

- * Cllr Penny Marriott (Mayor)
- * Cllr John Robini (Deputy Mayor)

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| Cllr Brian Adams | * Cllr Daniel Hunt |
| * Cllr Christine Baker | * Cllr Jerry Hyman |
| * Cllr David Beaman | * Cllr Peter Isherwood |
| * Cllr Roger Blishen | * Cllr Jacquie Keen |
| * Cllr Peter Clark | * Cllr Robert Knowles |
| * Cllr Carole Cockburn | * Cllr Anna James |
| * Cllr Richard Cole | * Cllr Andy MacLeod |
| * Cllr Steve Cosser | * Cllr Peter Marriott |
| * Cllr Martin D'Arcy | * Cllr Michaela Martin |
| * Cllr Jerome Davidson | * Cllr Peter Martin |
| * Cllr Kevin Deanus | * Cllr Mark Merryweather |
| * Cllr Simon Dear | Cllr Kika Mirylees |
| * Cllr Sally Dickson | * Cllr Stephen Mulliner |
| * Cllr Brian Edmonds | * Cllr John Neale |
| * Cllr Patricia Ellis | * Cllr Peter Nicholson |
| * Cllr David Else | * Cllr Nick Palmer |
| * Cllr Jenny Else | * Cllr Julia Potts |
| * Cllr Jan Floyd-Douglass | * Cllr Ruth Reed |
| * Cllr Paul Follows | * Cllr Paul Rivers |
| * Cllr Mary Forszewski | * Cllr Penny Rivers |
| * Cllr Maxine Gale | * Cllr Anne-Marie Rosoman |
| * Cllr Michael Goodridge | * Cllr Trevor Sadler |
| * Cllr John Gray | * Cllr Richard Seaborne |
| Cllr Michaela Gray | * Cllr Liz Townsend |
| * Cllr Joan Heagin | * Cllr John Ward |
| * Cllr Val Henry | * Cllr Steve Williams |
| * Cllr George Hesse | * Cllr George Wilson |
| Cllr Chris Howard | |

*Present

Apologies

Cllr Brian Adams, Cllr Michaela Gray, Cllr Chris Howard and Cllr Kika Mirylees

Prior to the commencement of the meeting, Rabbi Dr Jonathan Romain led Members in a moment of reflection.

CNL22/20 WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS AND PROCEDURAL INFORMATION

22.1 The Mayor, Cllr Penny Marriott, welcomed Members and members of the public to the Council meeting, and introduced the Officers present: the Chief Executive, Tom Horwood; Strategic Directors, Graeme Clark and Annie

Righton; Head of Policy & Governance, Robin Taylor; and Borough Solicitor, Daniel Bainbridge.

- 22.2 The Mayor reminded Members of the protocols for Zoom meetings, and on her recommendation Council RESOLVED to suspend Procedure Rule 21.1, the requirement for Members to stand to speak.

CNL23/20 MINUTES (Agenda item 1.)

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 9 June 2020 were confirmed.

CNL24/20 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda item 2.)

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Brian Adams, Michaela Gray, Chris Howard and Kika Mirylees.

CNL25/20 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (Agenda item 3.)

There were no interests declared under this heading.

CNL26/20 MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS (Agenda item 4.)

- 25.1 The Mayor reported that it had been a very quiet month in terms of Mayoral engagements, but she had been able to attend the Council Offices to raise the flag for Armed Forces Day in June, when she had been accompanied by Chief Petty Officer Gemma Muggerridge from the Farnham Sea Cadets, one of Mayor's charities for 2020/21.
- 25.2 The Mayor thanked Rabbi Jonathan Romain for leading the prayers before the start of the meeting, and advised that she would be inviting a different faith representative to take that role for each Council meeting, covering all faiths and denominations.
- 25.3 Finally, the Mayor had enjoyed a virtual tea party with the Town Mayors of Farnham, Godalming and Haslemere, and the Chairman of Cranleigh Parish Council, and had been impressed with the huge amount of work the towns and parishes had achieved in mobilising and helping to coordinate their community response to the Covid pandemic. And, she had had taken part in a congratulatory meeting, via Zoom, for the street champions in Cranleigh who had been so important to the local response in their village.

CNL27/20 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS (Agenda item 5.)

- 26.1 The Leader noted that there would be a discussion about recent developments in relation to unitary councils later in the meeting, and he would not pre-empt that, but thanked Members for the cross-party co-operation that had enabled the late Motion to be added to the agenda.
- 26.2 The Leader also advised Members that since appointing a Portfolio Holder with responsibility for Dunsfold Park the arrangement for the Strategic Governance Board and the Advisory Group had been reviewed and updated, and would be circulated to Members imminently. He expected that this work stream would start to move forward in the near future.

The Leader then invited the Executive Portfolio Holders to give brief updates on current issues:

26.3 Cllr Mark Merryweather, Portfolio Holder for Finance, Assets and Commercial Services:

- Further to the government announcement at the beginning of the month about additional funding for local authorities, Waverley would be receiving £145k from the £500m funding pot announced. However, there was still insufficient detail about the second element of the funding announced, which was the formula-based compensation for lost income, to be able to estimate how much Waverley might receive.

26.4 Cllr Steve Williams, Portfolio Holder for Environment and Sustainability:

- Not only had the Environmental Services team managed to maintain waste and recycling collections throughout the lockdown period, they had now almost completed a significant change in the bin collection routes, after which new kerbside collections of textiles and small electrical items would be introduced.
- Whilst there had been an inevitable pause in the public engagement on the Climate Change and Sustainability Strategy, this was now resuming and commentary from the public and organisations including town and parish councils would be invited. It was important to build on the culture of putting sustainability at the heart of decision-making, and he would be writing to Jeremy Hunt MP to seek his support for the recent Private Members Bill introduced by Derek Thomas MP asking for provision of necessary powers and resources to enable all UK local authorities to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030.
- The Council had mounted a serious challenge to UK Oil and Gas and their plans to drill for fossil fuels in Waverley, and at the end of June the Surrey County Council planning committee turned down the planning application, which was a vindication of the extensive consultation Waverley had carried out and work done to fight the application.

26.5 Cllr Anne-Marie Rosoman, Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Safety:

- Waverley's Housing Officers had provided invaluable support to tenants and residents, particularly the vulnerable, shielding, and homeless. As restrictions were now lifting, the Housing Service was moving forward with the recovery plan to resume repairs and capital works to the housing stock.
- Reports of anti-social behaviour had reduced substantially during lockdown, but going forward the council would continue to work with partners in the Safer Waverley Partnership and there was a recent success in having CCTV installed at a Senior Living Scheme in Farnham where there had been reports of anti-social behaviour.
- Inspector Gary Smith was moving to a new role at Surrey Police Headquarters at Mount Browne and would be replaced as Borough Commander by Inspector Sam Adcock, who would take up the role in September.

- 26.6 Cllr Andy MacLeod, Portfolio Holder for Planning Policy and Brightwells:
- With regard to Local Plan Part 2, Planning Policy Officers were now reviewing the responses to the 'call for sites' in Haslemere and Witley, and would be discussing these with the relevant councils and other relevant bodies such as Natural England.
 - The Brightwells Yard development site had been shut for three months and whilst work had now resumed it was at reduced capacity to maintain social distancing. The development was now unlikely to open in spring 2021, but it was extremely important that it opened by autumn 2021 in order to be ready for the Christmas trading period.
 - The recent planning application to reduce the size of the basement parking at the Woolmead development in Farnham had been refused, and whilst the next steps were in the hands of the applicant, it was extremely important that there was progress on site due to its proximity to the Brightwells development.
- 26.7 Cllr Nick Palmer, Portfolio Holder for Operational and Enforcement Services:
- Car parking revenue was around 40-50% of normal, and was starting to improve gradually. Charges were being maintained at the current level for the time being to avoid discouraging people from going to the shops.
 - As lockdown had eased there had been a considerable increase in the number of visitors to local beauty spots, including Frensham Pond. Unfortunately there had been a consequent increase in littering and anti-social behaviour, and Waverley officers had done an extraordinary job in very difficult and challenging circumstances to protect the heathland and wildlife from the dangers of wild fires and excess littering. The intention was to bring in additional resources to help support the environmental enforcement work on the site and to ease the pressure on the area.
- 26.8 Cllr Liz Townsend, Portfolio Holder for Economic Development, Leisure, Parks & Countryside, and Dunsfold Park:
- Waverley officers were continuing to process business grant applications and had now issued about £23.6m of government funding.
 - Towns and villages had made huge efforts, and were now 'open for business'. The Economic Development Team had provided exceptional and professional support throughout the Covid crisis, and through the newly established Business Task Group she was now meeting with a broad cross section of businesses from across Waverley.
 - The situation at Frensham Ponds had been very challenging and Cllr Townsend echoed thanks to the Officers, Rangers, and volunteers for their work in dealing with poor behaviour and excess litter left by visitors. Several new traffic management measures were being implemented including contactless parking payments, extra signage, and additional highways measures.
 - The governance structure for Dunsfold Park Garden Village had been revised to address previous concerns and would be circulated to all councillors tomorrow, together with a formal invitation to relevant

parishes for formal representation. This was an exciting opportunity for Portfolio Holders, local Members and local Parish Councillors to make the expectations of this new garden village a reality.

26.9 Cllr David Beaman, Portfolio Holder for Health, Wellbeing and Culture:

- Whilst the cultural sector had lagged behind in receiving support from the government, there were two positive announcements: the first was to congratulate Farnham on being awarded Craft City designation; and the second was to congratulate Creative Response in Farnham who had got Arts Council funding to enable their work in using art therapy for disability and mental ill-health.

26.10 Cllr Peter Clark, Portfolio Holder for Business Transformation, IT and Customer Service:

- Since the introduction of Government regulations to enable council meetings with remote attendance, Waverley's IT team had procured video-conferencing equipment to set up Zoom rooms in the Council Offices at The Burys. In addition to Committee Room 1, and a mobile Zoom room, the Council Chamber had also now been adapted for Zoom meetings.
- The IT team had risen to the challenge of enabling business and customer services to be maintained with little or no interruption over the last few months. They were now looking forward and developing a new IT Strategy that would embed the learning of recent months, and this would come forward to the Executive in September. One of the exciting developments was that most of the IT team were now approved software developers for Liberty Create low-code software. This would allow the council to develop applications for the business to replace licensed applications and legacy software, and so provide improved on-line self service for residents as well as cost savings.
- Work on bringing together the various customer-facing staff from across the council into one customer service centre was continuing, with formal consultations starting shortly.

26.11 Cllr Paul Follows, Deputy Leader:

- Thanked the Communications and Engagement Team for their continuing efforts to keep residents and Members informed, particularly about Covid-related guidance and information.
- Work on the revised Corporate Strategy had started, with meetings between the Portfolio Holders and their Heads of Service. He had been attending all the meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees in preparation for re-booting the Governance Review Group which would be happening shortly.
- Thanked Inspector Gary Smith for his work with the Safer Waverley Partnership, particularly in Godalming and Farncombe, and looked forward to welcoming his successor.

CNL28/20 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC (Agenda item 6.)

The following questions were received from members of the public in accordance with Procedure Rule 10:

27.1 From Alfold Parish Council, and read out by Parish Councillor Penni Mayne:

“Our question is; will the Council now consider it time that local Parish representation is invited as a full participating member into the governance and decision-making process, as co-leaders in developing a positive plan for DPGV, and in accordance with national best practice as set out by the Town and Country Planning Association?”

Cllr Liz Townsend, Portfolio Holder for Economic Development, Leisure, Parks, Countryside and Dunsfold Park, responded:

“At the beginning of March I was delighted to join the Executive team, and alongside responsibilities for economic development, parks and leisure I also took on responsibility for the new Dunsfold Garden Village. After an initial meeting on the 20th March with the planning project team leader to receive an update on the new settlement and to discuss the governance arrangements, we then had lockdown announced on 23rd March. We then had, like all councils, to prioritize our response to the immediate Covid-19 emergency and to rapidly adapt to the considerable challenges that we faced as well as to implement the additional responsibilities assigned to us by central government. We had to quickly adopt new processes like all councils, with online meetings and temporary governance, together with a new planning committee structure. I am extremely proud of the council and our officers, that we responded so swiftly to meeting all of these demands and continued to provide all of our services without interruption to our residents.

You will not be surprised to learn that I am completely committed to providing every opportunity that I can to encourage local representation at parish level. As soon as I could at the beginning of June I resumed regular meetings with officers on Dunsfold and with the complete support of the Executive started to look at the governance structure which was presented to the Executive on 30th June and agreed. I am aware that the Leader has already announced the new structure earlier and I am delighted to be able to confirm that representatives from Alfold, Cranleigh, and Dunsfold Parish Councils will be formally invited to sit alongside Waverley local councillors as full participating members on the Dunsfold Park Garden Village Advisory Group. I am really looking forward to working with you to make the expectations of this new village a reality.”

27.2 From Mr Daniel Kuszel, of Godalming:

“The Deputy Leader of Waverley Borough Council has publicly acknowledged that under previous administrations Godalming did not receive a proportionate share of capital spending and improvement projects compared to other towns within the borough and certainly in comparison to the population sizes of towns within the borough. It has now been over a year since the new "rainbow coalition" took control of

the council but as yet there has been no levelling or redress for Godalming or its residents.

Does the Leader believe that the Deputy Leader was mistaken when he made the statement? If he doesn't, why not, but if he does, what is being done to address the historical imbalance."

Cllr John Ward, Leader of the Council responded:

"The Deputy Leader, at least, will be relieved that I do not believe he was mistaken. I would refer Mr Kuszel to the responses given to your previous inquiries on this subject, most recently in September 2019 when Councillor Merryweather provided a very comprehensive response to your question about the perceived inequality of spending by Waverley across the borough. Councillor Merryweather confirmed in his response to you that he had consulted with Councillor Follows, also now Leader of Godalming Town Council. I don't intend to read the whole response out in full at Council as it ran to a number of pages but I am satisfied that this provided you with a full explanation and position still stands today."

CNL29/20 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL (Agenda item 7.)

The following questions had been received from Members in accordance with Procedure Rule 11.2:

28.1 Question from Cllr Mary Foryszewski:

"With the current fiscal situation, can the Leader confirm, following the Chief Executives report that Surrey CC are applying to be a single unitary authority, that no officer time or money will be wasted on a boundary review within the Borough at this time."

Response from the Leader, Cllr John Ward:

"As you are aware, Waverley has been notified by the Boundary Commission that it intends to do a boundary review of our borough starting next year with a view to completing this before the 2023 local elections. Waverley did not request a review but unfortunately these are at the whim of the Local Boundary Commission for England, which is the government department responsible for determining the timing of boundary reviews and for conducting them. The Commission has statutory authority to conduct its work and councils must cooperate. The costs of the commission's work are met by public funds nationally and Waverley Borough Council will not be charged by the Commission. However, Waverley would have to respond to requests by the commission for information, for example for population data, expected planning delivery and matters of local connection; also, to publicise the Commission's work and respond to its first draft. Clearly, if Waverley Borough Council were not to exist after 2023 a boundary review would have been futile.

"Waverley officers have updated the Commission on Surrey County Council's bid for a single Surrey unitary council and we await the Commission's response.

“I must add that I totally agree with the sentiment of the question and can assure you that any unavoidable expenditure will be kept to an absolute minimum.”

28.2 Question from Cllr Robert Knowles:

“Can the Leader inform Council whether officers or the administration were consulted on the unilateral decision by Surrey County Council to ask the Secretary of State for authority to put the case to become Europe’s largest single unitary authority?”

Response from the Leader, Cllr John Ward:

“I’m tempted to say no, and just leave it there but this question does deserve a proper answer. In summary, on 28th June, Waverley Borough Council found out about rumours of a unitary bid by Surrey County Council from the local government press and then sought to engage with Surrey County Council. On 3rd July, Surrey County Council presented to District and Borough Chief Executives some ideas on a unitarisation bid in the context of the forthcoming Government White Paper. A preference for a single unitary within Surrey County Council was mentioned, but not agreed by districts and boroughs, and discussion among the council Leaders was urged. The Surrey Leader’s speech at his Council meeting on 7th July did not mention bidding for a single unitary, although rumours in the press continued. Surrey County Council then published on 13th July its letter to the Secretary of State in favour of a single unitary, without further considering district and borough councils.

“At a meeting of Surrey Leaders on Friday 17th July, all of us expressed our opposition to such a scheme and our dismay and disappointment that such a matter had been raised with the government without any consultation whatsoever with the Leaders of the 11 boroughs and districts that make up the county.

“I was particularly disillusioned to read in the papers prepared for the Surrey Cabinet scheduled for Tuesday 21st July, ie yesterday, the statement that preliminary related discussions have been held with the following district and borough council Leaders and Chief Executives when at the time no such discussions had been held with me or any other borough or district Leader. This, combined with a quote attributed to the Surrey Leader, that he is having conversations with stakeholders, in which regrettably Waverley did not feature, causes one to be very concerned about what the county is telling local MPs in order to get their support.”

28.3 Question from Cllr Kevin Deanus:

“Dunsfold Park is situated within the Ward of Alfold, whom I am proud to represent. The planning permission granted to build 1800 homes, and ultimately, 2600 homes, is the most significant approval in Waverley’s history, both in terms of size, but the disruption to local residents over many years.

“On the 8th June, 2019, some 13 months ago, I emailed the Leader, Councillor Ward, and copied all Councillors, about my concern how the executive planned to oversee the development at Dunsfold Park.

2On the 16th July 2019, when raised at Full Council, the leader stated, “Regular meetings will continue, and we are in the late stages of the process of establishing a Dunsfold Park Garden Village Board”.

“On the 18th September 2019, at Full Council, the Leader presented the new Corporate Strategy. He will recall that I spoke on the matter with both dismay and astonishment. I read from the Corporate Strategy, “We shall develop a more open, inclusive approach to communications and decision making”, and “we will be an open, democratic and participative Governance, valuing the worth of all residents”.

“I reminded Councillor Ward that he had failed on all of these Corporate Priorities as I was still waiting for the decency of a discussion about how the Dunsfold Park Governance would work.

“On the 8th October 2019, a Dunsfold Governance Structure was finally presented at Council. I had not been consulted, and my extensive knowledge of the site and surrounding area was clearly not valued, or simply ignored. I pointed out the glaring and obvious omissions. The structure had failed to include the ward member (and members from surrounding wards), the Parish Council, who represent the community at ground level, and members of the public. I reminded Councillor Ward of the Corporate Strategy and how it had failed at every hurdle.

“Members of the Executive looked extremely embarrassed, and the leader did offer a form of apology, stating it would be sorted.

“An informal discussion took place after the meeting, and later I followed this with a further email requesting a resolution. Councillor Ward did respond and promised to send some dates to arrange a meeting. Some 9 months later I am still waiting for this to happen. I also spoken to a member of the Executive, who I will not name, who was embarrassed and apologised.

“To summarise my questions are:

1. Since the 16th July 2019 to the current date, can the Leader detail the formal meetings with Dunsfold Park senior management he has held regarding the development, and provide me with copies of these minutes.
2. Can the leader detail meetings held within the formal Governance Structure, approved by full Council on the 8th October 2019 to the current date, with copies of the minutes and dates, and additionally, those from the Dunsfold Park Village Board meetings identified and raised by the Leader at Council on the 16th July 2019.
3. Having highlighted the blatant omissions regarding participative governance, local engagement and valuing residents, does the Leader believe this is a good example of his Corporate Plan aspirations.

4. As we are now 13 months on, will the Leader confirm he actually will discuss the issue with me and produce an amended Governance structure that includes Alfold Parish Council and Local residents at the appropriate level.
5. Would the leader agree that the community have been dealt with in an unprofessional manner or will he say he is proud of this reoccurring reluctance to engage. After 13 months the issue of local Governance has not been progressed, promises of meetings have been ignored, and the Governance structure from the 8th October 2019 still remains unchanged.”

Response from the Leader, Cllr John Ward:

“Councillor Deanus, your five questions preceded by an emotive 400 word somewhat intemperate preamble ten times as long as any of the questions certainly strains the limit of the procedural rules. However, I shall endeavour to answer them as politely as possible.

“Question one, whilst there's been no formal meetings with the Dunsfold Park senior management, various informal meetings have taken place to move things forward, including

- Executive Briefings on 1st October 2019, 31 March 2020, and 30th June 2020;
- Monthly progress meetings between DAL and the officers
- Bi-monthly meetings between Homes England and officers, with DAL attending every other meeting
- Design South East - Design Review Panel workshops in August 2019, which local councils attended
- Portfolio Holder and Planning Project Team Leader update meetings in March, June (twice) and July (twice)
- TCPA training webinar on Garden Village Principles on 14th July open to all councillors, officers, SCC officers and councillors, MPs, Alfold, Cranleigh and Dunsfold Parish Councils, and DAL

“Question two, whilst there has not been a requirement for the governance structure to be implemented since its adoption and the Dunsfold Park Liaison Group has not met since March 2019 as there have been no relevant items to form an agenda, both local councillors for Alfold and Dunsfold wards have been included on the proposed Advisory Board and that is not proposed to change. Clearly, when the Portfolio

“Clearly, when the Portfolio Holder for Dunsfold Park was appointed, it was critical that she be brought up to speed on the project in the first instance and then review the proposed governance structure. This, as she has already informed you, she has done.

“We have also had to adopt our temporary Governance arrangements re online meetings and also our new planning committee structure which is referred to in the Dunsfold Governance Structure. All this was agreed in the Council Meeting on 9 June and as planned after my announcement this evening the revised Governance structure will be circulated to all Waverley Councillors tomorrow. It is expected that these meetings will be convened in the near future, now that lockdown is easing to support the progress of the

new settlement. Representatives from Alfold, Cranleigh and Dunsfold Parish Councils will also be invited to sit on the Advisory Board.

“Also, as you will be aware the new road application was granted permission in October 2019 and was followed by a non-material amendment application (also granted) to align the original outline application against the new road applications.

“Local Councillors for Alfold and Dunsfold participated in and contributed to the Design Review Panel meetings last August and it is expected that they will continue to be involved in future panel meetings.

“A Dunsfold Park Team has been set up comprising a Principal Planning Officer and Planning Technician, paid for through a planning performance agreement and intended to ensure that the project is delivered in a timely manner.

“Training by the TCPA was offered to all Councillors on 14 July, this focused on Garden Village Principles, was well attended and officers received very positive feedback. Further training from Design South East (with a design focus), is currently being arranged and future events related to climate change mitigation and stewardship will also be offered in the autumn.

“Officers continue to work closely with DAL to bring forward an exceptional new settlement and public consultation will take place at the relevant opportunities.

“Question three, the Leader does not accept your premises.

“Question four, I am delighted to confirm that representatives from Alfold, Cranleigh and Dunsfold Parish Councils, alongside Councillor representatives from Alfold and Dunsfold wards will be invited to sit on the Advisory Panel.

“There is a commitment to undertake a four week public consultation on the masterplan and associated documents that will be submitted to discharge the relevant condition of the original outline planning application. Officers will also work with DAL to extend the reach of this public consultation. Additionally various Councillor briefings will take place both prior to the submission of the documents (all Councillors) and after submission (Advisory Board members). This goes well beyond any normal expectations to deal with the discharge of a condition and recognises the strategic importance and value of getting this framework for future reserved matters applications right.

“DAL undertook their own public consultation on the evolving masterplan in October/November 2019. In the same vein, the local Parish Councils are welcome to hold their own public consultation events on the new settlement if they consider this appropriate.

“The amended governance structure includes representation from each of the Parish councils within the advisory board. It is not appropriate to include

residents on this board, but they will have the opportunity to comment through public consultations at various stages through the process.

“Question five, the Leader would not agree.

“Let me finish by saying that I hope you find some of these answers good news, but there is also some bad news. I noticed that you are concerned, in fact from your language might be miffed, that you have not been consulted and your extensive knowledge of the site and surrounding area were clearly not valued. It may come of something of a distinct blow to your ego but they are not the only person in Surrey with extensive knowledge of the site and the surrounding area. Thank you for your question.”

28.4 Question from Cllr Richard Seaborne:

“Following recent announcements by Surrey County Council, does the administration agree that in the event that Waverley council is abolished, alternative solutions must recognise that different parts of Surrey have distinctly different characteristics and needs, and that all options for a replacement unitary authority, or authorities OR a combined authority must be fully considered, including options cross border from Surrey, with areas which may have more in common with our area?”

Response from the Leader, Cllr John Ward:

“Again, yes.

I could leave it there but like the previous question there are a few things that are worthy of comment. I think my answer to the earlier questions outlines the Administration's deep concern that abolition of the borough has been mooted without any local consultation. I and my Executive agree with all the points raised in your question and believe that this situation is sufficiently important and urgent that there should be a full and proper debate at this Council. I therefore thank both the Leader of the Principal Opposition, the Mayor, and the Officers who have worked very co-operatively to enable this matter to appear on the agenda later this evening where there will be an opportunity for all of us to air these views. I can also inform you that a joint letter from all 11 borough and district councils will probably tomorrow be submitted to the Minister Robert Jenrick, asking him to consider other ideas from the Surrey letter. Sadly, it appears Surrey Cabinet yesterday agreed to proceed on their own.”

CNL30/20 MOTIONS (Agenda item 8.)

29.1 The Mayor informed Members and members of the public that the Motion to be debated had been received after the normal deadline for receipt of written Motions. However, in view of the timing of the statement from Surrey County Council, and with the agreement of the Leader of the Principal Opposition Group, she had felt it important to accept the Motion and enable a debate.

29.2 The Leader began his introduction by reading the text of the Motion:
“This Council opposes a single Surrey-wide Unitary Authority;

This Council recognises principles of localism many of which are incompatible with a single unitary authority within Surrey, therefore Council, instructs the Executive to urgently investigate alternative forms of Unitary Authorities and the timing of any such reorganisation that may be more advantageous to Waverley and its residents, including any opportunities with neighbouring Counties.”

The Motion was seconded by Cllr Paul Follows. The Leader requested that a recorded vote be taken on the Motion, which was supported by the Executive including Cllr Follows, Cllr Beaman, Cllr Clark, Cllr Merryweather, and Cllr MacLeod.

- 29.3 The Leader reminded Members of the backdrop to government’s launch of the biggest reorganisation of local government for 50 years – the ongoing global pandemic, imminent worldwide recession, and the UK about to leave the EU potentially without a trade deal. The recently announced White Paper on Devolution and Recovery trailed Combined Authorities and directly elected mayors as the way forward. Whilst there was some enthusiasm for streamlining by abolishing one tier of local government, replacing this with directly elected mayors with their attendant bureaucracy and costs did not seem logical. The Leader thanked the Leader of the Opposition for her co-operation in supporting this urgent Motion to Council, to give Members the opportunity to voice their views on unitary councils in general, and on the recent proposal by Surrey County Council to establish a Surrey-wide unitary council. There had been strong rumours for some time that counties would attempt to centralize power in this way, and the recent actions suggested a degree of coordination from above. There were also strong rumours that the government would attempt to abandon the county council elections due next year in order to facilitate this. It was important not to allow residents to be disenfranchised in this manner.
- 29.4 The Leader of Surrey County Council had written to the Secretary of State asking that Surrey be formally requested to apply to become a single mega-unitary authority by abolishing all of the current eleven boroughs and districts and seizing their powers. The letter did not refer to there being consensus on the proposal, without which the government had indicated proposals would not be pursued. In fact, all eleven Leaders of the Surrey boroughs had expressed their united opposition to the Surrey single unitary proposal. The efficient formation of unitary councils depended on three factors: their size, their location, and their quality. In other words, their ability to perform their functions efficiently and to the advantage of their residents. There were currently 56 non-metropolitan unitary authorities in England ranging in size from one serving about 40 000 people to the largest serving about half a million, but with an average of about 250 000 residents each. In stark contrast to this, Surrey proposed that they should centrally govern all of the county's 1.2 million people. Based on the government's expected size of 300 to 400 000 people it should be possible to do better than this for instance by splitting Surrey into three or four more effective locally based unitary authorities with properly devolved powers and offices situated in the area they serve.

- 29.5 The Surrey proposal failed to meet local aspirations both on the grounds of size and location. There were numerous ways to improve efficiency whilst keeping administration close to the people being represented. The proposal from Surrey for more centralization was the very reverse of the principle of devolution, the supposed subject of the forthcoming White Paper.
- 29.6 The Deputy Leader, Cllr Paul Follows, welcomed the constructive dialogue between the administration and the opposition over recent days that had enabled this Motion to come forward, and which would empower the Executive to continue these discussions in greater depth. The Liberal Democrat Group was strongly opposed to the proposal by Surrey County Council for a single Surrey unitary authority. However, they did not rule out the general concept of unitary authorities, and would give qualified support to multiple smaller unitary authorities that could include components internal or external to Surrey.
- 29.7 The fundamental elements missing from the matter so far were courtesy, consultation, communication and consensus. Surrey County Council, and in particular its Leader, had proceeded without consultation with the Boroughs and Districts, or with residents; they had not communicated with anyone outside a small group of Surrey County Councillors and Surrey MPs; and there was clearly no consensus other than in opposition to the proposal. The idea of pursuing controversial and complicated local government reform at this time was at best frivolous and at worst, dangerous.
- 29.8 A single unitary authority of over 1.2 million people was antithetical to localism; Surrey would be monolithic and unaccountable. The proposals also included an elected mayor which added cost and diluted accountability. If realized it would also be the largest such authority not just in the UK but in northern Europe. This proposed new authority would somehow need to work with residents from Haslemere to Egham in one direction, and Farnham to Oxted in the other, and all points in between. The Covid period had reinforced the real and persistent value of local knowledge and local response in our communities. This proposed centralised authority would encompass planning, highways, children's services, social care, and much more; and any thought that planning matters might devolve to Towns and Parishes was simply naïve
- 29.9 Cllr Julia Potts, Leader of the Principal Opposition Group echoed the introduction from Cllr Ward and welcomed the cross-party discussions that had taken place over recent days and the opportunity for the discussion at Full Council. Cllr Potts emphasised that this was a free vote for Conservative Group Members. Ultimately, this was about what was right for residents. There was no denying that 50 years on from the last major re-structure of local government there was a need to look at a new system that reflected the needs of residents. But that did not mean any process should be rushed, and it should involve dialogue and ensure all options are explored. At the moment information was very scarce, and the heart of the motion before Members was that need for the Executive to explore every option and report back to Council and enable informed decisions.

29.10 Many Members spoke in support of the Motion. In addition to the principle points articulated by the Leader, Deputy Leader and Opposition Leader, Members commented on:

- The uncertainty of genuine savings being made through creation of a single Surrey unitary.
- The need for proportional representation to give a reasonable balance of opinion across larger areas with larger individual electoral wards.
- Consideration being given to enabling natural communities that crossed country boundaries with Hampshire and West Sussex.
- A possible north-south Surrey unitary split along the A25 corridor reflecting Surrey's more urban north and more rural south.
- The need to respond swiftly to Surrey County Council's proposals and to consider all options.
- The potential for larger town councils to take on more devolved responsibilities and really empower local communities.

29.11 Cllr Cosser and Cllr Peter Martin expressed reservations about supporting the motion that explicitly ruled out the option of a single Surrey unitary authority. Both Members felt that this had to be one of the options to be explored in order to come to a fully informed decision on the best option for Waverley residents.

29.12 In summing up, the Leader thanked Members for their comments and support. He reiterated his concern at the speed with which Surrey County Council was moving forward, and taking the least complex option for them to progress without considering what was best for Surrey residents. The Borough and District Leaders were discussing a joint working group to develop a response and the Motion would give the Executive to explore options with the other Surrey authorities.

29.13 Council RESOLVED to agree the following Motion, which was proposed by the Leader, Cllr John Ward, and seconded by the Deputy Leader, Cllr Paul Follows:

“This Council opposes a single Surrey-wide Unitary Authority; This Council recognises principles of localism many of which are incompatible with a single unitary authority within Surrey, therefore Council, instructs the Executive to urgently investigate alternative forms of Unitary Authorities and the timing of any such reorganisation that may be more advantageous to Waverley and its residents, including any opportunities with neighbouring Counties.”

In accordance with PR 17, a recorded vote was taken:

For the Motion: 51

Cllrs Christine Baker, David Beaman, Roger Blishen, Peter Clark, Carole Cockburn, Richard Cole, Martin D'Arcy, Jerome Davidson, Kevin Deanus, Simon Dear, Sally Dickson, Brian Edmonds, Patricia Ellis, David Else, Jenny Else, Jan Floyd-Douglass, Paul Follows, Mary Forszewska, Maxine Gale, Michael Goodridge, John Gray, Joan Heagin, Val Henry, George Hesse, Daniel Hunt, Jerry Hyman, Peter Isherwood, Jacquie Keen, Robert Knowles, Anna James, Andy MacLeod, Penny

Marriott, Peter Marriott, Michaela Martin, Mark Merryweather, Stephen Mulliner, John Neale, Peter Nicholson, Nick Palmer, Julia Potts, Ruth Reed, Paul Rivers, Penny Rivers, John Robini, Anne-Marie Rosoman, Trevor Sadler, Richard Seaborne, Liz Townsend, John Ward, Steve Williams, and George Wilson

Against the Motion: 0

Abstentions: 2

Cllrs Steve Cosser and Peter Martin

CNL31/20 MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE (Agenda item 9.)

30.1 It was moved by the Leader, duly seconded and RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Executive 8 July 2020 be received and noted.

There were no matters referred to Council for decision; the following Members spoke in relation to Part II Matters of Report:

30.2 Re EXE7/20, Household recycling centre issues and proposals, Cllr Carole Cockburn reported her concerns about the recent press release stating that removal of the bring sites would provide space for cycle parking or electric vehicle charging points, and apparently ignoring the fact that some of these were located within Conservation Areas. Waverley had a duty to protect Conservation Areas from inappropriate development both within the Conservation Area and also in its setting. It was vital that the Farnham Conservation Area Management Plan be consulted before anything was done in either of the two Farnham car parks in or adjacent to the Conservation Area after the bring sites were removed.

30.3 Re EXE10/20, Broadwater Park Golf Course Options Appraisal, the following Members made statements:

- Cllr Jenny Else referred to her statement on this matter at the Executive on 8 July about how concerned she believed a large number of Waverley residents were feeling about the way in which the Broadwater Golf Club were being treated with regard to the non-renewal of their lease. This view had been expressed after receiving a number of direct communications, and not via social media as asserted by Cllr Follows at the Executive meeting and recorded in the minutes of the meeting. Cllr Else felt that his comments had attempted to devalue her view and bring into question her integrity, contrary to the rules of the code of conduct for Members. Cllr Else asked that Cllr Follows apologise in order that it could be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.
- Cllr Follows responded that he had been referring on 8 July to statements on the Godalming & Villages Community Boards which he had believed were repeated by Cllr Else. He was happy to concede that Cllr Else might have heard the comments directly, but he was also certain that the comment were almost the same as those made on social media on 8 May. Cllr Else was not satisfied with this response

and again asked for an apology. After further exchanges, the Mayor called the matter to a close.

- Cllr John Gray noted that since the Executive meeting he had received a response from the S151 Officer about some of the matters raised. Cllr Gray had further questions to raise about the legal costs incurred prior to the Executive decision but he was happy to do this through the Overview & Scrutiny Call-in process that was now in train.

CNL32/20 MINUTES OF THE LICENSING AND REGULATORY COMMITTEE (Agenda item 10.)

- 31.1 It was moved by the Chairman of the Committee, duly seconded and RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Licensing & Regulatory Committee held on 29 June 2020 be received and noted.

There were no matters referred to Council for decision, and no Members had registered to speak on Part II matters for report.

The meeting concluded at 9.00 pm

Mayor

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