

EXECUTIVE

* Councillor Joss Bigmore (Chairman)

* Councillor Julia McShane
Councillor Tim Anderson
Councillor Tom Hunt
* Councillor John Redpath

Councillor John Rigg
* Councillor James Steel
Councillor Cait Taylor

*Present

Councillor Ramsey Nagaty was in attendance.

In remote attendance: Councillors Angela Goodwin, Tony Rooth and Paul Spooner

EX49 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Tim Anderson (Lead Councillor for Resources), John Rigg (Lead Councillor for Regeneration) and Cait Taylor (Lead Councillor for Climate Change).

EX50 LOCAL CODE OF CONDUCT - DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTEREST

No Disclosable Pecuniary Interests were declared.

Councillor John Redpath declared a non-pecuniary interest in respect of Item 5 (Public Conveniences Review) on the basis that he was an occasional user of some of the facilities under review but indicated that it would not affect his objectivity in considering the matter.

EX51 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held 23 November 2021 were confirmed as a correct record. The Chairman signed the minutes.

EX52 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader of the Council urged anyone who had not yet been vaccinated or received a booster to do so in support of everyone returning to more normal times during the coming year. The vaccination centre at Artington remained in operation to provide vaccinations to those across the borough.

There would be three new forthcoming online sessions hosted by the Council.

The annual Economic Forum would run on Monday 17 January between 7:30 and 8:30am. The session would cover regeneration and shaping Guildford's future. It was targeted at all businesses and would be hosted by Dawn Hudd, Director for Strategic Services with guest speakers Marcus Wright from the Royal Bank of Scotland and Professor Amelia Hadfield, Head of the Dept. of Politics, University of Surrey. The Leader would introduce the session and Claire Morris, Director for Resources would be in attendance to speak and answer questions.

The second online crowdfunding workshop would take place on 12 January. Guidance and expert advice would be on hand to get local projects started.

Tuesday 18 January at 6pm was the date for the second webinar on 'Shaping Guildford'. Businesses and local residents were invited to attend and contribute to the conversation about the future of the town centre.

EX53 PUBLIC CONVENIENCES REVIEW

The Executive considered a report that contributed to the Council's medium term review of spending. The Lead Councillor for Environment introduced the report.

The Council was seeking to reduce revenue spend in the light of challenging financial circumstances. The process of arriving at the recommendations in the report had included two meetings of the Service Delivery Executive Advisory Board (EAB) most recently on 4 November 2021. Alongside the proposed withdrawal of grant funding from Ash and Shere Parish Councils (£14,040), it was anticipated that there would be limited closures to be undertaken following consultation with the public. The deletion of two staff posts would result in one voluntary departure and the other being transferred to another role in the Waste Team.

The Lead Councillor for the Environment acknowledged the report was putting some difficult decisions before the Executive, but these were discretionary services and stressed the financial position of the Council.

Mr David Beaman, Chairman of the South West Surrey Disability and Empowerment Network addressed the meeting speaking on behalf of disabled residents and expressed concern about the reduction of the service within the community and the timescale of the closures. It was suggested that the withdrawal of services would also negatively impact residents with young children and the elderly. Mr Beaman was also a Waverley Borough Councillor and a Farnham Town Councillor and whilst recognising the financial pressures on local government asked if there might have been revenue savings made elsewhere – such as off-street car parking charging, consideration of the introduction of charging for public conveniences or contracting out. There was a final request that closures be staggered and not implemented at the same time to reduce the impact on the community.

Councillor Ramsey Nagaty had chaired the meeting of the EAB held on 4 November and was present to comment. The EAB had suggested closer collaboration between parties to retain services such as that between the Cricket Club and the café on Woodbridge Road. Farnham Road Car Park facilities were described as requiring updating and if that were not possible then closure was suggested. Overall, despite concerns for the very young and the elderly, the EAB had agreed with the recommendations. Finally, it was suggested that some capital investment to refurbish the two parish facilities would be welcomed by the parish councils before the funding was withdrawn.

It was noted that as a part of the consultation process when determining which of the conveniences would be subject to closure, businesses local to the site might be interested in advertising their facilities as available nearby. There would also be discussions with local businesses with a view to taking over the running of the facilities themselves such as the café on Woodbridge Road.

The installation of charging meters would in itself be costly and then the payback for the investment would create a time lapse. Coupled with the reduction footfall as a result of introducing charging indicated the practice would not help the Councils revenue account in the short to medium term as was required.

Increasing car parking charges could not be viewed as a single action to meet all revenue requirements. There would be increases in off-street car parking charges to come but had to be a review of all services as a part of addressing the budget gap.

The Leader of the Council in summing up reflected that, although there were difficult decisions to be taken, the recommendations before the Executive were the best options available to the Council. Subsequently, the Executive,

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the closure of up to five of the Council's public conveniences be approved in principle.
- (2) That public convenience grants be withdrawn from Ash and Shere Parish Councils.
- (3) That, subject to a review of responses from a public consultation, the Head of Operational and Technical Services, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Environment, be authorised to determine which public conveniences should be closed in March 2022.

Reason:

To achieve £65,000 per annum savings in the public conveniences budget starting in the 2022/23 financial year.

Post minute note: The Healthmatic report as appendix to the committee report considered by the Executive displayed the ladies and gentlemen's tags on the Bedford Road data tables the wrong way round. This error did not alter the validity or accuracy of the Executive report, or associated Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA).

EX54 CARAVAN SITE LICENSING: FIT AND PROPER REGULATIONS

The Executive considered a report on new legislation that required relevant and responsible persons of relevant protected caravan sites (caravan sites that require a licence to operate lawfully) to be fit and proper.

The Mobile Homes Requirement for Manager of Site to be a Fit and Proper Person (England) Regulations 2020 ("The Regulations") required those managing or in control of relevant protected sites to make application for inclusion on the Fit and Proper (F&P) Register. The Regulations also required the Council to assess Fit and Proper applications, publish and maintain a public register and to publish a fees policy (found in the Caravan licensing Fees Policy in Appendix 1 to the report) that justified the costs charged for Fit and Proper applications. The report was introduced by the Deputy Leader of the Council.

The Executive noted that those residents living in mobile home parks were often vulnerable or elderly and the Regulations provided a further layer of protection to that group by ensuring that managers needed to be Fit and Proper. This assurance would assist residents, especially when managing complaints by ensuring the process would be dealt with competently. The exceptions to the Regulations were where the site was run by the same family or run not for profit. Unless exempt, the managers of sites would be required to register with the Council every five years to be included on the Register for which there would be a fee. The formula for calculating the fee was set out in Schedule 1. Registration would include an assessment of the site by the Council and require Disclosure and Barring Service certification, adequate funding arrangements and evidence of the relevant management skills and experience needed to run the site. The Council's database was ready to receive applications and the Register would be published on the Council's website where guidance for site managers would also be available. It was noted that the site licensing fee fell outside of the Regulations. The Executive,

RESOLVED:

That the proposed charging structure for Fit and Proper applications, as set out in the Caravan Site Licensing Fee Policy at Appendix 1 to the report submitted to the Executive, be approved.

Reasons:

1. To enable the Council to approve the caravan site licensing policy so that fees are charged to managers of relevant protected sites in reflection of the legislation and the costs that will be incurred by the Council to undertake new statutory duties.
2. In addition, to approve the amended caravan site licensing annual fee that enables this fee to be charged from financial year 2022 that is more reflective of the Council's corporate fee setting methodology.

EX55 UNIVERSAL BASIC INCOME (UBI)

Universal Basic Income (UBI, Citizens' Basic Income – CBI, or simply Basic Income) was an idea where a regular cash payment was made to every individual adult, without any reference to their other income or wealth and without any conditions. The core aim of the proposal was to reduce or eliminate poverty. The Welsh Government had committed to trials and the Scottish Government had invested in the feasibility of pilots. Several English cities were keen to test it out and had written letters in support of holding pilots in their areas and a number of political parties had included UBI trials in their election manifestos. There had been a Parliamentary debate on the matter on 13 October 2020 at which point the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions saw no benefit in moving from Universal Credit to UBI.

At the Council meeting on 13 April 2021, following consideration of a motion submitted by Councillor Steven Lee, the Council had agreed to ask the Executive to consider a choice of four actions to move forward the UBI proposal, one of which was potentially to seek funding for a trial in Guildford.

The report before the Executive provided further information on what UBI was, the consideration of UBI at government level to date and what the purpose of UBI labs were. The Leader of the Council introduced the report and reflected that although there had been no appetite at national level for UBI, the motion itself had received majority support by Council. The Leader felt disinclined to use council resources for what might be viewed as lobbying on a political matter.

Although there were UBI labs for Surrey and Guildford, it was unclear if these were run by the same teams and there was no contact available for the Council to research further. Such research, if undertaken, would require officer resource and there was no enthusiasm to make this commitment given the unknown amount of time this would take up. However, due to the level of support the original motion received at Council the Leader agreed to compose a hybrid version of the original letter drafted to the Government. The Executive,

RESOLVED:

- (1) That approval be given for the Leader of the Council to send a letter, based on the draft letter set out in Appendix 2 to the report submitted to the Executive, to the Under-Secretary of State for Work and Pensions asking government to consider reforms to the existing benefits system and highlighting this Council's desire to investigate UBI should the opportunity arise in the future.
- (2) That the letter should:
 - (a) identify the potential for levelling up the inequalities in the borough, and in Surrey as a whole; and
 - (b) highlight that this Council would only wish to be involved in a fully funded trial of UBI.
- (3) That no engagement be made with the local UBI Lab.

- (4) That the draft letter be circulated to group leaders and that they be invited to sign the letter should they wish.

Reason:

To respond to the motion adopted by the Council on 13 April 2021.

EX56 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

The Executive

RESOLVED: That, under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) and Regulation 5 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012, the public be excluded from the meeting for consideration of agenda item 9 on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the 1972 Act.

EX57 EASEMENT OVER SHALFORD COMMON AT CHINTHURST LANE

The Executive considered a report arising from an approach made to the Council to request a deed of easement over Council owned land comprising Shalford Common at Chinthurst Lane, for the purposes of vehicular and pedestrian access to a proposed development site for five houses.

Since any development would be subject to planning consents the Executive,

RESOLVED: That approval be given to releasing restrictions on two land titles and entering into an option agreement and deed of easement over Shalford Common, as described in the report submitted to the Executive.

Reasons:

1. To facilitate the building of new homes.
2. To generate income (a capital receipt)

The meeting finished at 7.47 pm

Signed

Chairman

Date