

# EXECUTIVE

18 February 2020

- \* Councillor Caroline Reeves (Chairman)
- \* Councillor Fiona White (Vice-Chairman)

- \* Councillor Joss Bigmore
- \* Councillor Angela Goodwin
- \* Councillor David Goodwin
- Councillor Jan Harwood

- \* Councillor Julia McShane
- \* Councillor John Rigg
- \* Councillor Pauline Searle
- \* Councillor James Steel

\*Present

Councillors Dennis Booth, Angela Gunning, Maddy Redpath, Deborah Seabrook, Patrick Sheard, and Paul Spooner were also in attendance.

## **EX91 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillor Jan Harwood.

## **EX92 LOCAL CODE OF CONDUCT - DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTEREST**

There were no declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests.

Councillors McShane, Reeves, Searle and White declared non-pecuniary interests in regard to Item 6 on the agenda in that:

Councillor McShane was a member of the management committee for CHIPS and was the Council appointee to the board of Guildford Action acting as trustee.

Councillor Reeves was a trustee of Guildford Action

Councillor Searle was a trustee of Reskilled and a patron of Homestart

Councillor White was a member of the management committee for CHIPS and was the Council appointee to the board of Guildford Citizens Advice acting as trustee.

## **EX93 MINUTES**

The Executive approved, as a correct record, the minutes of the meetings held on 7 and 21 January 2020. The Chairman signed the minutes.

## **EX94 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Following the implementation of Phase A of the Future Guildford Transformation Programme, which included the introduction of a new structure for the Corporate Management Team, the Leader intended to conduct a review of the Executive portfolios to ensure that there was a closer alignment with the new directorate responsibilities.

The Leader expressed concern about the safety of the brick-built bridge at Millmead Lock, following the recent flooding. This bridge was closed whilst a full structural investigation was being undertaken.

**EX95 WALNUT BRIDGE, GUILDFORD - CALL IN OF EXECUTIVE DECISION TAKEN ON 7 JANUARY 2020**

The Executive considered a report on the outcome of a review by Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) of the decision taken by the Executive at its meeting on 7 January 2020 in relation to additional funding for the Walnut Bridge project following a call in.

A presentation video was provided to illustrate the existing bridge and the proposed replacement.

At its special call in meeting on 4 February 2020, the OSC had explored the Executive's understanding of the project; whether the Executive had sufficient and accurate information, taken into account all relevant facts and assessed them properly; and considered whether the Executive had acted in accordance with the Constitution's principles of decision making.

OSC had resolved as follows:

- (1) That the proposed decision taken by the Executive on 7 January 2020 in connection with the Walnut Bridge project be not supported and that it be referred back to the next appropriate meeting of the Executive for reconsideration.
- (2) That, in considering the referral back of the proposed decision, the Executive be requested to take into account the following comments and advice from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee:
  - (a) To re-examine the financial arrangements with the LEP in terms of a possible further extension of the delivery deadline.
  - (b) To investigate the possible removal of the ramp from the bridge design with the aim of a cheaper, less permanent option to the proposed ramp, in order to better accommodate any changes that may arise from the Town Centre Masterplan process.
  - (c) Subject to the outcome of the discussions with the LEP, to take the opportunity of looking at the bridge design "in the round".
  - (d) To review the proposed decision on the Walnut Bridge project with consideration to the Town Centre Master Plan.
  - (e) To consider whether it would make sense for the Town Centre Masterplan to be progressed prior to a decision being made in respect of proceeding with the Walnut Bridge project.

In accordance with Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 16 (f), the Executive was required to reconsider the proposed decision by taking into account the comments/ advice submitted by the OSC referred to above. It was noted that once a decision had been referred back to the Executive following a call-in, it could not be subject to further call-in.

The Executive was informed that following the OSC meeting, a meeting with a representative of the LEP was held on 11 February 2020 to explore and consider what options there might be with respect to the Local Growth Fund expenditure dates and conditions for completion of the Walnut Bridge Project. Arising from that meeting, the following options were available for the Executive's consideration:

- 1 To review the design of the Bridge/Ramp to address concerns raised on the bulk of the ramp specifically and the design of the bridge itself.

- 2 To decline to proceed with Scheme
- 3 To decline to proceed with scheme and resolve to incorporate bridge/public realm vision within the DPD, or informal Masterplan
- 4 To confirm the Executive's decision taken on 7 January 2020

Details of the four options, together with the considerations, advantages and risks associated with those options were set out on the Supplementary Information Sheet circulated at the meeting.

Other issues arising from the meeting with the LEP included the following:

- Funding for the Walnut Bridge project was via the Local Growth Fund, which required that expenditure be made by 31 March 2021.
- The LEP was under significant pressure to secure that projects were delivered, and expenditure completed, to time.
- Uncertainty as to whether alternative or supplemental funding may be available from the Government, so there was an imperative to direct funding to projects which would deliver by the 2021 date. LEP would seek to recover funding by way of clawback if the Council were to choose not to deliver the scheme.
- LEP may offer flexibility on the detailed design – but the delivery deadline, and the continued meeting of the funding award criteria (the growth, transport indicators etc) were mandatory. If the Council sought to modify the design then it (design, contractor appointment) would need to be deliverable within the timeframe.

During the discussion on the options open to the Executive and the risks associated with those options, it was noted that any decision not to proceed along the LEP timescale would leave the Council in a less favourable financial position to complete the project. Amongst the Executive, there remained mixed views of the proposed design. Due to the financial position, commitment to the current design of the bridge was required at this point in time with acceptance that this commitment would be made before discussion of other public realm design projects that were in the pipeline.

Having taken into account the OSC's comments and advice and the options now open to the Council, the Executive

RESOLVED: That its decision taken on 7 January 2020 in respect of this matter be confirmed.

Reason:

To ensure compliance with Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 16.

**EX96 ALLOCATION OF COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY GRANTS 2020-21**

The Lead Councillor for Community Health, Support and Wellbeing introduced the report asking the Executive to approve grants to community and voluntary organisations for 2020-21 as proposed by the Council's Grants Panel.

Having noted the advice of the Community EAB, the Executive

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the allocation of community grants for 2020-21, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report submitted to the Executive, be approved.
- (2) That the sum of £50,495 be transferred from the community grants budget to the budget for grants to voluntary organisations for 2020-21.
- (3) That the allocation of grant funding to voluntary organisations for 2020-21, as set out in Appendix 2 to the report, be approved.

Reason:

To enable the grants process for 2020-21 to be implemented.

## **EX97 TOWN CENTRE CCTV EQUIPMENT UPGRADE**

The Executive, having considered a report on the need to update much of the Town Centre CCTV cameras and associated equipment to ensure the system continued to operate to the highest standards and to seek authority to undertake the necessary procurement

RESOLVED That the Town Centre CCTV Equipment Upgrade project be moved from the provisional to the approved list of the General Fund Capital Programme.

Reasons:

- To improve public safety and improve protection from and detection of crime.
- To approve to move the Town Centre CCTV Equipment Upgrade project from the provisional to the approved list of the General Fund Capital Programme.

## **EX98 PAPERLESS MEETINGS**

The Executive noted that the Council faced a number of significant challenges particularly in respect of meeting its responsibilities following the declaration of a climate emergency in July 2019. In addition, as part of the Future Guildford transformation programme, it was proposed to achieve savings and efficiencies by reducing print and postage costs through the introduction of paperless meetings. To this end, councillors and officers had received ICT devices with the necessary functionality and software to enable them to read and annotate agendas electronically including the necessary training on how the devices and software operated.

The Lead Councillor for Finance and Assets, Customer Service introduced the report and was in support of a clean break option to paperless for all councillors from April of this year.

Some councillors present had reservations in regard to conducting their duties for certain committees such as Planning where agenda packs could be very large and complex. It was also suggested that councillors would print their agendas at home instead if they felt there was a need which would negate any reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions achieved by the Council. It was further suggested that paper copies could be required under such circumstances where devices, internet connections, or the Modern.Gov app failed. Councillors were assured that suitable provision was in place.

Although transition would be more challenging for some councillors and officers than for others, the Executive considered it was right to proceed as long as there was additional training in place and that there would be a review of the decision after a certain time period.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That, subject to paragraph (3) below and with effect from 7 April 2020,

- (a) the Council will no longer provide to councillors, officers, Honorary Freemen, Honorary Aldermen, or the public, any printed copy agendas, minutes, order papers, supplementary information sheets (Late Sheets) for Council, Executive, Committee, Sub-Committee, Board, Working Group or Task Group meetings; and
  - (b) all officer level meetings shall be paperless.
- (2) That officers continue to support councillors in the understanding and operation of their new devices and the Modern.Gov app, including arranging a repeater session of the training given to councillors on 16 December.
  - (3) That the Council shall provide in respect of each meeting to which the public would be entitled to attend referred to in paragraph (1) (a) above:
    - (a) one hard copy agenda for viewing by the public at the main reception of the Council offices following publication of the agenda, and
    - (b) six hard copy agendas for viewing by the public at any such meeting.
  - (4) That the measures referred to above be introduced on a trial basis for six months and reviewed thereafter.

**Recommendation to Council (7 April 2020):**

That the following amendment be made to paragraph 1 (Scope) of the Access to Information Procedure Rules in Part 4 of the Constitution:

“Reference in these procedure rules to the making available or supply of copies of any agenda and reports, or any other written material submitted to the Council, Executive, Board, Committee or Sub-Committee shall include the provision of such copies by electronic means.”

Reasons:

To deliver 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.

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 19 (e), Councillor Fiona White requested that her vote against the above decision be recorded.

**EX99 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

The Executive

RESOLVED:

That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) and Regulation 5 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012, the public be excluded from the meeting for consideration of the following item on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act.

**EX100 NORTH STREET DEVELOPMENT GUILDFORD**

The Executive welcomed a report setting out a future development option for North Street. The Lead Councillor for Major Projects introduced the report and explained that the proposals put forward could revitalise this area of the town centre, provide greater diversity of use and

support modal shift. Having noted that those aspirations were compatible with the Council's Corporate Plan and Local Plan, the Executive

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the Managing Director be authorised, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Lead Councillor for Finance and Assets, Customer Service to agree terms for the sale of the Council's freehold interests in sites within the North Street Development area described in the report submitted to the Executive, subject to:
  - (a) the commercial agreement being conditional upon St Edward achieving planning consent for an acceptable scheme: a substantial residential-led mixed-use scheme with ground floor retail, leisure, and community uses;
  - (b) the Managing Director, Chief Finance Officer, Council Solicitor and Monitoring Officer, Leader of the Council, and the Lead Councillor being satisfied with the advice received from the property, cost, and legal advisers as to the financial viability of the proposed scheme and all other terms; and
  - (c) the Managing Director and Leader of the Council, being satisfied with:
    - (i) the advice of the Council Solicitor in respect of the proposed contractual arrangements; and
    - (ii) other due diligence undertaken in respect of the St Edward's proposal.
- (2) That the sum of £500,000 be transferred from the provisional to the approved capital programme to enable a legal agreement to be reached with the developer for the sale of the Council's interests in the site.

Reasons:

To support the Council's policies set out in its Corporate Plan 2018-2023, The Local Plan 2015-2034 and Guildford Town Centre Regeneration Strategy 2017 to "facilitate the delivery of a major new mixed-use development on North Street incorporating a significant number of new homes and public realm improvements.

The meeting finished at 8.20 pm

Signed .....

Chairman

Date .....