

STATEMENT OF DECISIONS TAKEN BY THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

Tuesday 24 March 2020

The matters referred to below were due to be considered by the Executive at its meeting on 24 March 2020. Due to the coronavirus crisis, the meeting was cancelled. Under Section 9E (2) (a) of the Local Government Act 2000, the Leader of the Council may take executive decisions.

The decisions summarised below were taken by the Leader of the Council on 24 March 2020 and, subject to the call-in procedure referred to in Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 17 and to the Notes at the end of this document, shall have effect five working days after the date on which this statement was published. Details of any recommendations to Council are also included for completeness.

Other members of the Executive, councillors and members of the public were invited to submit any representations in writing that they would have made at the meeting, which the Leader took into account when making these decisions.

Agenda Item No.	Officer(s) to action Item
----------------------------	--------------------------------------

1.	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
-----------	------------------------------

Not applicable.

2.	LOCAL CODE OF CONDUCT - DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTEREST
-----------	---

There were no declarations of interest by the Leader.

3.	MINUTES
-----------	----------------

Not applicable.

4.	LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS
-----------	-------------------------------

Not applicable

5.	FUTURE MANAGEMENT AND OPERATION OF CHANTRY WOOD CAMPSITE
-----------	---

Decision:

Hendryk Jurk

(1) That the Chantry Wood Campsite continues in its current form with increased fees as set out in "Option B2" of the report submitted to the Executive.

(2) That the Council continues to engage with forest school operators to explore options to increase outdoor education whilst maintaining a camping facility.

Reason:

To implement arrangements at the campsite that respond to the views expressed during the consultation that protects the natural environment and reduces the operational cost to the Council.

Options considered and rejected by the Leader of the Council:

Option B1 Basic facilities run by GBC

Option B3 Basic Facilities – run by volunteers

Option B4 Basic facilities – run by forest school

Details of any conflict of interest declared by the Leader and any dispensation granted:

None

Details of any written submissions received and considered by the Leader from other members of the Executive, councillors, public or officers:

Cllr Patrick Sheard (non-Exec member):

Given the latest strictures from HMG over the last few days, I don't feel it appropriate to take any decision at this current point in time.

Cllr Deborah Seabrook (non-Exec member):

EAB asked for the possibility of providing improved disabled facilities be investigated. Whilst the consultation had not revealed a great demand, that may be because respondents were self-selecting and it does not appear any attempt was made to ask disabled people if they were interested in using the site or what they would need to be able to do so. It may well be that any adaptations necessary would go far beyond 'reasonable adjustment' and hence be unachievable/ affordable. However, it would be good to see this point considered.

Leader's response:

We are deferring consideration of access improvements as the camp site can't be booked now and we will look at this when we are in a position to use it, when we know if the Forest School are interested and we will also review the booking system when the IT is in place.

Cllr George Potter (non-Exec member):

An issue that residents have raised with me is that the booking system for the campsite is likely to be a major contributory factor to its low usage.

At present all bookings must be made a year in advance and there is no online calendar to show the availability of the campsite. There is also no deposit required for making a booking.

This effectively encourages people to make speculative bookings well in advance and then to simply cancel, or not show up, for bookings that they no longer want or need. The resultant booking vacancies aren't filled, however, because others who wish to book the site have no way of knowing that these vacancies exist.

Indeed, residents have told me that when calling to make booking

enquiries staff have declined to tell them what dates are available and instead residents have resorted to asking about each calendar date in turn until they get to one to which the answer is "it's available".

If charges are going to increase then a priority must be to get a better booking system that encourages, rather than discourages, use of the campsite.

Additionally, I would strongly support the prioritisation of rebuild/adaptations to the toilet blocks to make them more disabled accessible. This should be prioritised ahead of works such as the refurbishment of the barn interior as, at present, the interior is predominantly used by the parks department for storage and is rarely used by public bookings.

Finally, residents have reported a belief that the campsite appears to periodically be used for internal corporate bookings by GBC. If this is indeed the case it should be the case that these bookings are cross-charged appropriately so that this usage is accurately recorded in figures which purport to show the usage of the campsite.

Leader's response:

- a) Corona Virus:
The campsite is currently shut due to Corona Virus as we cannot provide basic sanitation and gatherings are discouraged as per government advice.
- b) The Booking system:
A new online booking system is planned as part of the Future Guildford project. This could show a bookings calendar and include a deposit payment.
- c) Level of usage:
The level of usage is determined by the single party booking, not the booking system. This is due to the current toilet system. The water infrastructure in the area would require upgrading in order to address this. This was considered in the Executive Report in 8 January 2019. The public consultation established that there is no public support for this scale of investment.
- d) Staff not being able to say what vacancies are available:
In the winter we have maintained a waiting list as booking dates were not confirmed pending this decision on the future operation. In order to avoid any confusion, we neither offered nor confirmed that bookings on specific dates are available.
- e) More accessible toilets:
Full disabled access cannot be achieved, as this would depend on water pressure availability. The water infrastructure in the area would require upgrading in order to address this. The public consultation established that there is no public support for this scale of investment. Some improvements can be delivered. The scope would determine the time required to address Green Belt/ Building regulations. Due to the nature of the surrounding site the current requirement for disabled access is low. A balance would need to be struck between effort and outcome, as the measures that are possible to be delivered within the current constraints

- may not be sufficient to provide greater accessibility.
- f) It is correct the campsite is occasionally booked for internal use. Cross charging would impact on the cost of other Council services, for example the Play Rangers.

6. BURCHATTS FARM BARN CAR PARK, STOKE PARK

Decision:

To defer the decision until a later date.

Sally Astles

Reason(s):

The parking assessment will be redone and so this was not an urgent piece of work to be undertaken at this point in time.

Options considered and rejected by the Leader of the Council:

To proceed with the project by transferring monies from the provisional to approved capital programme.

Details of any conflict of interest declared by the Leader and any dispensation granted:

None

Details of any written submissions received and considered by the Leader from other members of the Executive, councillors or public:

Cllr Patrick Sheard (non-Exec member):

Given the latest strictures from HMG over the last few days, I feel we should postpone this decision until the HMG has made it decision regarding infrastructure developments /building workers clearer.

Cllr Deborah Seabrook (non-Exec member):

Agreed in principle. However, I have 3 points:

1. Should we re-prioritise the capital programme in view of current unprecedented circumstances?
2. If/ when the works go ahead, priority should be given to maintaining spaces for use by Disability challengers during the works. Others can walk.
3. Only 3 cycle stands are mentioned in section 3.10. Given we are trying to increase sustainable travel, we should be making it easier for people to cycle, especially urban saints, Guildfordians etc.

Leader's response:

We will review the whole proposal because officers have informed us the parking assessment will have to be redone before we are able to start the work. Cycling can be reviewed then.

Cllr John Redpath (non-Exec member):

I am concerned about the charges for surfacing Burchatts car park. This is a huge amount of money for this area. Has it been properly tendered and is it for all the currently unsurfaced areas such as Challengers, the Barn demise etc?

Even then it's excessive.

Leader's response:

- It is an estimate to allow the formal tendering process to be undertaken. We cannot go through a tendering process without first getting authority to spend the money. Our engineers have allowed for a generous contingency of 15%, so there is a good chance the final cost will be less. We do not want to underestimate the final cost in case we do not have enough funds and end up having to go back to the Executive.
- Our engineers have based the cost on current contractor rates and these rates are from contractors on the cheaper end of the scale. The cost includes the following:
 - Preliminaries, restrictive working, traffic management
 - SUDS drainage works
 - Earthworks
 - Block paving construction
 - Tarmac construction
 - Kerbs, edgings
 - Consultants: CDM, QS and Engineering design time
 - Contingencies, 15% of works.

7. PROPERTY INVESTMENT STRATEGY

Decision:

To defer the decision to a future meeting of the Executive.

Melissa
Bromham

Reason(s):

To reconsider when there can be a full discussion with members of the Executive and where the confidential Appendix 3 can be considered which it had been intended to circulate with a Late Sheet prior to the meeting being cancelled.

Options considered and rejected by the Leader of the Council:

1. To approve the Property Investment Strategy.
2. To approve the delegation of authority to the Head of Asset Management in consultation with the Director of Strategic Services, the Chief Financial Officer and the Lead Member for Finance, Asset Management and Customer Services, to acquire property within the set parameters of the strategy.

Details of any conflict of interest declared by the Leader and any dispensation granted:

None.

Details of any written submissions received and considered by the Leader from other members of the Executive, councillors or public:

Cllr Patrick Sheard (non-Exec member):

Given the latest strictures from HMG over the last few days, I don't feel it appropriate to take any decision at this current point in time.

Cllr Deborah Seabrook (non-Exec member):

Does this need reappraising in the light of the current circumstances? It is extremely difficult to discern what is going to be a good investment at this time but perhaps green energy projects provide more certainty. I

attended the big energy summit and am in the course of writing a note on this topic.

Leader's response:

This isn't making it a priority to spend on property, current events will change all sorts of investment portfolios and all this does is allow for an action if deemed necessary.

8. GUILDFORD BOROUGH LOCAL PLAN - LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME 2020

Decision:

That the Local Development Scheme, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report submitted to the Executive be adopted with effect from 1 April 2020.

Stuart
Harrison,
Laura
Howard

Reason:

To progress the new Guildford borough Local Plan: development management policies by having a Local Development Scheme (LDS) with an up to date timetable for the Local Plan.

Options considered and rejected by the Leader of the Council:

None.

Details of any conflict of interest declared by the Leader and any dispensation granted:

None.

Details of any written submissions received and considered by the Leader from other members of the Executive, councillors or public:

Cllr Patrick Sheard (non-Exec member):

This is probably inappropriate at this time.

Leader response:

This is not a radical decision that might be impacted by the Covid-19 situation and is required in order to move forward with the proposed consultation on the Development Management Policies approval of which will be required from Full Council.

Cllr Deborah Seabrook (non-Exec member):

Agrees with recommendation

9. REGULATION 18 CONSULTATION ON LOCAL PLAN: DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT POLICIES

Recommendation to Council:

- (1) That the draft Local Plan: Development Management Policies document, as set out in Appendix 2 to the report submitted to the Executive, be put before Full Council on 7 April 2020 for approval for Regulation 18 public consultation and to approve a seven-week period of consultation beginning on 20 April 2020.

Stuart
Harrison,
Laura
Howard

- (2) That the Planning Policy Manager be authorised to make such minor alterations to improve the clarity of the document as he may determine in consultation with the Lead Councillor.

Reason(s):

Undertaking a public consultation on the draft Local Plan is a statutory requirement placed on Local Planning Authorities under Regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 and will enable the Council to move closer to adopting the second part of the Local Plan.

Options considered and rejected by the Leader of the Council:

None.

Details of any conflict of interest declared by the Leader and any dispensation granted:

None.

Details of any written submissions received and considered by the Leader from other members of the Executive, councillors or public:

Cllr Patrick Sheard (non-Exec member):

I can see little point recommendation to the Full Council Meeting that seems highly unlikely to occur.

Leader's response:

We can move this item through to Full Council whilst we await guidance from Government on how we will be able to progress business during this challenging time.

Cllr Deborah Seabrook (non-Exec member):

Overall, I am supportive of this document and appreciate the work that has gone into it. However, I and other councillors participated in the EAB which considered this document on 17th Feb. We have also made written submissions. Whilst the document summarises EAB comments, short of going through the document for that meeting and the current document, it is difficult to ascertain what changes have been made as a result of any councillor written representations etc. It does not feel like the officers really pay much attention.

Leader's response:

I will ask the Planning Policy Manager to comment on and perhaps highlight specifically in the report to Council any changes made to the document as a result of councillors' written representations.

10. TOWN CENTRE MASTERPLAN

Decision:

- (1) That a Town Centre Masterplan Programme Board be established and chaired by Councillor John Rigg.
- (2) That a procurement specialist be appointed for the purpose of a delivery led town centre project who will advise the Council on the

Andrew
Tyldesley

recruitment of a team of specialists, including planners, to lead on the delivery of a portfolio of projects that will together contribute to the comprehensive regeneration of Guildford town centre, and be responsible for delivering the projects that are identified as supporting the future of the Town Centre as well as the evidence base that will inform an aspirational document to explore the development potential of the Town Centre.

Reason:

To support the implementation of the resolution in Council minute C029.

Options considered and rejected by the Leader of the Council:

To not approve the recommendation thereby delaying the delivery of a strategy for the improvement of Guildford Town Centre .

Details of any conflict of interest declared by the Leader and any dispensation granted:

None.

Details of any written submissions received and considered by the Leader from other members of the Executive, councillors or public:

Cllr Patrick Sheard (non-Exec member):

I am happy to support this proposal.

Cllr Deborah Seabrook (non-Exec member):

Agree with the recommendation.

11. PAPERLESS MEETINGS

Decision:

John
Armstrong

That Option B, as set out below, be implemented:

To adopt a “paper-light” approach to meetings, which would have paperless meetings as an aspiration, but recognise that councillors should still have a choice between using their devices and the functionality of the Modern.Gov app or continuing to receive paper copy agendas; and in respect of the latter, the basis upon which paper copies will be provided will be as follows:

- Paper copy Council agendas and order papers will only be provided to councillors who ‘opt in’ to receive them and, similarly, paper copy committee agendas and supplementary information (late) sheets will only be provided to members of a committee and substitutes who ‘opt in’ to receive them
- Paper copy agendas will be placed in councillors’ pigeon-holes unless they ‘opt in’ to have them sent by first class post
- The ‘opt in’ requirements to also apply in respect of agendas for working groups, task groups, and task and finish groups involving councillors

Reason(s):

To work towards delivering on the Council’s commitments to secure

ongoing savings in its revenue budget and to assist in achieving the Council's corporate aspirations to reduce its carbon footprint, whilst still complying with legislation requiring the provision of copy agendas for inspection by the public.

Options considered and rejected by the Leader of the Council:

Option A – confirm original decision taken by Executive on 18 February 2020.

Details of any conflict of interest declared by the Leader and any dispensation granted:

None.

Details of any written submissions received and considered by the Leader from other members of the Executive, councillors or public:

Cllr Patrick Sheard (non-Exec member):

I'm happy with this proposal, though I see little point in having paper agendas in pigeon-holes / via post unless there is a further choice to not having them at all (Or some procedural / legal requirement for these to be distributed)

Leader's response:

Option B emphasises that there is an initial presumption of paperless meetings, subject to the "opt in" provisions outlined above. Councillors not wishing to have agendas should not therefore opt in.

Cllr Deborah Seabrook (non-Exec member):

Agrees with the recommendation.

NOTES:

- (a) Any decision marked "#" means that the item was deemed by the Managing Director and agreed by the Executive and Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to be a matter of urgency for the reason indicated and, in accordance with Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 17 (h), such decision takes effect immediately and is therefore *not* subject to the call-in procedure.
- (b) The call-in procedure is as follows:
 - (i) the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee; or
 - (ii) a minimum of five members of the Councilmay require that a decision be referred to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for review.
- (c) Councillors wishing to exercise their right to call-in a decision taken by the Executive must give notice in writing to the Democratic Services Manager. The reason for a councillor calling-in a decision shall accompany any such request and must meet one of the following criteria:
 - (a) that there was insufficient, misleading or inaccurate information available to the decision-maker;
 - (b) that all the relevant facts had not been taken into account and/or properly assessed;
 - (c) that the decision is contrary to the budget and policy framework and is not covered by urgency provisions; or
 - (d) that the decision is not in accordance with the decision-making principles set out in the Constitution.

Such notice should be marked for the attention of John Armstrong who can be contacted by e-mail on john.armstrong@guildford.gov.uk

- (d) On receipt of a call-in request, the Monitoring Officer will decide, in consultation with the chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, whether it is valid and will notify the councillors concerned accordingly.
- (e) In the case of a valid call-in, the decision shall be referred to a special Call-in meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, which shall be held within 21 days of the decision on validity referred to in paragraph (d) above.
- (f) A decision marked with an asterisk denotes that the matter is a "Key Decision" which is defined in the Council's Constitution as an executive decision:
 - (i) which is likely to result in significant expenditure or savings (of at least £200,000) having regard to the budget for the service or function to which the decision relates; or
 - (ii) which is likely to have a significant impact on two or more wards within the Borough.