

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

17 December 2019

* Councillor Paul Spooner (Chairman)

* Councillor James Walsh (Vice-Chairman)

* Councillor Colin Cross
Councillor Graham Eyre
Councillor Liz Hogger
Councillor Tom Hunt
Councillor Steven Lee

* Councillor Masuk Miah
* Councillor John Redpath
* Councillor Tony Rooth
* Councillor Deborah Seabrook
* Councillor Patrick Sheard

*Present

Councillors Angela Gunning, Caroline Reeves, Leader of the Council and Lead Councillor for the Environment & Sustainability across the Borough, Transformation, Sustainable Transport, Economic Development, and Governance, and Fiona White, Deputy Leader of the Council and Lead Councillor for Safeguarding, Inclusion, Public Safety, Community Safety and Vulnerable Families were also in attendance.

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 23(j), Councillors Jo Randall and George Potter attended as substitutes for Councillors Graham Eyre and Liz Hogger respectively.

OS29 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

The Committee was advised of apologies for absence from Councillors Graham Eyre, Liz Hogger, Tom Hunt, and Steven Lee and two substitutes as detailed above.

OS30 LOCAL CODE OF CONDUCT AND DECLARATION OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS

There were no declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests.

The Chairman, Councillor Spooner, advised the Committee that, in accordance with Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 2 [specifically, that 'no councillor may be involved in scrutinising a decision in which he or she has been directly involved (unless that involvement was only as a member of an EAB)'], he would withdraw from the Committee and hand over to the Vice-Chairman for item 3, An Update on the Implementation of Future Guildford.

The Chairman outlined his past involvement in the establishment of the Future Guildford project, including his role as a joint sponsor of the project until May 2019. He indicated that he had envisaged the Future Guildford process would not focus solely on cutbacks, rather it would identify service areas that required more resource, enable improvements for service users, and shape the future Council.

OS31 AN UPDATE ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF FUTURE GUILDFORD

In accordance with Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 2, the Chairman, Councillor Spooner, withdrew from the Committee. The Vice-Chairman, Councillor James Walsh, took the Chair for the remainder of the meeting.

The Vice-Chairman explained the background to the item and welcomed Councillor Caroline Reeves, Leader of the Council and Lead Councillor for the Environment & Sustainability across the Borough, Transformation, Sustainable Transport, Economic Development, and

Governance, the Managing Director, the Resources Director, the Chief Internal Auditor, the Customer Services and Business Improvement Manager, the Senior Specialist – HR, and Dave Mullin from Ignite Consulting.

The Managing Director led a presentation that summarised the update report submitted to the Committee, including the reorganisation of the Corporate Management Team, the progress and achievements of Phase A of Future Guildford, the Enterprise Resource Planning project, the service challenge element of Future Guildford, the ongoing work on the culture of the organisation, and reflections on the implementation of Future Guildford to date.

The Committee was informed of the financial challenges facing the Council and advised that the organisation needed to deliver savings in addition to those already identified in the Future Guildford programme.

The meeting was advised of appointments and vacancies within the Resources and Strategic Services directorates. The Committee was informed that the new post of Climate Change Lead would be funded by savings in Operational Services. The Committee was advised that following the departure of staff within the ICT service the Council had recruited four staff on temporary contracts while recruitment takes place following transition.

The Senior Specialist – HR advised the Committee that the compulsory redundancies during Phase A of Future Guildford had been minimal, with nine Compulsory Redundancies and nineteen Voluntary Compulsory Redundancies.

The Committee was informed that the service challenge workstream of Future Guildford had led to expected increased income from planning pre-applications and streamlined joint working with Waverley Borough Council around the Family Support Team. The Resources Director indicated that ongoing work by the procurement team on category spend and rationalisation of contracts would deliver efficiency savings.

The Committee was informed that following staff feedback, Phases B and C of Future Guildford had been merged into a single-Phase B. With reference to Phase B, the Managing Director confirmed that future service models and options for frontline services would be presented for consideration by Councillors.

With reference to learning from the first phase of Future Guildford, the Managing Director advised the Committee that information about Phase A could have been communicated better to staff not involved directly. In addition, the consultation document was very large and would be simplified for Phase B. The Committee was advised that the reactions of staff to Future Guildford differed widely and challenges needed to be addressed early.

The Managing Director indicated that the placement of services under directorates would be monitored and changed if necessary.

During the ensuing discussion a number of points were made and clarifications offered:

- The Managing Director indicated that the reorganisation of the Corporate Management Team and the reduction from four to three directorates was enabled by the efficiencies of Future Guildford and the possible introduction of different service delivery models, including outsourcing and commissioning.
- The Chief Internal Auditor confirmed that no decision had been made concerning the establishment of a Teckal or a trust and that funds earmarked for such use remained intact.

- With reference to the project costs to date, Councillors would be provided with a breakdown and explanation of the monies spent on contractors to date.
- The Chief Internal Auditor undertook to provide the Committee members with risk assessments relating to the project.
- The Chief Internal Auditor indicated that Phase B of Future Guildford aimed to improve frontline services and that public consultation would be required.
- Members remarked on the difficulty of evaluating the success of Phase A and the soundness of progressing to Phase B without more qualitative information. The Committee suggested the value in providing examples of the redesigned 78 business processes in Phase A and requested that more evidence of success be included in future project updates.
- In reply to a question, the Managing Director confirmed that the service challenge process included opportunities to suggest improvements, efficiencies, and investments.
- The meeting was advised that Committee members would be provided with examples and justifications of business processes that had changed as a result of Phase A.
- Committee members indicated the need for baseline performance and cost data to evaluate the project. In addition, the Committee suggested the need in establishing baseline assessments of customer satisfaction and staff morale.
- In reply to questioning, the Committee was advised that the specification and accessibility of management information was central to the project's business process redesign.
- The Committee was advised that a potential loss of knowledge caused by staff departures, together with other knowledge gaps or training needs, were identified and planned for in the project.
- A Committee member suggested that the amount of information provided in the report submitted to the Committee was excessive and difficult to understand and absorb.
- A member of the Committee suggested the focus of the Future Guildford Project Board could be improved. The Managing Director indicated that the issues log would be shared with Project Board members.
- The results of relevant staff surveys would be provided to the Committee members.
- The Committee was advised that increased self-serve for internal and external customers would enhance services.
- The Leader of the Council referred to the low number of staff departures involved with Phase A of the Future Guildford project and the responses of staff to the project.

The Vice-Chairman summarised the actions identified in the discussion. He indicated that subsequent reports on Future Guildford should include information identified by the Committee, including risk assessments, the issues log, and changes to services.

In addition, the Vice-Chairman requested that detailed information on outsourcing and other models of service provision be submitted to the Committee in advance of any related Executive decisions and that a representative of Unison be invited to attend the Committee's consideration of Future Guildford. In response, the Managing Director indicated that the requested information would be provided to the Committee and a representative of Unison invited to the relevant meeting.

RESOLVED: That an update report on Future Guildford, including information as identified above, be submitted to the Committee's March 2020 meeting.

The meeting finished at 9.07 pm

Signed

Date

Chairman