

23 SEPTEMBER 2019

PLACE MAKING AND INNOVATION EXECUTIVE ADVISORY BOARD

23 September 2019

- * Councillor Angela Gunning (Chairman)
- * Councillor Gordon Jackson (Vice-Chairman)

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| * Councillor Jon Askew | * Councillor Diana Jones |
| * Councillor Christopher Barrass | * Councillor Masuk Miah |
| * Councillor Ruth Brothwell | Councillor Maddy Redpath |
| Councillor Graham Eyre | * Councillor Will Salmon |
| Councillor Liz Hogger | * Councillor Patrick Sheard |

*Present

Councillors were also in attendance.

BEI10 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Liz Hogger and Maddy Redpath. Councillors George Potter and Tony Rooth attended as substitutes for Councillors Hogger and Redpath respectively.

The following officers were also in attendance:

Shalford Common Land Management:

Hendryk Jurk, Countryside Manager,
Paul Stacey, Parks and Landscape Manager

Bedford Wharf – Plaza Landscaping:

Paul Bassi, Project Manager
Tracey Coleman, Director of Planning and Regeneration

Economic Report 2018-19:

Chris Burchell, Local Economy Manager

BEI11 LOCAL CODE OF CONDUCT AND DECLARATION OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS

There were no disclosures of interest.

BEI12 MINUTES

The minutes of the Executive Advisory Board held on 20 May 2019 were confirmed as a correct record, and signed by the Chairman.

BEI13 SHALFORD COMMON LAND MANAGEMENT

The Executive Advisory Board received a report and presentation regarding an action plan designed to resolve a number of land management issues experienced on Shalford Common. The Board was asked to provide their views on the proposals that would be put forward in the consultation. The outcome of the proposed action plan sought to ensure the Council as a landowner fulfilled its statutory obligations; to protect the common land, to use as a public open space, to provide safe access for recreation but also to recognise the increasing demands for car parking at Shalford Common and identify measures for its effective management. These measures would be agreed by the Executive at their meeting on 26 November 2019.

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Seven priority areas had been identified so to pursue a consistent approach in the land management of Shalford Common for the future. Approval would need to be sought from the Secretary of State under S38 of the Commons Act 2006 to undertake certain works, including the creation of car parks, provided the works were for the benefit of the Common.

The seven priority areas included:

- 1a. Huber's Garage/Mitchell's Row
- 1b. Cricket Club Parking
2. King's Road Shop Front
3. Pound Place
4. Parrot Pub Car Park
- 5a. Access track to Dagley Lane Caravan Park
- 5b. Recycling Car Park
6. Dagley Lane/Juniper Terraces
7. Approaches to Ashley Gardens and Christmas Hill

The Board noted the risks and issues associated with the options proposed for each area which included local opposition to parking enforcement or provision of designated parking areas, enforcement was resource intensive, displacement of parking problem to other areas, costs and the availability of parking areas becoming reduced owing to the presence of long-term parked cars.

Prior to consideration of this item, the Board invited Councillor Sue Dunford to speak for three minutes on behalf of Shalford Parish Council who stated the following:

- Shalford Parish Council welcomed the report and had consulted with the residents on this issue. There were lots of small cottages in Shalford and the residents of which often had two cars. The residents were primarily concerned that any parking restrictions implemented must not affect the trade of small businesses which the local community relied upon. It was recommended that the recycling car park could be used to provide additional parking spaces which would be very useful owing to its position opposite the shops. Shalford Parish Council recommended that shop owners were included in any consultation.

The following points arose from related questions and discussion:

- The primary users who parked at Shalford Common used it for either accessing Shalford Train Station or for the local shops.
- Need to outline a list of parking restriction options as part of the consultation.
- Need to think carefully about enforcing time restricted parking in areas where small businesses operate that would be affected by reduced footfall.
- It was confirmed that officers had consulted with Huber's Garage. The main issue remained that two properties on the access track experienced problems with cars parked on the track which thereby restricted access to these properties. Time restricted access would not resolve the issue in this scenario.
- Need to ensure that the consultation included seeking the views of local shop owners.
- Need to apply time-restricted parking areas where appropriate whilst also ensuring that links to existing public transport networks, car club schemes and bicycle hire schemes were clearly signposted.
- With the advent of driverless cars, less cars were anticipated to be on the road in the future; however, this was not likely to be in place for another ten years.

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- Need to profile the people who used Shalford Common to park on, which would enable the Council to understand specific user needs, so to get parking restrictions right that did not undermine local businesses and supported local community needs.
- The Board proposed speaking to private landowners so that car park prices could be lowered. However, in the case of Shalford Station, it was confirmed that it only cost £2.00 a day to park.
- The Board noted that common land law prevented the use of residential parking schemes.
- The consultation should inform the process rather than be pre-determined.
- Proposed installation of wooden posts to prevent people from parking on the common.
- The Board queried whether the Secretary of State would give permission for exchange land for the purposes of deregistration and if preliminary discussions could be entered into now.
- It was confirmed that the Secretary of State's default position was that common land should not be lost from public use unless the residents were adequately consulted on a range of options.

After a full discussion, the Board made the following recommendations to the Executive:

- The people who parked on Shalford Common needed to be profiled to ensure that any parking restrictions applied was adequately married to the type of parking usage.
- The consultation needed to clearly define a range of options in relation to the proposed parking restrictions recommended for implementation.
- The public needed to be clearly signposted to alternative modes of transport such as public transport, car club and bicycle hire schemes.

BEI14 BEDFORD WHARF - PLAZA LANDSCAPING

The Executive Advisory Board received a report and presentation on progress for the Bedford Wharf Plaza Landscaping scheme. A condition of the planning permission for the replacement Walnut Bridge was that a landscaping scheme (for Bedford Wharf Plaza) must be implemented within six months following the bridge completion. The Executive last considered Bedford Wharf Plaza at its meeting in January 2019 where funding of £500,000 was approved to facilitate consultation on, and design of, a landscaping scheme for the plaza. The funds would not secure a development of high quality and so a phased and sequential approach was recommended.

The scheme represented an opportunity to regenerate the wider area, particularly around the railway station which was being developed by Solum and was expected to generate significant footfall. The scheme offered a means of developing a streetscape legibility for how the town looked and what people recognised as a Guildford townscape. Guildford did not have a square and the plaza therefore represented a means of creating a significant gateway feature for the town.

The Board were asked to provide their views and guidance on the project approach for the Bedford Wharf Plaza Landscaping.

The following points arose from related questions and discussion:

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- Considered whether the scheme should only be looking at landscaping when we should be looking at the wider area around Bedford Wharf.
- It was confirmed that as part of Walnut Bridge Planning condition (not S106) the council was obliged to deliver a restorative landscaping scheme.
- The Board noted that Solum was moving forward, the planning conditions were being discharged and works would start next year. The landscaping works had to be in place within 6 months of the completion of the consent of the proposed bridge.
- The Board questioned the difference between a masterplan and a landscaping scheme and recommended that rather a Framework was required which acted as a guide for development in the wider area. Given the cinema was likely to be redeveloped as well as the Surrey Police building, it was a shame that Bedford Wharf Plaza was the sole focus when it should include the whole of Bedford Wharf.
- The Board noted that the consultation would be undertaken online which required significant advertising through social media platforms otherwise a low response rate was anticipated. The online consultation was due to have started on 20 September but had been postponed so that the views of the Board could be taken into consideration prior to commencement.
- The Board received confirmation that Bedford Wharf Plaza was a landscaping masterplan, not a masterplan for development uses. Part of the area was in a flood zone and the Council was therefore unable to use it for those purposes.
- The masterplan was in response to a planning application whereby the Council was trying to engage with the public to identify what should be in the public realm. It was confirmed that the Council had secured £1 million pounds of funding towards public art at Guildford Station.
- The Council had previously been criticized for not consulting with the public. The Plaza didn't have to be in place until 6 months after the completion of Walnut Bridge and therefore provided the time in which to develop a scheme that was in keeping.
- The Board considered it was of great concern that if the scheme would not be completed until June 2022 that the Council was not using that time to look at a broader masterplan which encompassed all of Bedford Wharf.
- The Board noted that there was a significant period of time to implement the scheme and elements of it may change but ultimately the Council needed the scheme to start taking S106 contributions.
- The Board noted that the Bedford Wharf Plaza scheme was an integral part of the Walnut Bridge development and was not exclusive in terms of their delivery. The scheme was focussed on the landscape and its connections with the surroundings were important. The Council would also be undertaking in depth online consultations with focus groups. Officers were fully aware of a lack of cohesion across other schemes and hoped that this proposal would unify them with an overarching vision for Guildford.
- The consultation results would drive and inform what sort of plaza the public wanted and in turn the Lead Design Consultant would be recruited at that point.
- The Board wanted to understand how the Bedford Wharf Plaza Scheme fitted in with the Town Centre Masterplan in terms of timescales for implementation.
- The Board noted that the Council was in the process of commissioning consultants to revisit the Town Centre Masterplan that would include the public consultation.
- The Board recommended that expenditure on the scheme was cut to a minimum so that strategic master-planning could be undertaken.
- The Board questioned the value of replacing the bridge without surveying the life of the existing bridge as well spending £1 million on public art works.

The Board remained unhappy about progressing the Bedford Wharf Plaza Landscaping scheme in isolation. A broader approach via a strategic masterplan was required to address

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the development needs of the entire area in a cohesive manner and that the Executive should note the Boards issues raised.

BEI15 ANNUAL ECONOMIC REPORT 2018-19

The Board received a briefing note and presentation on the Guildford Economic Report 2018. The report was not formally published but the information was shared with key partners. The report gathered information which helped with Guildford's existing Economic Strategy to understand how we are performing and to give us a steer on economic trends. Guildford's economy was compared against four other key economic centres; Basingstoke and Deane, Rushmoor, Winchester and Woking. For example, Winchester ranked highly in initiating new start-up companies. Business cases could be compiled based upon such information and was a valued tool within the business community. In terms of the strategic context, the government has asked all Local Enterprise Partnerships to produce a Local Industrial Strategy with a strong focus on raising productivity levels in the UK. Guildford Borough Council had published its own Innovation Strategy to drive innovation within its own economy and to encourage investment in SMART infrastructure. The national average for spend on research and development in the private sector is 1% but recent figures from EM3 LEP is that companies locally are spending 2.8% above the national average.

The Board noted that it was also about working to scale and that whatever Guildford did was part of the wider context. The Gross Value Added (GVA) for Guildford now stands at £5.5 billion. Guildford was in the top ten of the Lambert Smith Hampton Economic Vitality Index and are aligned with Oxford and Cambridge. The health of the economy was not just driven by economic figures but factors such as social cohesion and quality of life were also key to Guildford's success. Recently, Guildford had experienced a reduction in the number of people employed which was largely associated with corporate companies relocating and downsizing as well as an observed decline in the survival rate of start-up businesses. Availability of A-Grade office space is now quite significant, but the provision of flexible start-up space needs to be increased.

The retail industry had experienced a decline in the number of enterprises and the numbers employed in the sector and the vacancy rate of shops stood at 5.8% set against a national average of 7% although anecdotally the vacancy rate appears to have worsened since these figures were issued in April. Guildford was neither the cheapest place to do business and frequently experienced employees have, being lost to companies in London. In terms of housing, property remained expensive in Guildford and people struggled with the associated costs. This encouraged more people to travel in but which in turn caused congestion issues. A current initiative was how to make the economy greener. The Council has agreed to support a bid for European Regional Development Funding (ERDF) led by Kent County Council that includes business grants for SMES to improve their energy efficiency and carbon footprint. The Council needed to explore how it could work better in collaboration with other businesses to bring such efficiencies into reality.

The Board discussed the presentation and made the following comments:

- Reassured to hear that Guildford was in good health economically.
- Noted the key obstacles for companies locating in Guildford were affordable housing, long commute, skills availability, automation, technology, lack of cash incentives and flexible co-working spaces.
- Noted that Guildford also needed to support people in trades as well as nurses, doctors and carers who were disadvantaged by the high property costs in Guildford both to buy or rent.

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- Relieved that the Council was not able to offer cash incentives as that often resulted in less for all.
- It appeared difficult to find office space which catered for average sized businesses when conversely smaller and larger office spaces seemed easier to find.
- The Board noted that the Council had undertaken a detailed survey of office space for start-up businesses. both in the middle range.
- Noted a high degree of economic disparity existed in Guildford which had a lot of high-end retail shops serving a small group of well-paid employees whilst the retail workers were relatively low paid, and there appeared to be no middle ground.
- The Local Plan has made provision for the Surrey Research Park to be extended by 10ha.
- The Board noted that there were more networking groups in Guildford emerging whereby business entrepreneurs could make connections with each other.
- The Board noted the need to create more succinct clusters of amenities, shops and business space so that a vibrant economy was sustained.
- The gaming industry recruited via international recruitment agencies and other areas of competition for the economy in general includes The Thames Valley, West London and Staines.
- The Board considered that with the advent of the internet, companies did not necessarily need to be in a conventional office, and that the associated costs of renting office space would in turn be reduced.

BEI16 JOINT EAB BUDGET TASK GROUP

The Board noted that both Executive Advisory Boards had been asked to establish a Joint EAB Budget Task Group (JEABBTG), comprising four councillors appointed by each EAB. The task group would meet twice, on dates to be confirmed to consider and review:

1. The draft General Fund and Housing Revenue Account revenue budgets, and
2. The draft General Fund and Housing Revenue Account capital programmes, including growth bids to inform the evaluation process.

The following political composition for 2019-20 was recommended:

3 x Liberal Democrats
2 x Residents for Guildford and Villages
1 x Conservative
1 x Guildford Greenbelt Group
1 x Labour

The Board noted that the following members should convene the Joint EAB Budget Task Group:

Councillor Angela Gunning (Labour)
Councillor Graham Eyre (Conservative)
Councillor Patrick Sheard (Guildford Greenbelt Group)

The Liberal Democrats needed to confirm their membership but was likely to be out of the following members:

Councillor Jon Askew
Councillor Masuk Miah
Councillor Will Salmon

As the Board did not know the dates and times of the meetings, it was requested that these were established first before the councillors could confirm their availability.

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BEI17 EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN

The Board strongly recommended that the Strategic Town Centre Masterplan was included in the Forward Plan and was actioned as soon as possible.

The Board noted that the Stoke Park Masterplan was due for consideration by Executive at its meeting on 24 September 2019 and the Place Making and Innovation EAB on 21 October 2019. [post-meeting note: The Stoke Park Masterplan was no longer on the agenda for the Place-Making and Innovation EAB meeting on 21 October].

The Board also noted that the Guildford Crowdfunding Proposal was no longer on the agenda for Executive at its meeting on 24 September 2019.

BEI18 EAB WORK PROGRAMME

The Board noted its work programme and recommended that a briefing on the Town Centre Masterplan was included as well as it ultimately being considered by the Executive.

The Board also noted that the Special Planning Documents (SPDs) to support the Guildford Local Plan should now be in development and, in light of its role in placemaking and the Council's commitment to openness and transparency, strongly requested sight of, and involvement in, these at early drafting stage, rather than once completed and put out to consultation.

The meeting finished at 9.50 pm

Signed

Date

Chairman