

GUILDFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of Guildford Borough Council held in the Council Chamber, Millmead House, Millmead, Guildford, Surrey GU2 4BB on Wednesday 8 February 2023

- * The Mayor, Councillor Dennis Booth
- * The Deputy Mayor, Councillor Masuk Miah

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

*Present

Honorary Freeman Jen Powell

The Council observed a moment's silence in memory of Honorary Freeman Jen Powell, who had sadly passed away on 31 January 2023.

CO110 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Paul Abbey, Christopher Barrass, Colin Cross, Andrew Gomm, David Goodwin, Steven Lee, Ann McShee, Susan Parker, Jo Randall, and James Steel and also from Honorary Aldermen Catherine Cobley, Sarah Creedy, Jayne Marks, Terence Patrick, Tony Phillips, Lynda Strudwick and Jenny Wicks.

CO111 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

There were no disclosures of interest.

CO112 MINUTES

The Council confirmed, as a correct record, the minutes of the extraordinary meeting held on 16 January 2023. The Mayor signed the minutes.

CO113 MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS

The Mayor was pleased to announce that there had been an excellent response to the request for nominations for The Mayor's Award for Service in the Community. The nomination period had now closed, with over 25 recommendations received.

The Mayor was delighted to report that there had been excellent support for The Mayor's Ball and that we were very close to capacity.

Finally, the Mayor was pleased to confirm that the Knife Angel would be coming to Guildford in March. This magnificent exhibit would be on display outside the Cathedral and there would be a month of seminars and activities particularly aimed at older students in our secondary schools. The Mayor asked councillors with close ties with secondary schools, to encourage attendance by Years 11-13. There were a number of important visitors scheduled to come to the event including the father of Stephen Lawrence.

CO114 LEADER'S COMMUNICATIONS

The Leader reported on the following matters to the Council:

- (a) Becoming a Councillor briefing – Thursday 9 February 2023 (6pm to 8pm in the Council Chamber)

Prospective candidates were encouraged to attend.

- (b) Purple Flag

The Council had been awarded the prestigious Purple Flag accreditation for our evening and night-time economy for the eighth year running. The Purple Flag aimed to raise the standard and the appeal of town and city centres between the hours of 5pm and 5am. It was awarded to towns that met or exceeded standards of excellence in managing the evening and night-time economy. This meant that Guildford was recognised for providing:

- a vibrant and diverse mix of dining
- entertainment and culture
- the safety and wellbeing of visitors and local residents

- (c) Bring ID to vote: public awareness campaign

The Council had launched a public awareness campaign in partnership with the Electoral Commission to make voters aware that they need to bring photo ID to polling stations at the local elections on 4 May 2023.

In response to questions from councillors, the Leader confirmed that Voter ID was only required for voters who voted in person at polling stations, not for those with a postal vote.

CO115 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

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

CO116 QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

- (a) **Councillor Ramsey Nagaty** asked the Lead Councillor for Finance and Planning Policy, Councillor Joss Bigmore, the following question:

- *“Proposed changes to the Planning System were recently announced by the Rt Hon Michael Gove MP.*
- *There is a consultation on changes to the NPPF.*
- *GBC has declared a Climate Change emergency.*
- *The ONS have confirmed that the housing need in the GBC Local Plan is greatly exaggerated.*

In view of the above, can the Lead Councillor for Planning Policy confirm that all necessary evidence (not merely infrastructure, economy, incorporation of the TCMP) is being gathered, specifically including a review of the Green Belt and Countryside study and an updated Brownfield Register?”

The Lead Councillor's response was as follows:

"The Council will have regard to all relevant factors when undertaking the Local Plan review in the context of National guidance on the matter. To support this, we will continue with preparatory work including gathering a proportionate and relevant evidence base to understand any changed circumstances affecting the borough.

At this stage, we are not of the view that circumstances have changed in such a way that means that undertaking an earlier review of the Local Plan would be advantageous to the borough and officers continue to work toward concluding a formal review towards the end of the statutory five-year period (i.e. by early next year) in line with the Council resolution in April 2022 (CO113).

Work will continue to be undertaken to update the relevant parts of the evidence base and this new evidence will be used to help inform the review.

A significantly greater evidence base would be required to support any updated (or new) Local Plan that is necessary following formal review. It would be premature to commission much of this work now prior to the outcome of a review, before a formal plan-making process is underway, and considering the significant uncertainty in relation to the national planning reform process and the potentially changed legal and national policy context for plan-making. Thus, following the review, an outline will be presented in terms of the extent of evidence base necessary and resources required to support a new plan-making process, and this will include consideration regarding whether our Green Belt and Countryside study remains fit for purpose.

This approach will enable us to respond flexibly to changing circumstances and avoids the risk of undertaking abortive work. That said, we are exploring if any evidence that is unlikely to become outdated can be produced jointly with Waverley Borough Council who have now carried out a review and decided to embark upon updating their evidence base.

Nevertheless, excellent progress is being made in the meantime with work toward adoption of our Local Plan Development Management Policies – I remain hopeful that we will be in a position to table the Plan before Council to consider for adoption during March following the Inspector's consultation on his proposed main modifications that ended last week.

I am also pleased to report that in line with Council's resolution in April of last year that 'priority be given to the Production of a Green Belt Supplementary Planning Document' a draft of the SPD was presented to our cross-party Local Plan panel this week. I hope that we will be in a position to consult on the document shortly.

Furthermore, we believe that the appropriate development of brownfield sites is a key means to achieve sustainable development and regeneration in our borough. To enable this, in November of last year, we published an update to our Brownfield Land Register which provides consistent information on brownfield sites that we consider to be appropriate for residential development. We will continue to keep this register current and plan on reviewing and updating it again before the end of this year".

- (b) **Councillor Maddy Redpath** asked the Leader of the Council, and Lead Councillor for Housing and Community, Councillor Julia McShane, the following question:

"The refusal at Planning Committee of the North Street scheme demonstrated a clear disconnect between the priorities of the Executive and the Planning Committee. This was especially apparent between members of the Liberal Democrat Group.

The Housing Service under the stewardship of Cllr McShane is driving a scheme on Guildford Park Road which has a 9-storey element on land that is significantly higher than the North Street site. I am concerned that this may raise objection similar to those regarding height and massing on the North Street scheme especially given the proximity to the Cathedral.

Can the Lead Councillor for Housing and Community please confirm that there are no 'in principle' objections to the parameters of this scheme from her group, and especially from the ward members of Onslow, and Friary and St Nicolas. The Council has already spent around £7mn on this scheme over the past decade and is yet to submit a Planning Application, this Council can't afford any more unnecessary surprises, and our residents can't suffer from more delays to Housing and Regeneration".

The Leader's response was as follows:

"The development of the Guildford Park Road site is a priority for this administration and the entire Liberal Democrat group, as we believe it represents a fantastic opportunity for high quality, sustainable, affordable housing in a central location which is adjacent to existing transport infrastructure. The Liberal Democrat group remain committed to our manifesto promise to provide much needed affordable housing, because our borough desperately needs it and without it, we will see our communities diminished as young people and those on low incomes are priced out of the area.

While there have been discussions within the Liberal Democrat group about the principles underlying the Guildford Park Road development, these discussions have been held strictly on the basis that nothing said would be binding on Planning Committee members or fetter the independence of their decision making in any way. Planning Committee members must approach any application with an open mind and avoiding preconceived opinions in order to determine the application on its own merits.

The evolving scheme for the Guildford Park Road site is being developed with consideration of the impact of the scheme both on the local community and the wider environment. The initial proposals having full regard to Planning policy and good design practice have been reviewed and refined to reflect the contributions and feedback from a range of stakeholders. We anticipate that as we continue to move forward with the scheme that there may be future revisions to the design, but it must be noted that the current proposal maintains important views across the town to the Cathedral. This development unlike other developments will provide at least 40% of the homes as social housing and with the money already invested having provided site access and put in place much needed infrastructure.

As a member of the Planning Committee, Cllr Redpath will no doubt remember her Probity in Planning Training and particularly the part where councillors who are members of the committee must not make up their minds on how to vote before formally considering the application, listening to the officer presentation, any representations and the full debate.

As she attended the meeting when the North Street scheme was considered, she will also recall that in her introduction of the application, the Chairman of the Planning Committee read out a prepared statement making it clear that GBC have contracted for the sale of land it owns within the site but that the existence of the contract was not a material planning consideration in respect of determining the application. Therefore, it should be very clear to everyone that members of the Planning Committee are not bound by the priorities of the Executive, and they should not be taking the Executive's views into account when making a decision relating to land in which the Council has an interest.

For that reason, no pressure or influence was put by the leadership of the Liberal Democrat group on members of the Planning Committee to vote in a certain way. Cllr Redpath comments that the outcome of the Planning Committee demonstrated a clear disconnect between the priorities of the Executive and the Planning Committee. I thank her for pointing this out as there should, correctly, be a disconnect between Executive and Planning Committee”.

Councillor Redpath asked the following by way of a supplementary question:

- (i) Whether there were any in-principle objections to the parameters of the Guildford Park Road scheme from her group, particularly from those representing Onslow and Friary & St Nicolas wards?
- (ii) Whether the Leader was aware that Councillor Redpath was absent from the Planning Committee meeting on 11 January 2023 at which the North Street scheme was considered?
- (iii) How Councillor McShane, as the Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group would ensure that the disconnect between her group’s Executive members and Planning Committee members in respect of the North Street scheme would not be repeated the Guildford Park Road scheme was considered by the Planning Committee?
- (iv) Whether the Leader could confirm what the height difference was between the highest building within the North Street scheme and the highest building within the Guildford Park Road scheme?

In response to (i), the Leader confirmed that she had answered the original question but clarified that there were no in-principle objections to the development, although the scheme was still being progressed and no planning application had been submitted.

In response to (ii), the Leader apologised for erroneously stating that Councillor Redpath had been present at the Planning Committee meeting on 11 January.

In response to (iii), the Leader reiterated that there was supposed to be a disconnect between what Executive members want or would like to see and Planning Committee members

In response to (iv), the Leader stated that a planning application had not yet been submitted for the Guildford Park Road scheme. The tallest building proposed in the planning application for the North Street scheme was 13 storeys, and that currently the tallest building envisaged for the Guildford Park Road was nine storeys, although that could change when the planning application was submitted.

In response to a further question which sought confirmation as to whether the planning application for Guildford Park Road would be submitted and determined this year, the Leader confirmed that the scheme was being developed, but that there was no certainty about anything.

In response to a further question which sought confirmation as to the reasons why this administration chose to redesign the Guildford Park Road scheme which included a new multi storey car park on land which could otherwise have been used for affordable housing, the Leader confirmed that the reason was that parking was not needed but more affordable housing was required on what was a brownfield site in the Council’s ownership.

In response to a further question as to why the emerging Development Management Policies did not include a height policy for the Town Centre, it was pointed out that, due to

the varied topography of the town centre, the Guildford Town Centre Views Supplementary Planning Document provided the necessary clarity on this issue.

- (c) **Councillor Tony Rooth** asked the Lead Councillor for Regeneration, Councillor John Rigg, the question set out below. (Councillor Rigg's response to each element of the question is set out in **red type** below.)

"Everyone should recognise Councillor Rigg's experience of dealing with large scale projects and major developers, including many years as a senior director with Savills. He has put in tremendous time and effort towards promoting the proposed planning application for North Street development put forward by St Edward, a joint venture between the developers, Berkeley Homes and M&G, who are represented by Savills.

May I please ask the Lead Councillor for Regeneration the following questions in relation to the North Street planning application:

- (1) *How many meetings /discussions have taken place between GBC Corporate team (headed by yourself and Director Dawn Hudd) with the developers and Savills in respect of the proposed development?*

I do not believe there were any meetings with Dawn Hudd, the developers and Savills present. There have been no discussions as far as I'm aware between myself and Savills or Dawn Hudd and Savills on North Street. Details of other meetings held with the developer and advisors have already been provided to Cllr Rooth.

- (2) *How many meetings / discussions have taken place between the GBC Corporate team and GBC Planning in respect of the developer's planning application and the officer's report to the Planning Committee?*

I have had no meetings with GBC Planning on North Street. I did attend with others including GBC Planning a meeting with the Design Panel South East. The Council Officer Corporate Team has had 2 or 3 informal meetings to provide general information about the development site. This was mainly general background information to help put matters into context. Equally we have both had occasional calls seeking information as any council member or the public may do.

- (3) *Could he please disclose details of presentation, minutes/notes, both formal and informal, in respect of such meetings / discussions?*

Minutes available have already been provided to Cllr Rooth.

For myself as a regular bus user, may I also ask him the following questions in respect of the bus access and egress proposed bus interchange (which have been strongly objected to by Surrey County Council Transport and Highways, major bus operators and bus users' representative):

- (4) *The same questions as in questions 1, 2 and 3 above to also include transport, highways and architectural advisers.*

Details of meetings with the Developer and their advisers have already been provided to Cllr Rooth.

- (5) *Could he please also disclose the advice requested and provided in relation to continuance of the present bus access alongside the Friary Centre as layout guidance including the Bus and Coach Station Design and Operation?*

Copies of all reports and advice in respect of all aspects of the bus station are publicly available on the Guildford Borough Council planning Portal.

- (6) *Could he please also disclose the advice that was requested and provided in relation to the possible relationship on North Street between buses and pedestrians / cyclists and other pavement users which have been satisfactorily introduced in several towns and cities?*

Copies of all reports and advice in respect of all aspects of the bus station are publicly available on the Guildford Borough Council planning Portal.

- (7) *Could the Lead Councillor confirm that discussing the bus station appearance, facilities etc. before the issue of access/egress to the bus station itself was resolved, was raised by myself and Paul Millin of SCC Highways and described as “being the cart before the horse” at meetings of the Bus Station Review group in November /December 2021 and in subsequent email exchanges, and could those emails be disclosed?*

I do not recollect that specific phrase. Perhaps Cllr Rooth can provide the emails he refers to. The redesign of the North in and North out arrangements from Leapale Road were, of course, considered in great detail over two years eventually by three firms of professional transportation consultants and found to be acceptable contrary to the Surrey County Council and bus companies’ objections which were not evidence based. Equally the capacity of the bus station following redesign was shown to be more than adequate with further expansion capacity available and that maintaining the southern entrance for buses via the gyratory and North Street was not in the interests of health and safety, including accidents and pollution and was actively against the interests of placemaking, the creation of a pocket park, pedestrianisation and community environmental and other wins.

- (8) *Finally, could the Lead Councillor please confirm the cost to date expended in relation to work on the proposed refurbishment of the bus station, excluding the access/egress issue, both in terms of time and money?*

Scott Brownrigg were appointed to advise the Council on the refurbishment of the bus Station. Their fee was £22,750.00 plus VAT. They were on a set fee, so time was not recorded. We have no access to the developer’s additional cost information coordinating the Scott Brownrigg designs into the bigger scheme and the supporting detailed technical transportation studies or supporting film evidence of underuse of the current bus station.

My questions relate to the access and egress to the proposed bus interchange (and the projected effects on size, capacity and layout of the proposed bus interchange and bus services generally, bus routes and bus times etc.) rather than the facilities and design of the bus station itself which clearly needs total refurbishment.”

It was noted that Councillor Rooth had circulated an email prior to the meeting to all councillors which contained a list of supplementary questions arising from the response of the Lead Councillor for Regeneration. The Lead Councillor indicated that he would respond to the questions in due course.

CO117 PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2023-24

Under Section 39 of the Localism Act 2011, the Council was required to consider and approve a pay policy statement for the financial year ahead and publish it on its website. The Council therefore considered the Pay Policy Statement covering 2023-24, which had set out the elements of pay and other benefits paid to staff and in particular the most senior employees.

The Pay Policy Statement reflected the current Senior Management structure following the creation of the shared Joint Management Team. The posts defined as senior management within the legislation were now employed by Waverley Borough Council, therefore all reference to these posts had been removed.

The Pay Policy Statements for Waverley and Guildford Borough Councils had been aligned where there were common aspects within the Policies. The new style of document had retained the key elements required for both Councils within their Pay Policy with the additional information added in respect of each Council.

The relevant provisions of the statutory guidance on the making and disclosure of Special Severance Payments by local authorities in England, which had been published on 12 May 2022, had been incorporated into the Pay Policy Statement.

Councillors noted that the Council would continue to pay at the Real Living Wage for outside London, at the bottom of the pay scale. This would aid recruitment difficulties in attracting and retaining key staff.

Upon the motion of the Lead Councillor for Climate Change and Organisational Development, Councillor George Potter, seconded by the Leader of the Council, Councillor Julia McShane, the Council

RESOLVED: That the Pay Policy Statement for the 2023-24 financial year, attached at Appendix 1 to the report submitted to the Council, be approved.

Reason:

To comply with the requirements of the Localism Act 2011 (Section 39) and associated guidance.

CO118 CAPITAL AND INVESTMENT STRATEGY (2023-24 TO 2027-28)

Prior to consideration of the budget related reports, of which the Capital and Investment Strategy was the first, the Chief Finance Officer (CFO) made a presentation to the Council, which provided information about the strategic context within which the budget had been prepared, the medium-term financial plan, the robustness of the estimates, adequacy of reserves and budget risks.

The Council considered a report on the Council's capital and investment strategy, which gave a high-level overview of how capital expenditure, capital financing and treasury management activity contributed to the provision of local public services along with an overview of how associated risk was managed and the implications for future financial sustainability.

Decisions made now, 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 report therefore included details of the capital programme, any new bids/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 had also covered the requirements of the Treasury Management Code and the prevailing DLUHC Statutory Guidance.

Councillors noted that in order to achieve the ambitious targets within the Corporate Plan, the Council needed to invest in its assets, via capital expenditure, which was split into the General Fund (GF) and Housing Revenue Account (HRA).

All projects, regardless of the fund, would be funded by capital receipts, grants and contributions, reserves, and finally borrowing. When preparing the budget reports, it was not known how each scheme would be funded and, in the case of regeneration projects, what the

delivery model would be. The report showed a high-level position. The business case for each individual project would set out the detailed funding arrangements for the project.

The Council noted that some capital receipts or revenue income streams might arise as a result of regeneration schemes, but in most cases the position was currently uncertain, and it was too early at this stage to make assumptions. It was likely that there would be cash-flow implications of the development schemes, where income would come in after the five-year time horizon of the report and the expenditure incurred earlier in the programme.

The Council had an underlying need to borrow for the General Fund capital programme of £286 million between 2022-23 and 2027-28. Officers had put forward bids, with a net cost over the same period of £10 million, increasing this underlying need to borrow to £296 million should these proposals be approved for inclusion in the programme.

The capital programme included several significant regeneration schemes, which it was assumed would be financed from GF resources. Detailed funding proposals for each scheme would be considered when their Outline Business Case was presented to the Executive for approval.

The main areas of expenditure (shown gross), as set out in the report, were:

- £274 million Weyside Urban Village (WUV)
- £62 million strategic property purchases
- £32 million North Downs Housing (NDH)
- £28 million Ash road bridge and footbridge

The report contained a summary of the new bids submitted and the position and profiling of the current programme (2022-23 to 2026-27).

Upon reviewing the current capital programme, officers had identified that there was a separate scheme for the bus station, the cost of which had also been included in the Shaping Guildford's Future scheme, and therefore could be removed from the provisional capital programme.

The HRA capital programme was split between expenditure on existing stock and either development of or purchase of new dwellings to add to the stock. The Council had in place a robust stock condition review process which provided 100% stock data over a rolling 5-year programme, which allowed for effective assessment against Regulatory and legislative standards. In addition to which, the recently updated Fire Risk Assessments, had allowed the Council to plan the current and future programme to ensure compliance with the new building safety legislation and standards. This, in turn, was complimented by the new compliance framework that had been rolled out over the last year which provided enhanced and improved levels of assurance and up to date information and requirements to meet the requirements of other key areas of compliance including asbestos, legionella, lifts and gas.

Improved building safety standards across social housing had resulted in a national drive to improve standards and safety. Guildford had responded to the recent and forthcoming changes in requirements with an extensive improvement programme. The first year of the programme required an investment at levels not previously seen in Guildford with £24.5 million invested in 2022-23, and a further £20 million planned for 2023-24 after which the extensive programme of building safety improvement would be completed, and investment level would return to levels as previously seen. The capital programme will be funded from HRA capital receipts and reserves. There was also £145 million between 2022-23 and 2027-28 million included for development projects to build or acquire new housing (including WUV).

The main areas of major repairs and improvement expenditure were:

- refurbishment, replacement & renewal programme of existing stock, £11 million, which included kitchen & bathroom upgrades, void property refurbishment and roof works

- works to existing stock to comply with changes to standards and legislation, £9 million, including replacement fire doors, electrical testing and fire protection works
- mechanical and electrical works £2 million, including central heating systems
- other works of £1.9 million including damp prevention works

The main development projects included:

- Guildford Park Car Park: £38.9 million
- WUV: £49 million
- Foxburrows: £10 million

The Council noted that officers carried out the treasury management function within the parameters set by the Council each year and in accordance with the approved treasury management practices.

The budget for investment income for 2023-24 was £3.5 million, based on an average investment portfolio of £75 million, at a weighted average rate of 3.56%. The budget for debt interest paid was £8.2 million, of which £4.8 million related to the HRA and £600,000 short term loans. WUV interest of £2.8 million was being capitalised and added to the cost of the scheme.

The Council noted that councils could invest to support public services by lending to or buying shares in other organisations (service investments) or to earn investment income (commercial investments, where earning a return was the primary purpose).

Investment property had been valued at £174 million, as per the 2021-22 unaudited Statement of Accounts, with rent receipts of £8.2 million. The Council had also invested £25.3 million in its housing company North Downs Housing Ltd (NDH), via 40% equity to Guildford Borough Council Holdings Ltd (£10.1 million) who, in turn, passed the equity to NDH, and 60% repayment loan direct to NDH (£15.3 million) at a rate of 5%.

The report had also included the Council's Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) policy and the Prudential Indicators and had set out the updated flexible use of capital receipts policy. This policy, if approved at Council, would permit the use of any capital receipts received in year to be used to fund any service transformation costs incurred in the same year.

The Capital and Investment Strategy 2023-24 to 2027-28 had also been considered by the Corporate Governance and Standards Committee at its meeting on 19 January 2023, by the Joint Executive Advisory Board at its meeting on 24 January 2023, and by the Executive on 26 January 2023.

Upon the motion of the Deputy Leader of the Council, and Lead Councillor for Finance and Planning Policy, Councillor Joss Bigmore, seconded by the Leader of the Council, and Lead Councillor for Housing and Community, Councillor Julia McShane, the Council:

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the General Fund and HRA capital estimates, as shown in Appendices 2 and 3 to the report submitted to the Council, as amended to include the bids approved by the Executive at its meeting on 26 January 2023, be approved.
- (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 in Appendix 1 thereto.

- (4) That the updated flexible use of capital receipts policy at Appendix 8 to the report, be approved.

Reasons:

- To enable the Council to approve the capital and investment strategy for 2023-24 to 2027-28
- To enable the Council to approve the funding required for the new capital schemes proposed

CO119 HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUDGET 2023-24

Councillors noted that the Council owned and managed over 5,200 Council Houses which it rented to tenants who qualified for social housing or for which it held the freehold. The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) was the ring-fenced account within which the Council recorded the income and expenditure for its operations as landlord to its residents and for the day-to-day management, repairs and maintenance of the council housing stock.

The Council considered a report on the proposed Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget for 2023-24, which had been built on the estimates and assumptions in the updated 2023 HRA Business Plan. The business plan had been reviewed to reflect changes in 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 Council's operating environment.

The Direction on the Rent Standard 2019 had required the Regulator of Social Housing to set a rent standard for social housing which came into effect from 2020, which would have been CPI +1% from the preceding September rate. This would have resulted in a rent cap of 11.1%. However, a new Direction was issued on 12 December 2022 which stated that rents should be capped at 7%.

However, it was proposed that rather than adopting the directed cap, the Council should adopt a 5% rent cap, which would mean that, on average, households in a 1 bedroomed property would save £8.84 a month compared to the Government cap, and £10.22 for those in a 2 bed and £11.70 for those in a 3 bedroomed property. This below cap level was a recognition of the challenging wider climate faced by residents and had been achievable due to the ongoing prudential management of the overall HRA Account to provide households with some additional assistance at this time.

For those in shared ownership, the Government had not introduced a cap and so rent increases could be set at up to 11.1%; however, the Council was proposing to cap these rents in line with rented homes at 5%.

A 3% increase in garage rents was proposed for 2023-24, which was in line with the wider Council policy on fees and charges.

The report included overall details of the proposed investment programme for the properties that were managed within the HRA, additional details of this work had also been set out within the item on the Capital and Investment Strategy.

The HRA annual budget and HRA business plan had assumed that any surpluses on the HRA were used to invest in redevelopment and upgrading of the existing stock, invest in new build affordable housing to be retained and rented by the Council within the HRA and then if there were sufficient monies available, the repayment of debt taken on under HRA self-financing.

The 30-year business plan had shown that there were sufficient resources within the HRA to carry out the Council's investment plans as well as repay the debt over the 30-year business plan period and still leave a healthy reserve balance at the end of the 30 years for further investment not yet identified.

There were further expected investment needs that would be fully developed in order to meet carbon targets and expected regulatory changes, and work on these continued. They were not, however, fully reflected within the current plan, but they would be considered in future reviews.

This report had also been considered by the Joint Executive Advisory Board at its meeting on 24 January 2023, and their comments had been included therein. At its meeting on 26 January 2023, the Executive had also considered the report and had endorsed the recommendations to Council.

Upon the motion of the Leader of the Council and Lead Councillor for Housing and Community, Councillor Julia McShane, seconded by the Deputy Leader of the Council, and Lead Councillor for Finance and Planning Policy, Councillor Joss Bigmore, the Council

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the proposed HRA revenue budget for 2023-24, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report submitted to the Council, be approved.
- (2) That a rent increase of 5%, be implemented.
- (3) That the fees and charges for HRA services for 2023-24, 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.

Reason:

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.

CO120 GENERAL FUND BUDGET 2023-24 AND MEDIUM-TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2024-25 TO 2026-27

The Council considered a report which outlined the draft General Fund Budget for 2023/24 and Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) ending 2026/27. The MTFP had set out the key work streams for the Council to focus on over this period which, collectively, aimed to address the projected significant shortfall in the General Fund budget.

The proposed budget for 2023-24, which included a Council Tax requirement for Guildford Borough Council of £11,392,760 excluding parish precepts and a Council Tax increase of £5.59 per year (2.99%), resulting in a Band D charge of £192.41. As set out in the report, the Council was required to set a balanced budget for 2023-24.

Parish Councils had requested precepts totalling £2,174,116 meaning the overall council tax requirement for the borough, including parish precepts would be £13,566,876.

The General Fund Budget Summary had shown a budget deficit of £3.1million to be resolved in 2023-24. There were no proposed cuts to services included in the draft 2023-24 General Fund budget. The budget strategy outlined in the report had identified a framework that would deliver savings from the asset management, business transformation, commercial and collaboration programmes to address the financial challenges and help protect funding for front line services.

It was anticipated that cost pressures would reduce over the MTFP period and reserves would be utilised in the short term whilst longer term base budget cost pressures would be resolved through the budget strategy.

The Joint Executive Advisory Board (JEAB) had considered this report at its meeting held on 24 January 2023. At its meeting held on 26 January 2023, the Executive had also considered this report, including the comments of the JEAB and had endorsed the recommendation therein.

Under The Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014 and Council Procedure Rule 19 (d), the Council was reminded that a recorded vote would be conducted on the proposed budget and Council tax resolution as set out in the report, and the Order Paper circulated at the meeting which contained details of the respective precepts set by Surrey County Council and the Police and Crime Commissioner for Surrey, neither of which were deemed to be excessive.

Upon the motion of the Deputy Leader of the Council and Lead Councillor for Finance and Planning Policy, Councillor Joss Bigmore, seconded by the Leader of the Council, and Lead Councillor for Housing and Community, Councillor Julia McShane, the Council:

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the budget be approved, and specifically that the Council Tax requirement for 2023-24 be set at £11,392,760 excluding parish precepts and £13,566,876 to include parish precepts.
- (2) That the Band D Council Tax for 2023-24 (excluding parish precepts) be set at £192.41, an increase of £5.59 (2.99%).
- (3) That the Band D Council Tax for 2023-24 (including parish precepts) be set at £229.12.
- (4) That the Council approves the following, as considered by the Executive on 26 January 2023:
 - (i) the General Fund revenue estimates for 2023-24 including proposed fees and charges relating to General Fund services, as set out in Appendix 4 to the report submitted to the Council;
 - (ii) the Housing Revenue Account estimates for 2023-24, including housing rents and other fees and charges;
 - (iii) the Capital and Investment Strategy for 2023-24; and
 - (iv) the Housing Revenue Account capital programme for 2023-24.
- (5) That the Council notes that the Chief Finance Officer, in accordance with the terms of her delegated authority, has calculated the following amounts for the year 2023-24 in accordance with regulations made under Sections 31B (3) and 34(4) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended) ('the Act'):
 - (i) 59,212.12 being the amount calculated by the Council, in accordance with Regulation 3 of the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 1992, as its council tax base for 2023-24 for the whole Council area.
 - (ii) For those parts of the borough to which a parish precept relates:

Parish of

Albury	619.95
Artington	137.20

Ash	7,275.55
East Clandon	152.39
West Clandon	718.34
Compton	482.45
Effingham	1,322.41
East Horsley	2,606.21
West Horsley	1,547.13
Normandy	1,359.26
Ockham	269.21
Pirbright	1,258.51
Puttenham	312.03
Ripley	915.91
St. Martha	400.04
Seale & Sands	509.60
Send	2,154.53
Shackleford	379.55
Shalford	1,889.64
Shere	1,985.19
Tongham	1,005.09
Wanborough	181.20
Wisley (Meeting)	107.31
Worplesdon	3,637.27

being the amounts calculated by the Council, in accordance with Regulation 6 of the 1992 Regulations, as the amounts of its council tax base for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which one or more special items relate.

- (6) That the Council calculates the following amounts for the financial year 2023-24 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Act:
- (i) £147,783,389 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A (2) of the Act taking into account all precepts issued to it by parish councils.
 - (ii) £134,216,513 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A (3) of the Act
 - (iii) £13,566,876 being the amount by which the aggregate at sub-paragraph (i) above exceeds the aggregate at sub-paragraph (ii) above, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act, as its council tax requirements for the year.
 - (iv) £229.12 being the amount at sub-paragraph (iii) above divided by the amount at sub-paragraph (i) of paragraph (5) above,

calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31B (1) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year (including parish precepts).

- (v) £2,174,116 being the aggregate amount of all special items (parish precepts) referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act as follows:

Parish of	£
Albury	43,602
Artington	4,915
Ash	547,587
East Clandon	9,556
West Clandon	26,143
Compton	26,873
Effingham	129,781
East Horsley	151,342
West Horsley	97,055
Normandy	154,481
Ockham	15,935
Pirbright	77,361
Puttenham	14,600
Ripley	91,390
St. Martha	13,850
Seale & Sands	19,500
Send	85,233
Shackleford	16,700
Shalford	117,375
Shere	178,822
Tongham	42,190
Wanborough	5,500
Wisley (Meeting)	0
Worplesdon	304,325
Total	2,174,116

- (vi) £192.41 being the amount at sub-paragraph (iv) above less the result given by dividing the amount at sub-paragraph (v) above by the amount at sub-paragraph (i) of paragraph (5) above, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 34(2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its council tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no special item (parish precept) relates.

- (vii) Part of the Council's area

Parish of	£ p
Albury	262.74
Artington	228.23
Ash	267.67

East Clandon	255.12
West Clandon	228.80
Compton	248.11
Effingham	290.55
East Horsley	250.48
West Horsley	255.15
Normandy	306.06
Ockham	251.60
Pirbright	253.88
Puttenham	239.20
Ripley	292.19
St. Martha	227.03
Seale & Sands	230.68
Send	231.97
Shackleford	236.41
Shalford	254.53
Shere	282.49
Tongham	234.39
Wanborough	222.76
Wisley (Meeting)	192.41
Worplesdon	276.08

being the amounts given by adding to the amount at sub-paragraph (vi) above the amounts of the special item or items relating to dwellings in those parts of the Council's area mentioned above divided in each case by the amount at sub-paragraph (ii) of paragraph (5) above, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 34(3) of the Act, as the basic amounts of its council tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which one or more special items relate.

(viii) Part of the Council's area

VALUATION BANDS								
	Band A	Band B	Band C	Band D	Band E	Band F	Band G	Band H
PARISH	£ p	£ p	£ p	£ p	£ p	£ p	£ p	£ p
Albury	175.16	204.35	233.54	262.74	321.12	379.51	437.89	525.47
Artington	152.15	177.51	202.87	228.23	278.94	329.66	380.38	456.45
Ash	178.44	208.18	237.93	267.67	327.15	386.63	446.11	535.33
East Clandon	170.08	198.42	226.77	255.12	311.81	368.50	425.19	510.23

West Clandon	152.53	177.95	203.37	228.80	279.64	330.48	381.33	457.59
Compton	165.40	192.97	220.54	248.11	303.24	358.38	413.51	496.21
Effingham	193.70	225.98	258.26	290.55	355.11	419.68	484.24	581.09
East Horsley	166.98	194.81	222.65	250.48	306.14	361.80	417.46	500.95
West Horsley	170.10	198.45	226.80	255.15	311.84	368.54	425.24	510.29
Normandy	204.04	238.04	272.05	306.06	374.07	442.08	510.09	612.11
Ockham	167.73	195.69	223.64	251.60	307.51	363.42	419.33	503.19
Pirbright	169.25	197.46	225.67	253.88	310.29	366.71	423.13	507.75
Puttenham	159.46	186.04	212.62	239.20	292.35	345.51	398.66	478.39
Ripley	194.79	227.26	259.72	292.19	357.12	422.05	486.98	584.37
St. Martha	151.35	176.58	201.80	227.03	277.48	327.93	378.38	454.05
Seale & Sands	153.78	179.41	205.05	230.68	281.94	333.20	384.46	461.35
Send	154.64	180.42	206.19	231.97	283.51	335.06	386.61	463.93
Shackleford	157.60	183.87	210.14	236.41	288.94	341.48	394.01	472.81
Shalford	169.68	197.96	226.25	254.53	311.09	367.65	424.21	509.05
Shere	188.32	219.71	251.10	282.49	345.26	408.04	470.81	564.97
Tongham	156.26	182.30	208.34	234.39	286.47	338.56	390.64	468.77
Wanborough	148.50	173.25	198.01	222.76	272.26	321.76	371.26	445.51
Wisley (Meeting)	128.27	149.65	171.03	192.41	235.16	277.92	320.68	384.81
Worplesdon	184.05	214.73	245.40	276.08	337.43	398.78	460.13	552.15
TOWN AREA								
Guildford	128.27	149.65	171.03	192.41	235.16	277.92	320.68	384.81

being the amounts given by multiplying the amounts at sub-paragraphs (vi) and (vii) above by the number which in the proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band divided by the number which in that proportion is applicable to dwellings listed in valuation band D, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 36(1) of the Act, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands.

- (7) That the Council notes that for the year 2023-24, (i) Surrey County Council (SCC) and (ii) the Police and Crime Commissioner for Surrey (PCCS) have stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Act, for each of the categories of dwelling in the Council's area as shown below:

VALUATION BANDS								
	Band A	Band B	Band C	Band D	Band E	Band F	Band G	Band H
	£ p	£ p	£ p	£ p	£ p	£ p	£ p	£ p
(i) SCC	1,116.72	1,302.84	1,488.96	1,675.08	2,047.32	2,419.56	2,791.80	3,350.16
(ii) PCCS	207.05	241.55	276.06	310.57	379.59	448.60	517.62	621.14

- (8) That the Council agrees, having calculated the aggregate in each of the amounts at subparagraph (viii) of paragraph (6) and paragraph (7) above, to set the following amounts as the amounts of Council Tax for the year 2022-23 for each of the categories of dwellings shown below in accordance with Section 30(2) of the Act.

Part of the Council's Area:

VALUATION BANDS								
	Band A	Band B	Band C	Band D	Band E	Band F	Band G	Band H
PARISH	£ p	£ p	£ p	£ p	£ p	£ p	£ p	£ p
Albury	1,498.93	1,748.74	1,998.56	2,248.39	2,748.03	3,247.67	3,747.31	4,496.77
Artington	1,475.92	1,721.90	1,967.89	2,213.88	2,705.85	3,197.82	3,689.80	4,427.75
Ash	1,502.21	1,752.57	2,002.95	2,253.32	2,754.06	3,254.79	3,755.53	4,506.63
East Clandon	1,493.85	1,742.81	1,991.79	2,240.77	2,738.72	3,236.66	3,734.61	4,481.53
West Clandon	1,476.30	1,722.34	1,968.39	2,214.45	2,706.55	3,198.64	3,690.75	4,428.89
Compton	1,489.17	1,737.36	1,985.56	2,233.76	2,730.15	3,226.54	3,722.93	4,467.51
Effingham	1,517.47	1,770.37	2,023.28	2,276.20	2,782.02	3,287.84	3,793.66	4,552.39
East Horsley	1,490.75	1,739.20	1,987.67	2,236.13	2,733.05	3,229.96	3,726.88	4,472.25
West Horsley	1,493.87	1,742.84	1,991.82	2,240.80	2,738.75	3,236.70	3,734.66	4,481.59
Normandy	1,527.81	1,782.43	2,037.07	2,291.71	2,800.98	3,310.24	3,819.51	4,583.41
Ockham	1,491.50	1,740.08	1,988.66	2,237.25	2,734.42	3,231.58	3,728.75	4,474.49
Pirbright	1,493.02	1,741.85	1,990.69	2,239.53	2,737.20	3,234.87	3,732.55	4,479.05
Puttenham	1,483.23	1,730.43	1,977.64	2,224.85	2,719.26	3,213.67	3,708.08	4,449.69
Ripley	1,518.56	1,771.65	2,024.74	2,277.84	2,784.03	3,290.21	3,796.40	4,555.67
St. Martha	1,475.12	1,720.97	1,966.82	2,212.68	2,704.39	3,196.09	3,687.80	4,425.35
Seale & Sands	1,477.55	1,723.80	1,970.07	2,216.33	2,708.85	3,201.36	3,693.88	4,432.65
Send	1,478.41	1,724.81	1,971.21	2,217.62	2,710.42	3,203.22	3,696.03	4,435.23
Shackleford	1,481.37	1,728.26	1,975.16	2,222.06	2,715.85	3,209.64	3,703.43	4,444.11
Shalford	1,493.45	1,742.35	1,991.27	2,240.18	2,738.00	3,235.81	3,733.63	4,480.35

Shere	1,512.09	1,764.10	2,016.12	2,268.14	2,772.17	3,276.20	3,780.23	4,536.27
Tongham	1,480.03	1,726.69	1,973.36	2,220.04	2,713.38	3,206.72	3,700.06	4,440.07
Wanborough	1,472.27	1,717.64	1,963.03	2,208.41	2,699.17	3,189.92	3,680.68	4,416.81
Wisley (Meeting)	1,452.04	1,694.04	1,936.05	2,178.06	2,662.07	3,146.08	3,630.10	4,356.11
Worplesdon	1,507.82	1,759.12	2,010.42	2,261.73	2,764.34	3,266.94	3,769.55	4,523.45
TOWN AREA								
Guildford	1,452.04	1,694.04	1,936.05	2,178.06	2,662.07	3,146.08	3,630.10	4,356.11

***Note: Wisley Parish Meeting**

In accordance with the Executive's decision at its meeting on 8 August 2002 (see Minute No. 270 – 2002-03), the Chief Finance Officer has anticipated the precept for 2023-24 for the Wisley Parish Meeting to be £nil and this is reflected in all the relevant Council Tax figures above.

(9) That the Council determines that the Borough Council's basic amount of council tax for 2023-24 is not excessive in accordance with the principles approved under section 52ZB of the Act.

(10) That, as the billing authority, the Council notes that it has not been notified by a major precepting authority that its relevant basic amount of Council Tax for 2023-24 was excessive under the regulations and that the billing authority was not required to hold a referendum in accordance with Section 52ZK of the Act.

(11) That the Council agrees, in respect of council tax payments:

(i) that the payment dates for the statutory ten monthly instalment scheme be set to run from 2 April to 2 January each year; and

(ii) that the payment dates be set as the second day of each month for a customer who has requested to opt out of the statutory scheme under the provisions of The Council Tax (Administration and Enforcement) (Amendment) (No 2) (England) Regulations 2012.

(12) That the Council agrees, in respect of non-domestic rate payments:

(i) that the payment dates for the statutory ten monthly instalment scheme be set to run from 2 April to 2 January each year; and

(ii) that the payment dates be set as the second day of each month for a customer who has requested to opt out of the statutory scheme under the provisions of the Non-Domestic Rating (Collection and Enforcement) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2014.

(13) That the Council approves the annual statement of accounts for Wisley Parish Meeting, which is currently dormant, for the year ended 31 March 2023, as set out below:

	Year ending	
	31 March 2022 £	31 March 2023 £
1. Balances brought forward	3,605	3,605
2. (+) Annual precept	Nil	Nil
3. (+) Total other receipts	0	3

4. (-) Staff costs	Nil	Nil
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments	Nil	Nil
6. (-) Total other payments	Nil	Nil
7. (=) Balances carried forward	3,605	3608

8. Total cash and investments	3,605	3,608
9. Total fixed assets and long-term assets	Nil	Nil
10. Total borrowings	Nil	Nil

Reason:

To enable the Council to set the Council Tax requirement and council tax for the 2023-24 financial year.

Result of the Recorded Vote:

The motion to adopt the Budget and Council Tax resolution above was approved, with thirty councillors voting in favour, none voting against, and seven abstentions, as follows:

FOR:

Councillor Tim Anderson
Councillor Jon Askew
Councillor Joss Bigmore
Councillor Chris Blow
Councillor Ruth Brothwell
Councillor Guida Esteves
Councillor Angela Goodwin
Councillor Angela Gunning
Councillor Gillian Harwood
Councillor Jan Harwood
Councillor Liz Hogger
Councillor Tom Hunt
Councillor Diana Jones
Councillor Ted Mayne
Councillor Julia McShane
Councillor Bob McShee
The Deputy Mayor,
Councillor Masuk Miah
Councillor Richard Morris
Councillor Ramsey Nagaty
Councillor George Potter
Councillor John Redpath
Councillor Maddy Redpath
Councillor John Rigg
Councillor Tony Rooth
Councillor Will Salmon
Councillor Deborah Seabrook
Councillor Pauline Searle
Councillor James Walsh
Councillor Fiona White
Councillor Catherine Young

AGAINST:

ABSTAIN:

Councillor David Bilbé
The Mayor, Councillor Dennis Booth
Councillor Graham Eyre
Councillor Nigel Manning
Councillor Marsha Moseley
Councillor Paul Spooner
Councillor Keith Witham

CO121 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE CORPORATE GOVERNANCE AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE 2021-22

Following receipt of the KPMG internal audit report on the effectiveness of the Corporate Governance and Standards Committee, which was considered by the Committee at its meeting

on 24 March 2022, the Council noted that one of the recommendations was that the Committee should report at least annually to the Council on its activities and an assessment of its performance in discharging its responsibilities as defined in the Committee's terms of reference.

The Council considered the first of these annual reports, for the municipal year 2021-22, having noted that it had been commended for adoption by the Corporate Governance and Standards Committee at its meeting held on 19 January 2023.

Upon the motion of the Chairman of the Corporate Governance and Standards Committee, Councillor Deborah Seabrook, seconded by the Lead Councillor for Climate Change and Organisational Development, Councillor George Potter, the Council

RESOLVED: That the annual report of the Corporate Governance & Standards Committee for 2021-22, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report submitted to the Council, be adopted.

Reason:

To ensure that the Committee is accountable for its work to the full Council.

CO122 APPOINTMENT OF DEPUTY MAYOR 2023-24

At the Council meeting held on 6 December 2022, the Council had considered a report on the selection of Mayor and Deputy Mayor for the Municipal Year 2023-24. In accordance with the constitutional changes adopted by the Council in 2014, the Council had agreed to nominate the current Deputy Mayor, Councillor Masuk Miah for election as Mayor of the Borough for 2023-24, subject to the outcome of the Borough Council elections in May 2023.

However, as no nominations had been submitted in respect of the appointment of Deputy Mayor for the Municipal Year 2023-24, the matter had been deferred to this meeting for consideration of any nominations.

Councillor Paul Spooner proposed and the Deputy Leader of the Council, Councillor Joss Bigmore, seconded the nomination of Councillor Nigel Manning for Deputy Mayor for the Municipal Year 2023-24. Councillor Manning absented himself from the meeting during the formal consideration of the nomination.

Having considered the nomination, the Council

RESOLVED: That, subject to the outcome of the Borough Council elections in May 2023, Councillor Nigel Manning be nominated for the Deputy Mayoralty of the Borough for the 2023-24 municipal year.

Reason:

To make early preparations for the selection of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor for the municipal year 2023-24.

CO123 APPOINTMENT OF JOINT INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL

The Council was required to conduct the next review of councillors' allowances in 2023 following the local elections. Under The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 ("the 2003 Regulations"), the Council must appoint an independent remuneration panel to make recommendations as to the type and level of allowances to be included in the next scheme of allowances for councillors. The Council had a duty to have regard to the panel's recommendations.

Waverley Borough Council was also committed to conduct a review of allowances for its councillors following next year's local elections.

Taking account of the current collaborative arrangements for joint working, both councils had agreed to establish a Joint Independent Remuneration Panel (JIRP) to conduct separate reviews of the allowances payable to councillors of both authorities and make separate recommendations to both councils. The panel would also act as a parish remuneration panel and would be required to produce a separate report collectively for the parish councils in Guildford borough and another report for the town and parish councils in Waverley borough.

At its meeting on 11 October, the Council had approved the terms of reference of the JIRP, and the re-appointment of three persons who had served previously on the independent remuneration panels for both Guildford and Waverley. Both councils had expressed a wish to appoint a JIRP comprising five members. Accordingly, the Democratic Services and Elections Manager had been authorised to advertise for candidates from the general public and a wide range of organisations, including the local business community and voluntary organisations, for the appointment of up to two other members of the JIRP to serve for a period of up to four years commencing with the 2023-24 municipal year.

Following the advertisement, four candidates had been shortlisted for interview by a panel comprising the Leaders and Deputy Leaders of both councils. After one of the candidates withdrew, the panel interviewed the three remaining candidates and had recommended that Rodney Bates and Paul Marcus be appointed to the JIRP.

Upon the motion of the Lead Councillor for Planning Development, Legal and Democratic Services, Councillor Tom Hunt seconded by the Leader of the Council, Councillor Julia McShane, the Council

RESOLVED: That Rodney Bates and Paul Marcus be appointed to the Joint Independent Remuneration Panel for a period of up to four years commencing with the 2023-24 municipal year.

Reason:

To comply with the requirements of The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003, and both councils' wish to establish a JIRP comprising of five members.

CO124 MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE

The Council received and noted the minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 24 November 2022, 12 December 2022, and 5 January 2023.

CO125 NOTICE OF MOTION DATED 27 JANUARY 2023: LOCAL PLAN

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 11, Councillor Ramsey Nagaty proposed, and Councillor Catherine Young seconded the following motion:

“In reference to the question previously asked please note that KC advice has been obtained confirming that sites taken out of the Green Belt by the adoption of the Local Plan 2019 that are yet to obtain planning permission may be returned to the Green Belt without any liability being incurred by GBC.

Green Belt has been removed and then re-instated by GBC in the past. In view of the considerable developments approved to date in the villages and countryside with GBC having a 5-year housing supply, the Council

RESOLVES:

- (1) That the Local Plan Panel shall commence its formal review of the Local Plan immediately.
- (2) That progress with regard to such review be reported at each Full Council meeting”.

Under Council Procedure Rule 15 (o), Councillor Nagaty 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 as follows:

Substitute the text of the original motion with the following:

“Guildford Borough Council is legally obliged to review the Local Plan 2019 by April 2024. Having taken Counsel’s advice, the Council previously debated and decided not to accelerate this review because of the risk of higher housing targets being imposed. This could have brought more pressure and threat to the Green Belt, not less, and therefore would have been counter-productive. Nevertheless, the Council also decided to put in hand some preparatory work to enable that 2024 review of the Local Plan.

Since that decision was taken, there have been speeches by the government that suggest they are more protective of the Green Belt. There is considerable uncertainty in the planning system: changes to the NPPF are being consulted on; there are proposed changes to the Standard Method (used to calculate the number of homes required); and there may be changes to the legislation as part of the Planning Reform Bill. All this is new compared to when Council last debated whether to conduct an early review or update of our Local Plan.

The Council therefore

RESOLVES:

- (1) That as part of a Local Plan update 2024, Council will investigate:
 - (a) whether there are exceptional circumstances that would enable the return of allocated, but as yet undeveloped, countryside sites to Green Belt status and how to effect this; and
 - (b) the possibility of reducing the local housing need figure according to the Standard Method, as well as the housing allocation number for each allocated site not yet brought forward, in light of Guildford’s specific issues relating to high student numbers and significant environmental constraints.
- (2) That consideration should then be given to whether this potentially reduced local housing need figure can be delivered sustainably in light of the increased priority of environmental factors”.

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.

Having debated the substantive motion, the Council

RESOLVED:

- (1) That as part of a Local Plan update 2024, Council will investigate:
 - (a) whether there are exceptional circumstances that would enable the return of allocated, but as yet undeveloped, countryside sites to Green Belt status and how to effect this; and
 - (b) the possibility of reducing the local housing need figure according to the Standard Method, as well as the housing allocation number for each allocated site not yet brought forward, in light of Guildford’s specific issues relating to high student numbers and significant environmental constraints.

(2) That consideration should then be given to whether this potentially reduced local housing need figure can be delivered sustainably in light of the increased priority of environmental factors.

CO126 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 9.21 pm

Signed
Mayor

Date

GUILDFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL

Minutes of an extraordinary meeting of Guildford Borough Council held in the Council Chamber, Millmead House, Millmead, Guildford, Surrey GU2 4BB on Wednesday 22 February 2023

- * The Mayor, Councillor Dennis Booth
- * The Deputy Mayor, Councillor Masuk Miah

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

*Present

Honorary Freeman Keith Churchouse and Honorary Alderman David Wright were also in attendance.

CO127 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Christopher Barrass, David Bilbe, Ruth Brothwell, Colin Cross, Angela Goodwin, David Goodwin, Liz Hogger, Diana Jones, Steven Lee, and Julia McShane and also from Honorary Aldermen Catherine Cobley, Jayne Marks, Tony Phillips, Lynda Strudwick and Jenny Wicks.

CO128 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

There were no disclosures of interest.

CO129 MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS

The Mayor was pleased to report that Crowdfund Guildford Funding was open, which would provide up to £100,000 to help fund projects over the next two years. From this pot up to £10,000, or 50% of the project's funding target, was available to help each project reach its target. The deadline for receipt of applications was 29 March 2023. The Mayor asked councillors to draw this to the attention of local communities and encourage applications.

As mentioned previously, the national monument for anti-aggression otherwise known as the Knife Angel was due to arrive in Guildford next week and would be erected outside of the

Cathedral. The Mayor urged councillors to visit it and promote the surrounding events especially to older students in our secondary schools.

CO130 LEADER'S COMMUNICATIONS

In the absence of the Leader, the Deputy Leader reported the following:

- (a) Local Plan Development Management Policies: In view of the positive response from the Planning Inspector, the Council would be able to consider the adoption of the Development Management policies at the scheduled extraordinary meeting of the Council on 22 March, which was before start of the pre-election period. The Deputy Leader also informed councillors that the public consultation in the Greenbelt SPD had started today and would end before the pre-election period.
- (b) #weloveGuildford campaign: The Deputy Leader congratulated the Communications team for the successful campaign, as part of the Council's aim to try to find new ways to engage with residents. The campaign had managed just over 17,000 interactions with residents across the borough who shared what they loved about Guildford.

CO131 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

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

CO132 QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

No questions had been received from councillors.

CO133 GUILDFORD ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Councillors noted that the Council had a number of economic strategies that had now reached their expiration and needed to be updated.

Major economic shocks such as the COVID-19 pandemic, Brexit and the cost-of-living crisis had brought changes and uncertainties to the economic landscape requiring a reassessment of challenges, opportunities and priorities. Coupled with the borough's relatively weak economic performance compared to other locations - a trend preceding the COVID-19 pandemic - there was impetus to set out a refreshed strategy and action plan to reinvigorate Guildford's economy and ensure it was a place where businesses and residents could continue to thrive.

In light of the changes to the economic landscape, and in line with the Council's Corporate Plan 2021 - 2025, the Council considered a report which presented a new Economic Development Strategy and accompanying draft action plan for the period up to 2040, outlining a renewed vision and priorities to support the local economy.

At its meeting earlier in the day, the Executive had also considered the report on this matter and had endorsed the recommendation therein.

Upon the motion of the Lead Councillor for Regeneration, Councillor John Redpath, seconded by the Deputy Leader of the Council, and lead Councillor for Finance and Planning Policy, Councillor Joss Bigmore, the Council

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the Economic Development Strategy 2023-2040 and the supporting evidence base, attached as Appendices 1 and 3 respectively to the report submitted to the Council, be adopted.
- (2) That the draft Economic Development Action Plan, attached as Appendix 2 to the report, which will be subject to further consultation with strategic partners, be noted.

Reason:

To support the reinvigoration of Guildford's economy, the new Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan:

- Sets out the case for action in light of changes to the international, national and regional economic landscape.
- Gives an updated analysis of Guildford's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.
- Identifies key strengths and opportunities to for the Council and its partners to harness, such as sector specialisms and economic assets (e.g. commercial spaces).
- Highlights the importance of mitigating the environmental impact of economic activity to reflect climate change and sustainability issues.
- Identifies the levers that the Council can utilise to address priority interventions that can help deliver significant positive impact for our economy.

CO134 REVIEW AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE PEER REVIEW - FINDINGS OF THE WORKING GROUP

The Council considered a report on the findings of the Planning Committee Review Working Group, which had been established by the Executive in 2021, to consider the LGA/PAS Planning Committee Peer Review recommendations and other improvement needs, and to make recommendations as appropriate to the Executive, Planning Committee and full Council.

The working group had met on six occasions to consider the 12 recommendations. The report included details of the working group's discussion against each recommendation and their own recommended response to each of the recommendations.

As most of the recommendations arising from the review affected the operation of the Planning Committee, the report had been referred initially to that Committee for comments at its special meeting held on 7 February 2023. The Committee's response to each of the working group's recommendations was also included in the report.

At its meeting earlier in the day, the Executive had considered the report on this matter and had endorsed the wording of the motion proposed by the Lead Councillor for Planning Development, Legal and Democratic Services, Councillor Tom Hunt, and seconded by the Deputy Leader of the Council, Councillor Joss Bigmore, which was set out in the Order Paper.

During the debate, some councillors expressed concerns over:

- the proposed revised process for referral of applications to the Planning Committee and consequential increase in councillors' workloads
- availability of planning officers to meet with ward councillors to discuss planning applications
- the absence of an automatic speaking slot for parish councils at Planning Committee
- the inability of a ward councillor to raise concerns after the 21-day period has expired
- the possibility that Chairman of the Planning Committee and Executive Head of Service could refuse almost every referral request without any means of challenging any such refusal

Following the debate, the Council

RESOLVED: That, taking into account the comments and recommendations made by the Planning Committee Review Working Group and the Planning Committee in response to the recommendations of the Planning Committee Peer Review undertaken by the Local Government Association with the Planning Advisory Service, the Council agrees the following actions:

- (1) That, in response to the LGA/PAS Recommendation **R1: (Provide greater certainty in planning process by ensuring decision making conforms with planning policies and material planning considerations acting on behalf of the whole Guildford community and ensuring that there is clear separation between ward level responsibilities and decision-making role on Committee)**, a regular (monthly) planning training programme, be reinstated via MS Teams, subject to the proviso that whilst the planning training programme would be regular, there might not on all occasions be training every month.
- (2) That, in response to the LGA/PAS Recommendation **R2: (Explore ways to rebuild trust and confidence between officers and Members. Consider running an independently facilitated workshop to be held between officers and Members, separate to the Planning Committee meeting, to better understand their roles, issues, and concerns)**, an Officer/Member Workshop be held following the elections in May 2023.
- (3) That, in response to the LGA/PAS Recommendation **R3: (Examine ways for Planning Committee and relevant officers to discuss and learn from appeal decisions to ensure that decisions on planning applications are undertaken, on behalf of the whole Guildford borough community, in a fair, impartial, and transparent way. The present system tagged onto the end of often long Planning Committees is not conducive to creating a learning atmosphere)**, quarterly appeal review sessions be held via MS Teams and facilitated by the Executive Head of Planning Development, noting that details of Appeal Decisions would continue to be included on Planning Committee agendas.
- (4) That, in response to the LGA/PAS Recommendation **R4: (Review Planning Committee reports to see if further explanation can be given on the weight to be afforded to the Local and Neighbourhood Plan policies as well as material planning considerations such as the National Planning Policy Framework)**, appropriate mechanisms were in place already through which councillors could query policy weight afforded to particular proposals, noting that weight to be afforded to Local and Neighbourhood Plans and other material planning considerations would be covered in the training programme.
- (5) That, in response to the LGA/PAS Recommendation **R5: (Ensure planning officers and Committee members are more aware of the impact of what a lack of housing delivery has on the weight given to Local Plan policies and kept appropriately updated on the work of the Housing Delivery Board)**, the topic of housing delivery be addressed as part of the Planning Committee training programme, which should include an overview of the Land Availability Assessment.
- (6) That, in response to the LGA/PAS Recommendation **R6: (Review the opportunity for further guidance in the form of a supplementary planning document to help guide new high quality and sustainable development)**, in view of the current progress being made with SPDs and DPDs, no further action in response to this recommendation is required.
- (7) That, in response to the LGA/PAS Recommendation **R7: (Review the Planning Committee referral system focusing particularly on the Member referral process (7-day procedure) and householder referral system to ensure that applications are not unnecessarily delayed and Planning Committee can focus on the strategically more important applications)**, the proposed process for Councillor Call-up (referral) to Planning Committee as set out in Appendix 3 to the report submitted to the Council, be approved.
- (8) That, in response to the LGA/PAS Recommendation **R8: (Revisit the site visits protocol with particular emphasis on who attends and on ensuring a consistent approach of officers and conduct of members during the site visit)**, no changes be made to the

current site visit protocol on the basis that councillors were aware of the need to ask for a site visit ahead of time rather than at the meeting itself which was noted to be useful for councillors in assessing the planning merits of a scheme.

- (9) That, in response to the LGA/PAS Recommendation **R9: (Review the member overturns process so that alternative motions are raised by Members and advice is provided by officers prior to the officer recommendation vote being made)**, the proposed procedure for councillors overturning officer recommendations at Committee, set out in Appendix 4 to the report submitted to the Council, be approved.
- (10) That, in response to the LGA/PAS Recommendation **R10: (Undertake bespoke probity in planning and appeals training for members with a neutral facilitator, for example, someone who has direct experience of being a Planning Inspector)**, the Probity in Planning training be incorporated into the annual training programme.
- (11) That, in response to the LGA/PAS Recommendation **R11: (Review public speaking opportunities for Parish councils and special interest groups)**, the current public speaking arrangements be retained, but for the Chairman to retain the existing discretion to allow additional speaking slots for significant applications.
- (12) That paragraphs (1) to (5), and (10) above be implemented following the Borough Council Elections in May 2023, and paragraphs (7) and (9) above be implemented with immediate effect*.
- (13) That the Executive Head of Planning Development be requested, in consultation with the relevant lead councillor and Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Planning Committee, to undertake a review of the processes and practices referred to above after 12 months' operation, or sooner if deemed necessary.

Reasons:

To modernise the operation of the Planning Committee and to review and update all associated processes and procedures.

(*In response to a request for clarification as to when the revised Planning Committee referral process would be introduced, the Council was advised that it would be as soon as possible, subject to making the necessary changes to the system, but would not be introduced retrospectively. All councillors would be notified by email of the effective date of implementation.)

CO135 REVIEW OF PROBITY IN PLANNING LOCAL CODE OF PRACTICE HANDBOOK FOR COUNCILLORS AND OFFICERS

The Council noted that the Probity in Planning - Local Code of Practice Handbook, which was last reviewed in April 2019, formed part of the Council's Constitution and provided guidance for councillors and officers on their role and conduct in the planning process. The guidance included how councillors and officers should manage contact with applicants, developers and objectors or supporters. The purpose of the guidance provided in the document was to ensure that decisions made in the planning process were not biased, were taken openly and transparently and based only on material planning considerations.

As part of its ongoing work reviewing various aspects of the corporate governance of the Council, the Corporate Governance Task Group, which had been appointed by the Corporate Governance & Standards Committee, had conducted a thorough review of the Handbook.

The draft revised Handbook, as recommended by the Task Group, had been considered by both the Corporate Governance & Standards Committee, at its meeting on 19 January 2023, and by the Planning Committee on 7 February 2023.

In summary, the key changes proposed were in respect of the following:

- Section 16: Pre-Application Discussions including Planning Performance Agreements
- Section 19: Councillor 'call-up' to Planning Committee
- Section 21: Planning Committee (particularly the procedure for dealing with Member overturns)

The various comments and recommendations from the Corporate Governance and Standards Committee and the Planning Committee were set out in the respective draft minutes from those meetings, copies of which were appended to the report submitted to the Council.

The changes to the Handbook proposed by both committees had also been incorporated into the revised version of the handbook appended to the report.

Upon the motion of the Lead Councillor for Planning Development, Legal and Democratic Services, Councillor Tom Hunt, seconded by the Deputy Leader of the Council, Councillor Joss Bigmore, the Council

RESOLVED: That the revised 'Probity in Planning Local Code of Practice Handbook for Councillors and Officers', attached as Appendix 2 to the report submitted to the Council, be adopted.

Reason:

To provide revised, up to date and fit for purpose Probity in Planning guidance to councillors and officers, together with other relevant information on the planning process at the Council in a helpful handbook.

CO136 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 8.30 pm

Signed

Mayor

Date