

GUILDFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL

Draft Minutes of a meeting of Guildford Borough Council held via Microsoft Teams on Tuesday 28 July 2020.

- * Councillor Richard Billington (Mayor)
- * Councillor Marsha Moseley (Deputy Mayor)

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| * Councillor Paul Abbey | * Councillor Ted Mayne |
| * Councillor Tim Anderson | * Councillor Julia McShane |
| * Councillor Jon Askew | * Councillor Ann McShee |
| * Councillor Christopher Barrass | * Councillor Bob McShee |
| * Councillor Joss Bigmore | Councillor Masuk Miah |
| * Councillor David Bilbé | * Councillor Ramsey Nagaty |
| * Councillor Chris Blow | * Councillor Susan Parker |
| * Councillor Dennis Booth | * Councillor George Potter |
| * Councillor Ruth Brothwell | * Councillor Jo Randall |
| * Councillor Colin Cross | * Councillor John Redpath |
| * Councillor Graham Eyre | * Councillor Maddy Redpath |
| * Councillor Andrew Gomm | * Councillor Caroline Reeves |
| * Councillor Angela Goodwin | * Councillor John Rigg |
| * Councillor David Goodwin | * Councillor Tony Rooth |
| * Councillor Angela Gunning | * Councillor Will Salmon |
| * Councillor Gillian Harwood | * Councillor Deborah Seabrook |
| * Councillor Jan Harwood | * Councillor Pauline Searle |
| * Councillor Liz Hogger | * Councillor Paul Spooner |
| * Councillor Tom Hunt | * Councillor James Steel |
| Councillor Gordon Jackson | * Councillor James Walsh |
| * Councillor Diana Jones | * Councillor Fiona White |
| * Councillor Steven Lee | * Councillor Catherine Young |
| * Councillor Nigel Manning | |

*Present

The Council observed a minute's silence in memory of Councillor Patrick Sheard who had passed away on 5 June 2020.

CO9 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Gordon Jackson and Masuk Miah.

CO10 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

There were no disclosures of interest.

CO11 MINUTES

The Council confirmed, as a correct record, the minutes of the meetings held on 5 and 19 May 2020. The Mayor signed the minutes.

CO12 MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS

The Mayor hoped that everyone was continuing to keep safe and well.

The Mayor reported that he was honoured to participate in the official opening of the new Covid-19 Ward at the Royal Surrey County Hospital in the previous week and commented how quickly the project had been delivered. The Mayor was confident that the team there would do their utmost to care for those in most need in the weeks and months ahead and wished them well.

The local response to the pandemic had been outstanding, with communities and council staff working together to provide support to the most vulnerable residents of our borough. None of this would have been possible without the hard work and commitment of the Council's staff, many of whom had to adjust almost overnight to new ways of working; either from home whilst caring for families, or having been redeployed to a different team, and all of this during an unprecedented and challenging period in our lives. The Mayor was delighted to be able to thank the team at the Spectrum hub personally in the previous week and had a number of staff visits planned in early August, to thank as many staff as possible for their hard work during this very difficult period.

The Mayor commented that the need to support our most vulnerable residents and the local charities that do so much, was now greater than ever. During his Mayoral year, the Mayor would be calling on councillors' support to raise funds for two charities that would help with this: The Mayor of Guildford's Local Support Fund, previously known as the Distress Fund, would continue to provide small financial grants to individuals needing help during difficult times, and The Coronavirus Response Fund, which would be supporting local charities to ensure they survived the impact of the pandemic. All donations to the Coronavirus Response Fund made via the Mayor's fundraising page would be match funded by the Council.

CO13 LEADER'S COMMUNICATIONS

The Leader made a statement on the Council's ongoing response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and in particular the support the Council had provided to date, and continued to provide, to our local communities and businesses. The Leader referred to the statistical information set out in the Order Paper to remind councillors of the extent of the support provided to date, and thanked staff for their commitment and support.

CO14 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were no questions or requests to make statements from the public.

CO15 QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

(1) Councillor Paul Spooner asked the Lead Councillor for Environment, Councillor James Steel the following question:

"On 20 July 2020, Councillor James Steel in a Guildford Lib Dems Press Release stated that he was pleased to announce a project to decolonise Guildford Borough Council's historic collections. He referenced a strategy timespan of 2020-2024 and stated that this was the top priority for GBC Heritage service to achieve over that period.

The stated process (apparently after discussion and agreement with the GBC leadership) is to:

- 1) Look at where each item came from
- 2) How each item was obtained
- 3) Whether the item should be sent back to place of origin to be displayed in their museums
- 4) For what remains after 3), write ups within the context of Britain's colonial history

The reason for the decision to decolonise the collection is given as being 'coupled' with the Black Lives Matter movement.

I therefore ask the Lead Councillor for Environment:

- (1) why he believes that he has a mandate for decolonising the Guildford collection without any discussion within the wider Council, any motion or policy being presented at Executive or to Full Council
- (2) why no consultation has taken place to affirm that this is the will of the wider community
- (3) confirmation that the leadership at GBC are now 'coupled' with the Black Lives Movement and advise the Council what the partnership means, what are the desired outcomes for the whole community and whether Black Lives Matter takes precedence over All Lives Matter in this context?
- (4) An explanation as to how the Leadership team are going to define 'colonisation' in relation to history?"

The Lead Councillor's response was as follows:

- "(1) The Heritage Service has put together an ambitious action plan 'Heritage Forward Plan' which is required by the Arts Council to ensure we have an accredited museum and embed best practice in managing our museum in which decolonisation is one of those action points. Decolonisation is a contemporary museum issue and one that all museums are now being asked to address. New guidance is currently being written by sector bodies such as the Museums Association to support museums in tackling this issue. In September 2019, a delegation was agreed by the Executive to the Director of Environment in consultation with myself to sign off the forward plan which was due to be submitted in April 2020; however, the Arts Council has delayed this by a year due to Covid. However, given the range of actions which the service wishes to conduct and my wish to have this on public display, the forward plan will be coming to the Executive for discussion and approval at some point in the Autumn as well as other matters in relation to the museum especially the NHLF withdrawing all funding bids across the country (apologies if this was not made clear in my article and has hence been corrected).
- (2) We will be talking to and consulting with relevant museum and heritage stakeholders such as the Council's own Museum Working Group, the Heritage Forum and Friends of Guildford Museum on the Heritage Forward Plan in due course. On a national scale we would be following the guidance of the Arts Council England, the Museums Association, and other professional organisations. The Museums Association is drawing up decolonisation guidance and checklists for museums to follow. The cultural and heritage sector is now taking the issue of decolonisation very seriously and we may find that when funding bodies such as NLHF and ACE relaunch their funding streams post Covid, that there is an emphasis on projects that address decolonisation and democratisation of collections. Therefore, we would put ourselves in a good position for future fundraising by being proactive on this matter. We are aware of some work that has been done in the past (2007) by the service in checking connections to our colonial past; however, we should not remain complacent about the matter and we need to reach out to minority groups as part of the process of displaying the various narratives objects can tell.
- (3) I will take this question and answer in two parts. First there seems to be a misunderstanding on the term 'coupled' in relation to my article. The term was used to bring together sources of information, in this instance the murder of George Floyd, the protests happening throughout Western society and the Black Lives Matter movement. It was not a reference to a coupling of organisations such as the 'coupling' Guildford has with Freiburg. Decolonisation practice in museums has been happening for a couple of years now and the action to 'decolonise' the collections was in the Forward Plan before the Black Lives Matter protests. The

public response to the recent Black Lives Matter protests has been a catalyst to push decolonisation up the agenda.

Second, I find it troubling that the leader of the Conservative Independent Group would want to push the term 'All Lives Matter'. The usage of this type of language is incredibly dangerous as it completely dismisses the persecution and discrimination faced by ethnic minorities within and outside the borough of Guildford on a daily basis. I must add that I'm a straight white man and do not speak on behalf of the ethnic minorities of Guildford or beyond.

- (4) I fail to see the connection between the Executive's view on what is meant by colonisation and the work that will be conducted. Defining decolonisation is a matter of international debate and discussion and we will take our lead from professional bodies.

Decolonisation as a framework for re-evaluation of museum collections, has only recently entered contemporary museum practice, with the recent think piece by the Museums Association entitled 'Empowering Collections' recommending "a proactive approach to the democratisation and decolonisation of museums (Museums Association, 2019)." Case studies of decolonisation in museum practice have tended to focus on ethnographic collections; however, it is a useful framework to reflect on any group of people considered 'other' to the dominant narrative.

For a museum without ethnographic collections (such as Guildford museum) the process of democratisation and decolonisation would involve recognising potential and unconscious bias in the collections and then seeking evidence, objects and testimonies that tell alternative narratives. These might include histories of people with disabilities, women, working class people, people who identify as LGBTQ or people with BAME heritage.

The Forward Plan states an aspiration to decolonise the collections, but the process is yet to be defined. It is likely that we will start by creating a decolonisation strategy or policy, linked to a research strategy, and based on museum sector best practice guidance. Decolonisation is likely to be an ongoing process that will happen via a series of smaller research projects. These will include consultation and collaboration with stakeholders and communities and may result in an exhibition or redisplay of a section of the museum.

Executive approval could be considered for any items that it might be felt should be repatriated or subject to restitution. There are strict guidelines and practice regarding the process for disposal, including for repatriation. Any objects proposed for repatriation would be subject to the policies and processes set out in the museum's Collections Development Policy. Ethical guidance on disposal including repatriation is provided by the Museums Association Code of Ethics."

Councillor James Steel
Lead Councillor for Environment

In response to a supplementary question from Councillor Spooner, in which he asked the Lead Councillor:

- (a) whether the decolonisation work would apply not only to the museum collections but also to all heritage assets; and
- (b) whether ethnic minorities were all black

the Lead Councillor confirmed in relation to (a) that the scope of the work would be defined in due course, but the crux would be based around the collections and the Museum project. In relation to (b), the Lead Councillor would respond by email.

Councillor Susan Parker asked a supplementary question to enquire whether, in view of comments in the press suggesting that the Museum collections were essentially local with very few relics of colonialism, and given the current crisis, the completion of an inventory of artefacts was appropriate?

The Lead Councillor responded by stating that the Arts Council England and other government bodies had drawn up checklists around decolonisation projects and where we want the museum to be placed to ensure that we keep up with the trends and ethics being promoted by these national bodies around museums.

Councillor George Potter asked a supplementary question to enquire whether

- (a) the digital cataloguing of the museum collections an ongoing task, and if so whether the decolonisation work will be done as part of an existing exercise and
- (b) the Lead Councillor was aware of the work done on Surrey local history in respect of the numerous links of several prominent local families to the slave trade.

Councillor James Walsh asked a supplementary question to enquire as to what wider consultations would be carried out in respect of this exercise.

The Lead Councillor responded by quoting from Tristram Hunt from the V&A Museum:

'The arguments against decolonisation seem to be: that it's not a nuanced approach - but the purpose of decolonising is to add depth, breadth and new knowledge to collections; and that it's rewriting history. Reality check - this is what museums and historians do all the time.'

To decolonise is to add context that has been deliberately ignored and stripped away over generations. There are many examples of the misrepresentation of objects in museum displays that have only been corrected after dialogue with source communities. And there are countless instances where interpretation still needs to be rectified and stories freshly told.'

It's easy to dither and defend the status quo but it is far more challenging and rewarding to tackle these issues. The question for me is not why should we rethink these collections and our relationships with source communities, but can we afford not to?'

Councillor Maddy Redpath asked a supplementary question to enquire as to whether councillors will, in future, be informed about initiatives by email before they are brought into the public domain rather than via the Liberal Democrats' website.

The Lead Councillor responded by stating that he had apologised to the R4GV group leader, Councillor Joss Bigmore for the manner by which this announcement had been made, but had agreed with him the steps to be taken.

- (2) Councillor George Potter asked the Leader of the Council, Councillor Caroline Reeves, the following question:

"Does the Council Leader agree that proposals to create a single, Surrey-wide unitary authority are incompatible with the principles of localism and could jeopardise our excellent COVID-19 response and public services? Will she agree to urgently

investigate alternative options for unitary authorities, and the timing of a reorganisation, that may be more advantageous to our residents and our borough?"

The Leader of the Council's response was as follows:

"At our regular Surrey Leaders meeting on 17 July we discussed the proposal by Surrey County Council to create a single unitary authority, outlined in an email each leader received on Tuesday 14 July. There was agreement that it was very unfortunate that the leader of Surrey County Council did not consult with any of the borough and district leaders before announcing the plan, in spite of having explained it to all the Surrey MPs.

The general opinion of the borough and district leaders was that a single unitary authority would be too large and would have a detrimental impact on the social cohesion of the communities within each of the boroughs and districts. Furthermore, the poor timing of the SCC proposals takes the focus away from the need to ensure that we continue to work in partnership with SCC and others to support our communities and businesses in recovering from the devastating effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The majority of Borough and District Leaders agreed to send a letter to the Secretary of State to voice our concern, and that leaders and the relevant chief executives would work together to put forward alternative proposals. A copy of the letter is appended to this Order Paper. A contribution of £10,000 from each authority was suggested by the relevant leaders as an appropriate contribution from each relevant authority to commission the work looking at this further. The final amounts, and the scale of the required work, is still under consideration but it would still be preferable if Surrey County Council could work with us and be open to exploring further options.

I understand that not all councillors at this authority disagree with the approach of a single unitary, however the majority do favour a unitary arrangement (more than one unitary council in the county) to replace Surrey County Council and the 11 boroughs and districts. We have heard some suggested timescales coming out of Surrey County Council (that do need to be confirmed by SCC) with submission of a full business case/proposal in September 2020, 'consult' November/December 2020, shadow councils in April/May 2021 and implement in 2022.

The key concern is there has been no consultation with us, and it leaves very little time for the relevant Boroughs and Districts to work up agreed alternative proposals for the Government to consider. My suggestion is that when the government White Paper has been published, we convene an extraordinary council meeting to discuss the way forward, if there is one.

As you all know, County Council elections are planned for May 2021 and we need to have some guidance about whether this process will be affected by this unitary discussion. I will update Councillors as soon as I know. Whilst we all understand the arguments about efficiency and clarity in relation to the unitary agenda generally, the omission of consultation with us, and the residents and businesses who will be most impacted, indicates a total lack of respect for local democracy and has not assisted in allowing balanced and inclusive discussion".

Councillor Caroline Reeves
Leader of the Council

In response to a supplementary question from Councillor Potter regarding the point at which an extraordinary Council would be convened, the Leader confirmed that the position was

currently uncertain but that as soon as we have sufficient information to enable the Council to debate the matter, an extraordinary meeting would be called.

CO16 REVIEW OF ALLOCATION OF SEATS ON COMMITTEES

The Council received the report of the proper officer (Democratic Services and Elections Manager) on the review of the allocation of seats on committees, consequent upon the following:

- the death of Councillor Patrick Sheard on 5 June 2020, which had resulted in the reduction in the membership of the Guildford Greenbelt Group on the Council to three; and
- the constitution of a new political group on the Council (the 'Conservative Independent Group'), with effect from 2 July 2020

The political balance on the Council was now:

Guildford Liberal Democrats: 17
Residents for Guildford and Villages: 16
Conservatives: 4
Conservative Independent Group: 4
Guildford Greenbelt Group: 3
Labour: 2
Independent: 1
Vacancy: 1

The Council noted that, due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, it was not currently possible to hold a by-election in respect of the vacancy in the Send ward until 6 May 2021.

Under Council Procedure Rule 23, whenever there was a change in the political constitution of the Council, the Council must, as soon as reasonably practicable, review the allocation of seats on committees to political groups.

The Council was informed that following Councillor Sheard's death group leaders had discussed, and had informally agreed, that as it was not possible to hold a by-election, there should be no change in the Guildford Greenbelt Group's current allocation of seats pending such by-election in May 2021. It was possible for the Council to determine that no changes be made to the current numerical allocation of seats to the Guildford Greenbelt Group until a by-election is held, provided that no councillor voted against the proposal at this meeting. If that were agreed, the Council would then have to agree a numerical allocation of seats on committees to accommodate the new Conservative Independent Group for the remainder of the 2020-21 Municipal Year, which could be done by way of a simple majority vote.

In that regard, the report had set out two options setting out calculations of numerical allocation of seats on committees dependent on the outcome of the vote in respect of whether any changes should be made to the allocation of seats to the Guildford Greenbelt Group.

Accordingly, the Deputy Leader of the Council, Councillor Joss Bigmore proposed a motion to address the above-mentioned matters, which was seconded by the Leader of the Council, Councillor Caroline Reeves.

Following the debate on the motion, Councillor Nigel Manning proposed, and the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Marsha Moseley seconded, the following amendment:

"To amend the proposed allocation of seats in Options 1 and 2 between the Conservative Group and Conservative Independent Group as follows:

- on the Community EAB, so that both the Conservative Group and the Conservative Independent Group have one seat each; and
- on the Planning Committee, so that the Conservative Group has two seats and the Conservative Independent Group has one seat”.

Following the debate on the amendment, it was put to the vote and was lost. Under the Remote Meetings Protocol, a roll call was taken to record the vote on the amendment, the results of which were 4 councillors voting in favour, 27 against, and 12 abstentions, as follows:

For the amendment	Against the amendment	Abstentions
Cllr Andrew Gomm	Cllr Tim Anderson	Cllr Paul Abbey
Cllr Nigel Manning	Cllr Jon Askew	Cllr Richard Billington
Cllr Marsha Moseley	Cllr Christopher Barrass	Cllr Dennis Booth
Cllr Jo Randall	Cllr Joss Bigmore	Cllr David Goodwin
	Cllr David Bilbé	Cllr Jan Harwood
	Cllr Chris Blow	Cllr Tom Hunt
	Cllr Ruth Brothwell	Cllr Julia McShane
	Cllr Colin Cross	Cllr Ramsey Nagaty
	Cllr Graham Eyre	Cllr Susan Parker
	Cllr Angela Goodwin	Cllr Caroline Reeves
	Cllr Gillian Harwood	Cllr Deborah Seabrook
	Cllr Liz Hogger	Cllr James Steel
	Cllr Diana Jones	
	Cllr Steven Lee	
	Cllr Ted Mayne	
	Cllr Ann McShee	
	Cllr Bob McShee	
	Cllr George Potter	
	Cllr John Redpath	
	Cllr Maddy Redpath	
	Cllr John Rigg	
	Cllr Will Salmon	
	Cllr Pauline Searle	
	Cllr Paul Spooner	
	Cllr James Walsh	
	Cllr Fiona White	
	Cllr Catherine Young	

Following the vote on the amendment, the Council

RESOLVED:

- (1) That, in the light of the vacancy in the Send ward caused by the death of Councillor Patrick Sheard and the postponement of any by-election to fill that vacancy until 6 May 2021, no changes be made to the Guildford Greenbelt Group’s current allocation of seats on committees for the 2020-21 municipal year as agreed by the Council on 19 May 2020 and shown in Appendix 1 to the report submitted to the Council.

Under the Remote Meetings Protocol, a roll call was taken to record the vote on paragraph (1) of the motion above, the results of which were 41 councillors voting in favour, none against, and 3 abstentions, as follows:

For para (1) of the motion**Against para (1) of the motion****Abstentions**

Cllr Paul Abbey
Cllr Tim Anderson
Cllr Jon Askew
Cllr Christopher Barrass
Cllr Joss Bigmore
Cllr David Bilbé
Cllr Chris Blow
Cllr Dennis Booth
Cllr Ruth Brothwell
Cllr Colin Cross
Cllr Graham Eyre
Cllr Andrew Gomm
Cllr Angela Goodwin
Cllr David Goodwin
Cllr Gillian Harwood
Cllr Jan Harwood
Cllr Liz Hogger
Cllr Tom Hunt
Cllr Diana Jones
Cllr Steven Lee
Cllr Nigel Manning
Cllr Ted Mayne
Cllr Julia McShane
Cllr Ann McShee
Cllr Bob McShee
Cllr Ramsey Nagaty
Cllr Susan Parker
Cllr George Potter
Cllr Jo Randall
Cllr John Redpath
Cllr Maddy Redpath
Cllr Caroline Reeves
Cllr John Rigg
Cllr Will Salmon
Cllr Deborah Seabrook
Cllr Pauline Searle
Cllr Paul Spooner
Cllr James Steel
Cllr James Walsh
Cllr Fiona White
Cllr Catherine Young

Cllr Richard Billington
Cllr Marsha Moseley
Cllr Tony Rooth

- (2) That, in the light of the constitution of the new Conservative Independent Group, the proposed numerical allocation of seats on committees for the remainder of the 2020-21 Municipal Year, as shown as Option 1 in Appendix 3 to the report submitted to the Council, and set out below, be adopted.

Committee	Lib Dem	R4GV	Con	Con Ind	GGG	Lab	Ind
Total no. of seats on the Council	17	16	4	4	3	2	1
% of no. of seats on the Council	36.17%	34.04%	8.51%	8.51%	6.38%	4.26%	2.13%
Corp Gov & Standards Cttee (7 seats)	2	2	1	0	1	1	0
Employment Cttee (3 seats)	1	1	0	1	0	0	0
Community EAB (12 seats)	4	5	2	0	1	0	0
Place Making & Innovation EAB (12 seats)	4	4	0	1	1	1	1
Guildford Joint Cttee (10 seats)	4	3	1	1	1	0	0
Licensing Cttee (15 seats)	6	5	1	1	1	0	1
Overview & Scrutiny Cttee (12 seats)	4	4	1	1	1	1	0
Planning Cttee (15 seats)	5	5	1	2	1	1	0
Total no. of seats on committees (Total: 86)	30	29	7	7	7	4	2

Under the Remote Meetings Protocol, a roll call was taken to record the vote on paragraph (2) of the motion above, the results of which were 36 councillors voting in favour, 1 against, and 8 abstentions, as follows:

For para (2) of the motion

Cllr Paul Abbey
Cllr Tim Anderson
Cllr Jon Askew
Cllr Christopher Barrass
Cllr Joss Bigmore
Cllr David Bilbé
Cllr Chris Blow
Cllr Ruth Brothwell
Cllr Colin Cross
Cllr Graham Eyre
Cllr Angela Goodwin
Cllr David Goodwin
Cllr Gillian Harwood
Cllr Jan Harwood
Cllr Liz Hogger
Cllr Tom Hunt
Cllr Diana Jones
Cllr Steven Lee
Cllr Ted Mayne
Cllr Julia McShane
Cllr Ann McShee
Cllr Bob McShee
Cllr Ramsey Nagaty

Against para (2) of the motion

Cllr Nigel Manning

Abstentions

Cllr Richard Billington
Cllr Dennis Booth
Cllr Andrew Gomm
Cllr Angela Gunning
Cllr Marsha Moseley
Cllr Jo Randall
Cllr Caroline Reeves
Cllr Tony Rooth

For para (2) of the motion**Against para (2) of the motion****Abstentions**

Cllr Susan Parker
Cllr George Potter
Cllr John Redpath
Cllr Maddy Redpath
Cllr John Rigg
Cllr Will Salmon
Cllr Deborah Seabrook
Cllr Pauline Searle
Cllr Paul Spooner
Cllr James Steel
Cllr James Walsh
Cllr Fiona White
Cllr Catherine Young

Reason:

To enable the Council to comply with Council Procedure Rule 23 in respect of the allocation of seats on committees to political groups and with its obligations under the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 in respect of the political proportionality on those committees.

CO17 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE

Upon the motion of the Deputy Leader of the Council, Councillor Joss Bigmore, seconded by Councillor John Rigg, the Council

RESOLVED: That the nomination of Councillor Colin Cross for election as vice-chairman of the Planning Committee for the remainder of the 2020-21 municipal year, be approved.

CO18 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2019-20

The Council considered a report which outlined the work undertaken by overview and scrutiny during the past municipal year and, within Appendix 1 to the report, its future work programme as thus far developed in the current circumstances.

Decisions taken during the past municipal year under the 'urgency' provisions and the use of 'call-in' were detailed within the report. In 2019-20, four decisions had been taken under the urgency provisions of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules, and there had been one call-in.

The report had also been considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 7 July 2020. The Committee had updated the scheduling of its work plan and had commended the Annual Report to Council.

Upon the motion of Councillor Paul Spooner, seconded by Councillor James Walsh, the Council

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the report be commended as the annual report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for 2019-20.
- (2) That the current rules relating to call in or urgency provisions remain unchanged.

Reasons:

- Article 8.2(d) of the Council's Constitution requires the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee to report annually to Full Council on the work undertaken during the year, its future work programme, and amended working methods if appropriate.

- Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 16(i) requires the operation of the provisions relating to call-in and urgency to be monitored annually and a report submitted to Full Council with proposals for review if necessary.

CO19 CORPORATE MANAGEMENT TEAM PAY AWARD 2020-21

The Council was reminded that the pay award for all staff in the salary bands below Director level was agreed each year by the Managing Director in consultation with the Leader of the Council. Separate approval from full Council was required for this pay award to be applied to the Managing Director and Director posts.

Councillors noted that the report on this matter had also been considered by the Employment Committee at its meeting on 12 June 2020. The Committee had endorsed the recommendation.

Upon the motion of the Leader of the Council, Councillor Caroline Reeves, seconded by the Deputy Leader of the Council, Councillor Joss Bigmore, the Council

RESOLVED: That a pay award of 2% be approved for the Managing Director and the Director posts with effect from 1 July 2020 in accordance with the Council's adopted Pay Policy Statement.

Reason:

To apply a pay award to the Corporate Management Team posts for 2020-21.

CO20 NOTICE OF MOTION DATED 10 JULY 2020: REVISED COLLECTION OF COUNCIL TAX ARREARS GOOD PRACTICE PROTOCOL

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 11, Councillor Angela Gunning proposed, and Councillor James Walsh seconded, the adoption of the following motion:

“At a time of increasing financial pressure and rising unemployment, it is important that safeguards are in place to protect and support residents facing the possibility of falling into debt.

The inability to pay council tax is something that can affect us all: from residents dealing with the stress and uncertainty of not being able to pay their bills, to councils increasingly dependent on local income following a decade of central government cuts.

The Citizens' Advice Bureau has worked with the Local Government Association to create a “Revised Collection of Council Tax Arrears Good Practice Protocol” which calls for councils to improve existing practices for offering advice, support and payment options for residents facing difficulties in paying their council tax. A copy is attached as Appendix 1 to the report submitted to the Council.

While Guildford Borough Council has a good record in the collection of council tax arrears, the Labour Group believes that adopting the protocol will strengthen the process by linking debt advice to repayment schemes and enabling early intervention before a crisis point is reached. This will benefit both our residents and the council, which is under increasing pressure to collect as much income as possible to support local services.

To date, 61 councils of all political stripes across England have already adopted the policy and the Labour Group calls on Guildford Borough Council to adopt the protocol as soon as is practical.

This Council resolves to request the Executive:

- (1) To adopt the CAB/LGA “Revised Collection of Council Tax Arrears Good Practice Protocol” as set out in Appendix 1 to the report submitted to the Council.

- (2) To authorise the Director of Resources to report back to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the impact of the protocol on council tax collection rates and customer satisfaction one year following its implementation”.

Following the debate on the motion, Councillor George Potter proposed, and Councillor Will Salmon seconded, the following amendment:

Delete everything from the end of 'This Council resolves to request the Executive' onwards and insert:

“To authorise the Director of Resources to review the CAB/LGA “Revised Collection of Council Tax Arrears Good Practice Protocol” as set out in Appendix 1 to the report submitted to the Council and to report back to the relevant EAB with details as to where the Council's current approach differs from the CAB/LGA protocol in order to enable a recommendation on the protocol to be made by the EAB.”

Following the debate on the amendment, it was put to the vote and was carried. Under the Remote Meetings Protocol, a roll call was taken to record the vote on the amendment, the results of which were 32 councillors voting in favour, none against, and 12 abstentions, as follows:

For the amendment

Cllr Tim Anderson
Cllr Jon Askew
Cllr Christopher Barrass
Cllr Chris Blow
Cllr Dennis Booth
Cllr Ruth Brothwell
Cllr Colin Cross
Cllr Angela Goodwin
Cllr David Goodwin
Cllr Gillian Harwood
Cllr Jan Harwood
Cllr Liz Hogger
Cllr Tom Hunt
Cllr Steven Lee
Cllr Nigel Manning
Cllr Ted Mayne
Cllr Julia McShane
Cllr Ann McShee
Cllr Bob McShee
Cllr Ramsey Nagaty
Cllr Susan Parker
Cllr George Potter
Cllr Jo Randall
Cllr Maddy Redpath
Cllr Caroline Reeves
Cllr John Rigg
Cllr Will Salmon
Cllr Deborah Seabrook
Cllr Pauline Searle
Cllr James Steel
Cllr Fiona White
Cllr Catherine Young

Against the amendment

Abstentions

Cllr Paul Abbey
Cllr Joss Bigmore
Cllr David Bilbé
Cllr Richard Billington
Cllr Graham Eyre
Cllr Andrew Gomm
Cllr Angela Gunning
Cllr Marsha Moseley
Cllr John Redpath
Cllr Tony Rooth
Cllr Paul Spooner
Cllr James Walsh

The motion, as amended, therefore became the substantive motion for debate.

Having debated the substantive motion, the Council

RESOLVED: To authorise the Director of Resources to review the CAB/LGA “Revised Collection of Council Tax Arrears Good Practice Protocol” as set out in Appendix 1 to the report submitted to the Council and to report back to the relevant EAB with details as to where the Council’s current approach differs from the CAB/LGA protocol in order to enable a recommendation on the protocol to be made by the EAB.

Under the Remote Meetings Protocol, a roll call was taken to record the vote on the substantive motion, the results of which were 36 councillors voting in favour, none against, and 8 abstentions, as follows:

For the substantive motion

Cllr Paul Abbey
Cllr Tim Anderson
Cllr Jon Askew
Cllr Christopher Barrass
Cllr Joss Bigmore
Cllr Chris Blow
Cllr Dennis Booth
Cllr Ruth Brothwell
Cllr Colin Cross
Cllr Graham Eyre
Cllr Andrew Gomm
Cllr Angela Goodwin
Cllr David Goodwin
Cllr Gillian Harwood
Cllr Jan Harwood
Cllr Liz Hogger
Cllr Tom Hunt
Cllr Steven Lee
Cllr Nigel Manning
Cllr Ted Mayne
Cllr Julia McShane
Cllr Bob McShee
Cllr Ramsey Nagaty
Cllr Susan Parker
Cllr George Potter
Cllr Jo Randall
Cllr Maddy Redpath
Cllr Caroline Reeves
Cllr John Rigg
Cllr Will Salmon
Cllr Deborah Seabrook
Cllr Pauline Searle
Cllr Paul Spooner
Cllr James Steel
Cllr Fiona White
Cllr Catherine Young

Against the substantive motion

Abstentions

Cllr David Bilbé
Cllr Richard Billington
Cllr Angela Gunning
Cllr Ann McShee
Cllr Marsha Moseley
Cllr John Redpath
Cllr Tony Rooth
Cllr James Walsh

CO21 MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE

The Council received and noted the minutes of the meetings of the Executive held on 21 April, 26 May, and 23 June 2020.

CO22 COMMON SEAL

The Council

RESOLVED: That the Common Seal of the Council be affixed to any documents to give effect to any decisions taken by the Council at this meeting.

The meeting finished at 9.13 pm

Signed
Mayor

Date