

EXECUTIVE

16 February 2021

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

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

*Present

Councillors Angela Goodwin, Nigel Manning, Ramsey Nagaty, Maddy Redpath, Deborah Seabrook and Paul Spooner were also in attendance.

EX76 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

EX77 LOCAL CODE OF CONDUCT - DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS

There were no disclosures of interest.

EX78 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held 26 January 2021 were confirmed as a correct record. The Chairman signed the minutes.

EX79 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader began by thanking all of those involved in the vaccination programme across the country for managing to hit their targets and outperforming almost every other country in the world with 25% of the population receiving their first injection. The achievement was described as remarkable achievement in terms of the numbers of people and also the quality of service at the vaccination centres.

During half term week the Leader sent a reminder to Guildford residents that Council Wardens had extra food parcels in case anyone needed assistance. The Council was aware that there were many people in newly vulnerable situations and that support was available. Residents were asked not to hesitate to contact the Council if help was needed and contact details were provided.

Guildford residents who had been told by the NHS to self-isolate, could be entitled to a Self-Isolation Payment. There were criteria around receiving this payment, but the Council had funds available and the Leader urged anyone who found themselves in such a situation to visit the Council's website for more information.

The Pop-Up Business School, which would start courses on 22 February, offered support to new and existing businesses and would run until 5 March 2021. The course would offer two sessions a day on Zoom and was free. The Leader invited those with a business idea or opportunity to contact the Council for guidance.

National Census Day would take place on Sunday 21 March. The Census updated our knowledge and understanding of our local communities. The Leader felt it was important that

everyone should take part. There would be more information on the Council's social and more traditional media as the date approached.

EX80 GYPSY AND TRAVELLER TRANSIT SITE PROVISION IN SURREY

The Executive considered a report supporting the provision of a traveller transit site for Surrey. Due to the impact unauthorised encampments made on local communities the Surrey Leaders' Group had identified the need for a transit site for Surrey. The transit site would be a location where unauthorised encampments could be relocated in the short term. It was proposed that a ten-pitch transit site within the county border at a location yet to be confirmed should be built with the financial contributions from the Police and ten of the district and borough councils. The contribution from Guildford would be £127,000. The host borough would not be requested to make a financial contribution and the remediation costs of the site would be met by Surrey County Council (SCC). The site would be acquired by SCC and managed by the SCC Gypsy and Traveller Liaison Team. It was hoped this would provide the pilot for future similar schemes. It was announced that tentative discussions had commenced to consider another site on the other side of the County.

There was no allocated budget for the expenditure. However, the Executive was asked to consider the sum of £115,000 that was designated for Traveller encampments that remained on the provisional capital programme (Scheme PL60(p)) together with a virement of £12,000 taken from the capital contingency fund to make up the total contribution.

Accordingly, the Executive

RESOLVED

- (1) That the provision of a Gypsy and Traveller Transit Site in Surrey, as progressed by the Surrey Leaders' Group, be supported and that the Council commits to a one-off contribution of £127,000 in capital funding for the construction of the site and an annual contribution of £7,500 revenue funding for the maintenance of the site.
- (2) That the £115,000 for Traveller encampments remaining on the provisional capital programme (Scheme PL60(p)) be repurposed and that a virement of £12,000 be taken from the capital contingency fund to increase the budget to £127,000.
- (3) That the provisional budget be transferred to the approved capital programme.

Reason:

To enable Surrey County Council to build a 10-pitch transit site that will enable the Police to invoke their section 62A powers under the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 and help manage unauthorised encampments across the county.

EX81 COLLABORATION BY COUNCILS IN SURREY

In response to the Surrey County Council (SCC) announcement that it intended to submit a case for change to Government for a single unitary council the leaders of the eleven district and borough councils each expressed views that a single unitary model was not supported. It was agreed that the districts and boroughs would collectively explore other options for local government in Surrey and KPMG was appointed to produce a report setting out various models for discussion. The KPMG report had two parts, options for unitary councils and options for closer collaboration between councils.

Since Government had not opted to take forward the SCC proposal in its White Paper it was suggested that it would be advantageous to seek closer collaborative working with Waverley Borough Council (WBC). Continued reduced funding from central government had been

compounded by the Covid pandemic to present both councils with a critical medium-term financial challenge. In addition to similar budgetary challenges there were at least eight service areas where closer collaborative working could be considered for potential savings. The WBC Executive had considered a similar report on collaboration.

The Joint Executive Advisory Board (JEAB) had considered the recommendations of the KPMG report at its meeting on 15 February 2021 and comments arising from that meeting were set out for the Executive on the Supplementary information Sheet. The Chairman of the JEAB addressed the meeting and summarised the debate from the meeting. The JEAB was in favour of a local government reorganisation of three unitary authorities overall for the County; collaboration with WBC with the assistance of the Local Government Association (LGA) to explore the details, concerns and potential financial savings and an option of possibly including Woking Borough Council in a collaborative partnership in the future.

The Executive received the comments from the JEAB favourably. Merged teams of officers supporting two sets of councillors was a model that had been adopted successfully elsewhere in the country delivering increased resilience and cost savings. Whilst it was noted that the Council had made over £8 million in savings through the Future Guildford transformation project, £6 million was still required in savings over the coming four years in order to maintain current service levels. It was noted that the Council retained just 9% of Council Tax and 5% of Business Rates whilst options to compete commercially were restricted by Government. Closer partnership working could bring substantial financial benefits, whilst protecting public services and keeping them local.

Having considered the report and the comments from the JEAB, the Executive

RESOLVED

- (1) That, in the event of councils in Surrey being invited to make submissions to the Secretary of State in respect of any future local government reorganisation, the three unitary council model set out under Option 3(c) of the KPMG report, be agreed as the Council's preferred council structure in Surrey.
- (2) That the eight priority areas for closer collaboration identified in the KPMG report be agreed in principle.
- (3) That the range of options for discussion with Waverley Borough Council on greater partnership working be explored.
- (4) That the Council engages with the LGA to undertake an initial scoping study to determine a rough order of magnitude around the potential savings for the various options for collaboration with Waverley Borough Council

Reason:

To help inform future discussions about local government structures and greater collaboration between councils in Surrey.

The meeting finished at 7.31 pm

Signed

Date

Chairman