

GUILDFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of Guildford Borough Council held at Council Chamber, Millmead House, Millmead, Guildford, Surrey GU2 4BB on Monday, 16th January, 2023

* The Mayor, Councillor Dennis Booth (Mayor)

* The Deputy Mayor, Councillor Masuk Miah (Deputy Mayor)

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| * Councillor Paul Abbey | * Councillor Julia McShane |
| * Councillor Tim Anderson | Councillor Ann McShee |
| * Councillor Jon Askew | * Councillor Bob McShee |
| * Councillor Christopher Barrass | * Councillor Richard Morris |
| * Councillor Joss Bigmore | * Councillor Marsha Moseley |
| * Councillor David Bilbé | * Councillor Ramsey Nagaty |
| Councillor Chris Blow | Councillor Susan Parker |
| * Councillor Ruth Brothwell | * Councillor George Potter |
| Councillor Colin Cross | Councillor Jo Randall |
| Councillor Guida Esteves | * Councillor John Redpath |
| * Councillor Graham Eyre | * Councillor Maddy Redpath |
| Councillor Andrew Gomm | * Councillor John Rigg |
| * Councillor Angela Goodwin | Councillor Tony Rooth |
| Councillor David Goodwin | * Councillor Will Salmon |
| * Councillor Angela Gunning | * Councillor Deborah Seabrook |
| * Councillor Gillian Harwood | * Councillor Pauline Searle |
| Councillor Jan Harwood | * Councillor Paul Spooner |
| * Councillor Liz Hogger | Councillor James Steel |
| * Councillor Tom Hunt | Councillor Cait Taylor |
| * Councillor Diana Jones | * Councillor James Walsh |
| * Councillor Steven Lee | * Councillor Fiona White |
| * Councillor Nigel Manning | Councillor Keith Witham |
| * Councillor Ted Mayne | * Councillor Catherine Young |

*Present

CO101 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Christopher Barrass, Colin Cross, Guida Esteves, Graham Eyre, Andrew Gomm, Angela Goodwin, David Goodwin, Liz Hogger, Nigel Manning, Ann McShee, Marsha Moseley, Susan Parker, John Rigg, James Steel, and Keith Witham, and also from Honorary Aldermen Catherine Cobley, Jayne Marks, Tony Phillips, and Lynda Strudwick.

CO102 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

There were no disclosures of interest.

CO103 MINUTES

The Council confirmed, as a correct record, the minutes of the meeting held on 6 December 2022, and the extraordinary meeting held on 3 January 2023. The Mayor signed the minutes.

CO104 MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS

The Mayor reminded councillors that the closing date for the submission of nominations for Mayor's Awards for service to the Community was 3 February. This was a wonderful way to recognise those unsung heroes in our Borough who go out of their way in serving others, often with little or no appreciation.

The Mayor also reminded councillors of the forthcoming Mayor's Charity Ball and was pleased to confirm that four tables had already been sold. Anyone interested in attending should contact Kate Foxton as soon as possible.

CO105 LEADER'S COMMUNICATIONS

The Leader made the following announcements:

County-wide award recognition for Officers in Regulatory Services

Officers from the Regulatory Services team (Mike Smith and Peter Burnage) had both been nominated for a Russell Jenner Award. The awards recognised contributions to the Environmental Health profession in Surrey. Mr Smith had won the Award with Mr Burnage being placed fourth. They had also recently led their teams to success in the Purple Flag and Paw Print industry awards, bringing well-deserved recognition to a field that often went unappreciated.

Safer Guildford Partnership training

The [Safer Guildford Partnership](#) worked collaboratively to share information, identify local priorities and coordinate a planned response to the prevention of crime, disorder, anti-social behaviour, and reoffending in the borough. As identified in the Safer Guildford Partnership Plan 2021-24, the Partnership was committed to raising awareness of priority community safety issues and the support available. As a member organisation, the Partnership was happy to provide some free training opportunities around suicide, domestic abuse, terrorism awareness and fraud. Anyone interested was asked to contact Gill.Paddington@guildford.gov.uk

Matisse: drawing with scissors

Late Works 1950 -1954

Matisse: drawing with scissors, was a Hayward Gallery Touring Exhibition from the Southbank Centre. It featured 35 posthumous prints of the cut-outs produced by Henri Matisse in the last four years of his life, when confined to bed by ill health. It included many of his iconic images, such as The Snail and the Blue Nudes.

Matisse: drawing with scissors would be on display at Guildford House Gallery from 21 January - 25 March 2023. The gallery was open Tuesday to Saturday 10am to 4.30pm (last entry 4pm). Admission was free.

Banner board advertising

Councillors noted that the Strategy, Performance and Events team managed advertising sales on several banner and poster boards at prime locations across Guildford. The team was currently planning their advertising schedule for this year. This type of advertising was a great way to promote the work of community groups, and councillors were asked to communicate this within their wards.

Accessibility guidance

The Leader noted that the Council had a legal duty to ensure all documents on the Council's website were accessible. An accessibility guidance pack was currently being finalised, which showed staff how to create accessible documents.

Becoming a councillor

With the local elections being held on 4 May 2023, the Leader was keen to encourage people from all backgrounds to consider standing for election. A briefing would be held on 9 February 2023 for anyone who might be interested in becoming a councillor. It would provide an informal opportunity to find what it would entail.

The Leader confirmed, in response to an enquiry, that the Becoming a Councillor briefing would be recorded.

CO106 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were no questions or statements from the public.

CO107 QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

There were no questions from councillors.

CO108 WEYSIDE URBAN VILLAGE DEVELOPMENT

Councillors noted that Weyside Urban Village ("WUV") was a major 41-hectare brownfield regeneration scheme that the Council had anticipated could deliver approximately 1,500 homes across a range of tenures, as well as 2,000 square metres of community space and 6,500 square metres of employment space.

In February 2020, the Council had committed £334.9 million to fund the site assembly and infrastructure construction to enable the development of the WUV site. It was expected that this sum would be fully recovered from the sale of ten land plots to housing developers, together with grant funding from Homes England and Enterprise M3 LEP.

Full Council approval had been based on financial modelling information which had demonstrated that the project would at least break even after undertaking activities such as securing planning consents and funding to ensure that the project would have greater or equal value to the receipts received.

Over 44% of the site was currently in Council ownership, and 100% would be achieved on completion of land transfers with Thames Water Utilities Ltd ("TWUL"). The conditional contract with TWUL had been signed on 25 April 2019 to fund and enable the relocation of the existing sewage treatment works on the Council's former landfill site freeing up the land for development.

The Council had secured £52.3m grant funding from Homes England and had signed a Grant Determination Agreement with Homes England in July 2020 to draw down the grant expenditure associated with the implementation of the infrastructure works, that were now in progress. In October 2021, the Planning Committee had issued a Resolution to Grant for the hybrid planning application for Weyside, with the decision notice to approve the application issued in March 2022.

Councillors noted that the broader economic landscape and its impact on the construction industry over the past 12 – 18 months had been profound. At the end of 2021, the Building Cost Information Service (BCIS) – which provided cost and price data for the UK construction industry – had reported that the annual growth in its material cost index reached a forty year high. Since then, pressures on supply chains had persisted and labour shortages had become more acute. Although the lifting of Covid restrictions led to a return to high activity levels, the war in Ukraine and high rates of inflation had put the construction industry in further turmoil. The impact of these issues was being felt at a local level, with forecast construction and financing costs also increasing significantly.

It had been agreed with the Executive that the project team would report the financial position to the Executive on an annual basis. The Council considered a report, which had been considered by the Executive at its meeting on 5 January 2023 and had outlined the financial forecast to the end of the programme, as well as the proposed mitigation to address the potential financial deficit that had arisen as a result of macro-level factors.

Council noted that the Executive had endorsed the recommendations in the report.

Upon the motion of the Lead Councillor for Regeneration, Councillor John Rigg, seconded by the Leader of the Council, Councillor Julia McShane, the Council

RESOLVED: That full Council:

- (1) notes the current forecasted eventual deficit, as set out in exempt Appendix 1 to this report, in 2033 (year 10 of the project delivery programme) and resulting General Fund revenue implications, noting that this is based on a number of variables outlined within Section 4 of this report (Financial Implications); and
- (2) approves the continuation of the Weyside Urban Village project until officers have completed the required due diligence described in (a) and (b) below and report back to Full Council in July 2023:
 - (a) To request officers to provide alternative risk assessed option appraisals other than to proceed with the original Full Council approved scheme, including all possible mitigations and alterations to the current funding and specifications, indicating by use of a range of values where specific data is not available, and a full explanation of assumptions with reasons, sufficient to enable Members to make a fully informed decision on how it wishes to proceed at Full Council in July 2023.
 - (b) To request officers to update the project with the latest assumptions, indices and valuations and report back to the July 2023 Full Council.”

Reasons:

The projected deficit, and significantly wide variation and uncertainty of the outcome of this project, had rendered the project as no longer compliant with the Full Council approval to break even at zero cost to the Council, i.e. the project had greater or equal value to the receipts received. At this point, Officers did not have Full Council authority to incur any further expenditure until councillors had considered their full options and implications. However, temporarily stopping expenditure was not realistic due to contractual commitments.

The resolution above would:

- Ensure that there was sufficient understanding of the projected financial forecast of the programme.
- Ensure that there was sufficient funding in the approved programme to cover the phase 1 & 2 infrastructure costs, SCC Waste Transfer Centre design cost, construction of the new Council Depot and the payments which the Council was obliged to make to TWUL under the Thames Water Agreement for 2022/23 and 2023/24.
- Ensure that statutory service agreements and construction agreements could be entered into for the delivery of services and infrastructure for the development and to ensure that Homes England Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) milestones were achieved.
- Support the delivery of the Council’s Corporate Plan (2021-2025) priorities, by supporting high quality development of a strategic site, creating employment opportunities through regeneration and facilitating housing that people could afford.

CO109 COMMON SEAL

The Council

RESOLVED: That the Common Seal of the Council be affixed to any documents to give effect to any decisions taken by the Council at this meeting.

The meeting finished at 7.34 pm

Signed
Mayor

Date