

STRATEGY AND RESOURCES EXECUTIVE ADVISORY BOARD

6 February 2023

- * Councillor Ruth Brothwell (Chairman)
- * Councillor Will Salmon (Vice-Chairman)

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| * Councillor Jon Askew | * Councillor Diana Jones |
| Councillor Christopher Barrass | Councillor Steven Lee |
| * Councillor Colin Cross | * The Mayor, Councillor Masuk Miah |
| * Councillor Graham Eyre | Councillor Jo Randall |
| * Councillor Angela Gunning | * Councillor Catherine Young |

* Present

Councillors Joss Bigmore, George Potter and John Redpath were also in attendance.

SR55 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Christopher Barrass, Steven Lee and Jo Randall. There were no notifications of substitutions.

SR56 LOCAL CODE OF CONDUCT AND DECLARATION OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS

There were no declarations of disclosable pecuniary or non-pecuniary interests.

SR57 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Executive Advisory Board (EAB) held on 10 October 2022 were confirmed as a correct record, and would be signed by the Chairman at the earliest opportunity.

SR58 CORPORATE SAFEGUARDING POLICY AND PROCEDURE

The Strategy and Resources Executive Advisory Board (EAB) considered the Council's Corporate Safeguarding Policy and Procedure together with a supporting paper in the format of a policy mandate, which were presented by the Senior Policy Officer - Strategy, Performance and Events. The Safeguarding Policy and Procedure consisted of two parts, namely, Part 1: Procedure on how to respond if you have a safeguarding concern; and Part 2: Safeguarding Policy.

The policy mandate addressed the following areas:

- Policy Overview
- Ownership
- Case for Change
- Key Deliverables
- Success Criteria
- Strategic Objectives
- Scope
- Organisational Impact
- Collaboration Considerations
- Strategic Assumptions, Issues and Risks
- Strategic Dependencies, Constraints and Opportunities

- IT Project Requirements
- Resources
- Governance and Approvals
- Updates and Review
- Recommendations / Comments to / from the Corporate Management Board (CMB) and the EAB
- Recommendations to the Executive

The policy mandate recommended that the EAB:

- (i) Reviewed the policy mandate for the draft Safeguarding Policy and Procedure; and
- (ii) Commented on the appropriateness of the draft Safeguarding Procedure (Part 1) and Policy (Part 2) as set out in Appendix 1 and 2 to the mandate, respectively, with specific reference to:
 - The Council's commitment to safeguarding people it interacted with and provided services for.
 - The accessibility of the documents for all staff and councillors.
 - The Council's statutory safeguarding duties.
 - The local authority's roles and responsibilities.
 - The organisation's training needs.

The principles behind the policy mandate and approach were two-fold. Firstly, it was felt that this approach would standardise the method by which officers developed new policies acting as a checklist to some extent to support the development of sound and well considered policies to meet objectives. Ideally, the mandate would be a living document utilised throughout the policy development process to support the process and bring clarity to the purpose of the policy and identify how it linked with wider Council goals, taking account of whether the policy had resource requirements for implementation, provided clear governance for approval gateways and included future updates.

Secondly, it was deemed that this methodology would standardise the manner in which policies were presented to committees / the Executive in the future to provide clarity with regard to the purpose and scope of emerging policies and to ensure that they were of a consistent quality with a clear purpose facilitating effective implementation. Feedback from the EAB in respect of the policy mandate approach was welcomed.

Concerning the Safeguarding Policy and Procedure, the Board was advised that this document was a new draft Policy and Procedure which would replace the current policy written in 2018. Since that time, the existing policy had been updated to reflect some legislative changes, updates to guidance and learning from best practice which had influenced how the Council managed its safeguarding responsibilities. There had also been some changes in the way that Surrey County Council (SCC), as the local authority with the remit for safeguarding arrangements in Surrey, responded to referrals and assessments. In comparison with the current policy, the new draft Policy and Procedure included a clearer structure reflecting the corporate approach and provided a quick reference guide in the event of an urgent case, facilitating alignment with the Council's new accessibility standard. The new documents had been streamlined, incorporated learning from practice in terms of day to day operating and reflected the recommendations of the internal safeguarding audit. Enhanced clarity in respect of roles and responsibilities to support changes in the organisation's structure and updated training pathways aligned to levels in an associated training programme also featured. Safeguarding across the Council, particularly in terms of front line delivery staff, remained strong in practice.

The policy mandate included the views of the CMB which sought a review of the implications and opportunities associated with the adoption of a joint Guildford and Waverley Safeguarding Policy in June 2023 as the preferred way forward. This recommendation was being pursued by officers and would lead to the deferral of the submission of the document to the Executive while the review was undertaken. The outcome would be reported to the Executives of both Councils after June 2023.

The following points arose from ensuing questions, comments and discussion for forwarding to the Executive:

1. The issue of safeguarding councillors was raised owing to increases in public involvement in Council business and approaches from residents, particularly in relation to potentially contentious planning matters. However, whilst councillor safety was an important consideration, the matter was more aligned to the remit of the Community Safety Partnership than safeguarding in general, which related to the parameters within which the Council operated and sought to safeguard the Borough's most vulnerable residents and track referrals to Social Services and other relevant agencies.
2. With regard to safeguarding case management, the importance of possessing the correct tools to complement the Policy and Procedure was raised and reference was made to the CPOMS safeguarding software system operated by SCC to monitor safeguarding, wellbeing, and pastoral issues in its schools. The system offered seamless confidentiality and security for logged cases enabling access by those needing to input and monitor related information. As the Council's current system was unrefined and complex to manage, officers were exploring other case management systems with a view to implementation. This process commenced with assessing the current position with a view to providing a comprehensive universal record system across the Council, which all authorised officers were able to access, supported by a corporate audit trail. Two potential safeguarding case management systems were currently being explored, in line with an Audit Action Plan, with a view to developing related options and business cases. The first was a corporate system involving Salesforce Customer Relationship Management software whilst the second was the Empowering Communities with Integrated Network Systems (ECINS) which consisted of an end to end secure collaborative case management platform. A version of the latter system, Surrey CINS, was operated by Surrey Police and utilised across areas of the County in respect of Community Safety and Social Care.
3. Support was expressed in respect of the policy mandate and the Policy and Procedure document, the style and format of which were considered to be clear and easily legible.

SR59 UK SHARED PROSPERITY FUND (UKSPF) AND RURAL ENGLAND PROSPERITY FUND (REPF)

The Strategy and Resources Executive Advisory Board (EAB) was invited to consider a report in respect of the interventions proposed in relation to the Council's UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) and Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) Government grants. The report outlined any proposed changes to projects and project spend since the submission of Guildford's UKSPF Investment Plan in August 2022. The paper was introduced by the Lead Councillor for Finance and Planning Policy and was presented by the Head of Regeneration and Corporate Programmes.

The EAB was advised that the Council had been awarded £1 million from the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities' (DLUHC') UKSPF to spend on capital and revenue activities between the financial years 2022-23 to 2024-25, with the aim of building pride in

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places and increasing life chances through investing in three investment priorities: Communities, Local Businesses, and People and Skills.

The UKSPF grant was then followed by the launch of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs' REPF, which allocated the Council £400,000 to spend on capital grants to support rural businesses and communities from 2023-24 to 2024-25.

In order to access its UKSPF and REPF allocations, the Council had submitted an Investment Plan and Addendum, respectively, outlining the opportunities and challenges facing the Borough, in addition to its investment priorities. Both the UKSPF Investment Plan and REPF Addendum had been informed by feedback from, and discussions with, a range of stakeholders. Since the submission of the UKSPF Investment Plan, further discussions with Council officers, external stakeholders and partners had been conducted to develop the projects put forward in Guildford's Investment Plan. In addition, there had been changes to some of the projects outlined, which would require approval from the DLUHC should the Council decide to pursue the changes.

On 5 December 2022, DLUHC confirmed the validation of Guildford's UKSPF Investment Plan. Having now received its first year of UKSPF allocation, the Council needed to decide if and how it should progress the projects it had proposed in its Investment Plan.

Following the consultations involving councillors, officers and local stakeholders, the following projects totalling £1 million had been put forward for inclusion in Guildford's UKSPF Investment Plan:

- Town Centre Improvements - £60,000
- Community and Neighbourhood Improvements (including Hostile Vehicle Mitigation proposal) - £300,000
- E-Bike Hire Scheme with Surrey County Council and University of Surrey - £200,000
- Marketing and Events - £19,500
- Community Grants - £300,000
- Visitor Economy - £20,500
- Business Support - £30,000
- Feasibility Study - £20,000
- Business Decarbonisation Scheme with Surrey County Council and other Surrey Districts and Boroughs - £50,000

The presentation given by the Head of Regeneration and Corporate Programmes provided an overview of the two Prosperity Funds and outlined the UKSPF proposed interventions, the proposed Joint Rural Grant Programme, the proposed change to the UPSPF profile spend, the proposed Local Delivery Board and the next steps.

The following points arose from ensuing questions, comments and discussion for forwarding to the Executive:

4. Although some of the intervention schemes were delivered directly by the Council, there were also grant schemes, such as new Leader-style grants and the community crowd fund, for which businesses and community groups would need to apply for from the Council. A substantial item of work for the Council to pursue in the coming months was to establish the formula to be applied in terms of identifying which groups it wished to target for support specifically and to develop an assessment criteria to determine grant applications submitted.
5. It was confirmed that the reference in the report to hostile vehicle mitigation related to the possible positioning of street furniture in the form of anti-terrorism bollards to

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prevent vehicle incursions into pedestrian areas. This matter was under discussion with Surrey Police to establish whether such measures remained relevant to certain areas across Guildford town centre.

6. Whilst the E-Bike Hire Scheme did not currently include e-scooters as their use outside trial areas remained illegal, the associated contract included provision for the future inclusion of e-scooters in the event that the legislation changed in favour of them.
7. The proposal to transfer the sum of £50,000 of revenue funding from the UKSPF to the REPF could be funded through a balancing of funding allocations currently profiled to the UKSPF. Alternatively, the transfer could be funded from feasibility fund contributions potentially earmarked for progressing repairs to the Tumbling Bay Weir, depending on whether the Council decided to become involved in that project. Any such funding changes were likely to require the approval of the DLUHC as a standard approach.

Having considered and discussed the report, the EAB endorsed the proposed interventions and changes associated with the Council's UKSPF and the Rural Grant Programme proposed for Guildford's REPF. The Board also supported the progression of Guildford's UKSPF and REPF plans, as outlined in the report.

SR60 GUILDFORD ECONOMIC STRATEGY

A report regarding the above was before the Executive Advisory Board (EAB) for consideration. The purpose of the report was to obtain the views and comments of the EAB in respect of the Economic Development Strategy 2023-2040 and the associated draft Action Plan, supported by an Evidence Base document, which would be subject to further consultation with strategic partners.

The Council had appointed property consultants Avison Young to advise in relation to the Strategy and Action Plan and representatives of the consultancy were in attendance at the meeting. The Company benefited from considerable experience in respect of working with local authorities and local enterprise partnerships etc to create local economic development strategies.

The Lead Councillor for Customer and Commercial Services introduced the report and advised that a number of the Council's economic strategies had now reached their expiration and were in need of updating. In addition, the Borough had experienced the impact of considerable economic shocks, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, Brexit and the cost-of-living crisis, which had brought changes and uncertainties to the local economic landscape requiring a reassessment of the Council's challenges, opportunities and priorities.

The Borough had strong economic foundations linked to its location and transport connections rendering it accessible to other important national and international economic nodes. It also benefitted from a highly skilled local workforce and was home to strong economic clusters such as the visitor economy, the vibrant gaming industry and the innovative rural economy. However, the Borough was currently experiencing relatively weak economic performance compared to other areas, which was a trend preceding the pandemic. Therefore, there was an impetus in line with the Council's Corporate Plan 2021 – 2025 to set out a refreshed Strategy and Action Plan to reinvigorate Guildford's economy and outline a renewed vision and priorities to support the local economy to ensure it was a place where businesses and residents could continue to thrive. Extensive research and consultation exercises had been conducted to produce the documents and shape the new vision, which featured innovative, progressive, productive, inclusive and green economy aspects. These were characterised by unique clusters of high growth, knowledge and

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production-based economic activity, benefiting from the involvement of partners and stakeholders to ensure delivery of the vision.

Representatives of Avison Young gave a presentation which outlined the introduction, purpose, process, outputs, findings, vision, themes and recommendations associated with the Strategy and Action Plan.

In terms of purpose, the consultancy had been commissioned to produce the documents which defined a ten year ambition for Guildford's economy and identified actions which the Council and its partners needed to undertake to achieve the ambition. The Strategy was underpinned by evidence, informed by extensive engagement and shaped by the existing strategy and policy. Whilst the Strategy was ambitious, influenced by best practice and concise to appeal to different audiences, and for sharing between the various organisations responsible for economic development, it was tailored to the current financial landscape of constraints.

The process consisted of four phases, namely, evidence gathering, stakeholder engagement, producing draft outputs, and consulting parties through various methods with regard to the content and recommendations of the Strategy. The final stage of the process would be to refine the documents to reflect feedback received.

The outputs of the three documents were outlined. Information concerning associated activities was available to access online together with some of the key findings.

The findings from research indicated that Guildford had an important economy consisting of 7,000 businesses supported by 80,000 employees collectively contributing in excess of £5.3 billion to the national economy each year. Guildford's urban economy was centred in and around the town and underpinned by international, national and regionally important economic anchors. These anchors, amongst others, supported economic specialisms in higher value and wage sectors such as professional services, ICT and health in addition to niche subsectors including space and satellite technology, video gaming, digital technologies, pharmaceuticals and medical technology. Whilst Guildford's rural economy was more dispersed, it was characterised by traditional land-based industries such as agriculture and forestry, in addition to arts, crafts and non-traditional knowledge-based activities. As the Borough had experienced minimal economic growth during the five years preceding the pandemic, there was a need to invigorate its economy by tackling the economic barriers which included the supply of office and industrial space, the nature of commercial space not meeting the demands of modern occupiers, housing market constraints, and traffic and infrastructure issues.

The aim was to reignite the Borough's economy to regain its former strength and to stimulate economic growth to enable the Borough to compete with other towns and cities around London to become the first choice for businesses to locate outside London enabling residents to benefit from local economic activity.

There were six themes underpinning the vision, namely, productivity; property; people; provision; place; and planet. The actions were organised under these themes and reflected barriers to economic growth seeking to unlock the local economy.

Recommended actions were set out under each of the six themes to assist with the implementation of the Strategy's vision. The intention was that the actions were ambitious and deliverable. There were short, medium and long term actions including those allocated to partners in recognition that the Council was not responsible for delivering economic growth alone.

The following points arose from ensuing questions, comments and discussion:

8. The Strategy and Action Plan were welcomed as beneficial policy documents which set the economic direction for the Council to follow and from which much important work would flow. Sitting below and reflecting the themes of the Corporate Plan, the documents would influence every aspect of the Council's services and ultimately be submitted to full Council for approval following further consultation.
9. The Strategy included a specific section relating to the local visitor economy and hospitality as these were important facets of Guildford's overall economy. A series of actions stemmed from this section which sought to enhance awareness of the Borough's visitor offering with a view to improving the provision of overnight stays to support the visitor and hospitality economy and to enable visitor attractions to prosper further. It was clarified that the Strategy included references to Wisley Royal Horticultural Society Gardens as being one of a number of important tourism assets that attracted more than 5.5 million local, domestic and overseas visitors each year. However, the references to the asset could be strengthened to reflect its status as one of the largest local employers and key anchor institutions which drove the Borough's economic performance boosting the visitor economy and contributing to the Shaping Guildford's Future initiative.
10. The retail sector, which was linked to the visitor and hospitality economy and of equal importance, featured in a section contained within the Strategy relating to the future and diversification of Guildford town centre. It was acknowledged that the retail sector was changing and currently facing a number of pressures.
11. Residential development providing new homes in the Borough would increase the population and footfall in the town fuelling the demand for leisure activities such as culture, museums, theatres and general entertainment including bars, restaurants and cafés adding value to heritage and culture.
12. In terms of data, Avison Young typically utilised information provided by the Office of National Statistics which was downloaded in accordance with best practice. However, the validity of some of the data relating to the villages, which formed a large part of the Borough outside the town centre, was questioned.
13. The delivery group structure identified in the Strategy, consisting of five thematic sub-groups that reflected the business base and economic specialisms positioned below a potential overarching Guildford Economic Partnership Group, was largely welcomed. However, the possibility of establishing an additional more open engagement platform with a broader membership to enable residents and business representatives to make contributions on an ongoing basis was suggested.
14. The importance of driving economic growth by supporting entrepreneurs and micro businesses through the provision of measures such as co-working spaces, accelerators or incubators, in addition to assisting larger established firms, was highlighted. Councillors were advised that the Assets Team was constantly seeking opportunities to maximise the use of the existing asset base in response to inward investment queries and an example of this was the refurbishment and letting of space within Old Millmead House for this purpose. Such provisions in the town centre would lead to Guildford becoming increasingly dynamic. As this was a medium term priority in the Action Plan, it was questioned whether this initiative could be progressed more rapidly as a short term objective in the event that there were under-utilised buildings or other facilities which could be made available to assist small businesses. Including details of the business needs of the latter in the Strategy would be valuable to direct the Council in its endeavours to meet such needs.
15. Outcomes of two past residents' surveys had indicated a preference for the Council to prioritise the provision of services to support less advantaged and vulnerable residents

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- above heritage and cultural services. One survey had been undertaken in respect of the Council's Corporate Plan and the other in relation to the Council's budget setting during the pandemic which may have swayed residents' views. Although the Strategy documents included a focus on promoting and utilising heritage assets, whilst referring to barriers, it did not expand on ways to support the electorate specifically. However, the documents extensively discussed vulnerable groups who featured as part of the vision which included inclusive growth and linking people with opportunities. There was also a chapter dedicated to people which explored the options for connecting the less advantaged to access the opportunities that Guildford's economy provided.
16. With regard to where the Strategy and Action Plan were positioned amongst the Council's significant number of existing plans, policies and processes, officers had sought to achieve a balance whereby duplication of other documents was avoided and the Strategy and Action Plan contained references and links to other relevant policies. Consideration could be given to strengthening references in the Strategy to the role that planning policies might have in enabling economic growth. In terms of the business interface, there was also an aim to add value and strategic insight without replicating other existing networks and forums.
 17. In terms of the planning context, it was felt that the Strategy indicated a way of working and embedding certain behaviours and objectives within the Council's operating procedures, including some consideration of economic issues. However, the Council was constrained by policies contained within the related statutory strategic planning policy framework documents and a Planning Committee should exercise caution where appearing to place reliance on non-statutory documents. The Strategy sought to offer advice regarding what could be achieved to support economic development through planning policies and was designed to dovetail and align with other policies and strategies.
 18. Whilst the Strategy and Action Plan sought to identify and respond to green environmental issues, it was recognised that such issues were cross-cutting across the whole Borough and should be embedded in all of the Council's decisions and functions leading to behavioural change. Officers had a relationship with Zero Carbon Guildford and were working with that organisation which was supporting local green companies through engagement and the provision of business advice. A representative of Avison Young had attended the launch of Zero Carbon Guildford's Sustainable Business Network and it was recognised that the organisation had been suggested as a potential partner to assist with the delivery of the Action Plan.

The Chairman advised that, owing to the current postal strike, those councillors who chose to receive hard paper copies of EAB agendas had received the paperwork later than anticipated and therefore had only a limited opportunity to evaluate this important report and formulate views thereon. As it was therefore felt that the EAB was not in a position to make recommendations to the Executive at this stage, members were invited to forward specific queries and points to officers who would look into them and respond, building them into the next version of the Strategy as appropriate for consideration by the Executive.

SR61 EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN

The Chairman drew attention to the Council's Community Asset Transfer Policy. As the Service Delivery EAB was proposing to discuss the Policy at its next meeting, the date of its determination by the Executive would be postponed to accommodate that discussion.

SR62 EAB WORK PROGRAMME

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The EAB was advised that the Local Plan Panel had met earlier in the day to consider the Green Belt Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). The meeting had been constructive and the document found to be clear and thorough requiring few amendments prior to public consultation. As this and other SPDs appeared unscheduled on the Work Programme, it was hoped that they would become available for the Board's consideration in the future.

The meeting finished at 8.53 pm

Signed

Date

Chairman