**GUILDFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Minutes of Part One of the Annual Meeting of Guildford Borough Council held at The Guildhall, High Street, Guildford on Wednesday 8 May 2024

* The Mayor, Councillor Masuk Miah
* The Deputy Mayor, Councillor Sallie Barker MBE

* Councillor Bilal Akhtar
Councillor Phil Bellamy
Councillor Dawn Bennett
* Councillor Joss Bigmore
* Councillor David Bilbe
* Councillor Honor Brooker
Councillor James Brooker
* Councillor Philip Brooker
* Councillor Ruth Brothwell
Councillor Yves de Contades
Councillor Amanda Creese
Councillor Geoff Davis
Councillor Jason Fenwick
* Councillor Matt Furniss
* Councillor Angela Goodwin
Councillor Lizzie Griffiths
* Councillor Gillian Harwood
Councillor Stephen Hives
* Councillor Catherine Houston
* Councillor Tom Hunt
* Councillor Bob Hughes
Councillor James Jones
* Councillor Vanessa King
Councillor Steven Lee
* Councillor Sandy Lowry
Councillor Richard Lucas
* Councillor Julia McShane
* Councillor Richard Mills OBE
Councillor Carla Morson
* Councillor Danielle Newson
* Councillor Patrick Oven
Councillor George Potter
Councillor Maddy Redpath
* Councillor Merel Rehorst-Smith
Councillor David Shaw
* Councillor Joanne Shaw
Councillor Katie Steel
* Councillor Howard Smith
Councillor Cait Taylor
Councillor Jane Tyson
Councillor James Walsh
Councillor Fiona White
* Councillor Dominique Williams
* Councillor Keith Witham
Councillor Sue Wyeth-Price
* Councillor Catherine Young

*Present

The following Honorary Officers of Dignity, Honorary Freemen and Honorary Aldermen were also in attendance:

The High Steward, the Earl of Onslow
Honorary Freeman Keith Churchouse
Honorary Freeman David Watts
Honorary Alderman Keith Childs
Honorary Alderman Sarah Creedy

Honorary Alderman Terence Patrick
Honorary Alderman Keith Taylor
Honorary Alderman Jenny Wicks
Honorary Alderman M A H M Williamson
Honorary Alderman David Wright
Honorary Recorder HH Judge Patricia Lees
Honorary Remembrancer Mr Matthew Alexander

Before proceeding to the principal business of the meeting, the Mayor received the report of the Honorary Remembrancer for the municipal year just ending and conveyed to Mr Matthew Alexander, the Council's appreciation of his excellent and informative report.

**CO1 ELECTION OF MAYOR**

Upon the motion of Councillor Philip Brooker, seconded by Councillor Matt Furniss, the Council unanimously

RESOLVED: That Councillor Sallie Barker MBE be elected Mayor for the municipal year 2024-25.

Councillor Masuk Miah vacated the chair.

Having been invested with the Mayoral robes and Chain of Office, Councillor Sallie Barker MBE made the statutory Declaration of Acceptance of Office and took the Oath of Allegiance. The Mayor then took the chair.

The Mayor asked the Council to record their appreciation of services rendered by the retiring Mayor, Councillor Masuk Miah over the past municipal year and invested him with the past Mayor's badge.

**CO2 APPOINTMENT OF DEPUTY MAYOR**

Upon the motion of The Mayor, Councillor Sallie Barker MBE, seconded by Councillor Masuk Miah, the Council unanimously

RESOLVED: That Councillor Howard Smith be appointed Deputy Mayor for the municipal year 2024-25.

Having been invested with the Deputy Mayor's robes and Chain of Office, Councillor Howard Smith made the statutory Declaration of Acceptance of Office and took the Oath of Allegiance.

**CO3 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Phil Bellamy, Yves de Contades, Amanda Creese, Geoff Davis, Stephen Hives, Richard Lucas, Carla Morson, Katie Steel, Jane Tyson, and Fiona White, and from Honorary Aldermen Catherine Cobley, Vas Kapsalis, Jayne Marks, Tony Phillips, Nick Sutcliffe, and Lynda Strudwick.

**CO4 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**CO5 MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS**

The Mayor made the following announcements:

(a) Civic Service – 12 May 2024

The Mayor invited councillors to accompany her to the Civic Service at Holy Trinity Church, High Street, Guildford at 11.30am on Sunday 12 May 2024.

(b) 'Part Two' of the Annual Meeting (Selection Meeting) - 13 May 2024

The Mayor also reminded councillors that there would be a meeting of the Council at 7pm on Monday 13 May 2024 to consider, among other things, the appointment of committees, and appointment of committee chairs and vice-chairs for the municipal year 2024-25.

(c) Councillor Geoff Davis

The Mayor informed the Council that Councillor Davis had been taken ill with a serious bacterial infection and had been in hospital and was expected to move into a specialist rehabilitation centre. On behalf of the Council, the Mayor wished Councillor Davis a very speedy recovery.

(d) Big Charity Fund Raising Walk - Sunday 19 May 2024

The Mayor reminded councillors that the Big Charity Fund Raising Walk would be starting and finishing at Shalford Park on Sunday 19 May, and that she would be walking the 10-mile route in aid of her chosen charity for this event, which was the Mayor of Guildford's Local Support Fund, and would welcome as much sponsorship from councillors as possible.

**CO6 MAYOR'S CHAPLAIN**

The Mayor announced the appointment of Rev. Ruth Brothwell, Assistant Priest, The Church of St Peter and St Paul, The Street, West Clandon as her Chaplain for the municipal year 2024-25.

**CO7 APPOINTMENT OF HONORARY REMEMBRANCER**

Upon the motion of The Mayor, Councillor Sallie Barker MBE, seconded by The Deputy Mayor, Councillor Howard Smith, the Council unanimously

RESOLVED: That Mr Matthew Alexander be appointed Honorary Remembrancer for the municipal year 2024-25.

The meeting finished at 12.37 pm

Signed …….. Date ……

Mayor

**GUILDFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Minutes of Part Two of the Annual Meeting of Guildford Borough Council held in the Council Chamber, Millmead House, Millmead, Guildford, Surrey on Monday 13 May 2024.

* The Mayor, Councillor Sallie Barker MBE
* The Deputy Mayor, Councillor Howard Smith

* Councillor Bilal Akhtar
* Councillor Phil Bellamy
* Councillor Dawn Bennett
* Councillor Joss Bigmore
* Councillor David Bilbe
* Councillor Honor Brooker
* Councillor James Brooker
* Councillor Philip Brooker
* Councillor Ruth Brothwell
* Councillor Yves de Contades
* Councillor Amanda Creese
  Councillor Geoff Davis
* Councillor Jason Fenwick
  Councillor Matt Furniss
* Councillor Angela Goodwin
* Councillor Lizzie Griffiths
* Councillor Gillian Harwood
* Councillor Stephen Hives
* Councillor Catherine Houston
* Councillor Tom Hunt
* Councillor Bob Hughes
* Councillor James Jones
* Councillor Vanessa King
* Councillor Steven Lee
* Councillor Sandy Lowry
  Councillor Richard Lucas
* Councillor Julia McShane
* Councillor Masuk Miah
* Councillor Richard Mills OBE
* Councillor Carla Morson
* Councillor Danielle Newson
* Councillor Patrick Oven
* Councillor George Potter
* Councillor Maddy Redpath
* Councillor Merel Rehorst-Smith
* Councillor David Shaw
* Councillor Joanne Shaw
* Councillor Katie Steel
* Councillor Cait Taylor
* Councillor Jane Tyson
* Councillor James Walsh
* Councillor Fiona White
* Councillor Dominique Williams
* Councillor Keith Witham
  Councillor Sue Wyeth-Price
* Councillor Catherine Young

*Present

Honorary Freeman Keith Churchouse was also in attendance.

**CO8 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Geoff Davis, Matt Furniss, Richard Lucas, and Sue Wyeth-Price; and from Honorary Aldermen Catherine Cobley, Jayne Marks, Tony Phillips, Lynda Strudwick, and David Wright.

**CO9 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST**
There were no disclosures of interest.

**CO10 MINUTES**
The minutes of the Budget meeting of the Council held on 7 February, and the extraordinary meetings held on 21 February and 16 April 2024 were approved as a correct record. The Mayor signed the minutes.

**CO11 MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS**
The Mayor outlined how she would like to Chair meetings of the Council (and how the Deputy Mayor would do so in her absence). Both believed in running meetings in a respectful, fair, firm and inclusive way, and to create an environment in which people felt comfortable in speaking and contributing to the debate so that as wide a range of views as possible could be heard. The Mayor reminded councillors that, under the new Council Procedure Rules, councillors would be invited to ask whether they required any clarification in relation of any aspect of a motion being put by the proposer.

The Mayor expected councillors to:

- Keep their contribution focused on the topic under discussion
- Try not to repeat comments already made
- Not disparage any other member of the Council for their views and to treat each other with respect at all times regardless of differing political views

The Mayor reminded councillors that the Council's Code of Conduct and the Nolan Principles should underpin behaviours and actions at Council meetings.

Finally, the Mayor thanked everyone who had attended Part One of the Annual Meeting on 8 May and the Civic Service on Sunday 12 May.

**CO12 ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE STATUTORY OFFICERS**
There were no announcements from the Statutory Officers.

**CO13 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**
Prior to the adoption by the Council of its new Council Procedure Rules on 16 April 2024, a number of enquiries regarding public speaking had been made and the members of the public concerned had been informed that this meeting of the Council would be the next opportunity for them to address the Council on

general matters either related to the powers, duties or functions of the Council or matters which affected the borough.

The new Procedure Rules did not provide for public participation at the Annual Meeting (of which this meeting was the second part, following the 'Mayor Making' meeting on 8 May 2024). Therefore, upon the motion of the Mayor, seconded by Councillor George Potter, the Council

RESOLVED: That Council Procedure Rule 2.2 (Business at the Annual Meeting) be suspended in order to receive questions and statements from the public on this occasion.

**PUBLIC SPEAKER – MONICA LILLEY:**
*"Good evening, Councillors, so I am Monica Lilley and myself and Liz Willis at the back here, my friend and colleague, we are representing, and we are volunteers for the plant-based Treaty Campaign and Animal Rising which is one and the same - it is an amalgamation, so to pitch straight in. We're in a climate emergency and it's almost five years since the Council declared a climate emergency and committed to carbon neutrality. During this time, the Council has taken a number of steps, especially as relates to transport and the built environment, and this is to be commended; however, one notable absence from the Council's extensive planning around climate change is the issue of food.*

*Globally, agriculture accounts for about one quarter of carbon emissions. In the UK, the figure is about 12%. Overwhelmingly, these emissions occur in the production of food. Food miles are a tiny fraction of the overall impact, and the evidence is clear. Animal products have a vastly greater climate impact than plant-based foods. As the BBC phrased it in a recent report: 'The very worst plant-based food , i.e., the most heavily processed, is better than the "very best" animal products'.*

*Raising animals for food generates more greenhouse gas emissions than all the world's vehicles combined. That's from a United Nations report Livestock's Long Shadow 2006, and that still stands. Recent research conducted at the University of Oxford states that a plant-based diet has only one quarter the environmental impact of a diet containing an average amount of animal products. It is clear, therefore, that combating climate change must involve a shift towards a plant-based food system and the government at all levels must play a part in encouraging this shift. If Guildford Council is committed to reducing the climate impact of both its own services and all activity in the district, then it must work to enable this transition. This is about the Council promoting a shift in how people eat, the beacon is always plant-based.*

*There are many ways this can be achieved. I don't think internal catering applies, does it? You don't have that if, if not so, the Council can promote plant-based menu options across all spaces in which it has influence, for example, schools, public cafes, leisure centre, hospitals, etc. It can also use its voice to inform residents of the district."*

Response from the Lead Councillor for Environment & Climate Change, Councillor George Potter:

*"Thank you, Ms Lilley, for your comments. You are completely correct in identifying that trying to promote more plant-based diets is certainly part of how we can try to achieve a shift towards decarbonisation and mitigating the impacts of the climate emergency.*

*As you've identified, we don't have any active internal catering at the Council with the exception, of course, when we have civic events, so it may potentially be something that the Mayor's office may wish to consider whether there might be worth considering some changes to the catering for various civic events. Beyond that, as you identify, we do have potential influence over menu options in, for instance, leisure centres or community buildings where the Council is involved in its management. However, the extent to which it might be possible to make those changes, is likely to require some investigation on our part.*

*It occurs to me that it might potentially be something that, if they were interested, perhaps one of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees might be interested in taking a look at to seek to explore this option further to see what tools we might have at our disposal for influencing the promotion of more plant-based eating at these various venues. If not then I'm sure we can try to take it away as an Executive but I suggest that might be the best first port of call".*

**PUBLIC SPEAKER - GAVIN MORGAN:**
*"My name is Gavin Morgan. I was one of the organisers of last year's Heritage Open Days and I want to talk about the Castle. Now when it comes to heritage, the Council has a problem. It owns the most important sites, collections and artworks relating to the town's history, but for over 20 years has struggled to do much with them. There is no money to develop heritage and it's hard to get grants, but the council can't get rid of heritage either. No one is selling the Castle or the Guildhall and people have to be paid to maintain all those museum and art collections. So what's the answer? Well perhaps to succeed in the future, the town needs to do something now that will capture the imagination of grant bodies, tourists and sponsors in the future.*

*And the Castle seems the key. It's there already, has great stories to tell about medieval monarchs, Magna Carter and King Arthur. Of all our heritage, it's the one most likely to attract tourists. The displays could be improved for little cost and there is potential to increase footfall. And we know we can use community groups, re-enactors and musicians to stage events and promote the Castle, but most significantly, the Castle could become a focus for bringing the community and the Heritage Service together, and it's that community value that grant bodies and sponsors are looking for. So, if that sounds like a good idea, we should talk further. The good news is that we demonstrated at last year's Heritage Open Days that we have the resources, experience and people to do this and it's a low cost, low risk, low effort, idea.*

*The concern is that if the Council does not do something like this, people may lose interest; pressure will build to sell off things like Guildford House, and the Council will still end up paying for buildings like the Castle and the Guildhall that perhaps few visit and collections no one sees. It's up to you to decide what to do but with heritage we either get on and use it, or we may lose it, thank you".*

<u>Response from the Lead Councillor for Commercial Services, Councillor Catherine Houston:</u>

*"Thank you, Mr Morgan, for coming along and speaking to us tonight. You are right in that we have a borough, not just a town, but a borough that is rich in culture and heritage, which brings a lot of community value. I thank you for all the work you do with organising the Heritage Open Day weekend which is really enjoyed by many across the borough.*

*As it happens, I have been speaking with our Leader about setting up a working group to within the Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee to look at the whole heritage service, with, hopefully input from interested parties like yourself with all your knowledge and background in this area which goes back many years. We are getting a lot of ideas coming from both inside and outside the Council, and it would be really good to harness all this goodwill so that we do have a plan for the future so thank you very much for coming along this evening and sharing your thoughts on that."*

**PUBLIC SPEAKER – DALE ASKEW:**
*"Good evening councillors, I'm Dale Askew and I speak as secretary of the Wodehouse Place Residents' Association. We know you'll be looking at the solace housing governance report in detail and the 70 plus recommendations. We want you to hear the details of how we have been affected as tenants and leaseholders in your borough. Housing is a service that hasn't worked for residents over many years, something which took this fraud investigation to be recognised. As*

*a council, you haven't listened to us when we have repeatedly reported problems with our homes. You haven't listened to us when we have questioned works sprung upon us, which we were told were urgent for safety. You haven't listened to our dedicated Councillor Maddy Redpath, who has repeatedly escalated issues to officers and the Executive. The Lead Councillor for Housing has continually assured us that residents' safety and wellbeing are its priority. We know compliance and safety standards were not being adhered to within our block.*

*This is not just a case of financial mismanagement, it is safety standards neglected, residents being exposed financially to questionable works, and regulatory standards set for the sector by central government flagrantly ignored. In all of this, the people living in the Council's homes appear not to have mattered and have suffered. We welcome the recommendations as an opportunity to now move forward.*

*But before this happens, reparations need to be made. At Wodehouse Place, electrical and fire safety works are still waiting to be finished. When can we expect a timescale for completion? Can we have assurance that leaseholders will not be charged where there was no evidence for the necessity of the works. Our guttering is defective in many parts of the building, and it overflows and floods and simply does not work. We now have excessive bright lights burning 24 hours a day in our corridors, bringing unwelcome light pollution into homes and racking up our electric bill. Leaks to the roof, water seeping into residents' homes, contractors repeatedly attending to the same areas of the roof, costs mounting up for us as leaseholders. Windows that continually fail and need repairing incurring residents thousands of pounds in repairs annually. Residents reporting damp and mould and being told that it is fine. Would you be happy with this situation in your homes?*

*If the Council can afford to spend hundreds of thousands of pounds on reports, investigations and lawyers, then why can it not repair and fix the homes we pay for to a decent standard? We were happy to have met Julian and Pedro, which was a good start to putting things right. We need officers and councillors to have all the information and be on the same page. We ask for councillors' commitment that the issues at Wodehouse Place will finally be put right with decent repairs and resident involvement. Many of our issues have been ongoing for 20 years. Actions, not words, are now needed."*

<u>Response from the Leader of the Council, Councillor Julia McShane:</u>
*"Thank you, Mr Askew. I thank you for the commitment and the contributions that you've made to the Tenants Engagement Group, which I've obviously been attending over a period of time. I absolutely acknowledge and appreciate that what's happened is not OK and I'm devastated about what's happened and*

*sorry for what's happened, and I appreciate that trust has been broken and that it's very important that we work incredibly hard with the information and the recommendations that we've got in the report and through our action plan to rebuild that trust and to listen and act accordingly.*

*I'm very pleased that Pedro and Julian came to Wodehouse. Thank you for showing them round and I understand that they will be going back on a further visit to talk to you and to listen to you again and to provide you with more information about providing a single point of contact for tenants and leaseholders at Wodehouse Place and obviously, as part of our overall journey to make improvements for all tenants. We have over 5,000 homes across our borough, it's absolutely important to us that we make all the improvements that are necessary to be able to provide tenants with an excellent service so that everybody has a safe and comfortable home to live in, because that has always been our priority, but clearly there have been issues that we now are fully aware of along the way that have prevented that from happening.*

*I'm absolutely committed to making sure that, working with officers and councillors, we absolutely do that for residents at Wodehouse and for residents across the borough, so thank you for coming."*

**Question 1: from David Allison**
**To the Lead Councillor for Planning, Councillor Fiona White**
*"Last July Merrow Downs Residents' Group launched a legal challenge of the deemed discharge of a number of planning conditions related to the development of the Urnfield Sports Ground by Tormead School planning application reference 20/P/00825. This challenge was subsequently uncontested by both the Council and the School, who acknowledged it had been unlawful. The Judicial Review process centred on the problems created when information that should be in the public domain is not published in a timely manner. Had it been, the legal challenge may not have been necessary because the errors made could have been spotted earlier and remedied.*

*As part of the resolution to this Judicial Review, the Council in the shape of its Legal Adviser agreed to publish all new application material related to the Urnfield case within three days. This the Council has failed to do to the extent that important documentation that was available over 12 weeks ago has still not been published. Can the Lead Councillor for Planning please explain why the Planning Department has failed to meet this clear commitment?"*

**Response from the Lead Councillor for Planning**

*"The Merrow Downs Residents Group challenged the Council's decision to discharge conditions attached to the grant of planning permission 20/P/00825 the conditions being:*

- *Condition 3 (construction transport management plan)*
- *Condition 4 (landscape and ecology management plan LEMP)*
- *Condition 6 (surface water drainage scheme)*
- *Condition 7 (hard and soft landscaping details)*

*The challenge rested on the fact that the Statutory Procedure for the deemed discharge of planning conditions set out in Part 5 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) Order 2015 ("the 2015 Order") had not been followed. It is specifically required under Article 29 that a deemed discharge notice is given to the local planning authority, which must include the following:*

*(a) details of the application submitted under Article 27 and identifying the planning condition to which it relates,*
*(b) where the period referred to in Article 27 has elapsed, confirmation that no appeal has been made under Section 78 of the Town and Country Planning 1990 Act, and*
*(c) the date on which deemed discharge is to take effect.*

*In accordance with the 2015 Order, the agent for the applicants wrote to the Council confirming that the letter should be taken as 'formal activation of deemed discharge' for discharge of conditions 3, 4 and 7. In accordance with the Article 29 (3) (b), the deemed discharge notice letter must confirm that no appeal has been made. The letter did not state this and therefore the statutory requirement was not met.*

*It should be noted that whilst information is published on the Planning Portal, there may be a timelapse between receipt and publication; this, in part, is due to the multiple routes that correspondence enters the Council.*

*Therefore, the Judicial Review process rested on the fact that a statutory requirement under Part 5 of the 2015 Order was not met. The Council agreed that the decisions on conditions 3, 4 and 7 should be quashed but not the decision on condition 6. In agreeing this position, the Council agreed to publish any new applications on the Council's Planning Portal and to allow a 21-day consultation period from the published date. The Council confirmed the publication would take place within 3 working days of receipt of such application. It was made clear that*

*this is not a statutory requirement and the Council confirmed that it was making an exception only on the basis of the specific circumstances of this case.*

*The Council did not agree to publish all new application material related to the Urnfield case within three days. Notwithstanding this point, the Council did publish all information received relating to the subsequent discharge of conditions applications for the period, other than sensitive material. However, the volume of correspondence made this unmanageable and material was published at a much slower rate over the past months".*

**Supplementary question:** *"Would the Lead Councillor agree that deemed discharge in any planning application is unsatisfactory, let alone going through unnoticed, and so the Planning Department should be given every resource and support to implement processes, data management and appropriate publication of documents for public interaction in order to avoid this happening again for any application?"*

**Response to supplementary question from the Lead Councillor for Planning**
*"I can't agree with you that deemed discharge is always unsatisfactory; it has its place in the process. Whether this was the right place, and the right process is another question, and I think there has been an acceptance that things didn't go the way that we would all have wanted them to in the way that this was handled.*

*Nevertheless, I think the response to your question shows that some new processes have been put in place for this particular application. I must stress this is for this particular application and not a blanket change for all situations; so I think, accepting that we didn't actually follow the process in the way that we should have in the first place, everything possible has been done now to rectify the situation, and we will, as a Council, endeavour to communicate better with your residents in future".*

**Question 2: from Katherine Atkinson**
**To the Lead Councillor for Planning, Councillor Fiona White**
*"In the middle of February someone posing as a local resident emailed Merrow Downs Residents' Group ("MDRG") to suggest that the final outstanding pre-commencement planning condition related to the Urnfield development planning application reference 20/P/00825 had been approved through what is known as a "deemed discharge" process. This planning condition related to the management of wildlife and ecology on the site which lies within the Surrey Hills National Landscape.*

*We asked Cllr Jo Shaw if she could find out from the Planning Department the current status (at that time) of this pre-commencement condition. Cllr Shaw forwarded to us an email from a senior planning officer dated 29 February in*

*which he explained that a report related to the discharge of condition 4 was about to be prepared by the case officer for consideration by the Head of Planning. The condition was, according to this information, outstanding and still subject to approval by the Council.*

*On 8 April, MDRG was informed by an Enforcement Officer that in fact a deemed discharge had taken place, and the condition had been discharged without the usual scrutiny or approvals process, on 15 February.*

*The result of this failed process is that a critical pre-commencement condition that was designed by the Planning Inspector to protect the wildlife and ecology on and around this site has been discharged once again without proper and sufficient scrutiny, and based on earlier plans that the Council did not judge good enough to be given approval. This is having very significant consequences for this part of the Surrey Hills National Landscape and in particular for protected species on and around the site, namely Hazel Dormice and Badgers. Can the Lead Councillor for Planning please explain why Councillor Shaw was misled so spectacularly?"*

**Response from the Lead Councillor for Planning**

*"The landscape and ecology management plan (LEMP) condition was discharged through Deemed Consent. However, it is not the case that this condition was discharged without proper and sufficient scrutiny. The case officer had received extensive correspondence from residents on this matter and, more importantly, had received confirmation from Surrey Wildlife Trust that there was no reason to not discharge the condition acknowledging that badger activity will vary over the course of a year and through the different seasons. It further commented that in the review of badger survey information and mitigation strategies there must be an understanding that badger ecology, and badger territory ecology is not static and is not simple. Surrey Wildlife Trust advised that no work should commence on setts, or that could disturb a sett, or that could breach the Protection of Badgers Act 1992, or start before a badger mitigation licence is granted. The Surrey Wildlife Trust emphasised that it is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that there is no breach of the Protection of Badgers Act and that any licence works carried out adhere to the badger mitigation licence, if granted by Natural England.*

*Councillor Shaw was not misled, at the time the information was given the case officer had not been aware that a Deemed Consent Notice had been served on 31 January 2024. It later came to light that this was the case and hence the difference in the dates."*

**Supplementary question**: "*Can Councillor White indicate what the Planning Department will do as a matter of urgency to ensure the errors made here are*

*not repeated in any future applications, and what we, as residents, can do to support that improvement process?"*

**<u>Response to supplementary question from the Lead Councillor for Planning</u>**
*"I think it's important for all of us to remember that this is a situation where, on appeal, planning permission was granted for this development and therefore it is likely that the development will take place, so while I acknowledge as I did in response to the earlier question that the processes that were followed were not as they should have been and certainly I have asked the Head of Planning to have a look at the process and see what we can do to tighten things up and improve them.*

*Nevertheless, I think that it is important to understand that this is a development that does have consent and we are talking about conditions and the compliance with conditions, and although I fully understand that the deemed consent notice, et cetera, were not apparent to the officer who dealt with Councillor Shaw's question, nevertheless Surrey Wildlife Trust had confirmed that the work could carry on and therefore there was no reason not to discharge the condition in this case."*

**Question 3: from Keith Meldrum**
**To the Leader of the Council, Councillor Julia McShane**
*"We are asking these questions as a last resort, because emails from our residents' group, and from us as individuals, to senior officers, including the new Chief Executive elicit no response. Can the Leader please explain the lack of response and how this refusal to engage with local residents voicing legitimate concerns about the Planning Department's performance can be reconciled with the Council's Corporate Customer Charter, let alone the expectations of common courtesy?"*

**<u>Response from the Lead Councillor for Planning</u>**
*"There has been extensive correspondence between the residents' group and officers within different services across the Council. It may sometimes take time to respond to questions asked given the extensive history and volume of correspondence that has come into the Council and quite correctly officers need to furnish themselves with all the necessary information before responding to correspondence. I am aware that an enormous amount of time has been spent on this matter to ensure that the technical information submitted to discharge conditions is fully understood and scrutinised by officers and external consultees".*

**CO14 APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEES AND OTHER APPOINTMENTS 2024-25**
The Council was required annually to establish its committees, their size and terms of reference, and to appoint councillors to them in accordance with the

rules on political balance. The Council also elected the chairmen and vice-chairmen of those committees.

Details of the proposed committees and their respective size and terms of reference for the municipal year 2024-25 were set out in the report submitted to the Council, including details of the numerical allocation of seats on the committees to the political groups. The Supplementary Agenda Pack also included details of each group's nominations to fill those seats (and substitutes where appropriate), together with the nominations for election of committee and sub-committee chairmen and vice-chairmen.

Upon the motion of the Leader of the Council, Councillor Julia McShane, and seconded by the Deputy Leader of the Council, Councillor Tom Hunt, the Council:

RESOLVED:

(1) That, for the 2024-25 municipal year, the Council agrees to appoint the committees referred to in the table set out in paragraph 6.2 of the report submitted to the Council, and agrees their respective size referred to therein and the proposed terms of reference, as indicated in Appendix 1 to the report.

(2) That the following numerical allocation of seats on committees to each political group on the Council, be approved for the 2024-25 municipal year:

| **Committee** | **Liberal Democrats** | **Conservatives** | **R4GV** | **GGG** | **Labour** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Corporate Gov & Standards Ctte **(7 seats)** | **4** | **1** | **1** | **0** | **1** |
| Joint Governance Committee **(6 seats)** | **3** | **1** | **1** | **1** | **0** |
| Joint Senior Staff Committee **(3 seats)** | **2** | **1** | **0** | **0** | **0** |
| Licensing Committee **(15 seats)** | **8** | **3** | **2** | **1** | **1** |
| O&S Committee – Resources **(12 seats)** | **6** | **3** | **2** | **1** | **0** |
| O&S Committee – Services **(12 seats)** | **6** | **3** | **2** | **0** | **1** |
| Planning Committee **(15 seats)** | **8** | **3** | **2** | **1** | **1** |
| **Total no. of seats on committees** | **37** | **15** | **10** | **4** | |

(3) That the nominations for membership of the committees and the joint committees for the 2024-25 municipal year be approved in accordance with the wishes of the political groups as indicated below:

**Corporate Governance and Standards Committee**

Councillor Phil Bellamy
Councillor Ruth Brothwell
Councillor Bob Hughes
Councillor Stephen Hives
Councillor Vanessa King
Councillor George Potter
Councillor James Walsh

**Guildford and Waverley Joint Governance Committee**

Councillor Joss Bigmore
Councillor James Brooker
Councillor Philip Brooker
Councillor Julia McShane
Councillor Danielle Newson
Councillor Merel Rehorst-Smith

**Guildford and Waverley Joint Senior Staff Committee**

Councillor Philip Brooker
Councillor Julia McShane
Councillor Fiona White

**Licensing Committee**

Councillor Bilal Akhtar
Councillor Amanda Creese
Councillor Gillian Harwood
Councillor Catherine Houston
Councillor Bob Hughes
Councillor Tom Hunt
Councillor Sandy Lowry
Councillor Masuk Miah
Councillor Patrick Oven
Councillor David Shaw
Councillor Katie Steel
Councillor Cait Taylor
Councillor Dominique Williams
Councillor Keith Witham
Councillor Catherine Young

**Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Resources**

Councillor Phil Bellamy
Councillor Dawn Bennett
Councillor Honor Brooker
Councillor Philip Brooker
Councillor Jason Fenwick
Councillor Stephen Hives
Councillor Vanessa King
Councillor Masuk Miah
Councillor Richard Mills OBE
Councillor Katie Steel
Councillor Dominique Williams
Councillor Sue Wyeth-Price

**Overview and Scrutiny Committee - Services**

Councillor Bilal Akhtar
The Mayor, Councillor Sallie Barker MBE
Councillor Geoff Davis
Councillor James Jones
Councillor Steven Lee
Councillor Sandy Lowry
Councillor Maddy Redpath
Councillor Joanne Shaw
Councillor Katie Steel
Councillor Jane Tyson
Councillor James Walsh
Councillor Catherine Young

**Planning Committee**

Councillor Bilal Akhtar
Councillor Joss Bigmore
Councillor David Bilbé
Councillor Yves de Contades
Councillor Lizzie Griffiths
Councillor Steve Hives
Councillor James Jones
Councillor Vanessa King
Councillor Richard Mills OBE

Councillor Patrick Oven
Councillor Maddy Redpath
Councillor Joanne Shaw
The Deputy Mayor, Councillor Howard Smith
Councillor Cait Taylor
Councillor Dominique Williams

(4) That the designated chairs of the Licensing Sub-Committee and Licensing Regulatory Sub-Committee continue to be elected annually by the Council, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 2.4.6.

(5) That the nominations for election of chairs and vice-chairs of committees and chairs of the Licensing sub-committees for the 2024-25 municipal year, as shown in the table below, be approved:

| **Committee** | **Nominee(s) for Chairman** | **Nominee for Vice-Chairman** |
|---|---|---|
| Corporate Governance & Standards Committee | Cllr Phil Bellamy | Cllr Bob Hughes |
| Licensing Committee | Cllr Catherine Young | Cllr Keith Witham |
| Licensing Sub-Committee /Licensing Regulatory Sub-Committee (up to 7 designated sub-committee chairs) | Cllr Amanda Creese<br>Cllr Gillian Harwood<br>Cllr Masuk Miah<br>Cllr Patrick Oven<br>Cllr Cait Taylor<br>Cllr Keith Witham<br>Cllr Catherine Young | |
| Overview & Scrutiny Committee - Resources | Cllr Philip Brooker | |
| Overview & Scrutiny Committee - Services | Cllr James Walsh | Cllr Bilal Akhtar |
| Planning Committee | Cllr Vanessa King | Cllr Dominique Williams |

(6) That the Council appoints Councillor Stephen Hives as Armed Forces Champion for 2024-25.

Reasons:

- To comply with Council Procedure Rules 2.4.1 and 2.4.6 in respect of the appointment of committees and election of committee chairs and vice-chairs
- To enable the Council to comply with its obligations under the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 in respect of the political proportionality on its committees.

Contested Election:
The Council was invited to vote on the contested election in respect of the vice-chair of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee – Resources.

The Council

RESOLVED: That Councillor Dominique Williams be elected vice-chair of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee – Resources for the 2024-25 municipal year.

Appointment of Councillor Champions – 2024-25
The Council was also invited to vote on the contested appointment of Councillor Champions for the 2024-25 municipal year.

It was noted, however, that Councillor Honor Brooker had withdrawn her nomination in respect of the Older Persons Champion, Councillor de Contades had withdrawn his nomination in respect of the Historic Environment and Design Champion, and the Mayor had withdrawn her nomination in respect of Deputy Armed Forces Champion.

Consequently, the Council

RESOLVED:

(1) That Councillor Richard Mills OBE be appointed as Historic Environment & Design Champion for 2024-25.

(2) That Councillor Joanne Shaw be appointed as Older Persons' Champion for 2024-25.

(3) That Councillor Danielle Newson be appointed as Deputy Armed Forces Champion for 2024-25.

**CO15 ANNUAL WEYSIDE URBAN VILLAGE REPORT**
Weyside Urban Village ("WUV") was a major 41-hectare brownfield regeneration scheme that the Council had anticipated could deliver approximately 1,500 homes across a range of tenures, as well as 2,000 square metres of community space and 6,500 square metres of employment space. In February 2020, the Council had committed £334.9 million to de-risk the infrastructure and site assembly process needed across the Weyside Urban Village site. Over 44% of the site was currently in Council ownership, and 100% would be achieved on completion of land transfers with

Thames Water Utilities Ltd (“TWUL”). The conditional contract with TWUL had been signed on 25 April 2019 (the "TW Agreement").

The Council had signed a Grant Determination Agreement (GDA) with Homes England in July 2020 for Housing Infrastructure Funding (HIF) for £52.3m, to draw down the grant expenditure associated with the implementation of the infrastructure works. In October 2021, the Planning Committee had issued a Resolution to Grant for the hybrid planning application for Weyside, with the decision notice to approve the application issued in March 2022.

The broader economic landscape and its impact on the construction industry over the last 12–18 months had been profound. At the end of 2021, the Building Cost Information Service - which provided cost and price data for the UK construction industry - reported that the annual growth in its material cost index had reached a forty-year high. Since then, pressures on supply chains had persisted and labour shortages had become more acute. Although the lifting of Covid restrictions had led to a return of high activity levels, the war in Ukraine and high rates of inflation had put the construction industry in further turmoil. The impact of these issues was being felt at a local level, with forecast construction and financing costs also increasing significantly.

The Executive had agreed in January 2020 that the project team would report the financial position to the Executive on an annual basis. The report now before the Council had set out the current financial forecast to the end of the programme ahead of a further paper being presented to Executive and Council outlining the proposed mitigation plan to address the potential financial deficit that had arisen as a result of macro-level factors.

The Council noted that the report had been considered by the Executive at its special meeting on 9 May and details of its decision and recommendation to Council was set out on the Supplementary Agenda Pack.

Upon the motion of the Deputy Leader of the Council and Lead Councillor for Regeneration, Councillor Tom Hunt, seconded by the Leader of the Council, Councillor Julia McShane, the Council

RESOLVED: That the Council approves the transfer of £69.548 million from the provisional capital programme to the approved capital programme for payments which the Council is obliged to make to Thames Water Utilities Limited under the Thames Water Agreement for 2024-25, for costs necessary to meet the milestones set within the Homes England HIF agreement and construction costs of phase 2 Infrastructure, Offsite Highways and the New Council Depot.

Reasons:

- To ensure that there is sufficient understanding of the projected financial forecast of the programme and outline the work underway to develop mitigation strategies to alleviate the forecast deficit.

- To ensure that there is sufficient funding in the approved programme to cover construction of phase 2 Infrastructure, Offsite Highways and the new Council Depot and the payments which the Council is obliged to make to Thames Water Utilities Limited under the Thames Water Agreement for 2024-25.

- To ensure that statutory service agreements and construction agreements can be entered into for the delivery of services and infrastructure for the development and to ensure that Homes England Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) milestones are achieved.

- To support the delivery of the Council's Corporate Plan (2021-2025) priorities, by supporting the high-quality development of a strategic site, creating employment opportunities through regeneration and facilitating affordable housing.

**CO16 MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE**

The Council received and noted the minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 25 January, 22 February, and 18 April 2024.

The meeting finished at 7.56 pm

Signed …….. Date ……

Mayor