

# EXECUTIVE

21 April 2020

- \* Councillor Caroline Reeves (Chairman)
- \* Councillor Jan Harwood (Vice-Chairman)

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|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| * Councillor Joss Bigmore   | * Councillor John Rigg      |
| * Councillor Angela Goodwin | * Councillor Pauline Searle |
| * Councillor David Goodwin  | * Councillor James Steel    |
| * Councillor Julia McShane  | * Councillor Fiona White    |

\*Present

Councillors Tim Anderson, Chris Blow, Gordon Jackson, Susan Parker, Deborah Seabrook, Patrick Sheard and Catherine Young were also in attendance.

## **EX101 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies for absence.

## **EX102 LOCAL CODE OF CONDUCT - DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

## **EX103 DECISIONS**

The decisions taken by the Leader of the Council on 24 March 2020 were noted.

## **EX104 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Leader made two announcements:

Firstly, the Leader made a statement on this Council's local response to the Covid 19 pandemic.

The community spirit and help being given by residents to support the most vulnerable people across the borough in difficult times was described as both outstanding and heart-warming. This spirit would be needed as the community finally emerged and recovered from the crisis.

The coronavirus pandemic had brought out a new respect for the value of public service, most visibly through the applause for the NHS and care workers on Thursday evenings. It was noted that importantly, other keyworkers were also being acknowledged. At a local level, people had been showing much gratitude and appreciation for Council staff delivering essential services. For example, notes had been attached to bins to thank refuse and recycling crews and there had been appreciation on social media from residents for the beautiful parks and countryside in the borough. There had been many messages of thanks received for the ways in which the Council had been supporting the community.

The Leader expressed sincere thanks to Council staff for maintaining essential services during the period of ongoing restriction. In addition, praise was given for the way in which the Council had, within a matter of weeks or even days in some cases, reorganised itself to deliver entirely new services to protect the most vulnerable residents. New community helplines had been installed and were being staffed seven days a week, local food distribution hubs had been

established, Spectrum was operating as the countywide base for distributing food to those who were shielding, meals on wheels had been stepped-up and guidance and advice was being provided to residents through Council communications like never before. The Council was receiving wonderful feedback from those who had received food parcels and phone calls.

An indication of the scale of change and adaptation by the Council in playing a part in supporting the community through this crisis was set out as follows:

- 4,919 telephone calls had been made to the most vulnerable residents
- 1,021 calls had been received by the vulnerable persons helpline and housing advice service
- 399 food parcel deliveries had been delivered to residents
- 1,087 food parcels had been delivered countywide from Guildford Spectrum
- 4,492 meals on wheels had been provided
- 88 urgent minor home adaptations had been completed to keep elderly and vulnerable residents safe
- 31,851 information leaflets had been delivered to households by staff and volunteers
- 41 homeless people had been placed in accommodation
- 85 staff had been redeployed to welfare hubs and the vulnerable persons helpline
- 40,613 web pages had been viewed on the coronavirus section of the Council's website
- 57,939 public engagements had been recorded with our social media activity
- 441 grants had been paid to local businesses totalling £6.4 million

The Leader thanked the Managing Director and all Council staff for the way in which they had stepped-up during such unprecedented times to protect and care for the most vulnerable people in the community. The strength and importance of local government across the country had been underlined and the Council had been part of that. Although this period was a time of great sadness because of the many lives lost and families bereaved, the Leader expressed pride in the way in which Guildford was playing its part in defeating the virus and the future recovery of the community.

Secondly, the Leader announced changes to be made in the coming weeks to Lead Councillor portfolios.

At the meeting of the Executive held on 18 February 2020, the Leader announced the need to make further changes to Lead Councillor Portfolios so that the political direction of the Council was consistent with the new directorate framework following Phase A of Future Guildford and the themes that were emerging from the new Corporate Plan. The development of portfolios was continuing and the final changes would be announced at the Council meeting on 5 May 2020.

The portfolio titles were likely to be centred around:

- Resources,
- Customer Service
- Economy

- Regeneration
- Climate Change
- Environment
- Housing and Development Control
- Community

#### **EX105 REVOCATION OF THE TAXI RANK, GUILDFORD PARK ROAD**

The Lead Councillor for Waste Licensing and Parking introduced the report.

The Executive was asked to consider the removal of the Hackney Carriage Stand (Taxi Rank) on Guildford Park Road, outside the rear entrance to Guildford Station following the completion of the required statutory consultation as part of the wider Sustainable Movement Corridor works. Having considered the single objection to the proposal, full details of which were included in the report, the Executive

RESOLVED: That the single objection received to the proposal be not supported and the revocation of the hackney carriage stand in Guildford Park Road, Guildford, as described in the report, be approved.

#### Reasons:

In support of the improvements for all modes of transport between the rail station, the University, Hospital and the Research Park. The removal of the taxi rank is part of a series of improvements proposed along Guildford Park Road.

#### **EX106 COVID19 EMERGENCY BUDGET**

The Executive noted that Guildford Borough Council was a category 1 responder to civil emergencies under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. The Council had an important role in responding locally to COVID19. In addition, there was a duty to ensure that crucial council services continued to operate in such unprecedented times. The Executive was asked to consider the Council's response to COVID-19 to date, the impact on services and to approve an emergency budget to support the Council's response.

The Lead Councillor for Finance and Assets, Customer Service introduced the report and gave thanks to council teams, communities, public and private groups and individuals around the borough for their support and assistance during such unprecedented times. The best and worst impact on the council's budget was estimated to be between £5 million to £15 million respectively. Grants for business were still available and the lead councillor urged local businesses to contact the council in this regard.

The Executive unanimously

RESOLVED: That the following recommendation to full Council on 5 May 2020 be supported:

That the Council:

- 1) Notes the Council's duties and response so far in dealing with the COVID19 pandemic
- 2) Notes the initial assessment of the impact on Guildford Borough Council's short-term financial position
- 3) Approves a revenue supplementary estimate of £15million to be funded from general fund reserves, such funding to be drawn down only if further government support is not forthcoming or is insufficient to cover the financial impact of COVID19 on the Council and sufficient cost savings cannot be found

- 4) Notes the advice of the Chief Finance Officer in paragraph 5.18 regarding the level of reserves and the potential need to rebuild reserves to a sufficient level if government grant support falls short
- 5) Notes the changes to Local Authority powers and duties introduced by the Coronavirus Act 2020 and delegates to the Managing Director, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, authority to amend service provision in accordance with the Council's statutory duties as these may be varied by the Act, regulations and guidance made thereunder.

Reason:

To enable the Council to continue to respond to the COVID19 emergency

The meeting finished at 7.50 pm

Signed .....

Chairman

Date .....