

13 JULY 2017

**SOCIETY, ENVIRONMENT, AND COUNCIL DEVELOPMENT  
EXECUTIVE ADVISORY BOARD**

13 July 2017

- \* Councillor Adrian Chandler (Chairman)
- \* Councillor Pauline Searle (Vice-Chairman)

- |                               |                           |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------|
| * Councillor Angela Gunning   | Councillor Dennis Paul    |
| Councillor Christian Holliday | Councillor Tony Phillips  |
| Councillor Gordon Jackson     | * Councillor David Quelch |
| * Councillor Jennifer Jordan  | * Councillor David Reeve  |
| Councillor Sheila Kirkland    | * Councillor David Wright |

\*Present

Councillor Matt Furniss was also in attendance.

**S8 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

Councillors Christian Holliday, Gordon Jackson, Sheila Kirkland and Tony Phillips submitted apologies for absence.

In accordance with Procedure Rule 23(j), Councillor Jenny Wicks attended as a substitute on behalf of Councillor Sheila Kirkland.

**S9 LOCAL CODE OF CONDUCT AND DECLARATION OF DISCLOSABLE  
PECUNIARY INTERESTS**

There were no declarations of disclosable pecuniary interest.

**S10 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 25 May 2017 were confirmed as a correct record and were signed by the Chairman.

**S11 RECYCLING IMPROVEMENTS: REVIEW OF REFUSE AND RECYCLING SERVICE**

The Waste and Fleet Services Manager gave an overview of the recycling and waste service. In 2009, alternate weekly collections of refuse and recycling began, with weekly recycling of food waste. Guildford was the first borough in the country to offer a design of vehicle and approach to service that later became the standard across the UK. By 2010, Guildford was able to evidence a satisfaction rate of 90%; by 2012 a more comprehensive service was delivered, and the satisfaction rate increased further to 94%. The current vehicle fleet was introduced in 2013, and was a big success. Moving from a box system to a separated system saved around 30% of staffing costs. The comingled system included in-cab reporting that allowed crews to report contaminated bins, and generated automatic letters to residents. The system had also led to a reduction in staff sickness levels associated with manual handling. Recycling rates were 56%, with a satisfaction rate of 97%. The latest data was still to be ratified by DEFRA, but indicated a recycling rate of 59.7%, which compared well with the highest performing authorities in the UK. However, 59% of bins were not full when put out for emptying, 55% of items put into black bins could have been put into green bins for recycling, and there was scope to increase levels of food waste recycling.

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The Recycling and Waste Officer reported that there were some emerging challenges linked to the finances of Surrey County Council, and this Council was working with the County Council and various project teams to deal with issues. The current vehicle fleet would be due for replacement in 2019, and it was unlikely that the purchase of new vehicles could be delayed beyond that point. Therefore, this Council was actively looking at securing the right solution for Guildford for 2020-2027, bearing in mind that the decision-making process would take around 12 months, with a 6-month build time for new vehicles. Examples from other councils were provided to illustrate some of the potential options available. The Recycling and Waste Officer explained how waste was dealt with at the recycling plant, and agreed to circulate details of the end destination of items recycled.

The Lead Councillor for Infrastructure and Governance confirmed that this agenda item had been brought before the Board at a very early stage, with plenty of time to determine areas of focus, such as using emerging green/hybrid technologies, improving recycling rates, changing collection intervals or tackling food waste. Electric buses were being trialled in London, meaning that the technology may extend to refuse vehicles by 2019.

The Board discussed some of the issues raised in the presentation, and was cognisant that the health and safety of employees was extremely important, including minimising the risks to refuse collectors associated with manual handling. Street cleansing was also discussed: recyclable materials such as cans, plastic bottles, grit and hard-core, were removed from street sweepings and included in the overall recycling figures. Work was in progress to improve recycling for residents of flats, with positive results.

The Waste and Fleet Services Manager informed the Board that the UK was performing better than countries such as the USA, but not as well as some European countries such as Germany and Switzerland. However, some of the systems successfully used in other areas would not be appropriate in Guildford, due to the rural nature of the Borough. It was acknowledged that there was still scope for improvement locally, particularly around the amount of recyclable materials and food waste put out with the refuse, although this would require major behavioural change, supported by education. There was a perception that reducing refuse capacity might lead to more contamination of the recycling stream, but this dynamic had not been fully researched. In terms of the cost of kerbside recycling, this could potentially be an expensive option as it was a labour intensive process. Similarly, using coloured bags was also expensive, although they had been used successfully in the past. Wheeled bins were used to maximise efficiency and the current design had evolved from decades of use. The Board was advised that recycling of absorbent hygiene products was difficult, as the specialist company dealing with them had closed down. The Board was also reminded about arrangements for recycling various items, e.g. printer cartridges, batteries, waste electrical and electronic equipment, and plastic bottles.

RESOLVED:

The Board agreed to invite the Waste and Fleet Services Manager to provide a further update on the review of the refuse and recycling service at its meeting to be scheduled in July 2018.

## **S12 12 MONTH REVIEW OF COUNCIL'S REVISED GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS**

The Democratic Services Manager reminded councillors that, following a scrutiny review of the Council's governance arrangements in 2015, the Council had introduced, with effect from January 2016, a hybrid arrangement involving two Executive Advisory Boards (EABs) and a single Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC). The Council had also agreed that the new arrangements should be reviewed after a 12-month period of operation.

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As part of the 12-month review, a seminar for all councillors was held on 07 March 2017. Comments from that seminar, together with recommendations from the Corporate Governance and Standards Committee (15 June 2017) had resulted in a set of recommendations to be considered by this Board, as well as the Borough EAB and the OSC, prior to final consideration by full Council on 25 July 2017. Having met on 10 and 11 July respectively, the Borough EAB and the OSC had proposed some amendments to the recommendations, details of which were included in the agenda for this meeting.

The Board went on to discuss each recommendation.

The Board agreed that webcasts allowed for transparency and public engagement, and that it would not be appropriate to remove a facility after it had already been made available to the public. Where it was necessary to discuss exempt or confidential material at an EAB meeting, this could be done in private session, or task groups could be set up to provide a forum for more detailed discussion. The Board recognised that topics discussed at EAB were often at an early stage of development, and agreed that this could be made clear to webcast viewers to prevent potential misunderstandings.

The Board agreed with the OSC and the Borough EAB that meetings between the Executive and the EAB/OSC chairmen and vice-chairmen should be on a six-monthly rather than annual basis in order to have a continuity of relationship. The purpose of these meetings was to put forward ideas and suggestions for the Work Programme, and for that reason, the Board also recommended that a representative from CMT should attend.

The Board endorsed the amendments recommended by the Borough EAB and OSC in respect of improving the arrangements for topic selection and broadening the approach to the development of the OSC work programme.

The Lead Councillor for Infrastructure and Governance reminded the Board that lead councillors were ultimately responsible for the topics discussed at EAB meetings, and therefore should normally take the lead on presenting matters, with support from officers.

The Board agreed that lead councillors should be involved in task groups, and since such groups would only be set up to consider significant matters, it was likely that lead councillors would wish to participate.

In respect of the recommendation that the focus for public engagement should be aimed more at OSC than EABs, the Board agreed with the Borough EAB and OSC that this recommendation be removed from the list of recommendations to be considered by full Council.

The Board agreed that proactive measures for public engagement were relevant to the work of both the EABs and OSC, and that progress on matters previously considered by EABs should be reported back to them when appropriate. Furthermore they agreed that a briefing note should be provided to officers invited to attend OSC meetings, to ensure there was full comprehension of the process.

**RESOLVED:** That the following recommendations be submitted for consideration by full Council on 25 July 2017:

- (1) That the Council continues the public webcasting of meetings of the EABs.
- (2) That a six-monthly meeting between all members of the Executive and the EAB and OSC chairmen and vice-chairmen, together with one representative from the

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Corporate Management Team, be established to discuss topic areas for future work programmes and to discuss how the EABs and OSC could make a more effective contribution to the decision-making process.

- (3) That, in order to improve the arrangements for topic selection and agenda planning, the Executive/CMT be requested to provide suggestions for topic areas for EABs drawn from the (revised) Corporate Plan Action Plan for consideration at future work programme meetings and to have a CMT (as well as Executive) representative attend those meetings.
- (4) That the approach to the development of the O&S Committee work programme be broadened, by amending O&S Procedure Rules to introduce a more flexible approach to topic selection through replacing the topic selection flow chart in OSC Procedure Rules with the PAPER tool.
- (5) That, in addition to raising questions at meetings, OSC members should have an opportunity for putting written questions to lead councillors attending OSC meetings in advance so that written answers may be prepared.
- (6) That lead councillors should normally present matters, with officer support, for discussion at EAB meetings and engage actively in a dialogue with the EABs regarding those matters, and that the terms of reference of the EABs be amended accordingly.
- (7) That EABs be encouraged to set up task groups to research and review areas for policy development, subject to:
  - (a) consideration of implications for staff resources, and
  - (b) to the relevant lead councillors attending meetings of such task groups in an ex officio capacity as appropriate.
- (8) That more proactive measures for public engagement in respect of the work of the OSC and the EABs be established by:
  - (a) inviting suggestions for the OSC work programme from the public and partners as well as officers and councillors, and
  - (b) alerting the public about OSC and EAB agenda topics on days leading up to the meeting, on the day of the meeting and action agreed at the meeting through press releases/social media.
- (9) That progress on matters previously considered by EABs be reported back to them when appropriate.
- (10) That a briefing note be provided to those officers invited to attend OSC meetings to ensure there is full comprehension of the process, including the role of scrutiny and the Scrutiny Officer.

Reason for Recommendation:

To ensure that the Council's decision-making processes remain accessible, robust and accountable to local people.

**S13      PROGRESS ON COUNCILLOR INVOLVEMENT IN THE PREPARATION OF THE BUDGET**

The Democratic Services Manager explained that both EABs had agreed to establish a politically balanced Joint EAB Budget Working Group in September 2016, comprising four councillors appointed by each EAB. The Board agreed to continue with this arrangement, and was asked to appoint one Conservative member, one Liberal Democrat member, one Labour member and one Guildford Greenbelt Group member to a new Joint EAB Budget Task Group.

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RESOLVED:

That Councillors Angela Gunning, David Quelch, David Reeve and Caroline Reeves be appointed to the Joint EAB Budget Task Group for 2017-18.

Reason for Decision:

To ensure backbench councillor involvement in the budget setting process.

**S14 PROGRESS ON ITEMS PREVIOUSLY CONSIDERED BY THE EAB**

The Board discussed the progress on items previously considered and agreed that topics that had been superseded should be removed from the list. Progress on the Electric Theatre was discussed, and a new working group had been set up to monitor compliance with the terms of the lease recently granted to the Academy of Contemporary Music. On 23 February 2017 the Board had received an update on the Health and Wellbeing Strategy and were awaiting details of successes and more information on preventing carer strain, which the Democratic Services Manager agreed to follow up.

**S15 EAB WORK PROGRAMME**

In considering its work programme, the Board discussed the possibility of taking forward a proposal to develop a Strategy for the Borough's Elderly, and agreed that this should be discussed at the forthcoming Work Programming meeting. At that meeting, the Director of Resources would suggest that the unscheduled item on sustainability issues could be included in the agenda for the Society EAB meeting on 07 September 2017.

The Board was asked to submit suggestions for topics to include within the current Work Programme.

The meeting finished at 9.23 pm

Signed .....

Date .....

Chairman