

EXECUTIVE

21 July 2020

- * Councillor Caroline Reeves (Chairman)
- * Councillor Joss Bigmore (Vice-Chairman)

- | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| * Councillor Tim Anderson | * Councillor John Redpath |
| * Councillor Jan Harwood | * Councillor John Rigg |
| * Councillor Julia McShane | * Councillor James Steel |

*Present

Councillors Christopher Barrass, Chris Blow, Dennis Booth, Angela Goodwin, Angela Gunning, Ramsey Nagaty, Susan Parker, George Potter, Maddy Redpath, Deborah Seabrook, Pauline Searle, Paul Spooner and Fiona White were also in attendance.

EX16 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

EX17 LOCAL CODE OF CONDUCT - DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTEREST

There were no disclosures of interest.

EX18 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 June 2020 were confirmed as a correct record. The Chairman signed the minutes.

EX19 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader announced that Surrey County Council had recently set out plans to seek government approval to create a single unitary authority in Surrey. This move was described by the Leader as extremely disappointing since there had not been discussion with borough and district leaders across the county in spite of detailed discussion with all Surrey MPs. The Leader's understanding, based upon correspondence from the Leader of Surrey County Council, was that a draft business case would be submitted to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) by the end of September. Whilst the Borough Council had been promised stakeholder engagement, the Leader expressed concern for Guildford residents given that there had yet to be any consultation with district and borough councils, let alone with residents given the very tight timetable that had been proposed.

The Leader agreed that devolution to unitary authorities was the most appropriate way to deal with the serious funding issues that all authorities faced, particularly in the post-pandemic period. The advantages of working or joining with neighbouring authorities were recognised, but there was a serious question to face with regard to the size of a single authority across the whole county. The Leader had particular concern for the impact on Guildford residents of such a large organisation both in terms of service provision and connection with their elected councillors.

The understanding was that unitary status for Surrey would create an authority covering 1.2 million people which was nearly double the size of any English unitary in existence, compared to a government preference for such authorities covering populations of 400,000.

EX20 CLIMATE EMERGENCY RESPONSE: ACTIONS FOR ACHIEVING NET-ZERO CARBON

On 23 July 2019, full Council declared a Climate Emergency and approved a series of commitments to reduce carbon. In support of the 2019 declaration the Council had undertaken and completed a significant number of carbon and energy-reducing projects and set up the Climate Change and Innovation Board and Climate Change Fund in order to plan, resource and implement further work and projects.

In support of those commitments the Executive considered a report that presented a high-level action plan with a two-pronged approach simultaneously directed towards achieving net-zero carbon within the Council's own operations and also proposing how the Council could support carbon reductions by working with stakeholders across the borough.

The action plan set out to plug into Council policy wherever possible, seeking renewable or low carbon deliverables in a strategic manner. Progress with partners and external stakeholders was difficult to assess due to a variety of influences and opportunities would become more apparent moving forward. The Executive welcomed the report noting that it was positive to see work moving forward in this area again following delays arising from the Pandemic.

The Executive unanimously

RESOLVED: That the draft Action Plan, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report submitted to the Executive, be adopted.

Reason:

To respond to the Council's Climate Emergency Declaration, by adopting a high-level action plan (incorporating the Energy Delivery Framework) for working towards net-zero carbon within the Council's operations and playing our part in delivering more extensive and progressive carbon reductions across the borough.

EX21 PUBLIC HEALTH FUNERAL POLICY

The Executive considered a report recommending adoption of a public health funeral policy. The report set out the Council's roles and responsibilities and the level of funeral provision required to provide a dignified, value for money funeral service. A six-week consultation with in-house services and public and private partner organisations had been undertaken and the draft policy updated to reflect the feedback received through this consultation process.

The Lead Councillor for the Environment introduced the report. Members welcomed the new policy and agreed unanimously that it was an appropriate document to support a little known but valuable service that was undertaken by the Council. The Executive

RESOLVED: That the draft Public Health Funeral Policy, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report submitted to the Executive, be adopted.

Reasons:

To ensure that Public Health Funerals are conducted in a fair and transparent way and that the deceased's estate is managed in line with the current legislation and guidance.

EX22 STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK (SDF) SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT

The Executive considered a report recommending the adoption of the draft Strategic Development Framework Supplementary Planning Document (SDF SPD). The SPD provided

further guidance to the Guildford borough Local Plan: strategy and sites (“the Local Plan”) that related to the development of the strategic sites in the borough.

The SPD provided detailed formal guidance to assist future master-planning of the strategic sites as required by Policy D1 (13) which in turn would guide the planning applications for the sites. The SPD was a material consideration in the determination of planning applications and appeals and it would guide planners, developers, urban designers and decision makers on the design principles that underpin the master-planning of the strategic sites.

Initial consultation of the SPD had been carried out through a series of workshops and the comments and issues received through these workshops were all considered in the preparation of the draft initial document. Thereafter, formal consultation was undertaken for 5 weeks in early 2020. The draft SDF SPD was updated in light of the comments received and were included with the Executive report in the Consultation Statement. The Lead Councillor for Climate Change introduced the report.

During the meeting the Executive received compliments regarding the high quality of the SPD document. The committee report included responses to points raised during the consultation process that was welcomed. The Executive heard suggestions that the consultation process could be extended and proposals that it might either be referred to either a meeting of the Joint Executive Advisory Board or on to Full Council for further debate. However, the consultation statement had been sent to all Place Making and Innovation Executive Advisory Board members on 4 July 2020.

Having considered the SDF SPD, the Executive unanimously

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the Strategic Development Framework Supplementary Planning Document, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report submitted to the Executive, be adopted as a Local Development Document.
- (2) That the Policy Lead - Planning Policy be authorised, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Climate Change, to make such minor alterations to improve the clarity of the adopted Supplementary Planning Document as they may deem necessary.

Reasons:

The recommendation under (1) will enable the adoption of the SPD as a Local Development Document and will add weight to this guidance as a material consideration in the assessment of relevant planning applications.

The recommendation under (2) allows for minor modifications to the SPD should they be necessary prior to publication.

EX23 GUILDFORD ECONOMIC REGENERATION PROGRAMME

In July 2019, the Council had resolved to produce a sustainable Town Centre Master Plan Development Plan Document to be delivered within the lifetime of the current administration with an agreement that work should commence immediately and with the appropriate level of officer support.

On 24 March 2020, the Leader of the Council agreed to convene a Masterplan Board and appoint a specialist adviser to brief and scope an external professional team that would contribute to the delivery of a pro-active strategy for the comprehensive regeneration of Guildford town centre.

The continued retail down-turn would have been exacerbated by the COVID19 pandemic and consequent lockdown. The Executive considered a report suggesting a review of the priority and timing of schemes set out in the adopted Local Plan and recommending adoption of a draft strategy that would achieve a greater overall economic benefit to the town centre.

The Lead Councillor for Regeneration introduced the report and set out the challenges for Guildford. Those challenges included the legacies of the past, responding to changes in modern lifestyle choices and increasing populations as well as immediate priorities such as Covid-19 and the proposed restructure of local government. The Executive unanimously

RESOLVED:

- (1) That a Guildford Economic Regeneration Programme Masterplan Board be established and chaired by the Lead Councillor for Regeneration.
- (2) That the draft Guildford Economic Regeneration Strategy and draft structure organisational plan, as set out in Appendices 1 and 2 to the report submitted to the Executive, be adopted.
- (3) That an external specialist adviser and professional team be appointed with the responsibility to deliver a strategy specifically for the regeneration of Guildford town centre.

Reasons:

- This programme has major benefits for Guildford's community and businesses by delivering a pro-active strategy to address the economic and physical constraints facing the town, including the retail downturn and the impact of the COVID19 situation.
- To support resolution CO29 of the Council made 23 July 2019.

The meeting finished at 8.50 pm

Signed

Date

Chairman