

EXECUTIVE

25 January 2022

* Councillor Joss Bigmore (Chairman)
Councillor Julia McShane (Vice-Chairman)

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

* Councillor John Rigg
Councillor James Steel
* Councillor Cait Taylor

*Present

Councillors Ruth Brothwell, Angela Goodwin, Ramsey Nagaty, and Tony Rooth were in remote attendance.

EX58 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Julia McShane (Deputy Leader and Lead Councillor for Community and Housing) and Councillor James Steel (Lead Councillor for Environment).

EX59 LOCAL CODE OF CONDUCT - DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

EX60 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 4 January 2022 were confirmed as a correct record. The Chairman signed the minutes.

EX61 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader welcomed Councillor Cait Taylor (Lead Councillor for Climate Change) to her first meeting as a member of the Executive.

The Leader observed that despite the forthcoming lifting of Covid restrictions known as 'Plan B', it was still important for residents to be vaccinated and to receive a booster vaccination for the safety and wellbeing of everyone in the community.

Household Support Funding which was designed to help those families on low incomes with fuel bills, food and other winter essentials was still available. The Leader urged those in need of assistance to follow the guidance available on the Council's website. [Household Support Fund](#).

It was noted that the Council had provided £390,000 to date in support of local businesses in recovery from the pandemic.

The Queen's 'Accession Day', a part of the programme to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee would fall on 6 February and local celebrations would commence with The Mayor, Councillor Marsha Moseley, planting a tree as a part of the Queen's 'Green Canopy' initiative.

EX62 YVONNE ARNAUD THEATRE GRANT FUNDING

The Council faced a projected budget deficit of £6 million over the coming four years. As a part of a comprehensive medium term financial review of discretionary services the Executive considered a report recommending reduced future grant funding for the Yvonne Arnaud Theatre (YAT).

In the absence of the Lead Councillor Environment, the Leader of the Council introduced the report. The Leader reflected on the challenging financial position facing the Council. The (YAT) had been in receipt of Council funding for many years. The funding had remained at £310,220, the same level since the 2015-16 financial year despite very substantial reductions to the Council's central government funding over the last decade. This level of support was no longer affordable for the council and a phased reduction of the funding was proposed over the coming three years.

The YAT had received over a million pounds in government Covid support grants during the pandemic and an independent credit check showed the theatre to be in a sound financial position. In addition, the Executive heard that public consultation conducted last year had revealed that local residents had put arts and culture as a low priority for public spending compared to other discretionary services provided by the Council.

The report had been considered by the Strategy and Resources Executive Advisory Board (EAB) on 6 December 2021. Councillor Ruth Brothwell who chaired the EAB meeting was in remote attendance and explained the debate had revealed a clear split of opinion illustrating the difficulty of the decision before the Executive. The minute extract of the meeting of the EAB was included in the Supplementary Information Sheet.

The Leader noted that the Council itself had undergone a significant restructure to find savings before looking at its discretionary services. The theatre was a valued partner and, given the community outreach work it delivered, worthy of continued funding by the Council but not at the same level as previously.

There were some enquiries from councillors about the condition of the Mill Studio which was leased to the YAT. The Leader explained that there would be a future discussion regarding the building before the expiration of the current lease which would be at the end of the year. Having considered the report, the Executive

RESOLVED:

That a phased reduction of the current annual grant funding of £310,220 to the YAT be approved as follows:

£273,000 (2022-23)

£236,500 (2023-24)

£200,000 (2024-25)

Reason:

To deliver financial savings to the Council.

EX63 SHERE PARISH COUNCIL CAR PARK – INTRODUCTION OF CHARGES

In the absence of the Lead Councillor for Environment, the Leader of the Council introduced the report.

In 2008, the Council made a significant contribution to the refurbishment of the visitor car park in Shere. In return, there was an agreement between Shere Parish Council and the Borough Council that there would be no parking tariffs initially, but a review mechanism was set up such that the parish could seek approval to adjust tariffs in the future with the Council's approval. The car park was again in need of some significant maintenance and the parish had suggested it was now appropriate for the users of the car park to contribute towards the ongoing expense. Following formal notification from the Parish Council that it wished to commence with charging a tariff, the Executive was asked to consider a report setting out the proposal with a recommendation for approval. It was noted that, in the event of any surplus revenue, this would be directed towards supporting the Parish Council's wider activities and services for visitors and residents.

There was a discussion about the Council's involvement in setting the tariff. It was explained that the Council would employ its experience and expertise in that regard so as to avoid negative impacts such as on-street obstructions and inconsiderate parking. There was no information that the Parish Council would employ private enforcement at this point in time.

The Executive

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the request by Shere Parish Council to make charges for the use of their car park under the 2008 agreement be approved.
- (2) That authority be delegated to the Head of Operational and Technical Services in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Environment to agree the tariffs that can be applied by the Parish Council for parking in this car park now and at any future review requested by the Parish Council.

Reasons:

1. To enable the Parish Council to raise revenues for the ongoing upkeep of the car park and other parish activities.
2. To ensure that tariffs for parking in this car park are appropriately balanced between the needs of the Parish Council and against the need to ensure that tariffs do not result in unintended consequences in the wider parish and neighbouring areas. To also allow future flexibility in the setting of those charges.

EX64 OFF-STREET PARKING BUSINESS PLAN 2022-23

In the absence of the Lead Councillor for Environment the report was introduced by the Lead Councillor for Economy.

The Executive received a report that updated on progress made delivering the recommendations that had been agreed at the meeting held on 23 November 2020 and included a summary of work outlining environmental initiatives. The report set out how the service had been supporting key workers, businesses and residents through the pandemic. Furthermore, the pandemic had forced a reconsideration of how to best manage the Council's parking resources in response to the needs of the town and

proposed recommendations on pricing strategy that would make better use of any spare capacity within the town centre car parks, whilst encouraging the use of the park and ride to increase revenue. With this in mind, the report set out the recommended tariffs for 2022-23.

There was a proposal to increase the Shopper Tariff by 60 pence for 3 hours; a 30 pence increase for short stay of one hour; evening and Sunday tariffs to increase by 50 pence an hour. In addition, there some specific tariffs set out for particular car parks. A further proposal was for the Executive to agree to make a Traffic Regulation Order to support the proper enforcement of electrical vehicle bays; replace the “Green Scheme” with a pay by phone solution and implement the necessary arrangements for the car parks in the town that were due to close during the coming year as a part of development of North Street. Apart from the revenue income the reasons for the recommendations were to support a varied option for parking in the town at a number of price points, to support the users of electrical vehicles and to influence residents and visitors to make more sustainable choices.

The Supplementary Information Sheet set out a change to the published recommendations that would see a three-month delay in the implementation of the Shopper Tariff increase following consultation with Experience Guildford. The delay would soften the impact of the rise and also provide additional time for park and ride bus service providers Stagecoach to regain their full fleet of drivers following the impact of the pandemic on staff levels.

At its meeting held on 13 January 2022, the Service Delivery Executive Advisory Board (EAB) reviewed the off-street parking pricing structure proposals which formed part of the Off-Street Parking Business Plan 2022-23. Councillor Angela Goodwin chaired the meeting and was in remote attendance to sum up the findings of the EAB which were also set out in a minute extract in the Supplementary Information Sheet. Councillor Goodwin highlighted the key recommendations from the EAB including working to continue the Park and Ride services and a proposal that the Executive consider a special pricing tariff to support attendance at special occasions such as the forthcoming Queen’s Jubilee celebrations.

It was noted that consultation processes should be improved and that the late consultation with Experience Guildford was regrettable. The Leader of the Council expressed his apologies to the Chief Executive, Amanda Masters. It was further noted that parking charges were paid for by retail and hospitality employees as well as shoppers and visitors. In order for town centre businesses to recruit and retain staff the parking offer needed to be viable. It was suggested that provision of contract parking spaces should be discussed with local businesses as a way forward. The meeting heard that least expensive parking offer for the town centre was the park and ride service.

Unlike many other towns and cities Guildford did retain ownership of its car parks which was beneficial for local business in that there could be a partnership approach to setting tariffs.

The Executive,

RESOLVED:

That the following revised tariffs be approved:

Shopper Tariff

1. Option B: to change with effect from 1 July 2022, the shopper tariff from £3 for up to 3 hours, £6 for 3 to 6 hours and £12 for more than 6 hours, to £3.60 for up to 3 hours, £7.20 for 3 to 6 hours and £14.40 for more than 6 hours (Bedford Road MSCP, Castle MSCP, G Live, Millbrook, Tunsgate, York Rd MSCP)
2. To include an additional transfer of £180,000 from the Car Parks Maintenance Reserve within the final General Fund Budget Report to be presented to the Council at the Budget Meeting on 9 February 2022 to cover the revenue implications of the delayed implementation of the Shopper Tariff.

Short-stay Tariff

3. Option D: to consolidate the tariff in the car parks charged by the hour from £1.30 and £1.50 per hour, and to change them to £1.80 per hour for the first 3 hours and £2.30 per hour for subsequent hours - Bedford Surface, Bright Hill, Commercial Rd 2, High Street, Lawn Road (Saturday only), Leapale Road MSCP, Old Police Station, Millmead House (Saturday only), Portsmouth Rd (Saturday only), Robin Hood (Saturday only), St Joseph's Church (Saturday only).

Evening Tariff

4. Option C: to change the evening charge from £1 (6pm to 10pm Mon-Sat) to £1.50 (6pm to 10pm Mon to Sun) (Bedford Rd MSCP, Bedford Surface, Bright Hill, Castle MSCP, Commercial Rd 2, G Live, High Street, Leapale Road MSCP, Millbrook, Old Police Station, Portsmouth Rd, Tunsgate and York Rd MSCP)

Sunday Tariff

5. Option C: to change the Sunday charge from £1.50 for up to 3 and £2.50 for 3 to 6 hours, to £2.00 for up to 3 and £4.00 for 3 to 6 hours (Bedford Rd MSCP, Bedford Surface, Bright Hill, Castle MSCP, Commercial Rd 2, G Live, High Street, Lawn Road, Leapale Road MSCP, Millmead House, Millbrook, Old Police Station, Portsmouth Rd, Hood, St Joseph's Church, Tunsgate and York Rd MSCP)

Car Park Specific Tariffs

6. Farnham Rd MSCP: change pre-7am rate from £0.90 per hour to £1.00 per hour, standard rate (7am to 7pm) from £1.00 per hour to £1.10 per hour, and (7pm to 7am) rate from £0.10 per hour to £0.20 per hour.
7. Guildford Park: change Monday to Friday tariff from £5.00 per day to £6.00 per day, and Saturday tariff from £1.00 per day to £2.00 per day.
8. Shalford Park & Walnut Tree Close: change Monday to Friday tariff from £3.20 per day to £4.00 per day.
9. Ash Vale Railway Station: change Monday to Friday tariff from £1.00 per day to £1.50 per day.

Traffic Regulation Order

10. To formally advertise the amendment to the Traffic Regulation Order for the purpose of the following changes:
 - (a) To make the EVCP bays enforceable and available only to vehicles being charged.

- (b) To replace the “Green Scheme” with a pay by phone solution that provides greater benefit for All Electric vehicle users in the pay and display car parks, equivalent to a tariff reduction of £0.20 per hour; and
- (c) To make the necessary amendments, as and when required, to reflect the permanent closure of Commercial Road 2, Guildford Park and Old Police Station car parks, which are all due to close in 2022-23.

and if any representations are received, to authorise the Parking Lead, Head of Technical and Operational Services and Director of Service Delivery to consider these in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Environment.

EV Strategy

- 11. To agree that an EV strategy be developed to define the Council’s role in this developing sector.

Annual Report

- 12. Noted the performance of Parking Services in 2020/21, as detailed in Appendix 2 of the report.

Reasons:

Town centre parking:

- 1. Is an enabler of around £150 to £200 million of retail activity within the local economy, as well as supporting a wide variety of other business needs (*Systra Parking Study 2020*),
- 2. Pricing is the primary mechanism with which to modify user behaviour, and in line with the Council’s strategic aims, encourage more sustainable transportation modes, such as the Park and Ride, public transport, cycling and walking,
- 3. Generates a significant surplus with which to maintain and improve the parking facilities, and more generally, support the Council’s budget.

EX65 CAPITAL AND INVESTMENT STRATEGY (2022-23 TO 2026-27)

The capital and investment strategy gave an overview of how capital expenditure, capital financing and treasury management activity contributed to the provision of local public services. The strategy also detailed how associated risks were managed and the implications for future sustainability. Decisions made presently and during the period of the strategy on capital and treasury management would have financial consequences for the Council for many years into the future.

The Executive considered a report which included details of the capital programme, new bids or mandates submitted for approval; plus the requirements of the Prudential Code and the investment strategy covering treasury management investments, service investments and commercial investments. The report also covered the requirements of the Treasury Management Code and the prevailing Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) Statutory Guidance.

The Lead Councillor for Resources introduced the report.

Capital and the treasury were heavily interlinked. The strategy included non-commercial and investment information as required by the government and the

Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA). The report included the General Fund and the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) capital programmes. The revised CIPFA prudential and treasury codes had been published in December and the changes would be incorporated in the 2023-24 report. The Government had announced an extension to the use of flexible capital receipts policy and the Executive was asked to approve this for use against the Council's transformation programmes. There were new bids to the General Fund of £16.6 million over the five-year period increasing the Council's underlying need to borrow to £316 million. The affordability calculation had been updated for the year showing the net cost of the non-income generating schemes and the availability of in year resources to fund borrowing costs. There were risk indicators throughout the report and appendices as were prudential indicators. The HRA capital programme was anticipating a £24.5 million spend on renovation and repairs of the Council's housing stock due to changes in legislation and to catch up following delays during the past two years caused by the pandemic. A number of other smaller schemes were progressing whilst some needed additional budget. Those schemes could be moved from the provisional budget to be delivered. The investment budget stood at £1.2 million for 2022-23 and interest paid was £5.74 million, £5 million of which was in the HRA.

The Joint Executive Advisory Board (JEAB) had been invited to consider this report at its meeting held on 10 January 2022 and the comments arising were set out in the Supplementary Information Sheet. Councillor Ruth Brothwell chaired the JEAB meeting and was in remote attendance. Councillor Brothwell confirmed that the JEAB review of the report had been thorough and had nothing further to add.

At its meeting held on 20 January 2022, the Corporate Governance and Standards Committee had considered the Capital and Investment Strategy and had endorsed the recommendations to the Executive and Council (as set out in the Executive report), and the comments arising during the debate were set out in the Supplementary Information Sheet.

The Executive,

RESOLVED:

Subject to Council approving the budget on 9 February 2022:

- (1) That the following schemes be removed from the capital programme:
 - a) SMC Ph 3: £5.895 million keeping £150,000 on the provisional programme. The £5.895 million will move onto the capital vision
 - b) Stoke Park masterplan enabling costs: PL56(p) £500,000 will move to the vision and come back with an updated business case
 - c) Sports Pavilions replacement water heaters: PL58(p) £154,000 will come back with a further bid if required
- (2) That the new bids as shown in Appendix 2 to the report submitted to the Executive be included in the provisional capital programmes.
- (3) That £10.124 million for Foxburrows scheme be transferred from the HRA provisional programme to the HRA approved programme.
- (4) That the affordability limit for schemes to be funded by borrowing be agreed as set out in paragraph 4.31 of the report and in Appendix 1 thereto.

- (5) That the remit of the Strategic property fund budget be widened to allow estate redevelopments to be funded from the budget.

The Executive also made the following recommendations to Council (9 February 2022):

- (1) That the General Fund and HRA capital estimates, as shown in Appendices 3 to 12 to the report be approved as amended to include the bids approved by the Executive at its meeting on 25 January 2022.
- (2) That the Minimum Revenue Provision policy referred to in section 5 of the report, be approved.
- (3) That the capital and investment strategy be approved, specifically the investment strategy and Prudential Indicators contained within the report and Appendix 1.
- (4) That the updated flexible use of capital receipts policy at Appendix 17 be approved.

Reasons:

To enable the Council, at its budget meeting on 9 February 2022, to approve the capital and investment strategy for 2022-23 to 2026-27, and to approve the funding required for the new capital schemes proposed.

EX66 HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) BUDGET 2022-23

The Council owned over 5,200 council houses which it rented to tenants who qualified for social housing. The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) was the ring-fenced account within which the Council recorded the rental income and expenditure for its operations as landlord to its tenants and for the day-to-day management, repairs and maintenance of the Council's housing stock.

The Executive considered a report that outlined the proposed Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget for 2022-23, which was built on the estimates and assumptions in the updated 2022 HRA Business Plan. The business plan was drawn up in line with the relevant legislation and guidance along with consideration of the Council's declaration of a Climate Emergency and the ongoing challenges of the pandemic as it affected the operating environment. The Lead Councillor for Resources introduced the report.

Council rents were set by the Regulator of Social Housing in the form of the Rent Standard. The Rent Standard was set by the Secretary of State on the 25 February 2019 and introduced following a four-year period between April 2016 and April 2020 where rents were reduced by 1% per annum under the Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016. It was recommended to the Executive that rent for 2022-23 should increase by 4.10% which was the total of the annual September 2020 to September 2021 Consumer Price Index (CPI) of 3.10% plus 1%. This approach was in line with the Rent Standard.

A 3% increase in garage rents was proposed which was in line with the wider Council policy on fees and charges set by the Executive in November 2021.

The significant expenditure budget for housing maintenance and housing stock was set out in Appendix 1 of the report. The investment followed the publication the government's Charter for Social Housing that set out the standard that should be expected by tenants including strengthening communities and tenant involvement in decisions about their homes. There would be improved monitoring of aspects such as fire safety provision and efforts to reduce anti-social behaviour. There would be additional support for vulnerable tenants notably in terms of advice on matters such as benefits. There would be measures undertaken to equip the Council's housing stock for the climate emergency included energy efficiency initiatives. Finally, the Council would invest in a new housing management software system.

The proposed investment programme for the properties that were managed within the HRA were set out within the Capital and Investment Strategy. The investment would include fire safety work, the replacement of 600 kitchens and bathrooms together with electrical work to meet the Decent Homes Standard, a major refurbishment of void properties to bring them back into use, various structural and roofing work and central heating upgrades.

The updated HRA business plan was set out in Appendix 3 projecting to the next 30 years. The plan had set out the intention to repay and not re-finance that variable rate loan that would mature in 2022. The HRA would retain a significant amount of reserves over the time period of the business plan which would mean that the Council could meet its commitments without extending the loan or any additional borrowing.

The Lead Councillor for Resources said that the Council's investment programme was significant and very good news for tenants.

The proposed Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget for 2022-23 was put before the Joint Executive Advisory Board (JEAB) for consideration at its meeting held on 10 January 2022. The chairman, Councillor Ruth Brothwell spoke in favour of the recommendations set out in the report. The comments of the JEAB were set out in full in the Supplementary Information Sheet.

Consequently, the Executive

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the initiatives, services and budgets as set out in the report submitted to the Executive and in Appendix 1 to the report, be approved.
- (2) That the Director of Service Delivery be authorised, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Community and Housing:
 - (a) to reallocate funding between approved schemes to make best use of the available resources; and
 - (b) to set rents accordingly.

The Executive also made the following recommendations to Council (9 February 2022):

- (1) That the proposed HRA revenue budget for 2022-23, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report, be approved.

- (2) That a rent increase of 4.10%, comprising the September 2021 CPI (3.10%) plus 1% in line with the Direction on the Rent Standard 2019 and as set out within Guidance provided by the Regulator of Social Housing, be implemented.
- (3) That the fees and charges for HRA services for 2022-23, as set out in Appendix 2 to the report, be approved.
- (4) That a 3% increase be applied to garage rents which is in line with the wider Council policy on fees and charges.

Reasons:

To enable the Council to set the rent charges for HRA property and associated fees and charges, along with authorising the necessary expenditure to implement a budget; this is consistent with the objectives outlined in the HRA Business Plan.

EX67 GENERAL FUND BUDGET 2022-23 AND MEDIUM-TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2023-24 TO 2025-26

The Executive considered a report that set out the overall financial position of the Council and outlined the proposed budget for 2022-23, which included a Council Tax requirement of £10,898,310 and a Council Tax increase of £5 per year (2.75%), resulting in a Band D charge of £186.82. The Council was required to set a balanced budget for 2022-23 and the report would be considered by Full Council on 9 February 2022.

The Lead Councillor for Resources introduced the report which built upon the draft budget put before the Executive on 23 November 2021 where a budget gap for the coming financial year of £1.2 million was identified. The Council had continued to act to address the shortfall by progressing its medium-term financial strategy (previously known as the 'savings strategy') that was agreed in June 2021. Since November, the Council had received the provisional Local Government Finance Settlement (LGFS) for 2021-22 on 16 December 2021. The figures included in the budget presented reflected the information contained in the settlement. Overall, the LGFS had been positive for the Council as it included additional funding in a number of areas set out in the report.

The report had set out the up-to-date budget figures since November and including those arising from the parking business plan and the debt cost in terms of the Minimum Revenue Provision and interest set out in the capital investment strategy considered earlier on the agenda. The budget movement summary of growth and savings had been included in the General Fund Summary. The fees and charges proposed for 2022-23 would increase by 3% from 2021-22 where the market allowed; however, as identified in the budget movement summary and the parking business plan, some fees would increase by more than 3%.

The Chief Financial Officer's report was included as an appendix and set out in detail the strategic economic framework in which the Council was operating, an overview of local government funding, the challenges faced by the Council and the long-term financial plan. Whilst a balanced budget was expected for 2022-23, overall the Council faced a budget gap over the medium term of £3.3 million.

The Executive

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the transfers to and from reserves, as set out in Section 8 and Appendix 2 of the report submitted to the Executive be approved.
- (2) That the growth and savings items included in the General Fund Summary at Appendix 2 and set out in detail in Appendix 3 to the report be approved.
- (3) That the savings identified in the updated savings strategy at Appendix 4 to the report, to be delivered over the medium-term plan period, be approved.
- (4) That the financial risk register set out in Appendix 5 to the report be approved, and that the Executive notes that level of reserves are currently sufficient to meet the Council's risks.

The Executive also made the following recommendations to Council (9 February 2022):

- (1) That the budget, as set out in the General Fund Summary in Appendix 2 to the report be approved, and specifically that the Council Tax requirement for 2022-23 be set at £10,898,310.
- (2) That the proposed fees and charges for 2022-23 relating to General Fund services and attached at Appendix 6 to the report be adopted with effect from 1 April 2022.
- (3) That the Band D Council Tax for 2022-23 be set at £186.82, an increase of £5 (2.75%)

Reason:

To enable the Council to set the Council Tax requirement and council tax for the 2022-23 financial year.

EX68 DRAFT TIMETABLE OF COUNCIL AND COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR 2022-23

The Leader of the Council introduced the report.

The Executive received the draft timetable of Council and committee meetings for the next municipal year. It was noted that it was proposed that, for 2022-23, the Executive should meet on a Thursday, instead of a Tuesday, so as to avoid diary conflicts for the Joint Chief Executive given that the Waverley Borough Council Executive also met on a Tuesday. The Executive would also meet on a Thursday during February and April 2022 for the same reason.

The draft timetable had also taken into account the arrangements for meetings during pre-election periods, which would be set out in a report on 'Pre-Election Publicity Guidance' to be presented to a future meeting by the Monitoring Officer. Under those arrangements, the Monitoring Officer would be recommending that only the Planning Committee, Licensing Sub-Committee and Licensing Regulatory Sub-Committee should meet during the pre-election period.

The Executive

RESOLVED:

That the full Council, on 9 February 2022, be asked to approve the proposed timetable of Council and Committee meetings for the 2022-23 municipal year, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report.

Reason:

To assist with the preparation of individual committee work programmes.

The meeting finished at 8.19 pm

Signed

Date

Chairman

EXECUTIVE

24 February 2022

- * Councillor Joss Bigmore (Chairman)
- * Councillor Julia McShane (Vice-Chair)

- | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| * Councillor Tim Anderson | * Councillor John Rigg |
| * Councillor Tom Hunt | * Councillor James Steel |
| * Councillor John Redpath | * Councillor Cait Taylor |

*Present

Councillor Deborah Seabrook was also in attendance.
Councillors Angela Goodwin, Tony Rooth, Fiona White and Catherine Young were in remote attendance

EX69 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

EX70 LOCAL CODE OF CONDUCT - DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

EX71 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 25 January 2022 were confirmed as a correct record. The Chairman signed the minutes.

With regard to the minute of the Leader's Announcements concerning the Covid Development Grant, the Lead Councillor for Economy commented that the £390,000 quoted related only to Covid Business Development Grant Scheme and, with this, Covid packages processed by the Council now totalled more than £47.5 million.

EX72 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader of the Council paid tribute to officers who had participated in supporting residents and county council partners in responding to the impact of storm Eunice. Staff had given their time freely over the weekend to make calls to check on the wellbeing of vulnerable residents, some of whom were without power or water and to assist with the clearance of debris, fallen trees and making areas safe. Throughout the council had maintain services including bin collections and meals on wheels. The few bins that were not collected on the Friday as the storm gathered were collected on the Saturday. Stoke Gardens had seen a wall collapse that had been made safe and the garden remained open. The Leader expressed regret at the loss of trees across the borough and other damage caused by the storm but was thankful that no one had been injured.

The Government had lifted all remaining Covid restrictions but the Leader was mindful that there were still Covid fatalities and urged residents to keep safe by getting vaccinated, get tested if experiencing symptoms and to consider wearing face coverings when in crowded places and to ventilate rooms. Those who were vulnerable were not always visible and it was important to keep them safe.

From April residents living in Council Tax Bands A to D were likely to receive £150 council tax rebate from the Government to help with the cost of living and energy price rises. The rebate was separate and would not appear on council tax bills. Those who paid by direct debit would

receive the rebate directly into their accounts. For those who did not pay by direct debit there would be guidance to follow on how to claim.

The 2022 Guildford in Bloom competition had been launched with the main competition complemented by a schools' competition. The theme for this year would be the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

An event would be held on the 4 June which was the Jubilee weekend at Guildford Castle with a picnic, music and other entertainment in partnership with Guildford Fringe Festival and Experience Guildford.

There was a new display at Guildford Museum called 'Soldiers of Surrey – stories from the Queens Royal Regiment'.

Finally, the Leader thanks the departing Monitoring Officer, Diane Owens for her service to the council.

EX73 RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE EXECUTIVE FROM THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The intention of the document was to collate and track progress of all recommendations made by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to the Executive throughout the year, and to log the Executive decisions on the submitted matters. The Executive's agreed response to the recommendations would be fed back to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and to relevant officers.

The standing agenda item was noted by the Executive. There were no further comments.

EX74 PETITION: MAKE GUILDFORD PESTICIDE-FREE

On 4 August 2021, an e-petition was launched on the Council's website requesting the Council to make Guildford pesticide-free.

The e-petition and supporting paper petition attracted over 500 signatures and in accordance with the council's procedure rules was debated by full Council on 7 December 2021. Following the debate, the Council resolved: "That the Executive be requested to urgently consider and approve the proposed chemical reduction measures in 2022 set out in Appendix 6 to the report submitted to the Council, and to commit the Council to working with Surrey County Council in developing a joint pesticide policy."

The Lead Councillor for Environment introduced the item and set out the proposals in the report.

It was noted that during clearing of a Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) in the borough pesticides were used. It was noted such activities were not always within the control of the council but there would be engagement and partnership work to reduce usage as set out in the appendices. The Leader agreed to explore the possibility of imposing conditions with regards to the use of pesticide at planning application stage.

There were legal restrictions on the use of pesticides as set out by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and in certain areas the council had stewardship arrangements with Defra that jointly agreed the best management approach.

It was acknowledged that the council was legally required to record the detail of the use of Glyphosate. It was suggested that the record should be in the public domain and easily accessible.

There was an endorsement of developing a close partnership with Waverley Borough Council and the Pesticide Action Network and it was noted that a meeting organised by Surrey Wildlife Trust would shortly be held involving all key partners and all other local authorities in Surrey. On agreement of the recommendations this would become an ongoing event.

The Leader thanked the members of the public that had raised the petition and brought the matter to the attention of councillors. A copy of the report would be emailed to the organisers for their information.

RESOLVED:

To approve the proposed chemical reduction measures in 2022 as set out in Appendix 6 of the report and to commit the Council to working with Surrey County Council (SCC) in developing a joint pesticide policy.

Reason:

To implement the resolution as agreed by the Council at its meeting on 7 December 2021.

EX75 NORTH STREET DEVELOPMENT SITE, GUILDFORD

The Executive considered a report that updated on the progress of the North Street development site and set out a high-level specification for the bus interchange and the proposed pedestrianisation of North Street. In addition, the report sought authority to transfer £150,000 of funds from the provisional to the approved capital programme so as to progress the project.

The Lead Councillor for Regeneration introduced the report.

Since July 2019 the Council had been in negotiations with the developer St Edward to agree terms for the sale of its land within the North Street development site in order to facilitate the construction of a residential led mixed-use scheme to include a refurbished bus interchange and pedestrianisation. Following the Executive meeting on 26 October 2021 a working group of stakeholders had been formed. The working group included St Edwards representatives, the Guildford Business Improvement District, M&G who were owners of the Friary Shopping Centre and Stagecoach; four ward councillors and officers from Surrey County Council and Guildford Borough Council. As agreed by the Executive the working group would make recommendations in respect of the design of the refurbished bus station including the associated access and public realm improvements and the proposed pedestrianisation of North Street. There had been three meetings of the working group where architects Scott Brownrigg, Murdoch Wickham and St Edwards had presented.

Agreement of a high-level specification for the refurbished bus interchange and the pedestrianisation of North Street was required to enable the exchange of the sale contract for the sale of the council's land and the redevelopment of the North Street site to proceed.

In paragraph 4.5 of the report, it was stated there would be a £500,000 shortfall on the budget due to the proposed taxi rank and roadway re-arrangements that were found to come with a much higher cost than anticipated. The Lead Councillor Regeneration announced that the developer had absorbed this cost and consequently the figures detailed in paragraph 4.6 should be adjusted accordingly.

The Lead Councillor stressed that the proposals were at high level specification stage and that more detailed proposals would be put to the Executive, involve full consultation and planning processes in due course.

The Executive,

RESOLVED:

1. To agree the working group's recommendation for the design and high-level specification for the refurbished bus interchange.
2. To agree the working group's recommendation for the design and high-level specification for the proposed pedestrianisation of North Street.
3. To move £150,000 from the 2022-23 provisional capital programme to the approved capital programme to fund the ongoing work on the North Street Project.

Reason:

To maintain progress with the North Street development project.

EX76 USE OF RIGHT TO BUY RECEIPTS POLICY

The report was introduced by the Lead Councillor for Resources.

Between 2018 and 2021 the council had a significant issue with identifying and then delivering schemes within the Housing Investment Programme (HIP) within the HRA. Whilst some of the smaller sites had been successful, a number of larger schemes in the Housing Investment Programme in the HRA capital programme had, for various reasons, seen significant slippage in delivery which resulted in the council needing to repay £2.7million in Right to Buy (RTB) receipts to government during Quarter 4 2018-19, and throughout 2019-20. This had caused much concern both within and outside of the council. The Executive agreed on 23rd March 2021 to develop and adopt a formal Use of Right to Buy Receipts policy.

The Council had not repaid any receipts in 2020-21 and 2021-22 due to a significant HRA property acquisition programme, increased awareness of the need to spend the receipts within the timescale and better monitoring arrangements. This approach was set out in the draft policy document submitted to the Executive. The Lead Councillor Resources explained that although the policy was very detailed that level of rigour was required to ensure that the council's forward management of RTB was comprehensive and robust. The policy could be reviewed and streamlined in the future.

There was gratitude to officers for the report from members of the Executive.

The Executive,

RESOLVED to approve the Use of Retained Right to Buy Receipts Policy.

Reason:

To facilitate the delivery of affordable housing in the borough and try to mitigate the risk of repaying RTB receipts to government in the future.

EX77 GRANT OF LICENCES FOR AMENITY LAND ADJACENT TO BEEHCROFT DRIVE

The report included an appendix that was classified by the Monitoring Officer as exempt under paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended). The Executive declined to discuss this appendix and the meeting remained in open session.

The existing access arrangements from Beechcroft Drive onto the A3 had long been identified by residents and public authorities alike as being compromised and dangerous. A permanent alternative vehicular access route had not been achieved, despite investigations and discussions taking place over a number of years.

The Executive considered a report that sought authority to enter into licence agreements with the freeholders of Beechcroft Drive to provide residents with an alternative access route via the Council's amenity land, at less than best consideration.

The Lead Councillor for Resources introduced the report and described the licence agreements as a pragmatic move. It was noted that the University had already issued licences to residents and urged the Executive to agree the recommendations and complete the access route.

Consequently, the Executive,

RESOLVED:

1. The Strategic Services Director, in consultation with the lead Councillor for Resources, be authorised to negotiate and enter into all property documentation required to grant licence agreements with the freeholders of Beechcroft Drive for less than best consideration.
2. The allocation of £11,000 revenue to cover the Council's legal costs associated with the drafting and execution of the licences relating to Beechcroft Drive was approved.

Reason:

This recommendation would provide the residents of Beechcroft Drive with an alternative access route to avoid having to enter/exit the residential street via the A3, as well as formalising the arrangement which relates to the Council's own land ownership.

EX78 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

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 10 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.

EX79 THE ACADEMY OF CONTEMPORARY MUSIC AND THE RIVERSIDE CENTRE

The Executive considered a report which set out the proposed agreement between the council and the Academy of Contemporary Music (ACM) who were tenants of the Council owned Riverside Centre, on Town Wharf. The ACM wished to give up their leasehold interest in the subject property which was surplus to their requirements following the relocation of their student union elsewhere.

RESOLVED, the officer recommendation to enter into a deed of surrender on the lease for the Riverside Centre was approved.

Reason:

The ACM was a local education provider that brought students and benefits into the Town Centre and which leased several properties from the Council.

The meeting finished at 7.50 pm

Signed

Date

Chairman