

## GUILDFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of Guildford Borough Council held in the Council Chamber, Millmead House, Millmead, Guildford, Surrey, on Wednesday 7 February 2024

\* The Mayor, Councillor Masuk Miah

\* The Deputy Mayor, Councillor Sallie Barker MBE

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

\*Present

Honorary Freeman Keith Churchouse was also in attendance.

### **CO101 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Ruth Brothwell, Jason Fenwick, Steven Lee, and Katie Steel; and from Honorary Aldermen Catherine

Cobley, Sarah Creedy, Jayne Marks, Terence Patrick, Tony Phillips, Lynda Strudwick, and Jenny Wicks.

#### **CO102 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST**

There were no disclosures of interest.

#### **CO103 MINUTES**

The minutes of the extraordinary meeting of the Council held on 23 January 2024 were approved as a correct record. The Mayor signed the minutes.

#### **CO104 MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS**

The Mayor reported that he planned to hold a multicultural Charity Gala at Holy Trinity Church, on 14 April 2024, the aim of which was to bring together, celebrate and showcase the diverse talent that existed within the borough.

Artistic Director, Nishi Joshi-Bhatt was excited to be involved with the project, and she and her group Nishi Dance Shakti would also be performing. It was hoped that the gala would attract solo artists, and groups to showcase dance, music, vocal performances, and other original acts.

Proceeds from the event would go to the Mayor's chosen charity, The Fountain Centre, and The Mayor of Guildford's Local Support Fund.

#### **CO105 LEADER'S COMMUNICATIONS**

##### Crowdfund Guildford

The Leader reported on the success of the Crowdfund Guildford scheme, which was supported by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, and the new round of funding that was now available. The Artventure Trust had been fundraising with Crowdfund Guildford and they had met their fundraising goal to create a sensory garden for art activities, gardening and a swing chair for clients with learning disabilities. The Council had pledged £3,000 pounds towards their £10,691 goal alongside 41 other supporters in the community.

A new round of funding through crowdfund Guildford had been launched and councillors were informed that anyone with an idea that could help the community they could join the free workshop on Friday 8 March 2024, which would inform participants about the funding available including advice on how to run a crowdfund campaign.

### Garden waste subscription refunds

The Leader reported that there had been significant disruption to the Council's garden waste bin service due to supply chain issues. The delay meant that we had been unable to deliver garden waste bins to some residents within the expected timeframe. Some residents that applied for a new subscription part way through the year did not receive a garden waste bin in time to make full use of the service. Consequently, it had been decided to cancel and refund in full their 2023-24 subscription.

If residents rejoined the garden waste collection service for the 2024-25 period, before 28 February, they would receive priority delivery of a new garden waste bin during March, in time for the new service year which would begin on 25 March.

### Tom Horwood – Joint Chief Executive

The Leader reminded councillors that this meeting would be Tom Horwood's last Council meeting before leaving Guildford and Waverley as Joint Chief Executive. The Leader noted that Mr Horwood's calm, professional approach in leadership of the organisation would be greatly missed and expressed gratitude for his commitment and dedicated public service.

In response to a question, the Leader confirmed that the garden waste subscription refunds would be made to those persons who did not receive a bin.

## **CO106 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There were no questions or statements from the public.

## **CO107 QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS**

Councillor Richard Mills OBE asked the Lead Councillor for Environment and Climate Change, Councillor George Potter, the following question:

*"The Risk Register at the meeting of the Guildford and Waverley Joint Governance Committee on 24<sup>th</sup> January 2024, Risk 7, page 30, accepted at that meeting, indicates that encouraging 'working from home as much as possible' is a current mitigation measure against the perceived risk that the objective of delivering net zero carbon by 2030, might not be achieved.*

*Will the Executive Portfolio Holder for Environment and Climate Change advise:*

- (a) how far this policy is currently being pursued?*

- (b) *how the level of home working by Council staff has changed over the period since the end of lockdown?*
- (c) *what contribution the policy has made, or is expected to make, to the reduction of carbon emissions in the Borough?, and*
- (d) *what assessment has been made of the costs and benefits of this policy including staff productivity and service delivery?"*

The Lead Councillor's response was as follows:

*"At the present time, GBC staff are allocated as either fixed or agile workers. Staff who have been identified as agile workers are expected to spend at least 50% of their time in the office.*

*However, that policy is currently being reviewed and the Council is looking at a number of data sources including: the approach being taken by other authorities in the region; the self-reported impact of agile working on staff health and wellbeing; and the feedback from team managers on the impact of agile working on their service delivery.*

*In terms of the latter, the initial review of data suggests that the Council's agile working approach has had a positive impact on recruitment, retention and, in some if not all cases, team performance. However, it is clear that it can also have a less positive impact on team cohesion if not managed carefully.*

*The future policy will need to respond to these concerns about team cohesion through planned, managed and structured team contact whilst also maximising the positive benefits of agile working in terms of recruitment, retention and minimising carbon emissions. The Council will consult and engage with the staff and union representatives before making any changes to the current approach. It will also consider the implications of any new policy before adopting it, including the implications on climate change.*

*Bearing all of this in mind, the current description of staff being encouraged to 'work at home as much as possible' is not correct in terms of the current policy and is unlikely to be correct in terms of any future policy and so I have asked officers to recommend changes to that wording that can be considered by the Joint Governance Committee in due course".*

As a supplementary question, Councillor Mills asked the Lead Councillor whether he would agree that there was widespread recognition that the continuing scale

of emissions from Spectrum which meant that the chances of achieving the net zero objective were now very slight and, if that was the case, the Council would need to consider three options:

- To close Spectrum.
- To continue to pursue the net zero objective, recognising that the prospect of successfully achieving that objective with the main mitigation measure was very slight.
- To accept that the objective was now unrealistic and should not be pursued further.

In response, the Lead Councillor indicated that as this raised issues that involved other portfolios (including Leisure), he was therefore unable to provide a detailed answer, not least because work was still continuing to address and develop a plan for how the Council was going to deal with the Spectrum and its carbon emissions over the period leading up to 2030. The Lead Councillor agreed, however, that if the risk register stated that working from home was one of the mitigation measures against the impact of carbon emissions caused by Spectrum, it would seem to be unrealistic and suggested that this matter should be raised again when the risk register was updated.

#### **CO108 PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2024-25**

Under Sections 38 to 42 of the Localism Act 2011 the Council was required to produce an annual policy statement that covered a number of matters concerning the pay of the authority's staff, in particular the Council's approach to the pay of senior management and the lowest paid employees, and the relationship between the two. The aim behind the Pay Policy Statement was to ensure that the Council's approach to pay was transparent. The Council considered the draft Pay Policy Statement for 2024-25, which met the requirements of the Localism Act in that regard and also met the requirements of guidance issued by the Secretary of State to which the authority was required to have regard under Section 40 of the Act.

Following approval by full Council, the Pay Policy Statement would be published on the Council's website. Any subsequent amendment to this statement made during the financial year would be similarly published.

Data on pay and rewards for staff was published on the website in line with the Code of Recommended Practice for Local Authorities on Data Transparency and the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

Upon the motion of the Lead Councillor for Community and Organisational Development, Councillor Carla Morson, seconded by the Leader of the Council, Councillor Julia McShane, the Council

RESOLVED: That the Pay Policy Statement for the 2024-25 financial year, attached at Appendix 1 to the report submitted to the Council, be approved.

Reason:

To comply with the requirements of the Localism Act 2011 (Section 39) and associated guidance.

### **CO109 CAPITAL AND INVESTMENT STRATEGY 2024-25 TO 2028-29**

Prior to consideration of the budget related reports, of which the Capital and Investment Strategy was the first, the interim Chief Finance Officer made a presentation to the Council, which provided information about the strategic context within which the budget had been prepared, the medium-term financial plan, the robustness of the estimates, adequacy of reserves and budget risks.

The Council considered a report on the Council's capital and investment strategy, which gave a high-level overview of how capital expenditure, capital financing and treasury management activity contributed to the provision of local public services along with an overview of how associated risk was managed and the implications for future financial sustainability.

Decisions made now, and during the period of the strategy on capital and treasury management would have financial consequences for the Council for many years into the future. The report therefore included details of the capital programme, any new bids/mandates submitted for approval plus the requirements of the Prudential Code and the investment strategy covering treasury management investments, service investments, and commercial investments. The report had also covered the requirements of the Treasury Management Code and the prevailing DLUHC Statutory Guidance.

Councillors noted that in order to achieve the ambitious targets within the Corporate Plan, the Council needed to invest in its assets, via capital expenditure, which was split into the General Fund (GF) and Housing Revenue Account (HRA).

All projects, regardless of the fund, would be funded by capital receipts, grants and contributions, reserves, and finally borrowing. When preparing the budget reports, it was not known how each scheme would be funded and, in the case of regeneration projects, what the delivery model would be. The report showed a

high-level position. The business case for each individual project would set out the detailed funding arrangements for the project.

The Council noted that some capital receipts or revenue income streams might arise as a result of regeneration schemes, but in most cases the position was currently uncertain, and it was too early at this stage to make assumptions. It was likely that there would be cash-flow implications of the development schemes, where income would come in after the five-year time horizon of the report and the expenditure incurred earlier in the programme.

The Council had an underlying need to borrow for the General Fund capital programme of £202 million between 2023-24 and 2028-29. Officers had put forward bids, with a net cost over the same period of £9.8 million, increasing this underlying need to borrow to £211.8 million should these proposals be approved for inclusion in the programme.

The capital programme included several significant regeneration schemes, which it was assumed would be financed from GF resources. Detailed funding proposals for each scheme would be considered when their Outline Business Case was presented to the Executive for approval.

The main areas of expenditure (shown gross), as set out in the report, were:

- £258 million Weyside Urban Village (WUV)
- £35 million Ash road bridge and footbridge (total gross cost £44 million, external funding, £36 million, net cost to GBC £8 million)

The report contained a summary of the new bids submitted and the position and profiling of the current programme (2023-24 to 2028-29).

The HRA capital programme was split between expenditure on existing stock and either development of or purchase of dwellings to add to the stock. A lot of work had been done on stock condition surveys and the results were being analysed with a view to having a robust stock condition assessment which provided 100% stock data over a rolling 5-year programme and allowed for effective assessment against Regulatory and legislative standards. This would allow compliance with the new building safety legislation and standards.

Improved building safety standards across social housing had resulted in a national drive to improve standards and safety. Guildford had started to respond to this and had spent a significant sum on its properties. The budget for 2024-25 and ongoing would see budgets return to more modest levels seen in the past.

The capital programme would be funded from HRA capital receipts and reserves. There was also £121 million between 2023-24 and 2028-29 included for development projects to build or acquire new housing (including WUV).

Officers had recommended the removal of the Bright Hill scheme from the HRA programme, as previously reported to Councillors, due to the change in the scope of the scheme being delivered.

The main areas of major repairs and improvement expenditure were:

- refurbishment, replacement & renewal programme of existing stock, £1.3 million, which included kitchen & bathroom upgrades, void property refurbishment and roof works,
- works to existing stock to comply with changes to standards and legislation, £3.4 million, including replacement fire doors, electrical testing and fire protection works,
- mechanical and electrical works £400,000, including central heating systems, and
- other works of £1.2 million including disabled adaptations.

The main HRA development projects included:

- Guildford Park Car Park: £39 million,
- WUV: £49 million, and
- Foxburrows: £11 million.

The Council noted that officers carried out the treasury management function within the parameters set by the Council each year and in accordance with the approved treasury management practices.

The budget for investment income for 2024-25 was £3 million, based on an average investment portfolio of £86 million, at a weighted average rate of 5%. The budget for debt interest paid was £14.8 million, of which £5.4 million related to the HRA and £7.9 million was being capitalised and added to the cost of schemes in the capital programme, which was a net cost to the General Fund of £1.5 million for the year.

The Council noted that councils could invest to support public services by lending to or buying shares in other organisations (service investments) or to earn investment income (commercial investments, where earning a return was the primary purpose).



Investment property (the primary purpose of which was to earn a yield) had been valued at £178 million, as per the 2022-23 unaudited Statement of Accounts, with rent receipts of £9.2 million and a yield of 5.7%. The Council was not making any future purchases solely for yield, which was in line with government guidelines. The Council had also invested £25.3 million in its housing company North Downs Housing Ltd (NDH), via 40% equity to Guildford Borough Council Holdings Ltd (£10.1 million) who, in turn, passed the equity to NDH, and 60% repayment loan direct to NDH (£15.3 million) at an interest rate of 5%. The loan was a repayment loan in line with the NDH business plan. There was no further investment planned within this capital and investment strategy.

The report had also included the Council's Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) policy and the Prudential Indicators and had set out the updated flexible use of capital receipts policy. This policy, if approved by the Council, would permit the use of any capital receipts received in year to be used to fund any service transformation costs incurred in the same year.

The Capital and Investment Strategy 2024-25 to 2028-29 had also been considered by the Joint Executive Advisory Board at its meeting on 11 January 2024, and by the Corporate Governance and Standards Committee at its meeting on 18 January 2024.

At its meeting on 25 January 2024, the Executive also considered this matter and endorsed the recommendation contained in the report submitted to the Council. The Executive had also resolved:

- (1) That, subject to Council approval, the new bids set out in Appendix 2 to the report be approved for inclusion in the capital programme as indicated.
- (2) That the Bright Hill scheme be removed from the HRA approved and provisional programmes as previously reported to Councillors.

Upon the motion of the Lead Councillor for Finance & Property, Councillor Richard Lucas, seconded by the Leader of the Council, Councillor Julia McShane, the Council:

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the General Fund and HRA capital estimates, as shown in Appendices 3 and 4 to the report submitted to the Council, as amended to include the bids approved by the Executive at its meeting on 25 January 2024, be approved.

- (2) That the Minimum Revenue Provision policy, referred to in section 9 of the report, be approved.
- (3) That the capital and investment strategy be approved, specifically the investment strategy and Prudential Indicators contained within the report and in Appendix 1 thereto.
- (4) That the updated flexible use of capital receipts policy, as set out in Appendix 9, be approved.

Reasons:

To enable Council to approve the capital and investment strategy for 2024-25 to 2028-29, and the funding required for the new capital schemes proposed.

### **CO110 HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUDGET 2024-25**

Councillors noted that the Council owned and managed over 5,200 Council Houses which it rented to tenants who qualified for social housing or for which it held the freehold. The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) was the ring-fenced account within which the Council recorded the income and expenditure for its operations as landlord to its residents and for the day-to-day management, repairs and maintenance of the council housing stock.

The Council considered a report on the proposed Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget for 2024-25, which had been built on the estimates and assumptions in the updated 2023 HRA Business Plan. The business plan had been 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 pandemic as it affected the Council's operating environment.

The Direction on the Rent Standard 2019 had required the Regulator of Social Housing to set a rent standard for social housing which came into effect from 2020. This would have been CPI +1% from the preceding September rate equating to 7.7%, which was the recommended rent increase for the year. This rate would also apply to those in Shared ownership.

A 5% increase in garage rents was proposed for 2024-25, which was in line with the wider Council policy on fees and charges.

The report included overall details of the proposed investment programme for the properties that were managed within the HRA, additional details of this work had also been set out within the item on the Capital and Investment Strategy.

The HRA annual budget and HRA business plan had assumed that any surpluses on the HRA were used to invest in redevelopment and upgrading of the existing stock, invest in new build affordable housing to be retained and rented by the Council within the HRA and then if there were sufficient monies available, the repayment of debt taken on under HRA self-financing.

The 30-year business plan had shown that there were sufficient resources within the HRA to carry out the Council's investment plans as well as repay the debt over the 30-year business plan period and still leave a healthy reserve balance at the end of the 30 years for further investment not yet identified.

There were further expected investment needs that would be fully developed in order to meet carbon targets and expected regulatory changes, and work on these continued. They were not, however, fully reflected within the current plan, but they would be considered in future reviews.

This report had also been considered by the Joint Executive Advisory Board at its meeting on 11 January 2024 and their comments had been included therein. At its meeting on 25 January 2024, the Executive also considered this report and had endorsed the recommendations to Council.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Julia McShane, proposed and the Lead Councillor for Finance and Property, Councillor Richard Lucas seconded the following motion:

- (1) That the proposed HRA revenue budget for 2024-25, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report submitted to the Council, be approved.
- (2) That a rent increase of 7.7%, be implemented.
- (3) That the fees and charges for HRA services for 2024-25, as set out in Appendix 2 to the 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.

Following the debate on the motion, Councillor Joss Bigmore proposed, and Councillor Maddy Redpath seconded the following amendment:

"In paragraph (2) of the motion, substitute "5%" in place of 7.7%."

The Council noted that if this amendment was adopted, the proposed HRA revenue budget for 2024-25 referred to in paragraph (1) of the motion would also

require amendment. Accordingly, the proposed HRA revenue budget for 2024-25 taking account of a 5% increase in council house rents was set out as Appendix 1 to the Order Paper.

If amended, the substantive motion would read as follows:

- (1) That the proposed HRA revenue budget for 2024-25, as set out in Appendix 1 to the ~~Order Paper report submitted to the Council~~, be approved.
- (2) That a rent increase of ~~5%~~ 7.7%, be implemented.
- (3) That the fees and charges for HRA services for 2024-25, as set out in Appendix 2 to the 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.”

Following the debate on the amendment it was put to the vote and was lost on the Mayor’s casting vote.

A recorded vote was requested in respect of the original motion, which was supported by four other councillors in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 19 (d).

The Council

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the proposed HRA revenue budget for 2024-25, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report submitted to the Council, be approved.
- (2) That a rent increase of 7.7%, be implemented.
- (3) That the fees and charges for HRA services for 2024-25, as set out in Appendix 2 to the 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.

Reasons:

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, which is consistent with the objectives outlined in the HRA Business Plan.

Result of the Recorded Vote:

The motion was approved, with nineteen councillors voting in favour, eighteen against, and seven abstentions, as follows:

**FOR:**

Councillor Phil Bellamy  
Councillor Angela Goodwin  
Councillor Gillian Harwood  
Councillor Stephen Hives  
Councillor Catherine Houston  
Councillor Tom Hunt  
Councillor Vanessa King  
Councillor Sandy Lowry  
Councillor Richard Lucas  
Councillor Julia McShane  
Councillor Masuk Miah  
Councillor Carla Morson  
Councillor George Potter  
Councillor Merel Rehorst-Smith  
Councillor Joanne Shaw  
Councillor Cait Taylor  
Councillor Jane Tyson  
Councillor Fiona White  
Councillor Dominique Williams

**AGAINST:**

Councillor Bilal Akhtar  
Councillor Sallie Barker MBE  
Councillor Dawn Bennett  
Councillor Joss Bigmore  
Councillor David Bilbé  
Councillor Honor Brooker  
Councillor James Brooker  
Councillor Philip Brooker  
Councillor Geoff Davis  
Councillor Matt Furniss  
Councillor Bob Hughes  
Councillor Richard Mills OBE  
Councillor Patrick Oven  
Councillor Maddy Redpath  
Councillor David Shaw  
Councillor Keith Witham  
Councillor Sue Wyeth-Price  
Councillor Catherine Young

**ABSTAIN:**

Councillor Amanda Creese  
Councillor Yves de Contades  
Councillor Lizzie Griffiths  
Councillor James Jones  
Councillor Danielle Newson  
Councillor Howard Smith  
Councillor James Walsh

**CO111 GENERAL FUND REVENUE BUDGET 2024-25 AND MEDIUM-TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2024-25 TO 2026-27**

The Council considered a report which outlined the draft General Fund Budget for 2024-25 and Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) ending 2026-27. The work on the 2024-25 budget and the £18.3m MTFP gap had been undertaken as part of the Financial Recovery Plan agreed by the Council in August 2023. The outputs from the various workstreams of the Financial Recovery Plan were set out within the report which had reduced the budget gap by £15.9m.

The MTFP had set out the key work streams for the Council to focus on over this period which, collectively, aimed to address the remaining £2.4m budget gap across the MTFP period, and prepare for future capital financing costs and funding risks.

Significant progress had been made since the report to Council in July 2023, but the agreed savings plans needed to be delivered and the remaining budget gap needed to be addressed.

It was also noted that strengthened financial reporting and processes needed to be embedded in the Council in order to lay the foundations of a financially resilient council.

The proposed budget for 2024-25, which included a Council Tax requirement for Guildford Borough Council of £11,868,084, excluding parish precepts and an increase of £5.75 in Council Tax (2.99%), resulting in a Band D charge of £198.16. As set out in the report, the Council was required to set a balanced budget for 2024-25.

Parish Councils had requested precepts totalling £2,330,834 meaning the overall council tax requirement for the borough, including parish precepts would be £14,198,918.

The Joint Executive Advisory Board (JEAB) had considered this report at its meeting held on 11 January 2024. At its meeting held on 25 January 2024, the Executive had also considered this report, including the comments of the JEAB, and had endorsed the recommendation therein.

Under The Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014 and Council Procedure Rule 19 (d), the Council was reminded that a recorded vote would be conducted on the proposed budget and Council tax resolution as set out in the report, and the Order Paper circulated at the meeting which contained details of the respective precepts set by Surrey County Council and the Police and Crime Commissioner for Surrey, neither of which were deemed to be excessive.

Under Council Procedure Rule 15 (o), Councillor Lucas as the mover of the original motion, indicated that, with the consent of his seconder and of the meeting, he wished to alter his motion by substituting, in paragraph 13, “£100,000” in place of “£40,000”. Paragraph 13, as altered, would therefore read as follows:

“(13) That the Council’s existing Local Council Tax Support Scheme, with uprating as set out in Appendix 6 and the ~~£40,000~~ £100,000 discretionary hardship fund that runs alongside it, be continued.”

The Council agreed to accept the alteration to the original motion, as indicated above. The motion, as altered, therefore became the substantive motion for debate.

Upon the motion of the Lead Councillor for Finance and Property, Councillor Richard Lucas, seconded by the Leader of the Council, Councillor Julia McShane, the Council:

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the budget be approved, and specifically that the Council Tax requirement for 2024-25 be set at £11,868,084 excluding parish precepts and £14,198,918 to include parish precepts.
- (2) That the Band D Council Tax for 2024-25 (excluding parish precepts) be set at £198.16, an increase of £5.75 (2.99%).
- (3) That the Band D Council Tax for 2024-25 (including parish precepts) be set at £237.08.
- (4) That the Council approves the following, as considered by the Executive on 25 January 2024:
  - (i) the General Fund revenue estimates for 2024-25 including proposed fees and charges relating to General Fund services, as set out in Appendix 3 to the report submitted to the Council,
  - (ii) the Housing Revenue Account estimates for 2024-25, including housing rents and other fees and charges,
  - (iii) the Capital and Investment Strategy for 2024-25, and
  - (iv) the Housing Revenue Account capital programme for 2024-25.
- (5) That the Council notes that the Chief Finance Officer, in accordance with the terms of his delegated authority, has calculated the following amounts for the year 2024-25 in accordance with regulations made under Sections 31B (3) and 34(4) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended) ('the Act'):
  - (i) 59,890.5 being the amount calculated by the Council, in accordance with Regulation 3 of the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 1992, as its council tax base for 2024-25 for the whole Council area.

(ii) For those parts of the borough to which a parish precept relates:

<b>Parish of:</b>	
Albury	619.07
Artington	140.92
Ash	7,452.34
East Clandon	150.82
West Clandon	712.26
Compton	486.67
Effingham	1,327.31
East Horsley	2,630.32
West Horsley	1,590.83
Normandy	1,372.10
Ockham	269.60
Pirbright	1,255.31
Puttenham	315.07
Ripley	923.26
St. Martha	403.27
Seale & Sands	518.71
Send	2,187.26
Shackleford	371.62
Shalford	1,886.89
Shere	1,991.85
Tongham	1,161.30
Wanborough	180.22
Wisley	-
Worplesdon	3,704.40
<b>Total</b>	<b>31,651.40</b>

being the amounts calculated by the Council, in accordance with Regulation 6 of the 1992 Regulations, as the amounts of its council tax base for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which one or more special items relate.

(6) That the Council calculates the following amounts for the financial year 2024-25 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Act:

(i) £138,901,117 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A (2) of the



Act taking into account all precepts issued to it by parish councils.

- (ii) £136,570,283 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A (3) of the Act
- (iii) £14,198,918 being the amount by which the aggregate at sub-paragraph (i) above exceeds the aggregate at sub-paragraph (ii) above, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act, as its council tax requirements for the year.
- (iv) £237.08 being the amount at sub-paragraph (iii) above divided by the amount at sub-paragraph (i) of paragraph (5) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31B (1) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year (including parish precepts).
- (v) £2,330,834 being the aggregate amount of all special items (parish precepts) referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act as follows:

<b>Parish of:</b>	<b>£</b>
Albury	44,840
Artington	5,161
Ash	571,427
East Clandon	10,394
West Clandon	27,895
Compton	26,981
Effingham	137,221
East Horsley	154,951
West Horsley	105,452
Normandy	154,481
Ockham	16,891
Pirbright	84,835
Puttenham	17,000
Ripley	99,398
St. Martha	13,850
Seale & Sands	23,000
Send	94,984
Shackleford	16,909
Shalford	120,968

Shere	209,397
Tongham	49,399
Wanborough	5,500
Wisley	-
Worplesdon	339,900
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,330,834</b>

(vi) £198.16 being the amount at sub-paragraph (iv) above less the result given by dividing the amount at sub-paragraph (v) above by the amount at sub-paragraph (i) of paragraph (5) above, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 34(2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its council tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no special item (parish precept) relates.

(vii) Part of the Council's area

Albury	270.59
Artington	234.78
Ash	274.84
East Clandon	267.08
West Clandon	237.32
Compton	253.60
Effingham	301.54
East Horsley	257.07
West Horsley	264.45
Normandy	310.75
Ockham	260.81
Pirbright	265.74
Puttenham	252.12
Ripley	305.82
St. Martha	232.50
Seale & Sands	242.50
Send	241.59
Shackleford	243.66
Shalford	262.27
Shere	303.29
Tongham	240.70
Wanborough	228.68

Wisley	198.16
Worplesdon	289.92

being the amounts given by adding to the amount at sub-paragraph (vi) above the amounts of the special item or items relating to dwellings in those parts of the Council's area mentioned above divided in each case by the amount at sub-paragraph (ii) of paragraph (5) above, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 34(3) of the Act, as the basic amounts of its council tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which one or more special items relate.

(viii) Part of the Council's area

VALUATION BANDS								
	Band	Band	Band	Band	Band	Band	Band	Band
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
PARISH	£ p	£ p	£ p	£ p	£ p	£ p	£ p	£ p
Albury	180.39	210.46	240.52	270.59	330.72	390.85	450.98	541.18
Artington	156.52	182.61	208.69	234.78	286.95	339.13	391.30	469.56
Ash	183.23	213.76	244.30	274.84	335.92	396.99	458.07	549.68
East Clandon	178.05	207.73	237.40	267.08	326.43	385.78	445.13	534.16
West Clandon	158.21	184.58	210.95	237.32	290.06	342.80	395.53	474.64
Compton	169.07	197.24	225.42	253.60	309.96	366.31	422.67	507.20
Effingham	201.03	234.53	268.04	301.54	368.55	435.56	502.57	603.08
East Horsley	171.38	199.94	228.51	257.07	314.20	371.32	428.45	514.14
West Horsley	176.30	205.68	235.07	264.45	323.22	381.98	440.75	528.90
Normandy	207.17	241.69	276.22	310.75	379.81	448.86	517.92	621.50
Ockham	173.87	202.85	231.83	260.81	318.77	376.73	434.68	521.62
Pirbright	177.16	206.69	236.21	265.74	324.79	383.85	442.90	531.48
Puttenham	168.08	196.09	224.11	252.12	308.15	364.17	420.20	504.24
Ripley	203.88	237.86	271.84	305.82	373.78	441.74	509.70	611.64
St. Martha	155.00	180.83	206.67	232.50	284.17	335.83	387.50	465.00
Seale & Sands	161.67	188.61	215.56	242.50	296.39	350.28	404.17	485.00
Send	161.06	187.90	214.75	241.59	295.28	348.96	402.65	483.18
Shackleford	162.44	189.51	216.59	243.66	297.81	351.95	406.10	487.32
Shalford	174.85	203.99	233.13	262.27	320.55	378.83	437.12	524.54
Shere	202.19	235.89	269.59	303.29	370.69	438.09	505.48	606.58
Tongham	160.47	187.21	213.96	240.70	294.19	347.68	401.17	481.40
Wanborough	152.45	177.86	203.27	228.68	279.50	330.32	381.13	457.36
Wisley (Meeting)	132.11	154.12	176.14	198.16	242.20	286.23	330.27	396.32
Worplesdon	193.28	225.49	257.71	289.92	354.35	418.77	483.20	579.84
<b>TOWN AREA</b>								
Guildford	132.11	154.12	176.14	198.16	242.20	286.23	330.27	396.32

being the amounts given by multiplying the amounts at sub-paragraphs (vi) and (vii) above by the number which in the proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band divided by the number which in that proportion is applicable to dwellings listed in valuation band D, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 36(1) of the Act, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands.

- (7) That the Council notes that for the year 2024-25, (i) Surrey County Council (SCC) and (ii) the Police and Crime Commissioner for Surrey (PCCS) have stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Act, for each of the categories of dwelling in the Council’s area as shown below:

		<b>VALUATION BANDS</b>							
		<b>Band A</b>	<b>Band B</b>	<b>Band C</b>	<b>Band D</b>	<b>Band E</b>	<b>Band F</b>	<b>Band G</b>	<b>Band H</b>
		£ p	£ p	£ p	£ p	£ p	£ p	£ p	£ p
(i) SCC		1,172.40	1367.80	1563.20	1758.60	2149.40	2540.20	2931.00	3517.20
(ii) PCCS		215.71	251.67	287.62	323.57	395.47	467.38	539.28	647.14

- (8) That the Council agrees, having calculated the aggregate in each of the amounts at sub-paragraph (viii) of paragraph (6) and paragraph (7) above, to set the following amounts as the amounts of Council Tax for the year 2024-25 for each of the categories of dwellings shown below in accordance with Section 30(2) of the Act.

Part of the Council's Area:

VALUATION BANDS								
	Band A	Band B	Band C	Band D	Band E	Band F	Band G	Band H
PARISH	£ p	£ p	£ p	£ p	£ p	£ p	£ p	£ p
Albury	1,568.50	1,829.93	2,091.34	2,352.76	2,875.59	3,398.43	3,921.26	4,705.52
Artington	1,544.63	1,802.08	2,059.51	2,316.95	2,831.82	3,346.71	3,861.58	4,633.90
Ash	1,571.34	1,833.23	2,095.12	2,357.01	2,880.79	3,404.57	3,928.35	4,714.02
East Clandon	1,566.16	1,827.20	2,088.22	2,349.25	2,871.30	3,393.36	3,915.41	4,698.50
West Clandon	1,546.32	1,804.05	2,061.77	2,319.49	2,834.93	3,350.38	3,865.81	4,638.98
Compton	1,557.18	1,816.71	2,076.24	2,335.77	2,854.83	3,373.89	3,892.95	4,671.54
Effingham	1,589.14	1,854.00	2,118.86	2,383.71	2,913.42	3,443.14	3,972.85	4,767.42
East Horsley	1,559.49	1,819.41	2,079.33	2,339.24	2,859.07	3,378.90	3,898.73	4,678.48
West Horsley	1,564.41	1,825.15	2,085.89	2,346.62	2,868.09	3,389.56	3,911.03	4,693.24
Normandy	1,595.28	1,861.16	2,127.04	2,392.92	2,924.68	3,456.44	3,988.20	4,785.84
Ockham	1,561.98	1,822.32	2,082.65	2,342.98	2,863.64	3,384.31	3,904.96	4,685.96
Pirbright	1,565.27	1,826.16	2,087.03	2,347.91	2,869.66	3,391.43	3,913.18	4,695.82
Puttenham	1,556.19	1,815.56	2,074.93	2,334.29	2,853.02	3,371.75	3,890.48	4,668.58
Ripley	1,591.99	1,857.33	2,122.66	2,387.99	2,918.65	3,449.32	3,979.98	4,775.98
St. Martha	1,543.11	1,800.30	2,057.49	2,314.67	2,829.04	3,343.41	3,857.78	4,629.34
Seale & Sands	1,549.78	1,808.08	2,066.38	2,324.67	2,841.26	3,357.86	3,874.45	4,649.34
Send	1,549.17	1,807.37	2,065.57	2,323.76	2,840.15	3,356.54	3,872.93	4,647.52
Shackleford	1,550.55	1,808.98	2,067.41	2,325.83	2,842.68	3,359.53	3,876.38	4,651.66
Shalford	1,562.96	1,823.46	2,083.95	2,344.44	2,865.42	3,386.41	3,907.40	4,688.88
Shere	1,590.30	1,855.36	2,120.41	2,385.46	2,915.56	3,445.67	3,975.76	4,770.92
Tongham	1,548.58	1,806.68	2,064.78	2,322.87	2,839.06	3,355.26	3,871.45	4,645.74
Wanborough	1,540.56	1,797.33	2,054.09	2,310.85	2,824.37	3,337.90	3,851.41	4,621.70
Wisley (Meeting)	1,520.22	1,773.59	2,026.96	2,280.33	2,787.07	3,293.81	3,800.55	4,560.66
Worplesdon	1,581.39	1,844.96	2,108.53	2,372.09	2,899.22	3,426.35	3,953.48	4,744.18
<b>TOWN AREA</b>								
Guildford	1,520.22	1,773.59	2,026.96	2,280.33	2,787.07	3,293.81	3,800.55	4,560.66

\*Note: Wisley Parish Meeting

In accordance with the Executive's decision at its meeting on 8 August 2002 (see Minute No. 270 – 2002-03), the Chief Finance Officer has anticipated the precept for 2024-25 for the Wisley Parish Meeting to be £nil and this is reflected in all the relevant Council Tax figures above.

- (9) That the Council determines that the Borough Council's basic amount of council tax for 2024-25 is not excessive in accordance with the principles approved under section 52ZB of the Act.
- (10) That, as the billing authority, the Council notes that it has not been notified by a major precepting authority that its relevant basic amount of Council Tax

for 2024-25 was excessive under the regulations and that the billing authority was not required to hold a referendum in accordance with Section 52ZK of the Act.

- (11) That the Council agrees, in respect of council tax payments:
  - (i) that the payment dates for the statutory ten monthly instalment scheme be set to run from 2 April to 2 January each year; and
  - (ii) that the payment dates be set as the second day of each month for a customer who has requested to opt out of the statutory scheme under the provisions of The Council Tax (Administration and Enforcement) (Amendment) (No 2) (England) Regulations 2012.
- (12) That the Council agrees, in respect of non-domestic rate payments:
  - (i) that the payment dates for the statutory ten monthly instalment scheme be set to run from 2 April to 2 January each year; and
  - (ii) that the payment dates be set as the second day of each month for a customer who has requested to opt out of the statutory scheme under the provisions of the Non-Domestic Rating (Collection and Enforcement) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2014.
- (13) That the Council's existing Local Council Tax Support Scheme, with uprating as set out in Appendix 6 and the £100,000 discretionary hardship fund that runs alongside it, be continued.
- (14) That, from 1 April 2025, the Council varies its determination of 26 February 2019 under Section 11B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, so that the long-term empty dwelling levy starts after a property has been empty and unfurnished for one year.
- (15) That, from 1 April 2025, the Council will charge a premium (levy) of 100% on periodically used dwellings as defined by section 11C of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.
- (16) That the use of the 2023-24 underspend as set out in paragraph 8.5 of the report, be approved.

(17) That the Council approves the annual statement of accounts for Wisley Parish Meeting, which is currently dormant, for the year ended 31 March 2024, as set out below:

	Year ending	
	31 March 2023	31 March 2024
	£	£
1. Balances brought forward	3,605	3,608
2. (+) Annual precept	Nil	Nil
3. (+) Total other receipts	3	0
4. (-) Staff costs	Nil	Nil
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments	Nil	Nil
6. (-) Total other payments	Nil	Nil
7. (=) Balances carried forward	3,608	3608

8. Total cash and investments	3,608	3,608
9. Total fixed assets and long-term assets	Nil	Nil
10. Total borrowings	Nil	Nil

Reasons:

- The General Fund Budget is a major decision for the Council and setting a balanced budget is a statutory requirement.
- Scrutiny of these MTFP and Budget proposals demonstrate transparency and good governance.
- The Council has been well positioned to respond to these challenges and whilst the latest MTFP for the subsequent years ending 2026-27 continues to project future financial pressures, and opportunities, the Council is able to take action to ensure sufficient funding is in place to deliver and maintain services.

Result of the Recorded Vote:

The motion to adopt the Budget and Council Tax resolution above was approved, with thirty councillors voting in favour, twelve voting against, and two abstentions, as follows:

**FOR:**

Councillor Phil Bellamy  
Councillor Amanda Creese  
Councillor Yves de Contades  
Councillor Angela Goodwin  
Councillor Lizzie Griffiths  
Councillor Gillian Harwood  
Councillor Stephen Hives  
Councillor Catherine Houston  
Councillor Tom Hunt  
Councillor James Jones  
Councillor Vanessa King  
Councillor Richard Lucas  
Councillor Sandy Lowry  
Councillor Julia McShane  
Councillor Masuk Miah  
Councillor Carla Morson  
Councillor Danielle Newson  
Councillor Patrick Oven  
Councillor George Potter  
Councillor Merel Rehorst-Smith  
Councillor David Shaw  
Councillor Joanne Shaw  
Councillor Howard Smith  
Councillor Cait Taylor  
Councillor Jane Tyson  
Councillor James Walsh  
Councillor Fiona White  
Councillor Dominique Williams  
Councillor Sue Wyeth-Price  
Councillor Catherine Young

**AGAINST:**

Councillor Bilal Akhtar  
Councillor Sallie Barker MBE  
Councillor Joss Bigmore  
Councillor David Bilbé  
Councillor Honor Brooker  
Councillor James Brooker  
Councillor Philip Brooker  
Councillor Geoff Davis  
Councillor Matt Furniss  
Councillor Bob Hughes  
Councillor Richard Mills OBE  
Councillor Keith Witham

**ABSTAIN:**

Councillor Dawn Bennett  
Councillor Maddy Redpath

**CO112 MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE**

The Council received and noted the minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 23 November 2023 and 4 January 2024.

The meeting finished at 9.55 pm



Signed .....

Mayor

Date .....

## **GUILDFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Minutes of an extraordinary meeting of Guildford Borough Council held in the Council Chamber, Millmead House, Millmead, Guildford, Surrey GU2 4BB on Wednesday 21 February 2024

The Mayor, Councillor Masuk Miah

\* The Deputy Mayor, Councillor Sallie Barker MBE – in the chair

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

\*Present

### **CO113 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from the Mayor, Councillor Masuk Miah, and Councillors Honor Brooker, Ruth Brothwell, Matt Furniss, Sandy Lowry, Merel Rehorst-Smith, and Katie Steel; and from Honorary Aldermen Catherine Cobley, Sarah Creedy, Jayne Marks, Tony Phillips, Lynda Strudwick, and Jenny Wicks.

### **CO114 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST**

There were no disclosures of interest.

### **CO115 MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS**

The Deputy Mayor reported that, before leaving for his well-deserved break, the Mayor had joined Guildford Hongkongers for their New Lunar Year Market at Guildford Cathedral on Saturday 10 February 2024, and very much enjoyed meeting over 60 stall holders – who served over 5,000 people during this popular event.

On a rainy Shrove Tuesday afternoon, The Mayor opened the popular Pancake Races, and the Charlotteville Jubilee Trust, who organised the event were delighted that £1,000 was raised for the Guildford Street Angels.

One of the Mayor's last engagements before his break was to join representatives from Rotary in Guildford and the Vivace Chorus, as they presented funds raised by the Mayor's Christmas Concert. Ticket sales raised £3,000 for the Mayor's Local Support Fund and the retiring collection raised just over £1,300 for the Fountain Centre.

### **CO116 LEADER'S COMMUNICATIONS**

#### Crowdfund Guildford

The Leader reported that there would be a free virtual workshop on Friday 8 March, in which participants would gain valuable insights into how residents can access support and funding for their ideas and projects, learn first-hand about the resources available, the application process and how the Council can help in bringing forward community initiatives. Councillors were asked to encourage residents and local groups with an idea, to attend. They could sign up by visiting [www.spacehive.dot.com/movement/Guildford](http://www.spacehive.dot.com/movement/Guildford).

#### Pride in Surrey

The Leader announced that Guildford would be hosting the fifth anniversary celebration of Pride in Surrey, at Stoke Park on Saturday 21 September 2024. The Leader expressed immense pride in our diverse community, which included a high representation of LGBTQ+ residents, recognising the significance this

event had to our residents. Tickets were now available via the Pride in Surrey website and were being offered on a 'pay what you can' basis keeping pride accessible for as many people as possible.

#### Arts Council Accreditation – Guildford Museum

The Leader reported that the Museum had retained full accreditation with Arts Council England, which recognised the hard work that the heritage team had put into every aspect of the Museum from looking after the collection of objects to meeting relevant standards for policies and procedures.

#### Public inquiry for planning appeal at land at Guildford Cathedral

The Leader reported that this appeal would be determined by public inquiry, which would open on 5 March 2024, and was due to last 10 days. Times and dates were subject to change, as advised by the Planning Inspector. More information could be found on the Council's website, where the appeal documents could be viewed.

### **CO117 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

The following persons addressed the Council meeting in respect of Minute No. CO119 below – Review of the Guildford Borough Local Plan: Strategy and Sites (2015-2034), and made the key points indicated below:

- (1) Julia Osborn, Chair of Send Parish Council, stated that the Local Plan had adopted a spatial strategy of housing and industrial development that was characterised by a heavy concentration of development in the north-east corner of the borough, particularly the ward of Send and Lovelace.

Since the removal of the villages from the Green Belt, Send had also witnessed a huge spike in windfall applications. According to the sustainability appraisal, villages sat at tier 10 of the sequential hierarchy, which meant that they were the least sustainable position for development to take place. All villages should only account for 5% of total supply. However, since the adoption of the plan, 843 dwellings had been approved in Send alone, which was 8% of total supply of the plan in just one village. Furthermore, strategic sites had not been delivered in the timeframe expected and key road improvement infrastructure fundamental to the spatial approach of the plan had not been delivered.

The spatial strategy of the Local Plan was now not fit for purpose, and it never was. The continued reliance on windfall applications, without infrastructure in villages was a completely unsustainable approach. This update needed vision and leadership, to produce a new spatial strategy, with a town centre master plan at its core and allocated sites in villages that

had not yet received approval must be removed from the plan, with immediate effect, to alleviate any further pressure on existing infrastructure. A new Green Belt and Countryside Study was also needed to reapply constraint to villages.

In response, the Lead Councillor for Planning, Councillor Fiona White stated that the Council was only being asked at this meeting to agree that the plan should be updated following the officer review. The matters to which the speaker had referred would be dealt with during the work to update the plan and the evidence that would be required as part of the update process. It was therefore not possible to respond to these matters at this stage. The Lead Councillor assured the speaker that the Council would liaise with parish councils, residents' associations and residents throughout the borough as part of this process.

- (2) John Rigg, on behalf of the Guildford Vision Group stated that many people in Guildford believed that the 2019 Local Plan was not fit for purpose, had huge gaps, with missing or bad policies. The glaring omission from the 2003 plan, the 2019 plan, and the officer's report on the agenda was a lack of planning vision, with no reference to the town or the emerging town master plan. The report remained silent on the essential evidence assembled in Shaping Guildford's Future (SGF). Seventy percent of the borough's population lived in the town, yet the Local Plan had no ambitions for flood remediation for height restrictions, density, delivering riverside homes and parks or to assist green belt protection. Its land allocations were incoherent and, as with North Street, often wrong. Thirty brownfield sites in the centre and 90 across the borough excluded due to flood risk. The Council appears to have abandoned and disregarded the emerging SGF.

In response, the Lead Councillor for Regeneration reiterated to the speaker that the Council at this meeting was only being asked to agree that the Local Plan should be updated, not to discuss the details of any future Plan. The Lead Councillor agreed that the evidence base needed to be reviewed, and reassured the speaker that the Council had no intention of discarding the work already completed through SGF. The regeneration team was already working with the planning policy team sharing the data that had been gathered during the SGF programme. The Lead Councillor emphasised that the flood alleviation scheme was essential to unlocking a wealth of opportunity within the town centre and that work was progressing.

- (3) Alastair Smith, Chair of the Guildford Society, supported the Council initiating an update of the Local Plan. National planning policy was in turmoil with

three significant updates to the NPPF over 18 months. The Guildford Local Plan needed to be robustly developed to cope with this turmoil. It was noted that a detailed plan and budget for the update was due to be prepared for approval. It was suggested that the following should be included in the plans:

- The evidence base needed to be fully updated, but must also include initiatives such as the economic strategy and the outputs from the Shaping Guildford Future programme.
- The revised local plan must lock in required infrastructure improvements particularly if the housing numbers increase.
- The Local Plan update was likely to take more than three years. The Lead Councillor had expressed caution on achieving a 30 month timescale proposed by central government. We cannot wait for three years. Alongside the Local Plan update, the Council must be prepared to draft and add extra policies on matters such as heights, which was a major concern to the Guildford Society and potentially, for selected site areas to guide development or policy in draft carried weight in the planning process. It was stated at the Executive meeting that the update should be viewed as an opportunity to address issues including town centre, riverside, brownfield sites, affordability, etc. The Society agreed, but also felt that design, quality and standards should be included.

In response, the Lead Councillor for Planning reiterated that the Council at this meeting was only being asked to agree to update the Local Plan and the speaker's comments would be looked at as part of that update. The Lead Councillor thanked the speaker for sending the paper that he had submitted in respect of the heights policy, which had already been passed on to the Planning Policy Team. The Lead Councillor assured the speaker that the Council would not ignore any of those things as part of the update process.

- (4) Malcolm Aish, Chair of Ockham Parish Council stated that the failure to deliver the infrastructure which underpinned the current Local Plan, should lead the Council to decide to proceed with an update of the Local Plan. The problems included the lack of delivery of the A3 improvements with the Burnt Common slip roads and other works around Guildford not proceeding. The works at junction 10 on the M25 were allegedly running two years late and the increase in residents had led to traffic queues and delays on the local road network. Optimistic plans for more cycling were not the answer.

The failure to upgrade the Ripley wastewater works meant that it could not cope with the numerous new homes already being built in Horsley and Send. The flood risk programme required much more work across the borough. Displacement is a problem across the Borough. The lack of evidence of a new Howard of Effingham School was putting a strain on school places, doctors' surgeries were refusing to take on new patients in this area, which would result in displaced residents looking further south for education and health needs. Guildford Borough Council's efforts to tackle climate change had not progressed, the take-up of electric vehicles had been slow and there were not enough charging points. The housing number forecast using the SHMA had been based on inflated ONS figures, which had grossly overstated the student population. This was expected to be demonstrated by the 2021 census data due to be published in 2025. These inflated figures were unlikely to lead to students wanting to live in the remote locations of the strategic sites. Students had been helped by the significant levels of purpose-built student accommodation and the possible reduced demand from the closure of the law school this year. The difficulties with the former Wisley Airfield as a strategic site may result in that not being available in an update of the plan. The brownfield sites in the centre of Guildford had reduced demand for retail and were available for residential development. The housing number had benefited from the large number of windfall units outside the plan and the huge demand for delivery materials had led to severe damage to local roads.

In response, the Lead Councillor for Planning, stated that the Council would take into account all the issues that had been raised on the assumption that the Council agreed to update the plan, but, unfortunately, she could not respond to any of the detail at this stage.

- (5) Karen Stevens, on behalf of Compton Parish Council commented on the current uncertainty around whether the proposed widening of the A3, part of the critical infrastructure on which three of the current strategic sites depended. Studies had shown that it would do little, if anything, to alleviate local traffic; it would simply unlock thousands of out-of-town houses, all reliant on cars. The strategic sites could not all be delivered, and keeping them in the Local Plan served no other purpose than to keep the housing figures artificially high. This would inevitably risk aggressive development when the five-year supply was not met. In the case of Blackwell Farm, it was also preventing the land from being designated a National Landscape. Natural England had assessed Blackwell Farm as meriting AONB status and had said that it could be included within the extended Surrey Hills National Landscape,

but only if the Council acknowledged that the site was undeliverable and removed it from the Local Plan. Compton Parish Council, whilst agreeing that an update was needed, felt that the Local Plan required a wholesale revision so that it delivered for Guildford. The current Plan was undemocratic, developer-led and bad for the environment. It ignored the views of thousands of residents, did not invest in the town centre or brownfield areas, but instead lazily built on countryside sites that relied on non-existent infrastructure and were anything but 'strategic'.

In response, the Lead Councillor for Planning reiterated her earlier comments, but also pointed out that the current Local Plan would remain in force while the update of the plan was being carried out, and that any planning decisions would be made by reference to that current local plan during the update period.

- (6) Amanda Mullarkey, on behalf of Guildford Residents Association, stated that a five-year housing supply based on the new formula would be required, but the Council was asked to plan the timetable wisely and to get some crucial things in place upfront. Firstly, a height supplementary planning document to sit alongside the heights policy for the plan. The SPD would inform site allocations for brownfield sites in the new plan, allow a plan-led approach and avoid excessive allocations for brownfield sites driving up heights. Secondly, development briefs for major brownfield sites linked to flood risk management and sustainable transport plans. Site briefs would make brownfield proposals credible and avoid housing figures for sites that bear no relationship to how a site could be developed. Thirdly, there was not a Community Infrastructure Levy plan to channel developer contributions from the current plan. We cannot afford to miss out that important part of the plan cycle. Effective means were required to secure developer contributions to infrastructure. Not only were there no A3 improvements, there was no sustainable movement corridor. Putting these three things in place would help to mitigate some of the big challenges that an update would trigger, for example, gaming of the system by developers who would have an incentive to talk down delivery of existing allocated sites in order to negotiate new supposedly deliverable sites, as happened in the run-up to the last plan. Another challenge would be Woking's unmet need, last time Guildford had to provide homes for Woking's unmet need under the duty to co-operate. This time, Woking's housing shortfall could be eye-watering, the Council would need excellent data in respect of constraints and on deliverable strategies for sustainable development of brownfield sites otherwise Guildford would again be asked to look for many more unsustainable greenfield sites.

In response, the Lead Councillor for Planning stated that none of the detail referred to by the speaker could be looked at until the Council had agreed to update the Local Plan and had commenced the update process, which had to be evidence led.

## **CO118 QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS**

(a) Councillor Joss Bigmore asked the Deputy Leader of the Council 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 was 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.”*

As a supplementary question, Councillor Bigmore asked the Lead Councillor to review whether it was appropriate for the matter in question, given the public interest in the site and the potential value to the Council, to be dealt with as an officer delegated decision thus avoiding formal scrutiny by a Committee of the Council. In response, the Lead Councillor stated that the key challenge with this site was that its value was not yet known and that there was an option agreement using the Stokes and Cambridge method which would depend on the value of the sale of the Blackwall Farm site. It would therefore be difficult to



determine how it would navigate any governance procedure other than delegated authority. The Lead Councillor indicated that he would discuss this with officers but did undertake to give councillors a briefing on the option agreement once the matter was a little closer to being finalised.

- (b) Councillor Catherine Young asked 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 was 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 asked 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 was 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."*

#### **CO119 REVIEW OF THE GUILDFORD BOROUGH LOCAL PLAN: STRATEGY AND SITES (2015-2034)**

The Council was required to review the Local Plan: Strategy and Sites (LPSS) within five years of adoption to decide if an update to the Plan was required. Having considered changes in national planning policy, associated guidance and relevant legislation, as well as changes in circumstances affecting Guildford borough since the LPSS was adopted, officers had recommended that the Local Plan should be updated.

Changes identified and which supported a decision to update the LPSS included the level of local housing need based on Government's standard method calculation, which differed significantly from the LPSS housing requirement; changes in the economy; slower progress toward delivery of several strategic sites than had been anticipated; and changes in planned delivery of supporting infrastructure such as the Guildford A3 scheme.

Furthermore, whilst many of the LPSS policies remained consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), there were changes in planning related legislation and guidance identified which supported a decision to update the LPSS. More fundamentally, however, the Government had proposed to introduce significant planning reform flowing, at least in part, from the recent publication of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 (LURA). These changes, which included a new NPPF and National Development Management Policies and other regulations, would impact on plan-making to the extent that 'new style' Local Plans were proposed.

Should the decision to update the Local Plan be supported, a further report would be prepared to propose appropriate timing for and budgetary requirements of the Local Plan update. Importantly, this would consider planning reform proposals including the Government's timescales for initiating 'new style' Local Plans alongside the impacts of changes on the nature and form of plans and supporting evidence.

It was important to stress that the findings of this review did not change any elements of the LPSS. The LPSS remained part of the Council's Development Plan, which was the primary consideration in terms of determining planning applications. Due weight would be given to policies according to their degree of consistency with the NPPF, which for the most part they were.

Upon the motion of the Lead Councillor for Planning, Councillor Fiona White, seconded by the Deputy Leader of the Council, and Lead Councillor for Regeneration, Councillor Tom Hunt, the Council

RESOLVED:

- (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 was a statutory requirement to review the LPSS within 5 years of its adoption. This was to assess whether it needed updating. The review findings set out in the report had indicated that an update of the LPSS would be an appropriate course of action to ensure that the Council's Local Plan remained effective into the future.
- There were a range of uncertainties which impacted on the context for the preparation of a new / updated Local Plan, some of which related to the lack of clarity regarding the detail of proposed Government reforms to the planning system which guided plan-making. It was necessary that these were fully considered in order to set out recommendations regarding the scope and timing of a new plan-making process.

The meeting finished at 8.21 pm

Signed .....

Date .....

Mayor

**GUILDFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Minutes of an extraordinary meeting of Guildford Borough Council held in the Council Chamber, Millmead House, Millmead, Guildford, Surrey GU2 4BB on Tuesday 16 April 2024

\* The Mayor, Councillor Masuk Miah

\* The Deputy Mayor, Councillor Sallie Barker MBE

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

\*Present

## **CO120 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Honor Brooker, Philip Brooker, Geoff Davis, Jason Fenwick, Matt Furniss, Carla Morson, Danielle Newson, Katie Steel, Keith Witham, and Catherine Young; and from Honorary Freeman Keith Churchouse and Honorary Aldermen Catherine Cobley, Sarah Creedy, Jayne Marks, Tony Phillips, and Lynda Strudwick.

## **CO121 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST**

There were no disclosures of interest.

## **CO122 MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS**

The Mayor reported that the previous week had marked the end of the holy month of Ramadan, which meant the end of a month of fasting from sunrise to sunset. During this time, the Mayor did not drink or eat anything during the day, which was often difficult to deal with, especially when attending Mayoral events although, thankfully, people had been very understanding.

The Mayor reported that he was honoured to be invited to speak about his experience of Ramadan at the staff briefing held the previous Thursday. Colleagues at Waverley had been very welcoming and the Mayor was happy to answer some of the questions people had about Ramadan.

The Mayor acknowledged that his Mayoral year would be ending very soon, but that he was still very busy and looking forward to presenting this year's Mayor's Awards for Service to the Community on 27 April at the County Club. The Mayor thanked the club for once again sponsoring this important event.

The Mayor also reported that arrangements were being finalised for his main fund-raising event of the year, in aid of his chosen charity The Fountain Centre. This would be the Mayor's charity adult football tournament, being held on Sunday 2 June, which was being hosted by Guildford City Boys and Girls Football Club at Stoughton Recreation Ground. The date had to be rescheduled beyond the mayoral year to fit in with the football league timing. The Mayor expressed his thanks to the Mayor elect for her understanding and for agreeing to join him at the event and present the Mayor's shield for fair play for the first time. The Mayor also thanked:

- everyone at Guildford City Boys and Girls FC,
- Corporate sponsor Martin Grant Homes,
- Chelsea FC Foundation,

- AFC Wimbledon Academy, and
- Guildford Lions.

Finally, the Mayor drew the Council's attention to the Big Charity Fund Raising Walk taking place on Sunday 19 May, which would start and finish at Shalford Park. The Mayor elect, would be walking the 10 mile route and councillors were invited to sponsor her.

As this was his last full Council meeting as Mayor before the Annual Meeting, the Mayor thanked councillors for their support throughout his Mayoral year, and particularly thanked the Deputy Mayor and wished her the very best of luck for her mayoral year.

### **CO123 LEADER'S COMMUNICATIONS**

The Leader reported on the following matters:

#### Making Guildford town centre safer for all

Over the past few months, the Council had been working with Surrey Police and Experience Guildford to introduce changes to help make Guildford town centre safer for all:

- There were now additional police officers patrolling in Guildford town centre at the weekends.
- The Council had introduced street marshals to the town centre on Saturdays and Sundays from 12:00pm to 8:00pm, who were on hand to:
  - help reassure visitors and residents in Guildford town centre,
  - work with Police to enforce Public Space Protection Orders that were in place, and
  - deal with other environmental and public realm issues, such as littering.
- Over the next few weeks, Surrey County Council's Targeted Youth Support would begin a youth outreach project.

The street marshals and youth outreach project were initiatives funded through the Safer Streets Fund. In Guildford, this funding was being used to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour within Guildford town centre. These changes would continue throughout 2024 and into 2025.

#### Guildford Flood Alleviation Scheme

The Environment Agency, this Council and the County Council were working together to develop a scheme to reduce flood risk to homes, businesses, and infrastructure in Guildford town centre. The scheme would also improve the

natural environment and build better connections between Guildford town centre and the River Wey.

The Environment Agency would be holding a drop-in public engagement event on Thursday 18 April from 2pm to 7pm, in The Circle Bar at the Yvonne Arnaud Theatre.

#### Active April

This month residents were being encouraged to try something new to keep fit. There was a variety of sports places to visit around the borough like Guildford Spectrum, the Lido, and outdoor gyms to help keep people active during this month.

#### **CO124 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There were no questions or statements from the public.

#### **CO125 QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS**

There were no questions from councillors.

#### **CO126 REVIEW OF THE CONSTITUTION: COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULES**

The Council considered a report on the recent review of Council Procedure Rules which had been undertaken as part of the current work programme to update the constitutions of both Guildford Borough Council (GBC) and Waverley Borough Council (WBC). The Joint Strategic Director of Legal and Democratic Services had prioritised the Council Procedure Rules as a high priority, requiring urgent attention.

After reviewing both councils' Council Procedure Rules, it was apparent that there would be little benefit in amending both sets of the current rules. Officers had therefore recommended the introduction of a set of new Council Procedure Rules for both councils, using examples of good practice, based on the statutory framework.

The work to review the Council Procedure Rules for both GBC and WBC was extensive, and had been presented initially to, and supported by, the Guildford and Waverley Joint Constitutions Review Group. Subsequently, WBC's Standards & General Purposes Committee (on 8 April 2024) and GBC's Corporate Governance & Standards Committee (on 11 April 2024) had considered the proposed new Council Procedure Rules. Details of the outcome of each committee's consideration of the proposed new Council Procedure Rules were



reported to the Council, and would be reported to WBC's full Council meeting on 23 April 2024.

A key theme in the proposed new Council Procedure Rules was to clearly identify who had the authority and responsibility to discharge functions at council meetings, including proper officers, and the correct procedures to be followed, including appropriate communication channels.

Upon the motion of the Lead Councillor for Regulatory & Democratic Services, Councillor Merel Rehorst-Smith, seconded by Councillor James Jones, the Council RESOLVED: That the proposed new Council Procedure Rules, as set out in Appendix 2 to the report submitted to the Council, be adopted into the Constitution, subject to the following minor amendments, as suggested by Waverley's Standards & General Purposes Committee:

- (a) CPR 2.3 - Election of the Mayor and Appointment of the Deputy Mayor (page 32 of the Council agenda): Amend the second paragraph so that it reads as follows:

“The current Mayor will preside over the election of their successor, unless they are unable to do so, in which case the current Deputy Mayor will do so. If the Deputy Mayor is ineligible to do so, due to the principle that a Councillor should not preside over their own election, the Monitoring Officer will **call for a motion that a non-executive Member of the Council take the chair to** preside for the first agenda item of business to Elect the Mayor. In the case of an equality of votes, the person presiding at the meeting, ~~provided they are a councillor,~~ shall give a casting vote in the case of an equality of votes”.

- (b) CPR 4.2 – Business at Extraordinary Meetings (page 37 of the Council agenda): Amend paragraph (vi) so that it reads as follows:

“(vi) consider the items of business for which the extraordinary meeting has been called, **and deal with any business remaining from the last Council meeting.**”

- (c) CPR 15.12 - Motions which may be moved during debate (page 52 of the Council agenda): Amend first paragraph so that it reads as follows:

“When a motion is under debate, no other motion may be moved except the following procedural **or closure** motions, which may be moved by a member, without comment, at the end of a speech by another member.”

- (d) CPR 25.4 – Leader of the Council (page 62 of the Council agenda):  
Amend the first paragraph so that it reads:

“The Leader of the Council, or Deputy Leader in their absence, may attend any meeting of a Committee and speak **once** on any item under consideration as of right, unless they have a relevant interest in the matter that would preclude them from being present.”

Reasons:

- Adoption of the new Council Procedure Rules will ensure that both Guildford and Waverley Borough Councils have adequate arrangements in place to deal with the conduct of business at council meetings in an effective and efficient manner that meets statutory requirements.
- Adoption of the new Council Procedure Rules will be a significant milestone in the process of aligning the constitutions of GBC and WBC where it is appropriate to do so.

## **CO127 REVIEW OF EXECUTIVE ADVISORY BOARDS AND OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY**

The Council noted that the Executive Advisory Boards (EABs) and the single Overview & Scrutiny (O&S) Committee had been established in 2016, following a review of the Council’s internal governance arrangements in 2015. The EABs had been based on a model adopted at that time by two district councils in Kent. In essence, their purpose was to increase backbench member involvement in significant Executive decisions, by advising the Executive at an early stage on the formulation and development of policies and major projects that will help to deliver the Council’s strategic priorities within its Corporate Plan.

When the new arrangements were introduced, much of the work of the then existing two O&S Committees (including policy development) transferred to the EABs and the new O&S Committee was responsible primarily for post-decision review of Executive decisions and wider external scrutiny, including task and finish group investigations.

The remits of the EABs were originally aligned to the themes of the Corporate Plan in place at the time of their establishment. Latterly, they had been linked to the

corporate management structure of the Council (Resources EAB and Community EAB).

The EABs also met jointly to consider matters of significant mutual interest, including consideration of draft budget papers each year. They had no substantive decision-making powers. The EABs and O&S Committee met in public, and all meetings were webcasted, and their proceedings were subject to Part C of the Council Procedure Rules (relating to committees), Public Speaking Procedure Rules, Access to Information Procedure Rules, and (for O&S) the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules as set out in Part 4 of Guildford's Constitution.

The Council acknowledged that, since May 2023, the EABs had met on just three occasions (two of which were joint meetings of the two EABs) with most scheduled meetings having been cancelled due to lack of business, or due to the business that had been scheduled on their work programme being postponed for a number of reasons.

At its informal briefing on 14 February 2024, the Executive considered a briefing note on the future of the EABs and their role within the Council's democratic governance processes, particularly in the context of the O&S function. The chairs and vice-chairs of the EABs and the O&S Committee had been invited to the briefing meeting to participate in the discussion and to offer their views. The chair and vice-chair of the O&S Committee and one of the EAB vice-chairs attended and were generally supportive of the proposals to disband the EABs and the existing O&S Committee and replace them with two new O&S Committees.

This matter had also been discussed at the meeting of the Joint Constitutions Review Group (JCRG) held on 28 March 2024. The JCRG supported the proposals and commended them for consideration by the Corporate Governance & Standards Committee at its special meeting held on 11 April 2024. The Committee had also endorsed the proposals and recommended their adoption by the Council.

Upon the motion of the Lead Councillor for Regulatory & Democratic Services, Councillor Merel Rehorst-Smith, seconded by Councillor James Walsh, the Council:

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the proposal to disband the two EABs and the single O&S Committee and to replace them with two new Overview and Scrutiny Committees (Option 3 referred to in the report submitted to the Council), be adopted and implemented with effect from the 2024-25 municipal year.

- (2) That the draft Terms of Reference of the two proposed new Overview and Scrutiny Committees, as set out in Appendix 3 to the report submitted to the Council, be adopted, subject to the addition of the following after paragraph 1.4:

*'1.5 General terms of reference*

*Each Overview and Scrutiny Committee may:*

- (a) appoint such formal sub-committees and informal task and finish groups as they consider appropriate to fulfil the Council's overview and scrutiny functions,*
- (b) approve an overview and scrutiny work programme so as to ensure that each Committee's time is effectively and efficiently utilised,*
- (c) undertake investigations into such matters relating to the Council's functions and powers as:
  - (i) may be referred by the Leader/Executive, or*
  - (ii) the Committee may consider appropriate.**
- (d) consider petitions received under the adopted Petition Scheme that fall into the following categories:
  - petitions requiring a senior officer to give evidence to the Committee, and*
  - a request from a petition organiser, who is not satisfied with the Council's response to a petition, for a review of the adequacy of the steps taken or proposed to be taken in response to the petition.'**

- (3) That the operation of the new Overview and Scrutiny Committees be reviewed after 12 months.

Reason:

To ensure that the Council is able to demonstrate that it discharges its overview and scrutiny function more effectively.

**CO128 APPOINTMENT OF JOINT STRATEGIC DIRECTOR OF FINANCE/SECTION 151 OFFICER**

The Council noted that Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 required local authorities to make arrangements for the proper administration of their financial

affairs and appoint a Section 151 Officer, also known as a Chief Finance Officer, to have responsibility for those arrangements.

Due to the changes to the Corporate Management Board structure and the advertising of the permanent role of Joint Strategic Director of Finance/Section 151 Officer a permanent appointment was required to ensure that both Councils met their statutory requirements.

Following the advertising of the permanent role, one application had been received, from the current interim S151 Officer, Richard Bates. Mr Bates had been in the role of interim Executive Head of Finance/ S151 Officer since 17 July 2023, and, latterly, the role of Interim Joint Strategic Director of Finance. At its meeting on 12 April 2024, the Joint Senior Staff Committee (JSSC) conducted an interview of Mr Bates for the permanent role of Joint Strategic Director of Finance/Section 151 Officer and had recommended unanimously to confirm his formal appointment to that role at the full meetings of both Guildford and Waverley Borough Councils to be held respectively on 16 and 23 April 2024.

It was noted that any formal offer of appointment was subject to no material or well-founded objection being made by either of the two Council Leaders on behalf of their respective Executives in accordance with the provisions of Paragraph 5 of Part II of Schedule 1 to the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) Regulations 2001. The Council was informed that no such objection had been received in respect of this appointment.

Upon the motion of the Leader of the Council, Councillor Julia McShane seconded by the Lead Councillor for Finance and Property, Councillor Richard Lucas, the Council

RESOLVED: That, subject to the agreement of Waverley Borough Council at its full Council meeting on 23 April 2024, confirmation of a formal offer of appointment to the role of Joint Strategic Director of Finance, and designation as Section 151 Officer, for both Guildford and Waverley Borough Councils be made to Richard Bates, subject to a salary of £127,850 per annum.

Reasons:

- Section 151 of the Local Government Act, 1972 required that local authorities had in place arrangements for the proper administration of their financial affairs.
- Richard Bates was a qualified Accountant and experienced local authority Chief Financial Officer. He had held the S151 Officer role at Dorset County Council and interim S151 Officer at Mendip District Council

- Richard Bates had been carrying out the responsibilities of the role of interim Executive Head of Finance/S151 Officer at both authorities since 17 July 2023 and, latterly, the role of Interim Joint Strategic Director of Finance.

The meeting finished at 7.50 pm.