

EXECUTIVE

20 July 2021

- * Councillor Joss Bigmore (Chairman)
- * Councillor Jan Harwood (Vice-Chairman)

- | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| * Councillor Tim Anderson | * Councillor John Redpath |
| Councillor Tom Hunt | * Councillor John Rigg |
| * Councillor Julia McShane | * Councillor James Steel |

*Present

Councillors Chris Blow, Angela Gunning, Ramsey Nagaty, and Paul Spooner, were also in attendance.

EX1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Tom Hunt.

EX2 LOCAL CODE OF CONDUCT - DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTEREST

There were no disclosures of interest.

EX3 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 April 2021 were confirmed as correct record. The Chairman signed the minutes.

EX4 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader commented that having spent some time in Guildford High Street yesterday, both shopping and dining, he had been reassured to see most people still adhering to behaviour limiting the spread of Coronavirus. As at 16 July, Guildford had 235 Covid cases per 100,000 people – which was lower than the Surrey average of 294 and the national average of 386. Hospital admissions remained low but were increasing - averaging 7 admissions per day in the county over the last week.

As announced last week, the vaccination centre at G Live would close on 31 July having vaccinated 170,000 people; a temporary facility would open at George Abbot School before the opening of a new centre at the Artington Park and Ride site in August.

The Leader urged everyone to be vaccinated, as it was our best defence against the virus, and noted that there were still drop-in slots available.

The Leader reported that the Council was asking all residents to submit the names of loved ones who lost their lives in active service since the end of WWII to go on a special Memorial for Guildford. Further information could be obtained from civicsecretary@guildford.gov.uk.

MyGuildford was the new one-stop-shop to access a range of our services in one place on our website. Subscribers can make requests, track progress, view bills and update details. Over 5,500 resident had joined already. Information on how to register was available via my.guildford.gov.uk.

Our Park Barn Community Centre had been relaunched as The Hive and everyone was welcome – it was noted there was a fantastic café and amazing cakes, a Community Fridge with free fresh food, and our ‘Thrive at the Hive’ service had pre-loved clothes, toys and homeware available to buy. Further details were available via our Community Wellbeing Team on social media, call 01483 444150 or email Community.Wellbeing@guildford.gov.uk.

The Leader also informed councillors that Keep Britain Tidy’s ‘Love Parks Week’ would begin on 23 July and, as schools break up, and residents were encouraged to use our award-winning parks and green spaces to enjoy the good weather and help their physical and mental health, but were requested to ensure that they either use the litter bins provided or take their rubbish home.

EX5 COMMUNITY SPONSORSHIP PROGRAMMES

The Executive considered a report seeking authorisation to progress community sponsorship applications under the Community Sponsorship Scheme as introduced by the Home Office. The intention of the Scheme was to support local community groups to take responsibility to welcome and resettle refugees from Syria and the surrounding region directly into their communities. This initiative complemented the resettlement work undertaken by local authorities as part of the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (VPRS) that was designed to support refugee families resettle in the UK within a 5-year support window.

A local community group, Resettle@Guildford, had prepared an application to the Home Office for Community Sponsorship of one household and sought the Council’s support in line with Home Office requirements to resettle a vulnerable family. Consent was required from both Surrey County Council (SCC) and Guildford Borough Council for any community sponsorship scheme’s application. SCC had given their consent to the community sponsors Resettle@Guildford’s application via delegation to the Executive Director of Children, Families and Lifelong Learning.

The Executive was in unanimous support of the recommendations and it was hoped the application would be swiftly expedited.

RESOLVED

- (1) To delegate authority to the Director of Service Delivery in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Housing and Community to give consent to future community sponsorship applications as part of the vulnerable persons resettlement scheme, subject to them meeting Home Office criteria.
- (2) To authorise the Head of Community Services to progress arrangements for consented community sponsorship with the Home Office and with Resettle@Guildford.

Reasons:

- The resettlement of refugee households in Guildford adds to the diversity of the area and the household will have the opportunity in the long term to contribute to the local economy through employment and voluntary work. This results in a vibrant local economy with thriving towns and villages. The VPRS and Community Sponsorship Scheme present opportunities to promote community spirit, to encourage individuals and families to welcome and support refugee households and to be more resilient in times of need.
- In granting delegated authority to the Director of Service Delivery in consultation with the Lead Member to give consent to community sponsors (such as Resettle@Guildford) alongside authorisation to the Head of Community Services to progress applications

with the Home Office, this process can work efficiently and swiftly for the benefit of our communities.

EX6 PRIORITY LIST OF HIGHWAY AND TRANSPORT SCHEMES CRITICAL TO LOCAL PLAN DELIVERY

A report was submitted to the Executive setting out five highway and transport schemes highlighted by the Council's Corporate Programmes Team as likely to be critical to the Local Plan maintaining its housing trajectory.

The Lead Councillor, following consultation with the Leader and other Executive colleagues requested that consideration of the report be deferred to the next meeting of the Executive on 24 August 2021 to enable the report to be considered by the Strategy and Resources EAB possibly on 9 August.

RESOLVED:

That consideration of this matter be deferred to the next meeting of the Executive to be held on 24 August 2021.

Reason:

To enable the matter to be considered by the Strategy and Resources EAB on 9 August 2021.

EX7 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2020-21

The Executive considered the draft Annual Governance Statement (AGS) that was required under the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015. The AGS detailed the governance framework and procedures that had operated at the Council during the year, a review of their effectiveness, significant governance issues that had occurred and a statement of assurance. The AGS was supported by the Annual Opinion Report (April 2020 to March 2021) as prepared by KPMG, the Council's internal audit managers. The draft AGS would be included in the Council's statement of accounts for 2020-21. The report would be considered by the Corporate Governance and Standards Committee at its meeting on 29 July 2021, and any comments from the Executive would be reported to that meeting. The Corporate Governance and Standards Committee had the authority to approve the AGS.

It was noted that 2020-21 had been an extraordinary challenging year for the Council in terms of addressing the Covid Pandemic, implementing Future Guildford with significant staff structural changes and an ongoing budgetary shortfall. The challenges had affected the governance of the Council which was reflected in the internal audit report's recommendation of 'partial assurance with improvement's required'. The Leader of the Council reflected on the reasons for improvement and with close monitoring looked forward to an improved audit report next year. The Leader requested that there be an interim report halfway through the year to provide an indication of progress and improvement.

The matter of email signature guidance as referred to the Corporate Governance and Standards Committee Task Group would be considered by that Committee in the near future. It was proposed that reference be made in the table setting out the principles of good governance within the AGS to the Council's petition scheme, which enabled anyone who lives, works, or studies in the borough to create paper petitions, or use the e-petition facility, to ask the Council to take action in respect of any matter on which we have functions, powers, or duties.

RESOLVED:

That the Council's Annual Governance Statement for 2020-21, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report submitted to the Executive, be commended to the Corporate Governance and Standards Committee for adoption at its meeting on 29 July 2021, subject to the following comments:

- (a) In Part A of the table in Section 3 of the AGS, the Corporate Governance & Standards Committee does not appear to have considered the Email Signature Guidance for Councillors proposed by the Corporate Governance Task Group.
- (b) In Part B of the table in Section 3 of the AGS, add the following:
 - "The Council has a petition scheme to enable anyone who lives, works, or studies in the borough to create paper petitions, or use the e-petition facility, to ask the Council to take action in respect of any matter on which we have functions, powers, or duties."
- (c) The Corporate Governance and Standards Committee to receive a mid-year update report on significant governance issues that arose in the financial year relating to the AGS.

Reason:

To comply with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, the Council must prepare, approve, and publish an Annual Governance Statement.

The meeting finished at 7.24 pm

Signed

Chairman

Date