

07 October 2020

A new Leader announced

Cllr Joss Bigmore was voted the new Leader of the Council at a meeting of Full Council last night. The change of leadership was part of a planned new co-operative approach to running the Council as it moves into the second year since the borough elections in 2019. The new co-operative approach to running the Council was announced at a meeting of Full Council in May 2020, but the actual handover was delayed by response required to the Covid-19 pandemic. As the Council moves into the second year since the borough elections in 2019, this approach reflects the fact that Residents for Guildford and Villages (R4GV) and the Liberal Democrats (Lib Dem) have an almost equal number of overall councillor seats and many shared priorities.

The Council's Executive comprises four councillors from the Liberal Democrats and four from the Residents for Guildford and Villages.

Cllr Caroline Reeves resigned as Leader at a meeting of the Executive on 23 September in order to enable the move which maximises the strengths of the new partnership in serving the borough. Under the terms of Article 6 of the Constitution, the Deputy Leader, Councillor Joss Bigmore acted as Leader with a right to exercise all functions reserved to the Leader, until he was elected as Leader last night by Full Council.

The R4GV leadership will run for two years, with the leadership reverting back to the Liberal Democrats for the period before the local elections in 2023. The talks behind these changes started before the current Coronavirus (Covid-19) crisis emerged and the agreement between R4GV and the Liberal Democrats had to adapt to the current reality of the Council currently focussing on its response to the pandemic in this lock-down period.

Leader of the Council, Cllr Joss Bigmore said: 'It is both an honour and a privilege to have the opportunity to lead Guildford Borough Council. I am very fortunate to have a strong Executive team of R4GV and Lib Dem councillors and we are supported by excellent officers. These are challenging times, but we will work tirelessly together to deliver the outcomes that the residents of this Borough deserve.'

Newly appointed Deputy Leader of the Council, Cllr Caroline Reeves said: 'Following a successful year of working together, we are proud to join forces with R4GV and use our shared experience and talents under this new model. The work carried out by the previous Executive (2019–2020) was extensive, if quietly achieved and we will build on this. A handover like this is unusual in local government but the residents of Guildford were looking for a new kind of politics, and the Lib Dems and I are committed to delivering that. I wish Cllr Bigmore all the best as Leader. We have a fantastic and committed team of officers at Guildford and I look forward to continuing to work with them, Cllr Bigmore and R4GV as part of the shared Lib Dem - R4GV Executive.'

The Executive and their Portfolios:

Resource Directorate: Corporate Theme – Improved Council

- Resources Cllr Tim Anderson (R4GV)
- Service Delivery Cllr Joss Bigmore (R4GV)

Strategy Directorate: Corporate Theme – Economy and Regeneration

- Economy Cllr John Redpath (R4GV)
- Regeneration Cllr John Rigg (R4GV)

Services Directorate: Corporate Themes - Climate Change and Environment, Housing and Communities

- Climate Change Cllr Jan Harwood (Lib Dem)
- Environment Cllr James Steel (Lib Dem)
- Housing and Development Control Cllr Caroline Reeves (Lib Dem)
- Community Cllr Julia McShane (Lib Dem)

For full details on each of the Executive portfolios

visit: <https://www.guildford.gov.uk/executive>