

GUILDFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of Guildford Borough Council held remotely via Microsoft Teams on Tuesday 8 December 2020

Councillor Richard Billington (Mayor)

* Councillor Marsha Moseley (Deputy Mayor) – in the chair

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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 Honorary Alderman Gordon Bridger who had passed away on 27 November 2020, Honorary Alderman Tony Page who had passed away on 8 October 2020, and former Councillor Jessica Page who had died shortly after Tony Page.

CO41 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from The Mayor, Councillor Richard Billington.

CO42 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

There were no disclosures of interest.

CO43 MINUTES

The Council confirmed, as a correct record, the minutes of the meeting held on 6 October 2020. The Deputy Mayor signed the minutes.

CO44 MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS

The Deputy Mayor read out a personal message from the Mayor, Councillor Richard Billington, who was convalescing following his recent surgery. The Mayor had thanked everyone who had sent so many good wishes for his speedy recovery.

The Deputy Mayor reminded the Council of the forthcoming online carol concert by the Vivace Chorus on 13 December 2020 in aid of one of the Mayor's chosen causes, the Coronavirus Response Fund.

CO45 LEADER'S COMMUNICATIONS

The Leader thanked the Borough for its continued diligence observing the Tier 2 Covid restrictions and noted that infection rates locally had been steadily falling. Whilst there had been a huge amount of optimism from the vaccines, it was important to continue to respect this deadly virus and stop our hospitals being overrun before the vaccination programme made significant inroads into the population.

The Leader also urged everyone to show their support to local shops and restaurants, by shopping locally but safely. He announced that our High Street markets had been relocated to the Portsmouth road car park so that there was more space for shoppers to browse whilst observing social distancing.

The public consultation which would help to inform the Council's spending review had been open for a week and encouraged as many people as possible to complete the online survey, and thanked the communications team for publicising the context behind our budget gap and encouraging residents to help guide our choices.

The Leader recalled the sizeable contributions from Tony and Jessica Page, and Gordon Bridger to our community and commented that he would like to mark their passing by asking the Corporate Governance Task group to look at the wording in the Constitution regarding restrictions in the rights and privileges of Honorary Aldermen, specifically the provision restricting Aldermen's speech and requiring them to be apolitical in public. The Leader looked forward to the Council considering new nominations for Honorary Aldermen or Freemen in the New Year.

Finally, the Leader wished councillors a Merry Christmas at this last Full Council Meeting for the year, and commented that 2020 would certainly be a year that lived long in memory, a year of terrible loss, but also a year where the community had repeatedly shown its strength in the face of adversity.

CO46 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

(a) Honorary Freeman Jen Powell, in her capacity as chairman of the Friends of Guildford Museum asked the Lead Councillor for Environment, Councillor James Steel, the following question:

"The Friends of Guildford Museum, whilst realising the financial constraints of Guildford Borough Council, have real concerns about the future of Guildford Museum. Could the Lead Councillor please assure The Friends that every possible avenue would be explored and discussed before any decision is taken?"

The Lead Councillor's response was as follows:

"The Council are currently developing and reviewing options for the way in which we deliver the full range of services, including the museum and heritage service. Following Covid, the Council's financial position is significantly compromised meaning we have to address expenditure and reduced income for 2021 and beyond

The situation has been exacerbated by the National Heritage Lottery Fund (NHLF) no longer considering funding bids, including the GBC application to refurbish and extend the museum. The NHLF's position was a nationwide approach, due to the need to redirect funding in response to Covid. This is disappointing as significant work was carried out to underpin the bid including public consultation and engagement with stakeholders/partners, including the Friends of Guildford Museum.

Guildford's heritage is valuable and intrinsic to the fabric and story of our town, but these are challenging times for the Council and the borough. I can assure you that officers within the heritage service will be discussing the future of the museum with Friends of Guildford Museum as longstanding advocates and supporters of our heritage."

Councillor James Steel
Lead Councillor for Environment

- (ii) Gavin Morgan, on behalf of Guildford Heritage Forum, asked the Lead Councillor for Environment, Councillor James Steel, the following question

"Given the letters in the press about the potential sale of Guildford Museum and collections will the Lead Councillor for Environment issue a clear, unambiguous statement that historic buildings, museum collections and borough art collected and purchased over decades and centuries and unique to Guildford will not be disposed of even if the services supporting them have to be reduced?"

The Lead Councillor's response was as follows:

"We are not in a position to issue a clear and unambiguous statement because we are currently in a consultation about where the Council's funds should be prioritised.

As I have confirmed in my response to the previous question this evening, officers are at this time developing options for the heritage service for the Council to review. As I have stressed, our heritage is important and of value to our town, but we are being faced with many difficult choices around finance for all of our services. Every part of the Council has an importance to individuals, the whole or various parts of the community. No decision will be taken lightly or without proper consideration.

Our collection is held in trust, along with Surrey Archaeological Society's own collection which we provide a home for; this prevents any disposal and would step outside the Museum Association's code of ethics."

Councillor James Steel
Lead Councillor for Environment

In response to a supplementary question arising from the written responses given, in which the Lead Councillor was asked:

- (i) whether he could ensure that, in the context of the Council's public consultation on its spending review, proper consideration is given as to what the museum could and should be offering for the benefit of the town's visitor experience rather than the contribution it currently makes; and
- (iii) given that the Council had put a lot of work into the new vision for the museum, whether he would consider possible improvements that could be made at a relatively low cost.

the Lead Councillor recognised the huge amount of work that had been done so far by the Heritage Team and Friends of Guildford Museum in terms of the new museum project and that the Covid situation and withdrawal of NHLF funding had been very unfortunate. The Lead Councillor reiterated that any decisions that are made arising from the Council's spending review, would be properly consulted on and due consideration given to the Council's current and future priorities.

CO47 QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

There were no questions from councillors.

CO48 LOCAL COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME 2021-22

The Council received a report on its statutory duty to consider annually whether to revise its Local Council Tax Support Scheme (LCTSS), replace it with another or make no changes. The Council was obliged to consult with interested parties if it wished to revise or replace the scheme. A stakeholder consultation carried out during September to October 2020 had received a low response rate, but Surrey County Council and the Police and Crime Commissioner for Surrey supported the changes proposed for 2021.

The Council noted that the LCTSS currently helped around 4,500 households by providing £5.7 million of support. The cost of the scheme was shared with Surrey County Council, with Guildford's share being around 10%.

In 2020-21, a number of minor changes were made to the scheme. For 2021-22 the following changes with a revenue cost of £65,000 had been proposed:

- Increase Personal Allowances and Premiums to match inflation.
- Increase Non-Dependant Deductions to reflect an expectation that their contribution to the household expenses should increase each year.
- Remove the cap on Band E entitlement for 2021-22, to provide additional help during the pandemic.

It was also proposed to increase the discretionary hardship fund to support any applicant suffering adversely from the consequences of savings to the Local Council Tax Support put in place over the past eight years, in addition to the proposed changes for 2021-22. It was proposed that the fund be increased from £40,000 to £60,000 for 2021-22.

During 2020 the government had provided COVID19 Council Tax Hardship Funds allowing the Council to support taxpayers with additional Council Tax discounts. It was proposed that any funds remaining at the end of the year would be carried over into 2021.

The Council was required to approve a scheme for the 2021-22 financial year by 31 January 2021 to enable annual bills to be calculated correctly. It was noted that the review of the LCTSS for 2022-23 would be included on the work programme for the Service Delivery Executive Advisory Board in 2021.

The Executive had considered the report at its meeting on 24 November 2020 and had endorsed the recommendation therein.

Upon the motion of the Lead Councillor for Resources, Councillor Tim Anderson, seconded by the Deputy Leader of the Council, Councillor Caroline Reeves, the Council:

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the current Local Council Tax Support Scheme be amended for 2021-22, as set out in detail in Appendix 1 to the report submitted to the Council, with effect from 1 April 2021.
- (2) That the Council continues to maintain a discretionary hardship fund in 2021-22, increases it to £60,000, and carries forward any residual 2020 COVID19 Council Tax Hardship Funds.

Reasons:

- (1) To ensure that the Council complies with legislation to implement a Local Council Tax Support Scheme from 1 April 2021.

- (2) To maintain a discretionary fund to help applicants suffering from severe financial hardship.

CO49 PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2020-21

The Council was informed that the Public Sector Exit Pay Cap regulations (Restriction of Public Sector Exit Payments Regulations 2020) came into force on 4 November 2020. The regulations would apply to all exit payments that fell due on or after that date. The regulations implemented a £95,000 cap on exit payments and the Council was awaiting the publication of the Guidance and Directions documents to accompany the regulations.

Consequently, the Council considered a report on proposed amendments to the Pay Policy Statement for the current financial year that were required to reflect the new regulations.

Upon the motion of the Leader of the Council, Councillor Joss Bigmore, seconded by the Lead Councillor for Resources, Councillor Tim Anderson, the Council:

RESOLVED: That the amendments required within the Pay Policy Statement for the 2020-21 financial year, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report submitted to the Council, be approved.

Reason:

To comply with the Restriction of Public Sector Exit Payments Regulations 2020.

CO50 LICENSING ACT 2003 - REVIEW OF STATEMENT OF LICENSING POLICY

In its role as the Licensing Authority under the Licensing Act 2003, the Council had a duty to prepare and keep under review its Statement of Licensing Policy. The purpose of a policy was to set out how the Licensing Authority sought to promote the four licensing objectives during the licensing process.

The Council's current policy was due for review by January 2021 and, following a public consultation exercise, the Licensing Committee at its meeting on 25 November had recommended that the Council adopts a new Statement of Licensing Policy for the period 2021-2026, a draft copy of which was appended to the report submitted to the Council.

Upon the motion of the Lead Councillor for Environment, Councillor James Steel, seconded by the Chairman of the Licensing Committee, Councillor David Goodwin, the Council

RESOLVED: That the Statement of Licensing Policy 2021-26, attached as Appendix 1 to the report submitted to the Council, be adopted.

Reason:

To ensure the Council's Statement of Licensing Policy is revised in line with statutory timescales.

CO51 PERIODIC ELECTORAL REVIEW BY THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

The Council noted that the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) had given notice that it would be undertaking an electoral review of the Council in its 2020-21 programme. The LGBCE intended to carry out electoral reviews of all English local authorities that had not been reviewed in twelve or more years. Guildford was last reviewed in 1998.

The purpose of an electoral review was to consider the total number of councillors elected to the council, the names, number and boundaries of the wards, and the number of councillors to be elected to each ward.

The Council considered a report which summarised the process for the review, the first stage of which was an invitation from the LGBCE to make a Council Size Submission, that is the total number of councillors to be elected to the Council. The LGBCE would consider all submissions received and decide on the Council Size number for the purpose of the second stage of the review (warding patterns) by considering three broad areas:

- The **governance arrangements** of the Council and how it takes decisions across the broad range of its responsibilities.
- The Council's **scrutiny functions** relating to its own decision making and the council's responsibilities to outside bodies.
- The **representational role of councillors in the local community** and how they engage with people, conduct casework and represent the council on local partner organisations.

The LGBCE emphasised that any submission to them on council size (whether for an increase, reduction or maintaining current arrangements), should ensure that it addressed these areas and that the view on council size is backed up by evidence.

A copy of the draft Submission, which proposed a small reduction in the number of councillors to 44, was appended to the report.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Joss Bigmore proposed, and the Deputy Leader of the Council, Councillor Caroline Reeves seconded the following motion:

“That the Council Size Submission, attached as Appendix 2 to the report submitted to the Council, and its stated preference for a Council size of 44 Councillors, be approved and presented to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE).”

Under Council Procedure Rule 15 (o), Councillor Bigmore as the mover of the original motion, indicated that, with the consent of his seconder and of the meeting, he wished to alter his motion so that it read as follows (*changes shown in italics*):

- “(1) That, *subject to paragraph (2) below*, the Council Size Submission, attached as Appendix 2 to the report submitted to the Council, and its stated preference for a Council size of 44 Councillors, be approved and presented to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE), *subject to the inclusion of the following amendment to Part 5 of the Submission (Local Authority Profile) on page 165 of the agenda*:

*“Guildford town centre is a principal regional shopping centre, with a vibrant night-time economy, **and is the only town in Surrey to be awarded Purple Flag status**”.*

- (2) *That the Democratic Services and Elections Manager, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, be authorised to make such minor alterations to improve the clarity of the draft Submission document as they may determine.”*

The proposed alteration to the motion was put to the vote and was carried. Under the Remote Meetings Protocol, a roll call was taken to record the vote on the proposed alteration, the results of which were 21 councillors voting in favour, 7 against, and 18 abstentions, as follows:

For the alteration
Cllr Tim Anderson
Cllr Jon Askew
Cllr Joss Bigmore
Cllr Chris Blow
Cllr Colin Cross

Against the alteration
Cllr David Bilbé
Cllr Graham Eyre
Cllr Andrew Gomm
Cllr Nigel Manning
Cllr Jo Randall

Abstentions
Cllr Paul Abbey
Cllr Christopher Barrass
Cllr Dennis Booth
Cllr Ruth Brothwell
Cllr Angela Goodwin

For the alteration

Cllr Jan Harwood
Cllr Gillian Harwood
Cllr Tom Hunt
Cllr Diana Jones
Cllr Ted Mayne
Cllr Julia McShane
Cllr Ann McShee
Cllr Bob McShee
Cllr Masuk Miah
Cllr John Redpath
Cllr Maddy Redpath
Cllr Caroline Reeves
Cllr John Rigg
Cllr Will Salmon
Cllr Deborah Seabrook
Cllr James Steel

Against the alteration

Cllr Paul Spooner
Cllr James Walsh

Abstentions

Cllr David Goodwin
Cllr Angela Gunning
Cllr Liz Hogger
Cllr Gordon Jackson
Cllr Steven Lee
Cllr Marsha Moseley
Cllr Ramsey Nagaty
Cllr Susan Parker
Cllr George Potter
Cllr Tony Rooth
Cllr Pauline Searle
Cllr Fiona White
Cllr Catherine Young

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

Following the debate on the substantive motion, Councillor Ramsey Nagaty proposed, and Councillor Tony Rooth seconded, the following amendment:

“That the Council refers this matter for further consideration by the Corporate Governance Task Group on Monday 14 December 2020 for the purpose of:

- (a) giving further consideration to the requirements of the review generally and in particular to that referred to on pages 137-138, 146, and 154 of the agenda
- (b) reviewing the contents of the Council Size Submission
- (c) consideration of the forecast increase in electorate by 2026

and reference back to an extraordinary (virtual) meeting of the Council on Thursday 17 December for final approval of the Council Size Submission”.

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, 8 against, and 6 abstentions, as follows:

For the amendment

Cllr Paul Abbey
Cllr Jon Askew
Cllr Christopher Barrass
Cllr David Bilbé
Cllr Dennis Booth
Cllr Ruth Brothwell
Cllr Colin Cross
Cllr Graham Eyre
Cllr Andrew Gomm
Cllr Angela Goodwin
Cllr David Goodwin
Cllr Angela Gunning
Cllr Gillian Harwood
Cllr Liz Hogger
Cllr Gordon Jackson
Cllr Diana Jones
Cllr Steven Lee
Cllr Nigel Manning

Against the amendment

Cllr Tim Anderson
Cllr Joss Bigmore
Cllr Chris Blow
Cllr Jan Harwood
Cllr Tom Hunt
Cllr Marsha Moseley
Cllr John Redpath
Cllr John Rigg

Abstentions

Cllr Ted Mayne
Cllr Julia McShane
Cllr Maddy Redpath
Cllr Caroline Reeves
Cllr Deborah Seabrook
Cllr James Steel

For the amendment

Cllr Ann McShee
Cllr Bob McShee
Cllr Masuk Miah
Cllr Ramsey Nagaty
Cllr Susan Parker
Cllr George Potter
Cllr Jo Randall
Cllr Tony Rooth
Cllr Will Salmon
Cllr Pauline Searle
Cllr Paul Spooner
Cllr James Walsh
Cllr Fiona White
Cllr Catherine Young

Against the amendment

Abstentions

Following the vote on the amendment, the Council

RESOLVED: That the Council refers this matter for further consideration by the Corporate Governance Task Group on Monday 14 December 2020 for the purpose of:

- (a) giving further consideration to the requirements of the review generally and in particular to that referred to on pages 137-138, 146, and 154 of the agenda
- (b) reviewing the contents of the Council Size Submission
- (c) consideration of the forecast increase in electorate by 2026

and reference back to an extraordinary (virtual) meeting of the Council on Thursday 17 December for final approval of the Council Size Submission.

Under the Remote Meetings Protocol, a roll call was taken to record the vote on the substantive motion, as amended, the results of which were 31 councillors voting in favour, 8 against, and 7 abstentions, as follows:

For

Cllr Paul Abbey
Cllr Jon Askew
Cllr Christopher Barrass
Cllr David Bilbé
Cllr Dennis Booth
Cllr Ruth Brothwell
Cllr Colin Cross
Cllr Graham Eyre
Cllr Andrew Gomm
Cllr Angela Goodwin
Cllr David Goodwin
Cllr Angela Gunning
Cllr Gillian Harwood
Cllr Liz Hogger
Cllr Gordon Jackson
Cllr Steven Lee
Cllr Nigel Manning
Cllr Ann McShee
Cllr Bob McShee
Cllr Masuk Miah
Cllr Ramsey Nagaty
Cllr Susan Parker
Cllr George Potter

Against

Cllr Tim Anderson
Cllr Joss Bigmore
Cllr Chris Blow
Cllr Jan Harwood
Cllr Tom Hunt
Cllr Marsha Moseley
Cllr John Redpath
Cllr John Rigg

Abstentions

Cllr Diana Jones
Cllr Ted Mayne
Cllr Julia McShane
Cllr Maddy Redpath
Cllr Caroline Reeves
Cllr Deborah Seabrook
Cllr James Steel

For

Cllr Jo Randall
Cllr Tony Rooth
Cllr Will Salmon
Cllr Pauline Searle
Cllr Paul Spooner
Cllr James Walsh
Cllr Fiona White
Cllr Catherine Young

Against

Abstentions

CO52 SELECTION OF THE MAYOR AND THE DEPUTY MAYOR 2021-22

It was noted that it was the Council's normal practice for the nominees for the Mayor and Deputy Mayor for the next succeeding municipal year to absent themselves from the meeting for consideration of this item of business. As the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Marsha Moseley (who was in the chair for the meeting in the absence of the Mayor), would have to leave the meeting, the Council

RESOLVED: That Councillor Gordon Jackson be elected chairman of the meeting for this item of business.

The Deputy Mayor, Councillor Marsha Moseley and Councillor Dennis Booth both left the meeting.

Councillor Jackson in the chair.

The Council considered a report on nominations received for election of Mayor and appointment of Deputy Mayor for the municipal year 2021-22. The Executive had also considered the report at its meeting on 24 November 2020, and had commended the nominations of Councillors Moseley and Booth respectively for Mayor and Deputy Mayor in 2021-22.

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

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Marsha Moseley be nominated for the Mayoralty of the Borough for the 2021-22 municipal year.
- (2) That Councillor Dennis Booth be nominated for the Deputy Mayoralty of the Borough for the 2021-22 municipal year.

Reason:

To make early preparations for the selection of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor for the municipal year 2021-22.

The Deputy Mayor, Councillor Marsha Moseley and Councillor Dennis Booth both returned to the meeting.

CO53 TIMETABLE OF COUNCIL AND COMMITTEE MEETINGS 2021-22

The Deputy Mayor, Councillor Marsha Moseley in the chair.

The Council considered a report on the proposed timetable of Council and Committee meetings for the 2021-22 municipal year. The Executive had also considered the report at its meeting on 24 November 2020, and had recommended approval of the timetable as appended to the report.

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

RESOLVED: That the proposed timetable of Council and Committee meetings for the 2021-22 municipal year, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report submitted to the Council, be approved.

Reason:

To assist with the preparation of individual committee work programmes.

CO54 MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE

The Council received and noted the minutes of the meetings of the Executive held on 22 September and 27 October 2020.

CO55 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 9.05 pm

Signed

Mayor

Date

GUILDFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL

Minutes of an extraordinary meeting of Guildford Borough Council held via Microsoft Teams on Thursday 17 December 2020

Councillor Richard Billington (Mayor)

* Councillor Marsha Moseley (Deputy Mayor) – in the chair

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

CO56 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of the Mayor, Councillor Richard Billington, and from Councillors Paul Abbey, Christopher Barrass, Graham Eyre, Andrew Gomm, Ted Mayne, Julia McShane, Caroline Reeves, John Rigg, and Catherine Young.

CO57 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

There were no disclosures of interest.

CO58 MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS

On behalf of the Mayor, the Deputy Mayor expressed her gratitude to the Vivace Chorus for putting on the Mayor's Christmas Concert on Sunday 13 December, and to everyone who tuned in and donated. The current total on the Mayor's charity page was: £1,657.48 (of which £770 directly related to the concert). The concert was available to watch on YouTube and Facebook until Sunday 20 December.

CO59 LEADER'S COMMUNICATIONS

The Leader gave an update on the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic locally and the recent announcement that much of the UK, including Guildford, would be moving to tier 3 at the weekend. The Leader urged everyone to take care over the Christmas period particularly bearing in mind the proposed temporary relaxation in the restrictions.

The Council had made plans for increased staff availability over the Christmas period should we have to deal with any emergency situations or should there be further changes to the restrictions.

The Leader announced a small update to the Executive portfolios, with responsibility for heritage moving from the Environment portfolio to the Economy portfolio.

The Leader commented on two consultations running at the moment, with the online surveys to allow the public to comment on the emerging plans for the North Street development and to express their priorities for next year's budget. Councillors were asked to ensure as many residents participate in these surveys as possible.

In relation to the main business on the agenda for this extraordinary meeting, the Leader announced that a new cross-party working group would be constituted at the 5 January meeting of the Executive to consider the next stages of the electoral review.

CO60 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were no questions or statements from the public.

CO61 QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

There were no questions from councillors.

CO62 PERIODIC ELECTORAL REVIEW BY THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

At its last meeting on 8 December 2020, the Council had considered a draft Council Size Submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE). The Council agreed to refer the matter for further consideration by the Corporate Governance Task Group at its meeting held on 14 December 2020 for the purpose of:

- (a) giving further consideration to the requirements of the review generally and in particular to that referred to on pages 4-5, 13, and 21 of the LGBCE's guidance to councillors;
- (b) reviewing the contents of the Council Size Submission; and
- (c) consideration of the forecast increase in electorate by 2026

and reference back to this extraordinary meeting of the Council for final approval of the Council Size Submission.

At its meeting on 14 December, the Task Group was provided with details of the Council's CIPFA Nearest Neighbours and forecast increase in electorate by 2026 and had reviewed the contents of the draft Submission. The proposed revised draft Submission, as recommended by the Task Group including tracked changes, was set out in Appendix 1 to the report submitted to the Council. This now stated a preference for maintaining the current Council Size of 48 Councillors, based on the retention of all out elections every four years.

The Chairman of the Corporate Governance Task Group, Councillor Deborah Seabrook proposed, and Councillor Liz Hogger seconded, the adoption of the following motion:

- (1) That the Council Size Submission, attached at Appendix 1 to the report submitted to the Council, and its stated preference for maintaining a Council size of 48 Councillors, be approved and presented to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England.
- (2) That the Democratic Services and Elections Manager, in consultation with the Chairman of the Corporate Governance Task Group, be authorised to make such minor alterations to improve the clarity of the revised draft Submission document as the Council may determine.

Under Council Procedure Rule 15 (o), Councillor Seabrook as the mover of the original motion, indicated that, with the consent of her seconder and of the meeting, she wished to alter her motion as follows:

Alter paragraph (1) of the motion so that it reads (*changes shown in italics*):

“(1) That, *subject to the amendments below*, the Council Size Submission, attached at Appendix 1 to the report submitted to the Council, and its stated preference for maintaining a Council size of 48 Councillors, be approved and presented to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England:

- (a) On page 17 of the revised draft Submission (page 30 of the Council agenda), after “*There are no plans to introduce area planning committees.*”, add the following paragraph:

“All councillors are involved in the planning process dealing with enquiries from residents regarding planning applications. Planning Committee members will have a significantly greater involvement as they deal with those applications referred to the committee for determination, most of which are locally sensitive or controversial. Meetings of the Planning Committee often take three hours or more to complete and committee members can expect to need several hours to read and understand the plans, respond to residents’ representations, and visit particular sites. Planning applications in respect of strategic sites identified in the Local Plan, will carry even greater sensitivity and will require a significant time commitment from councillors on the Committee, in addition to the normal business.”

- (b) On page 28 of the revised draft Submission (page 41 of the Council agenda), under “Alternatives”

- (i) amend the first paragraph as follows:

*“In considering the appropriate Council size, we have looked at the implications of reducing the number of councillors to ~~44 fewer than 48~~ but feel that this would not provide sufficient Councillor capacity to undertake the range of roles set out in this proposal or offer sufficient community leadership. It is also recognised that the Borough will continue to see significant population growth *in view of the anticipated housing development, for example at the various strategic sites identified in the Local Plan.* ~~and~~ We therefore *believe that* a reduction in number of councillors would result in an increase in electorate represented by each councillor and an increase in councillor workload in terms of casework and community leadership.”*

- (ii) substitute the following in place of the second paragraph:

*“We have also looked at a comparable increase in councillor numbers (an increase of three councillors was awarded to Guildford in 1998 and the borough’s population has increased by 25% since then). An increase of, say, four to 52 councillors would still mean each councillor represents 2279 each by 2026 (128 electors per councillor more than present 2151) and more thereafter. *However, the financial implications of a general increase in councillor numbers would be hard to justify in the current difficult financial climate.* As stated above, once the warding review has been undertaken and the need for possible adjustments in councillor numbers taken into account to achieve appropriate revised ward boundaries, we reiterate that this should be by an adjustment by way of an increase in councillor numbers rather than a reduction, for the reasons articulated in this Submission.”*

- (c) On page 29 of the revised draft Submission (page 42 of the Council agenda), add the following paragraph to the “Conclusion” immediately before “*The Council also wishes to continue with all-out elections every four years*”:

“On the basis of the Commission’s expectation (as stated in their guidance) that the Council makes a submission for a council size that we believe is right for our authority and which enables the Council to “represent communities in the future and ensure that governance arrangements reflect our long term ambitions”, and takes into account future trends, we believe that the Council size should be at least 48”.

The Council agreed to accept the alteration to the original motion, as indicated above. The motion, as altered, therefore became the substantive motion for debate.

Following the debate on the substantive motion, the Council

RESOLVED:

- (1) That, subject to the amendments below, the Council Size Submission, attached at Appendix 1 to the report submitted to the Council, and its stated preference for maintaining a Council size of 48 Councillors, be approved and presented to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England:

- (a) On page 17 of the revised draft Submission (page 30 of the Council agenda), after “*There are no plans to introduce area planning committees.*”, add the following paragraph:

“All councillors are involved in the planning process dealing with enquiries from residents regarding planning applications. Planning Committee members will have a significantly greater involvement as they deal with those applications referred to the committee for determination, most of which are locally sensitive or controversial. Meetings of the Planning Committee often take three hours or more to complete and committee members can expect to need several hours to read and understand the plans, respond to residents’ representations, and visit particular sites. Planning applications in respect of strategic sites identified in the Local Plan, will carry even greater sensitivity and will require a significant time commitment from councillors on the Committee, in addition to the normal business.”

- (b) On page 28 of the revised draft Submission (page 41 of the Council agenda), under “Alternatives”

- (j) amend the first paragraph as follows:

*“In considering the appropriate Council size, we have looked at the implications of reducing the number of councillors to ~~44 fewer than 48~~ but feel that this would not provide sufficient Councillor capacity to undertake the range of roles set out in this proposal or offer sufficient community leadership. It is also recognised that the Borough will continue to see significant population growth **in view of the anticipated housing development, for example at the various strategic sites identified in the Local Plan.** ~~and~~ We therefore **believe that** a reduction in number of councillors would result in an increase in electorate represented by each councillor and an increase in councillor workload in terms of casework and community leadership.”*

- (ii) substitute the following in place of the second paragraph:

“We have also looked at a comparable increase in councillor numbers (an increase of three councillors was awarded to Guildford in 1998 and the borough’s population has increased by 25% since then). An increase of, say, four to 52 councillors would still

mean each councillor represents 2279 each by 2026 (128 electors per councillor more than present 2151) and more thereafter. *However, the financial implications of a general increase in councillor numbers would be hard to justify in the current difficult financial climate.* As stated above, once the warding review has been undertaken and the need for possible adjustments in councillor numbers taken into account to achieve appropriate revised ward boundaries, we reiterate that this should be by an adjustment by way of an increase in councillor numbers rather than a reduction, for the reasons articulated in this Submission.”

- (c) On page 29 of the revised draft Submission (page 42 of the Council agenda), add the following paragraph to the “Conclusion” immediately before “*The Council also wishes to continue with all-out elections every four years*”:

“On the basis of the Commission’s expectation (as stated in their guidance) that the Council makes a submission for a council size that we believe is right for our authority and which enables the Council to “represent communities in the future and ensure that governance arrangements reflect our long term ambitions”, and takes into account future trends, we believe that the Council size should be at least 48”.

- (2) That the Democratic Services and Elections Manager, in consultation with the Chairman of the Corporate Governance Task Group, be authorised to make such minor alterations to improve the clarity of the revised draft Submission document as the Council may determine.

Under the Remote Meetings Protocol, a roll call was taken to record the vote on the substantive motion, the results of which were 30 councillors voting in favour, 5 against, and 2 abstentions, as follows:

<u>For</u>	<u>Against</u>	<u>Abstentions</u>
Cllr Jon Askew	Cllr Joss Bigmore	Cllr Steven Lee
Cllr Tim Anderson	Cllr Jan Harwood	Cllr Marsha Moseley
Cllr David Bilbé	Cllr Tom Hunt	
Cllr Chris Blow	Cllr John Redpath	
Cllr Dennis Booth	Cllr James Steel	
Cllr Ruth Brothwell		
Cllr Colin Cross		
Cllr Angela Goodwin		
Cllr David Goodwin		
Cllr Angela Gunning		
Cllr Gillian Harwood		
Cllr Liz Hogger		
Cllr Gordon Jackson		
Cllr Diana Jones		
Cllr Nigel Manning		
Cllr Ann McShee		
Cllr Bob McShee		
Cllr Masuk Miah		
Cllr Ramsey Nagaty		
Cllr Susan Parker		
Cllr George Potter		
Cllr Jo Randall		
Cllr Maddy Redpath		
Cllr Tony Rooth		
Cllr Will Salmon		
Cllr Deborah Seabrook		
Cllr Pauline Searle		
Cllr Paul Spooner		
Cllr James Walsh		

For
Cllr Fiona White

Against

Abstentions

CO63 REVIEW OF ALLOCATION OF SEATS ON COMMITTEES: 2020-21

The Council received the report of the proper officer (Democratic Services and Elections Manager) on the review of the allocation of seats on committees, following receipt on 11 December 2020 of notice in writing from Councillors David Bilbé, Richard Billington, Graham Eyre, and Paul Spooner that they wished to be treated as members of the Conservative group and, subsequently, written notice from the leader of the Conservative group, Councillor Nigel Manning, that he would be happy to treat those four councillors as members of that group.

These notices also had the effect of simultaneously ceasing the membership of Councillors Bilbé, Billington, Eyre, and Spooner of the Conservative Independent Group on the Council.

The political balance on the Council was now:

Guildford Liberal Democrats: 17
Residents for Guildford and Villages: 16
Conservative Group: 8
Guildford Greenbelt Group: 3
Labour: 2
Independent: 1
Vacancy: 1

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 report included a suggested numerical allocation of seats on committees to political groups that would best meet, as far as reasonably practicable, the requirements for political balance for the remainder of the 2020-21 Municipal Year.

Upon the motion of the Leader of the Council, Councillor Joss Bigmore, seconded by Councillor Nigel Manning, the Council

RESOLVED: That, in the light of the change in the political constitution of the Council described in the report submitted to the Council, the proposed revision to the calculation of the numerical allocation of seats on committees to political groups and the independent councillor for the remainder of the 2020-21 Municipal Year, as set out in the table below, be approved:

Committee	Lib Dem	R4GV	Con	GGG	Lab	Ind
Total no. of seats on the Council (1 vacancy)	17	16	8	3	2	1
% of no. of seats on the Council	36.17%	34.04%	17.02%	6.38%	4.26%	2.13%
Corp Gov & Standards Cttee (7 seats)	2	2	1	1	1	0
Employment Cttee (3 seats)	1	1	1	0	0	0
Service Delivery EAB (12 seats)	4	5	2	1	0	0
Strategy and Resources EAB (12 seats)	4	4	1	1	1	1
Guildford Joint Cttee (10 seats)	4	3	2	1	0	0
Licensing Cttee (15 seats)	6	5	2	1	0	1
Overview & Scrutiny Cttee (12 seats)	4	4	2	1	1	0
Planning Cttee (15 seats)	5	5	3	1	1	0
Total no. of seats on committees (Total: 86)	30	29	14	7	4	2

CO64 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 7.53 pm

Signed
Mayor

Date