



GUILDFORD  
BOROUGH



**Guildford Borough Council**

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**Waverley Borough Council**

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To: All Members of the Guildford &  
Waverley Joint Senior Staff  
Committee

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Calls may be recorded for training or monitoring

Date: 19 March 2024

Membership of the Guildford & Waverley Joint Senior Staff Committee:

**Guildford Borough Councillors:**

Cllr Julia McShane (co-chair)

Cllr Philip Brooker

Cllr Fiona White

**Waverley Borough Councillors:**

Cllr Paul Follows (co-chair)

Cllr Tony Fairclough

Cllr Peter Martin

Dear Councillor

**GUILDFORD & WAVERLEY JOINT SENIOR STAFF COMMITTEE  
MEETING - THURSDAY 28 MARCH 2024**

A meeting of Guildford & Waverley Joint Senior Staff Committee will be held in COMMITTEE ROOM 1, WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL, THE BURYS, GODALMING, SURREY, GU7 1HR on THURSDAY 28 MARCH 2024 at 2.00 pm and you are hereby summoned to attend this meeting.

The Agenda for the Meeting is set out below.

Yours sincerely

PEDRO WROBEL  
Chief Executive

## AGENDA

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTES
2. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST
3. MINUTES (Pages 3 - 24)
4. UPDATE ON SENIOR STAFFING APPOINTMENTS (Pages 25 - 30)
5. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

The Joint Senior Staff Committee is asked to consider passing the following resolution:

“(1) That pursuant to Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of agenda items 6 and 7 on the grounds that it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the public were present during the items, there would be disclosure to them of exempt information (as defined by Section 100I of the Act) of the description specified as appropriate in Paragraphs 1, 2, 3, and 5 of the revised Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act namely:

Para (1): Information relating to any individual.

Para (2): information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual

Para (3): information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

Para (5): information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings.

(2) That the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.”

6. RECRUITMENT OF SECTION 151 OFFICER (Pages 31 - 34)
7. SENIOR STAFF INVESTIGATION - UPDATE

Report to follow.

## **Guildford Borough Council and Waverley Borough Council Joint Senior Staff Committee**

To confirm as a correct record:

- the public Minutes of the Joint Senior Staff Committee held on 29 February 2024 (Appendix 1), and
- the exempt Minutes of the Joint Senior Staff Committee held on 29 February 2024 (Appendix 2)

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**GUILDFORD & WAVERLEY JOINT SENIOR STAFF COMMITTEE**

**MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 29 FEBRUARY 2024**

Present:

Councillor Paul Follows, Leader, Waverley Borough Council(co-chair) [in the chair]  
Councillor Julia McShane, Leader, Guildford Borough Council (co-chair)  
Councillor Philip Brooker, Guildford Borough Council  
Councillor Tony Fairclough, Deputy Leader, Waverley Borough Council  
Councillor Peter Martin, Waverley Borough Council  
Councillor Fiona White, Guildford Borough Council

In attendance:

Pedro Wrobel, Joint Chief Executive/Head of Paid Service  
Susan Sale, Joint Executive Head of Legal & Democratic Services & Monitoring Officer  
Robin Taylor, Joint Executive Head of Organisational Development  
Jon Formby, Interim HR Manager, WBC  
John Armstrong, Democratic Services & Elections Manager, GBC  
Mark Greenburgh, external solicitor

**Action By**

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

None.

**2. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST**

Councillor Paul Follows disclosed, for transparency purposes, that, in relation to Agenda Item 5 – Senior Staff Investigation, his parents were tenants of Guildford Borough Council.

Councillor Julia McShane disclosed, for transparency purposes, that, in relation to Agenda Item 5, she was the portfolio holder for the housing function at Guildford, and having taken advice from the Monitoring Officer, considered that she was not conflicted in respect of that item.

**3. MINUTES**

The Committee approved, as a correct record, the minutes of the last meeting of the former Joint Appointments Committee held on 15 January 2024.

#### **4. SENIOR STAFFING ARRANGEMENTS**

The Joint Chief Executive withdrew from the meeting during consideration of this matter.

The Joint Senior Staff Committee (JSSC) noted that at their extraordinary full Council meetings on 19 December 2023, Guildford and Waverley Borough Councils had approved the recommendation of the former Joint Appointments Committee of 14 December 2023 to appoint Pedro Wrobel as their Chief Executive and to designate him as their Head of Paid Service, subject to human resources processes, including arranging a commencement date.

At their extraordinary full Council meetings held respectively on 23 and 24 January, Guildford and Waverley Borough Councils had also approved the recommendation of the former Joint Appointments Committee of 15 January 2024 to appoint the Strategic Director for Community Wellbeing, as interim Joint Chief Executive/Head of Paid Service for the period between the former Chief Executive's departure and the arrival of the incoming Chief Executive/Head of Paid Service, Pedro Wrobel.

The Councils had been fortunate in being able to secure the services of Pedro Wrobel earlier than expected and he had commenced his role as both Councils' Joint Chief Executive /Head of Paid Service on 19 February 2024, initially under a secondment agreement from Westminster City Council. The interim arrangements that had been made for the expected period between the departure of the former Chief Executive and the arrival of the incoming Chief Executive were therefore no longer required and the Strategic Director, Community Wellbeing had reverted to her substantive post on 19 February 2024.

On 16 February 2024, the Leaders of both Councils had reached an agreement with both the Strategic Director, Community Wellbeing and the Strategic Director, Transformation and Governance, that they would step back from their duties to allow an investigation to be carried out and that the next steps would need to be considered by the

JSSC.

The stepping back from their duties by two Strategic Directors meant there was an urgent requirement to secure additional senior level support for both Councils on an interim basis. The Councils had been able to secure the services of Michael Coughlin from Surrey County Council on a part time and interim basis, by way of secondment, for a short period, from 19 February 2024 to 8 March 2024, to act as Director for the Housing and Environmental Services. Consultation had been undertaken with both councils' Executives regarding this short-term interim appointment and no member of either Executive had raised any objections. The JSSC was asked to note the exceptional circumstances surrounding this appointment and the reasons why it had not been possible to convene a timely meeting of the JSSC to formally approve this short-term interim appointment, and the reasons for the councils' deviation from their usual procedures. The JSSC was asked to approve retrospectively the appointment from 19 February 2024.

The Head of Paid Service had made additional interim arrangements in respect of responsibilities for particular service areas: Organisational Development, Legal and Democratic Services and Finance were currently the responsibility of the Chief Executive; Housing and Environmental Services were the responsibility of the Interim Strategic Director; all other service areas were currently the responsibility of the Strategic Director for Place for an interim period.

The JSSC noted that the Head of Paid Service was making arrangements for further interim resource at Strategic Director level to take over from Mr Coughlin from 8 March 2024 and was asked to delegate authority to the Chief Executive/Head of Paid Service to make such interim appointment, in consultation with the Leaders of both Councils, to enable swift action to be taken without the need to convene a further meeting of the JSSC on this occasion. The statutory requirement for consultation with the Executives prior to any formal offer being made would need to be followed.

The JSSC also noted that the Head of Paid Service:

- (a) was also currently undertaking recruitment for a permanent Executive Head of Environmental Services and that the procedures set out in the Officer Employment Procedure Rules would be followed in respect of that appointment; and
- (b) had implemented arrangements for interim cover for the role of Joint Executive Head of Housing, whilst recruitment for the permanent appointment was being pursued.

The JSSC noted the financial implications of the proposals in the report. Councillor Martin expressed concern that the significant additional costs arising as a consequence of the housing maintenance fraud investigation at Guildford should be split equally between Guildford and Waverley. The Joint Monitoring Officer confirmed that, in accordance with the terms of the Inter Authority Agreement, the cost of the interim senior staffing arrangements would be split equally between the councils.

Having considered the report, the JSSC

RESOLVED:

- (1) To note the appointment of Pedro Wrobel into the role of Joint Chief Executive and designation as Head of Paid Service, in accordance with Council decisions, with effect from Monday 19 February 2024.
- (2) To note that Pedro Wrobel became an Officer of both Councils from 19 February 2024 and will commence employment with Waverley Borough Council from 8 April 2024; and that a secondment agreement is in place between Waverley Borough Council and Westminster City Council until 8 April.
- (3) To retrospectively approve the interim appointment of Michael Coughlin into the role of Joint Strategic Director from Monday 19 February 2024 for an initial period of 3 weeks, noting that Waverley Borough Council have a secondment agreement with Surrey County Council in



respect of this arrangement.

- (4) To delegate authority to the Joint Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service with immediate effect to approve any interim appointments of up to 6 months, usually in the remit of the Joint Senior Staff Committee, subject to consultation with the Leader of Guildford Borough Council and the Leader of Waverley Borough Council and to details of any such interim appointments being reported to the Joint Senior Staff Committee for transparency purposes, and for the Monitoring Officer to amend both Council's constitutions to reflect this delegation.
- (5) To approve the cost of interim support as set out in the financial implications paragraph of the report submitted to the Committee.

Reasons:

- To appoint a Joint Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service as part of the agreed collaboration arrangements between Guildford and Waverley Borough Councils.
- To comply with the requirements of Section 4 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.
- To ensure adequate senior staffing cover is in place for the functioning of Waverley and Guildford Borough Councils.

(Councillor Peter Martin requested that his vote against this decision in respect of the financial implications be recorded.)

The Joint Chief Executive re-joined the meeting and indicated his wish to raise a further related matter regarding senior staffing arrangements. Accordingly, the Joint Executive Head of Legal & Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer withdrew from the meeting.

The Joint Chief Executive reminded councillors that the former Joint Chief Executive had previously indicated his intention to review the senior staffing structure by including both the Joint Monitoring Officer and Joint Section 151 Officer

on to the Joint Management Board as strategic directors. Following a comparative exercise to look at the wider market and best practice across the comparable district and borough councils, and taking account of DLUHC guidance, the Joint Chief Executive informed the JSSC of his decision, taken under his delegated authority as Head of Paid Service in consultation with the two Leaders, to implement that proposal with effect from 1 March 2024.

Members of the JSSC expressed their strong endorsement of the decision taken by the Joint Chief Executive.

The Joint Executive Head of Legal & Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer re-joined the meeting.

## **5. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

The Committee

RESOLVED:

(1) That pursuant to Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item of business on the grounds that it was likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the public were present during the item, there would be disclosure to them of exempt information (as defined by Section 100I of the Act) of the description specified in Paragraphs 1, 2, 3, and 5 of the revised Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act namely:

Para (1): Information relating to any individual.

Para (2): information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual

Para (3): information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

Para (5): information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings.

- (2) That the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

## **6. SENIOR STAFF INVESTIGATION**

The JSSC

RESOLVED:

- (1) To approve the recommendations set out in the exempt report submitted to the Joint Senior Staff Committee.
- (2) To convene a further meeting of the Joint Senior Staff Committee to consider an update on progress in respect of the investigation no later than two months from the date of this meeting.

Reasons:

- The power to authorise an investigation and to take disciplinary action in relation to Joint Strategic Directors is delegated to the Joint Senior Staff Committee.

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By virtue of paragraph(s) 1, 2, 3, 5 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A  
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Agenda item number: 3  
Appendix 2

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# **Guildford and Waverley Borough Councils**

Report to: Joint Senior Staff Committee

Date: 28 March 2024

Ward(s) affected: N/A

Report of Interim HR Manager, Waverley Borough Council

Author: Jon Formby

Tel: 01483 523499

Email: jon.formby@waverley.gov.uk

Report Status: Open

## **Update on Senior Staffing Appointments**

### **1. Executive Summary**

- 1.1 On 16 February 2024, the Leaders of the Councils reached an agreement with both the Strategic Director, Community Wellbeing (who was at that time the Interim Joint Chief Executive) and the Strategic Director, Transformation and Governance, that to allow an investigation to be carried out they would step back from their duties and the next steps would need to be considered by the Joint Senior Staff Committee.
- 1.2 At its meeting on 29 February 2024, the Joint Senior Staff Committee agreed to delegate authority to the Joint Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service with immediate effect to approve any interim appointments, of up to 6 months, usually in the remit of the Joint Senior Staff Committee, subject to consultation with the Leaders of both Councils, and to details of any such interim appointments being reported to the Joint Senior Staff Committee for transparency purposes and for the Monitoring Officer to amend both Councils' constitutions to reflect this delegation.

- 1.3 Following the departure of Michael Coughlin after a three-week secondment from Surrey County Council in the role of part-time Interim Strategic Director for Housing and Environment, the Head of Paid Service secured the services of Julian Higson through Penna to be Interim Strategic Director for Housing and Environment for a three-month period from 6 March 2024 to 6 June 2024. This is a five-day working week at a daily rate of £986 plus VAT, inclusive of expenses.
- 1.4 The additional interim arrangements made by the Head of Paid Service at the point of the two Strategic Directors voluntarily stepping back at that time remain in place, with: Organisational Development reporting to the Chief Executive; Housing and Environmental Services reporting to the Interim Strategic Director for Housing and Environment; and all other service areas reporting into the Strategic Director for Place.
- 1.5 The Head of Paid Service has proposed further interim management arrangements below JMT level to be put in place whilst the recruitment processes for an Executive Head of Environmental Services and Executive Head of Housing have been undertaken.
- 1.6 An offer for a permanent Executive Head of Environmental Services has now been made to Marcus Harvey, who will be joining Waverley and Guildford on Monday 17 June 2024.
- 1.7 An offer for a permanent Executive Head of Housing has now been made. Subject to the completion of the normal Executive consultation processes set out in paragraph 9.1, this appointment will be confirmed.
- 1.8 A new role of Head of Business Improvement at Guildford has been advertised. This role will be a Guildford role in the first instance, focusing on the delivery of an improvement plan in response to the Guildford SOLACE report. Because this new post will report directly to the Chief Executive it is defined in law as a 'Non-Statutory Chief Officer'. Under paragraph 3.6 of the Officer Employment Procedure Rules, the appointment of such officers falls within the remit of the Joint Senior Staff Committee. However, the Committee is able to



delegate its responsibility in that respect to the Head of Paid Service if it chooses to. Recommendation 2.4 below asks the Committee to approve this delegation.

## **2. Recommendation to Committee**

The Joint Senior Staff Committee is recommended to:

- 2.1 Note the appointment, under delegated authority by the Head of Paid Service, of Julian Higson to the role of Interim Strategic Director for a 3-month period from 6 March to 6 June 2024.
- 2.2 Note the offer of the permanent role of Executive Head of Environmental Services to Marcus Harvey with a start date of Monday 17 June 2024.
- 2.3 Note the offer of the permanent role of Executive Head of Housing (subject to the completion of the normal Executive consultation processes set out in paragraph 9.1)
- 2.4 Delegate responsibility for appointing the GBC Head of Business Improvement to the Head of Paid Service.
- 2.5 Approve the cost of interim support as set out in the financial implications paragraph below.

## **3. Reasons for Recommendation:**

- 3.1. To ensure adequate senior staffing cover is in place for the functioning of Waverley and Guildford Borough Councils.

## **4. Exemption from publication**

- 4.1 This report is not exempt.

## **5. Purpose of Report**

- 5.1 To note and report back the changes made to the Senior Staffing Arrangements following the delegation of powers to the Head of Paid Service and Chief Executive to ensure that Guildford and Waverley

Borough Councils have sufficient senior staffing arrangements in place.

The Joint Senior Staff Committee's role, as set out in its terms of reference, is:

*“Adopting and exercising such of the functions of Guildford Borough Council and Waverley Borough Council (“the councils”) as can be delegated by those councils in respect of the appointment of the councils’ Joint Chief Executive/Head of Paid Service and any Joint Statutory Officer and Director posts as are covered by the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) Regulations 2001 (as amended) or any successor regulations.”*

## **6. Strategic Priorities**

- 6.1 Gaps in senior level resource present a significant strategic risk to both authorities. For this reason, the Head of Paid Service has sought to fill key gaps on an interim and permanent basis.

## **7. Background**

- 7.1. The ending of the secondment of Michael Coughlin from Surrey County Council, meant there was a requirement to source additional interim Strategic Director support for the Corporate Management Board quickly to ensure adequate resource.
- 7.2. The interim recruitment of Julian Higson as Strategic Director through Penna for Housing and Environmental Services meant an experienced Director level candidate could be sourced quickly with experience of comparable Director level roles at Brentwood and Rochford District Council, London Borough of Harrow and Bristol City Council.

## **8. Financial Implications**

- 8.1 Under the terms of the interim arrangement with Penna the cost of interim Strategic Director, Julian Higson will be charged equally between Waverley and Guildford at a rate of £986 per day plus VAT for a 3 month period.

- 8.2 The Joint Strategic Director, Community Wellbeing and Joint Strategic Director, Transformation and Governance remain on full pay whilst the investigation is carried out.
- 8.3 The advertisements for the Strategic Director of Finance and Head of Business Improvement are through our existing mechanisms for advertising roles and so do not require any additional funding.
- 8.4 The costs of advertising for the roles of Executive Head of Environmental Services and Executive Head of Housing were through direct advertising with the Municipal Journal and managed by the Waverley Human Resource Team at a cost of £5,950 plus VAT for the media and other costs covered within the existing salary budget.

## **9. Legal Implications**

- 9.1 The Joint Strategic Director of Legal & Democratic Services has consulted both Executives to ask whether they would have any well-founded objections to the appointments in line with the Senior Officer Employment Rules and none have been received.

## **10. Human Resource Implications**

- 10.1 The role of Strategic Director is an important senior role at the second level tier in the structure of the Joint Management Team at Guildford and Waverley Borough Councils.
- 10.2 The role of Executive Head of Service is an important senior role at the third level tier in the structure of the Joint Management Team at Guildford and Waverley Borough Councils.

## **11. Equality and Diversity Implications**

- 11.1 Equality impact assessments are carried out when necessary to ensure service delivery meets the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010. There are no immediate equality, diversity, or inclusion implications in this report's recommendations. Impact assessments may be required as further collaboration proposals are developed and implemented and will be reported as appropriate.

**12. Climate Change/Sustainability Implications**

12.1 The climate change emergency declaration and the urgent target for net zero carbon by 2030 is a critical objective for both councils. While no specific impacts on the climate emergency declaration have been identified as a consequence of this report's recommendations, the Councils will be assessing and prioritising the environmental, climate and carbon impacts of any proposals that emerge.

**13. Background Papers**

None

**14. Appendices**

None

By virtue of paragraph(s) 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A  
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Agenda item number: 6

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