

## Executive

\* Councillor Julia McShane (Chairperson)

\* Councillor Tom Hunt (Vice-Chair)

\* Councillor Angela Goodwin

\* Councillor George Potter

\* Councillor Catherine Houston

\* Councillor Merel Rehorst-Smith

\* Councillor Richard Lucas

\* Councillor Fiona White

Councillor Carla Morson

\*Present

Councillors Vanessa King and Dominique Williams were also in remote attendance.

### **EX86 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Carla Morson.

### **EX87 Local Code of Conduct - Disclosable Pecuniary Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **EX88 Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 January 2025 were confirmed as correct. The Leader signed the minutes.

### **EX89 Leader's Announcements**

The Leader made the following announcements:

Independent report finds significant savings from Guildford and Waverley partnership

I'm pleased to update you on our Collaboration. An independent report, written by Local Partnerships, has outlined the benefits and savings produced by our ongoing collaboration with Waverley Borough Council. The report also highlights the potential for further savings and efficiencies in the future.

The 'Analysis of collaboration benefits' report shows that the joint management approach introduced in 2022 has already generated savings of £603,000 without impacting the quality of our services.

The report is a key milestone in our collaboration. We are considering options that could see more services shared across both councils. These will be carefully evaluated to make sure they deliver more benefits than costs.

[Find out more and read the full report in the newsroom on our website.](#)

Give your views at Guildford Flood Alleviation Scheme event

A Guildford Flood Alleviation Scheme public event will take place on Saturday 22 February, 12noon to 5pm at The Electric Theatre.

You can:

- find out what has happened on the project since last year
- learn about the next steps and
- give your views.

Members of the project team will be there to meet you and answer any questions.

There will also be an online event on Wednesday 26 February, from 7.30pm to 8.30pm if you can't make it to the in-person event.

Search for 'Guildford Flood alleviation scheme' or [visit the Environment Agency project website for more information.](#)

Declaration of Freedom of Religion and Belief

It was a privilege to sign the Declaration of Freedom of Religion and Belief, alongside faith, community and civic leaders in Guildford last Sunday (19 January). The signing of the Declaration was part of an interfaith event that marked the 750<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the expulsion of the Jews from Guildford in 1275. We want to be a borough where all our communities are valued, cultures appreciated, and religious diversity respected. The Declaration reflects one of our key priorities of building a more inclusive borough.

We're open to working with all faith groups and those with no religious beliefs to celebrate important events in our borough. People should approach the [events@guildford.gov.uk](mailto:events@guildford.gov.uk) in the first instance with any request.

### **Crowdfund Guildford workshop for fundraisers**

There's still time for fundraisers to register for a place at the free online workshop on Tuesday 28 January, from 12noon to 1pm. This will give them the know-how, tools, and confidence they need to start a campaign with Crowdfund Guildford.

Register at [www.eventbrite.co.uk](http://www.eventbrite.co.uk) and search for 'Crowdfund Guildford'.

You can find out more about Crowdfund Guildford at [www.spacehive.com](http://www.spacehive.com).

### **EX90 Change of use and lease extension of The Bridge, Bridge Street, Guildford**

The Council owned the freehold of The Bridge, Bridge Street which was let out on a long lease at a peppercorn rent and had historically been used as hostel accommodation. The leaseholder was seeking an extension of the current lease from 88 years to 125 years, and in addition, to a change of use from Hostel Accommodation to Student Accommodation. Both matters could be dealt with

simultaneously under one transaction and would generate a capital receipt for the Council.

The Executive,

RESOLVED:

1. Approved the surrender of the current lease over The Bridge, and the subleases over Napoleon's Passage and the airspace above, between the Council and M. F. Strawson, and simultaneously grant one new lease over The Bridge, Napoleon's Passage, and the airspace above, for a term of 125 years with a new user provision being Student Accommodation.
2. Approved the surrender of both leases over Napoleon's Passage and the airspace above, between the Council and the National Trust, and simultaneously enter into two new leases for a term of 125 years.

Reason(s):

To provide the Council with a capital receipt of £214,000. All capital receipts generated from General Fund assets will contribute towards the Council's Financial Recovery Plan to reduce Council debt and achieve a sustainable financial position.

**EX91 To review the rent over 40 Moorfield Road, Slyfield Industrial Estate**  
The Council's asset portfolio required ongoing active property management to keep the estate in good order. Many of the tenanted investment assets were on leases which included provision for regular rent reviews, either based on open market, or indexed/ fixed increase.

The term of the lease was 150 years from 24 February 1989. The lease contained a provision for upward-only open market rent reviews every 5 years, with the subject rent review being due with effect from 3 February 2024.

Freehold land values particularly in the industrial sector had increased substantially in recent years which put the Council in a strong negotiating position. The external valuer demonstrated that the comparable evidence of freehold land transactions produced the highest value compared with rental values.

The Executive,

RESOLVED:

To approve an increase in the rent from £174,144 per annum to £278,500 per annum with effect from the 3 February 2024 rent review.

Reason(s):

1. The proposed settlement represents best consideration.
2. The proposed annual rent secures an excellent increase in the annual rental income stream for the Council.

**EX92 Off-Street Parking Annual Business Plan**

The Executive considered a report updating on the operation and financial performance of the Parking Service in 2021-22, 2022-23 and 2023-24. The Executive noted the improvements completed and those to be undertaken over the next 5 years.

It was noted that the council's website now included maps to assist those seeking to park in Guildford. The map had been helpfully replicated on the Experience Guildford website. Discussions with Surrey County Council in respect of directional car park signage was ongoing.

Millmead Car Park has 87 spaces and not 187 as set out in the report. Paragraph 3.9 should read 'per year'.

The report was welcomed and was considered comprehensive and well set out.

The Executive,

**RESOLVED:**

1. In respect of Farnham Road Multistorey Car Park:
  - To increase the standard daytime rate from £1.10 per hour to £1.20 per hour
  - To remove the pre-7am £1.00 per hour rate
  - To standardise the Sunday daytime rate with the proposed Monday to Saturday rate of £1.20 per hour
  - To increase the maximum daily (capped) tariff from £9.00 per day to £10.00 per day.
2. In respect of York Road Multistorey Car Park:
  - To convert from a Shopper car park to a Long-stay car park
  - To remove the £4.00 up to 3-hour tariff structure and replace with a standard daytime rate of £1.20 per hour between 8am and 6pm
  - To reduce the maximum daily (capped) tariff from £11.00 per day to £10.00 per day.

3. In respect of season tickets, contract parking and garages:  
To increase the current rates charged by 10%.
4. To make no other changes to the Short-stay and Shopper car park tariffs.
5. To refocus the Parking Strategy to reflect modern technology and parking trends by using external consultants up to a budget of £50,000 and to report its findings to the Executive.
6. To delegate approval to join the National Parking Platform (NPP) to the Joint Assistance Director of Commercial Services in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Commercial Services.
7. To note the priorities for the capital programme for the years 2025-2030.

Reason(s):

1. In April 2024, tariffs in the Short-stay and Shopper car park were increased. However, the daytime Long-stay parking and Sunday fees at Farnham Road MSCP were left unchanged. Similarly, the Contract Parking, Season ticket and Garage fees were not revised at that time.
2. At Farnham Road MSCP the proposed 10p per hour increase from £1.10 per hour to £1.20 per hour recommended, equates to a 2.92% per increase over the 3-year period since the charges were last amended. This and the other amendments to the tariffs proposed for this car park are expected to generate an additional £119,000 per annum in net revenue.
3. Changes in the nature of the business and retail activity, in the upper High Street area of the town centre, has resulted in reduction in utilisation at York Road MSCP. This has led to an over-capacity of Shopper parking provision in the area. Therefore, to try to encourage greater use of this facility, which boasts the largest capacity of any car park in that particular part of the town, changing the car park to a Long-stay facility, with lower charges, may help to increase patronage and free up capacity in nearby Short-stay and Shopper facilities.
4. The conversion of York Road MSCP will establish a Long-stay interceptor facility on the eastern side of the town centre, like that provided by Farnham Road MSCP on the western approach to the town centre. However, the proposed change in daytime tariffs to a £1.20 per hour fee will have a negative financial impact. This is expected to reduce net revenue by around £186,000 per annum (assuming no increase in patronage). Even so, it may help to better meet the needs of businesses, who since the pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis, have been seeking concessions for staff parking.

5. However, if as anticipated, the reduced fees encourage greater utilisation, the negative revenue position could be reduced. A 5% increase in patronage would reduce the net revenue reduction from £186,000 to £159,000 per annum, A 10% increase in utilisation would reduce the net revenue reductions to £133,000. Indeed, if there was a 15% increase in use, the £106,000 net reduction would be exceeded by the net increase in revenue anticipated at Farnham Road MSCP (£119,000). So, the proposed changes could be broadly 'cost neutral'. Of course, if there is displacement from other nearby Short-stay and Shopper car parks, this may reduce revenues there, but this would help to free up capacity in these centrally located facilities, for other visitors to use.
6. Notwithstanding, the Parking team has been set a target to generate an additional £1.0m in net revenue in 2025-26 (in addition to the £800,000 target that it was set for 2024-25). So, other tariff changes could be considered. However, thus far during 2024-25, the service has exceeded predictions in respect ticket revenue, contract parking, season ticket, pre-payment and penalty charge notice income (see 6.3).
7. Additionally, when new Pay and Display (P&D) and Barrier Pay on Foot (PoF) parking equipment is introduced in late 2024-25 / early 2025-26, the availability of improved technology and contactless payments across all our parking facilities is likely to generate additional revenues, in respect to the anticipated transfer from cash to card payments. This could be expected to generate around £300,000 additional net revenue per annum, through people using card rather than limiting the duration of their stays based upon the amount of change they possess.
8. Contract Parking and Season tickets represent extremely good value for money for regular users, with discounts ranging between 15%-45% of standard parking tariffs. To avoid impeding the return-to-work post-pandemic, the fees associated with these two forms of parking offer have only been increased once, in 2022-23, when the fees were subject to a 3.0% rise. Garages were last increased in 2023-24, by 3.5%. Therefore, a 10% increase in Contract, Season ticket and Garage fees is recommended. In respect to Contract and Season ticket parking, this equates to 3.23% annual increase per year over the 3-year period since the charges were last amended. This is broadly in line with the average inflation rate over the period. Given the realignment of the tariffs and daily cap on fees in Farnham Road and York Road MSCPs, it is recommended that the season ticket fees in these car parks are also standardised. These changes are expected to generate an additional £78,500 per annum in net revenue.
9. Summary of impact of the recommended changes

- Performance exceeding expectations FY24-25: +£265k (ticket) +£268k (PCN) + £67k (Contract etc...)
- Farnham Road MSCP: +£119,000
- York Road MSCP: -£186,000
- Contract Parking, Season Tickets & Garages: +£78,500

10. Other changes to operations in FY24-25

- New payment equipment / technology: +£300,000
- Cash Collection collaboration: +£65,000
- Waverley enforcement collaboration: +£23,000

**TOTAL (compared to baseline FY24/25 budget): +£1.00m**

11. No other tariffs changes are recommended for 2025-26, on the basis that the vast majority of the other parking fees were increased in April 2024. It should be noted that these revisions were higher than the levels originally recommended by officers.
12. The development of a new Parking Strategy will help to determine any changes in supply and demand and assess the future requirements for the provision of parking within the town. This will help to ensure that the parking facilities remain fit for purpose and there is sufficient capacity for them to act as an effective enabler for the local economy.
13. The NPP will bring together car park operators, equipment suppliers and service providers, to give customers a wider range of options to pay for parking, improved business intelligence for operators and benefits in terms of the economies of scale.
14. The adoption of a more structured capital programme for both the structured and surface car parks will assist in budgeting for planned maintenance, upgrades and ensure that health and safety and the customer's experience is maintained/improved.

**EX93 Governance and Resourcing of a Joint Executive Support Team**

The Council's Executive Support Team supported the Leadership Team. It had effectively been operating as a joint service for both councils since 2021. However, the Executive Support Team had not been treated in accordance with the Council's interim Policy on Joint roles or the existing Inter-Authority Agreement and this inconsistency was to be remedied by the recommendations in the report.

The Executive,

RESOLVED:

1. Approved the creation of 1.5 full time equivalent new Personal Assistant posts to support the recent growth of three new Joint Assistant Directors, subject to budget approval by Council;
2. Subject to approval of the creation of two further new Joint Assistant Directors, approved the creation of 1 full time equivalent further Personal Assistant post to support those posts, subject to budget approval by Council;
3. Subject to consultation with affected staff and Unions, designate all existing and new posts within the Executive Support Team as Joint Posts from 1 April 2025;
4. Approved honorarium payments from 2021 (or the start of employment, whichever is the later) to existing Officers in the Executive Support Team in accordance with paragraph 11.3 of this report, at a cost of £51,000 to Guildford Borough Council;
5. Recommended to Council that the Executive Support function be a joint function with Waverley Borough Council and that the Council agrees to delegate the exercise of this function to Waverley Borough Council on behalf of Guildford Borough Council;
6. Recommended to Council that the Strategic Director of Legal and Democratic Services be given delegated authority, in consultation with the Joint Chairs of the Joint Governance Committee, to include the shared Executive Support service in any Inter-Authority Agreement.

Reason(s):

1. To ensure that the Leaders of both Councils, the Corporate Leadership Board and the Joint Leadership Team are adequately supported by sufficient resources within the Executive Support Team, to enable them to operate in an efficient and cost-effective way.
2. To ensure that Executive Support Team officers, who provide a service to both Councils by supporting and working closely with Joint Officers, are formally recognised as having Joint Posts.
3. To ensure that such Joint Posts are dealt with in a consistent manner and in accordance with existing HR policies for such posts and the inter authority agreement between the two Councils for the sharing of staff.
4. Recognising that when officers in the Executive Support Team commenced their roles, they were not treated in accordance with the current HR policy for Joint Posts as it did not exist at the relevant time, and remedying this lack of consistency, parity and fairness by way of payment of honorariums will put such officers into the position they would have been in had the policy been in place at the time.



5. To seek Council's formal approval of the creation of a joint service and to agree the provision of the function to Guildford Borough Council by Waverley Borough Council.

#### **EX94 Review of Hackney Carriage Stands following North Street Redevelopment**

The Executive report presented the results of the statutory public consultation into the proposed changes to Hackney Carriage Stands (Taxi Ranks) in Guildford town centre that were required due to the North Street Redevelopment. Some of the changes would be temporary and some permanent. The report asked the Executive to approve all proposed changes in line with the recommendation from the Licensing Committee meeting on 15 January.

The Executive shared some of the concerns in respect of safety that had been expressed by the Licensing Committee. However, it was noted that options due to space were limited. Surrey County Council and Surrey Police had been consulted. There would be increased marshals at busy times and extra CCTV installed. The areas of concern were the temporary arrangements and it was considered the proposals were sensible and well-balanced and overall, the town centre would be improved by the development.

The work of officers was appreciated and the Executive requested the Licensing Committee receive regular verbal updates on how well the arrangements were operating.

The Executive,

**RESOLVED:**

1. The removal of the current taxi rank on North Street outside Marks and Spencer due to the future pedestrianisation of North Street;
2. The temporary closure of the current taxi rank on North Street outside the Friary Centre during a period of redevelopment works;
3. The temporary adoption of the parking bays at lower High Street outside Vision Express as a taxi rank during a period of redevelopment works;
4. The temporary adoption of the double yellow line at Bedford Road outside St James House as a night time taxi rank; and
5. Should external funding not be available, and in agreement with the Assistant Director for Regeneration, funds estimated at £28,720 can be transferred to assist with improving safety and mitigating the impact during the temporary closure of the main North Street Rank at the Friary.

Reason(s):

This proposal is part of the wider redevelopment works to Guildford town centre requiring both temporary and permanent changes to taxi ranks affected by development.

**EX95 Risk Management Strategy (2025/26 - 2028/29)**

The Executive considered new risk management strategy for the Council. The strategy set out an approach to risk management that, if adopted, would commit the council to risk management as a core component of effective governance, leadership and the management of the organisation at all levels. The development of the strategy was a key action of the council's Improvement Plan, arising from the independent governance review undertaken by Solace in 2024.

The Council has worked closely with Zurich Resilience Solutions in creating the strategy. Zurich had confirmed that it was comprehensive and met standards of good practice.

The strategy was accompanied by a risk management methodology that set out how the principles and objectives of the strategy was to be achieved at the Council.

Both documents had been previously reviewed by the Corporate Governance and Standards Committee and the minute of the meeting held on 16 January with comments and recommendations was set out in the Supplementary Information Sheet.

The Executive,

RESOLVED:

1. Note the risk management strategy (2025/26 – 2028/29) and any comments on its contents made by the Corporate Governance and Standards Committee;
2. Approve the risk management strategy (2025/25 – 2028/29);
3. Subject to any revisions required following the Corporate Governance and Standards Committee's receipt of the strategy, delegate authority to the Joint Assistant Director, Strategy and Corporate Services to make any necessary amendments in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Community and Organisational Development; and,
4. Delegate authority to the Joint Assistant Director, Strategy and Corporate Services to make any minor amendments to the risk management strategy as required and in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Community and Organisational Development.

Reason(s):

For the council to have effective arrangements in place for the management of risk.

**EX96 Framework Agreement for Countryside Services Framework**

The purpose of the report before the Executive was to seek ratification of the execution of a Highways Framework Agreement for Countryside Services between Guildford Borough Council and Surrey County Council (SCC).

SCC went out to procure a framework for the provision of countryside services commencing in April 2024. The services provided under the framework were split into seven different lots which included, for example, grass cutting, weed control, countryside services and highways services. Under the Framework Agreement the Council had the opportunity to be awarded call-off contracts by framework customers to provide the services in the awarded lots.

The Executive,

**RESOLVED:**

1. Ratify the execution underhand in May 2024 of the Framework Agreement with Surrey County Council for provision of countryside services.
2. Delegate authority to the Joint Strategic Director Housing, Communities & Environment to enter all call-off contracts under the Framework Agreement.

Reason(s):

1. To note the award and execution underhand of the Framework Agreement and provide ratification of the method of execution.
2. To ensure that the Council can fulfil its obligations under the Framework Agreement and respond expeditiously to call-offs under the Framework Agreement.

**EX97 General Fund Capital Budget 2025-26 to 2028-29**

The Executive considered a report setting out the capital programme. The Council had a significant capital programme which was delivering renewal and replacement of the Council's assets and enabling regeneration projects such as Ash Road Bridge and Weyside Urban Village. The existing capital programme has been updated for projected timing and scale of project cashflows.

It was noted that the Capital Strategy and Treasury Management paper was approved by full Council in December 2024 which set out the overall strategy for the Medium Term Financial Period and the prudential indicators to be adhered to in terms of affordability and financing.

The minutes of the Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee were appended to the Supplementary Information Sheet.

The Executive considered the capital growth proposals as set out to be prudent despite the recent announcements in respect of local government unitarisation which had placed a different light on consideration of some capital projects spending.

The simplified report was welcomed and officers thanked for their support during the in-depth examination of service budgets that had taken place during the financial year.

The Executive

RESOLVED:

1. Noted the comments arising from the meeting of the Resources Overview and Scrutiny meeting on 21 January 2025.
2. Recommended the following to Council

(at its Budget Meeting on 5 February 2025):

- (1) That the updated capital programme set out in Appendix 1 is approved.
- (2) That the proposed treatment of the new capital bids as set out in paragraphs 6.9 to 6.16 are approved.

Reason(s):

1. The financing of the approved Capital Budget has direct implications on borrowing costs within the General Fund revenue budget and other funding sources such as Reserves and Balances.
2. Setting a balanced budget is a statutory requirement.

#### **EX98 General Fund Revenue Budget 2025-26 and Medium-Term Financial Plan 2025-26 to 2027-28**

The Executive considered the report and noted that the provisional finance settlement had been extremely poor for most councils, including this council, in receiving no increase in its Core Spending Power. Consequently, overall funding for 2025-26 would remain at the same level as 2024-25, even after an increase in Council Tax revenues. There was no new funding available to meet the cost of pay awards, demand and inflationary pressures.

There had been an in-depth review of existing budgets which had identified some areas of savings and efficiencies. This, together with a further review of fees and charges had meant that most cost existing pressures could be met without the

need for cuts to services. Of the 42 growth bids received from services very few could be accommodated for 2025-26.

It was noted that further reviews of service budgets were planned which could release funding in due course.

The minutes of the Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee were appended to the Supplementary Information Sheet.

The Executive welcomed a simplified report that was more accessible to members and residents. It was noted that there were some growth bids that would improve services and increase efficiencies. There was an amendment to the fees and charges appendix to increase the annual garden waste charge.

The Executive,

RESOLVED:

1. Noted the comments arising from the Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on 21 January 2025.
2. Recommended the following to full Council (at its Budget Meeting on 5 February 2025):
  1. That the General Fund Budget for 2025/26 as summarised in Appendix 6 be approved.
  2. That a 2.99% increase in Guildford Council's Band D Council Tax Charge for 2025/26, be approved with resultant increases to the other council tax bands.
  3. That the Council's existing Local Council Tax Support Scheme, with uprating as set out in Appendix 1 and the £40,000 discretionary hardship fund that runs alongside it, be continued.
  4. That Council endorses the updated guidelines for Discretionary Reductions, set out in Appendix 2.
  5. That, from 1 April 2025, the Council varies its determination of 7 February 2024 under Section 11B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, to except properties from the long-term empty dwelling levy in accordance with The Council Tax (Prescribed Classes of Dwellings and Consequential Amendments) (England) Regulations 2024 SI 1007. Where a property is not excepted the long-term empty dwelling levy starts after a property has been empty and unfurnished for one year.
  6. That, from 1 April 2025, the Council varies its determination of 7 February 2024 under section 11C of the Local Government Finance Act

1992 to except properties from the premium on periodically used dwellings in accordance with The Council Tax (Prescribed Classes of Dwellings and Consequential Amendments) (England) Regulations 2024 SI 1007. Where a property is not excepted the Council will charge a premium (levy) of 100% on periodically used dwellings.

7. That the schedule of Fees and Charges, as set out in Appendix 3 to this report, be approved **with the amendment that the subscription fee per garden waste bin be increased to £65 per annum.**

Reason(s):

1. The General Fund Budget is a major decision for the Council and setting a balanced budget is a statutory requirement.
2. Scrutiny of the MTFP and Budget proposals demonstrate transparency and good governance.
3. The Council has been well positioned to respond to the financial challenges faced by all local authorities. Whilst the latest MTFP for the subsequent years ending 2028-29 continues to project future financial pressures, and opportunities, the Council will take action to ensure sufficient funding is in place to deliver and maintain services.

**EX99 Housing Revenue Account Budget 2025-26**

The Executive considered the report that outlined the proposed Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget for 2025/26, which had been built on the estimates and assumptions in the updated 2024 HRA Business Plan. The Business Plan had been independently 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 wider operating environment.

The minutes of the Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee were appended to the Supplementary Information Sheet.

It was observed that the proposed rental increase of just 2.7% was agreeable in comparison to the private sector rental market charges. Any energy efficiencies installed across the Council's housing estate would provide a direct benefit to residents in terms of lower bills.

The Executive,

**RESOLVED:**

1. Noted the comments arising from the Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on 21 January 2025; and
2. Recommended to full Council

(at its Budget Meeting on 5 February 2025):

That the Council approves:

1. The proposed HRA revenue budget for 2025/26, as set out in Appendix 1 to this report.
2. That a rent increase of 2.7%, be implemented.
3. That the fees and charges for HRA services for 2025/26, as set out in Appendix 2 to this report, be approved.
4. That a 5% increase be applied to garage rents which is in line with the wider Council policy on fees and charges.

Reason(s):

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

The meeting finished at 8.40 pm

Signed .....

Date .....

Chairman