



EXTRAORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING

WEDNESDAY 21 FEBRUARY 2024

ORDER PAPER

WEBCASTING NOTICE

This meeting will be recorded for subsequent broadcast on the Council's website in accordance with the Council's capacity in performing a task in the public interest and in line with the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014.

The whole of the meeting will be recorded, except where there are confidential or exempt items, and the footage will be on the website for six months.

If you have any queries regarding webcasting of meetings, please contact Democratic Services.

I would like to welcome everyone to this evening's extraordinary meeting of the Council.

I should be grateful if you would ensure that your mobile phones and other hand-held devices are switched to silent during the meeting. If the fire alarm sounds during the course of the meeting - we are not expecting it to go off - please leave the Council Chamber immediately and proceed calmly to the assembly point in Millmead on the paved area adjacent to the river as you exit the site.

This Order Paper sets out details of those members of the public who have given advance notice of their wish to ask a question or address the Council in respect of any business on tonight's agenda. It also sets out details of any questions submitted by councillors together with any motions and amendments to be proposed by councillors in respect of the business on the agenda.

Unless a member of the public has given notice of their wish to ask a question or address the Council under Item 5 (Public Participation), they will not be permitted to speak. Those who have given notice may address the Council for a maximum of three minutes. Speakers may not engage in any further debate once they have finished their speech.

Councillor Masuk Miah
The Mayor of Guildford

Time limits on speeches at full Council meetings:	
Public speaker:	3 minutes
Response to public speaker:	3 minutes
Questions from councillors:	3 minutes
Response to questions from councillors:	3 minutes
Proposer of a motion:	10 minutes
Seconder of a motion:	5 minutes
Other councillors speaking during the debate on a motion:	5 minutes
Proposer of a motion's right of reply at the end of the debate on the motion:	10 minutes
Proposer of an amendment:	5 minutes
Seconder of an amendment:	5 minutes
Other councillors speaking during the debate on an amendment:	5 minutes
Proposer of a motion's right of reply at the end of the debate on an amendment:	5 minutes
Proposer of an amendment's right of reply at the end of the debate on an amendment:	5 minutes

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

To receive any apologies for absence.

2. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

To receive and note any disclosable pecuniary interests from councillors. In accordance with the local Code of Conduct, a councillor is required to disclose at the meeting any disclosable pecuniary interest (DPI) that they may have in respect of any matter for consideration on this agenda. Any councillor with a DPI must not participate in any discussion or vote regarding that matter and they must also withdraw from the meeting immediately before consideration of the matter.

If that DPI has not been registered, the councillor must notify the Monitoring Officer of the details of the DPI within 28 days of the date of the meeting.

Councillors are further invited to disclose any non-pecuniary interest which may be relevant to any matter on this agenda, in the interests of transparency, and to confirm that it will not affect their objectivity in relation to that matter.

3. MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS

To receive any communications from the Mayor.

4. LEADER'S COMMUNICATIONS

The Leader to comment on the following matters:

- Crowdfund Guildford free workshop
- Pride in Surrey
- Arts Council Accreditation – Guildford Museum
- Public inquiry for planning appeal at land at Guildford Cathedral

Councillors shall have the opportunity of asking questions of the Leader in respect of her communications.

5. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The following persons have given notice of their wish to make a statement to the Council in respect of the Review of the Guildford Borough Local Plan: Strategy & Sites (2015-2034):

- Julia Osborn, Chair of Send Parish Council
- John Rigg, Chairman of the Guildford Vision Group
- Alistair Smith, Chair of the Guildford Society
- Malcolm Aish, Chair of Ockham Parish Council
- Karen Stevens, on behalf of Compton Parish Council
- Amanda Mullarkey, on behalf of Guildford Residents Association

The Lead Councillor for Planning will be invited to respond to each of the public speakers.

6. QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

- (a) **Councillor Joss Bigmore** to ask the Deputy Leader and Lead Councillor for Regeneration, Councillor Tom Hunt the following question:

“The Local Plan contains a number of large strategic sites which are yet to deliver homes. The allocation at Blackwell Farm can’t be delivered without the addition of a piece of land owned by GBC. Can the lead councillor please give an update as to the negotiations between the University of Surrey and GBC as regards this ransom strip.”

The Lead Councillor’s response is as follows:

“Blackwell Park Limited (BPL), the wholly owned subsidiary of the University of Surrey charged with the development of Blackwell Park, has entered into Heads of Terms for an Option Agreement with the Council to purchase from the Council a small parcel of land necessary for the development. We are confident that the transaction meets our best value requirement and as the Local Planning Authority have reserved all rights and powers to determine or refuse any future planning application.

The Council has commissioned a S123 valuation to confirm that the best value requirement is being met and Legal are finalising documentation for completion.

The Council in its role as Local Planning Authority (LPA) is now working with BPL to establish a Planning Performance Agreement and BPL is committed to lodging a planning application that meets the high expectations that the Guildford community is calling for and deserves.”

- (b) **Councillor Catherine Young** to ask the Lead Councillor for Planning, Councillor Fiona White the following question:

“The NPPF at paragraph 61 states the following:

*‘To determine the minimum number of homes needed, strategic policies should be informed by a local housing need assessment, conducted using the standard method in national planning guidance. The outcome of **the standard method is an advisory starting-point** for establishing a housing requirement for the area (see paragraph 67 below). There may be **exceptional circumstances**, including relating to the particular demographic characteristics of an area which justify an alternative approach to assessing housing need; in which case the alternative approach should also reflect **current and future demographic trends and market signals**’.*

Correct me if I am wrong, but the officer’s report implies that we are likely to be working towards an increased housing figure based on the standard method of 771 houses per annum, versus our current figure of 562.

*To me, the NPPF clearly states the standard method is **advisory**.*

Will the Lead Councillor ensure that the significant constraints that did not appear to be given due weight during the previous Local Plan examination be fought for with more vigour? This would include greater protection for our Green Belt, the Surrey Hills National Landscape, our countryside and all our open green spaces.

Additionally, can she also confirm her intention to fully investigate and evidence the challenges that have been made over recent years to the ONS figures, which indicate a significant inflation of migratory student numbers, which clearly indicate our housing need is lower?

Once this evidence is considered, if it points to a significantly lower housing number for Guildford, can she commit to the reinstatement of Green Belt to those villages that were removed from the Green Belt by the Local Plan in 2019?”

The Lead Councillor's response is as follows:

"These questions all relate to work and evidence collecting that will need to take place as part of the update process, should this be agreed by the Council tonight. As part of understanding the timetable and budgetary requirements associated with the update (see Recommendation 2), the Planning Policy team will be considering the breadth of evidence that will be necessary to support a new plan. The updated plan and associated evidence base will be prepared in accordance with the national policy and guidance that is in place at that time."

- (c) **Councillor Catherine Young** to ask the Lead Councillor for Planning, Councillor Fiona White the following question:

"There is already established a Planning Policy Board made up of cross-party membership. Would the Lead Councillor for Planning please provide details as to how this group will be involved in the update of the Local Plan, should the recommendation to Full Council be agreed tonight?"

Whilst there is understandable reliance on the Planning Policy Board members to keep their respective groups informed, if approved, this is a critical process affecting every aspect of our Borough, our residents, our places, and our environment. Can the Lead Councillor agree to ensure that there are at least formal quarterly updates provided to all Councillors?"

The Lead Councillor's response is as follows:

"I am sure that Councillor Young will remember that there was previously a Local Plan Panel to provide a sounding board in relation to the putting together of the current local plan. Once part 2 of the local plan was complete, that changed to become the Planning Policy Board. In anticipation of the council's agreement to update the local plan, I am proposing to disband the Planning Policy Board and to revive the Local Plan Panel. Each of the opposition groups on the council will be invited to nominate a member to serve on the panel. It is important that those members discuss the issues raised with their own groups as I want to encourage as much involvement from all parties on this council. If a nominated member can't attend, I hope that they will send a substitute so that nothing gets missed. I will be chairing the Panel and I have asked Councillors Vanessa King and Dominique Williams to join as well. The Panel will meet as and when necessary. I think that the workload will be fairly light at the beginning but will increase as the update evolves."

I will also try to ensure that all councillors are kept informed on our progress, but I am not willing to commit to providing updates on a specific basis. The

process of updating the local plan is not linear and, in fact, can be quite “lumpy”. There will be times when so much detailed work is being done behind the scenes that there is little to report, and I don’t believe that I can commit to the regular updates you have asked for. However, I will commit to share as and when we have something to share, which is the purpose of the Local Plan Panel.”

7. REVIEW OF THE GUILDFORD BOROUGH LOCAL PLAN: STRATEGY AND SITES (2015-2034) (Pages 7 – 88 of the Council agenda)

The Lead Councillor for Planning, Councillor Fiona White to propose, and the Deputy Leader of the Council, and Lead Councillor for Regeneration, Councillor Tom Hunt to second the following motion:

- “(1) That the Guildford Borough Local Plan: Strategy and Sites (2015-2034) be updated following the findings of the review undertaken in accordance with Regulation 10A of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended).
- (2) That a further report be submitted to the Executive at a later date to clarify the appropriate timing for and budgetary requirements of the Local Plan update, such report to follow the enactment of the national planning reform legislation and to consider its implications for the update process.”

Reasons:

- There is a statutory requirement to review the LPSS within 5 years of its adoption. This is to assess whether it needs updating. The review findings set out in this report indicate that an update of the LPSS would be an appropriate course of action to ensure that the Council’s Local Plan remains effective into the future.
- There are a range of uncertainties which impact on the context for the preparation of a new / updated Local Plan, some of which relate to the lack of clarity regarding the detail of proposed Government reforms to the planning system which guide plan-making. It is necessary that these are fully considered in order to set out recommendations regarding the scope and timing of a new plan-making process.

Comments:

Councillor Patrick Oven
Councillor James Walsh
Councillor Richard Mills
Councillor Vanessa King

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