OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

3 March 2020

* Councillor Paul Spooner (Chairman)
* Councillor James Walsh (Vice-Chairman)

* Councillor Colin Cross	* Councillor Masuk Miah
* Councillor Graham Eyre	* Councillor John Redpath
Councillor Liz Hogger	Councillor Tony Rooth
* Councillor Tom Hunt	* Councillor Deborah Seabrook
Councillor Steven Lee	* Councillor Patrick Sheard

*Present

Councillors Dennis Booth, Angela Goodwin, Lead Councillor for Housing, Access and Disability, Homelessness, Jan Harwood, Lead Councillor for Planning, Regeneration, and Housing Delivery, Ted Mayne, Julia McShane, Lead Councillor for Community Health, Support and Wellbeing, and Caroline Reeves, the Leader of the Council and Lead Councillor for Environment and Sustainability across the Borough, Transformation, Sustainable Transport, Economic Development, and Governance were also in attendance.

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 23(j), Councillor George Potter attended as a substitute for Councillor Steven Lee.

OS43   APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

The Committee was advised of apologies for absence from Councillors Liz Hogger, Steven Lee, and Tony Rooth and notified of a substitute as detailed above.

OS44   LOCAL CODE OF CONDUCT AND DECLARATION OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS

There were no declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests.

OS45   MINUTES

The minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings held on 14 January and 4 February 2020 were agreed.

OS46   LEAD COUNCILLOR QUESTION SESSION

The Chairman welcomed the Lead Councillor for Housing, Access and Disability, Homelessness and the Director of Service Delivery.

A number of question areas were provided to the Lead Councillor for Housing, Access and Disability, Homelessness in advance of the meeting: improving accessibility for disabled people; homelessness; Council and social housing; social rent housing; and North Downs Housing Limited (NDH). In addressing these issues and other questions, a number of clarifications and responses were offered:

- The Lead Councillor for Housing, Access and Disability, Homelessness was asked about the Council's activities to improve accessibility for disabled people across the Borough, particularly in town or village centres. In reply, the Committee was advised of the need to comply with disability legislation when delivering services or projects and the inclusion of equalities on the Council's committee reports, supported by an

equalities impact assessment where required. In addition, the Committee was advised of examples of services that support disabled people, such as assisted waste collection, and accessible parks and playgrounds. The Lead Councillor for Housing, Access and Disability, Homelessness indicated that the Guildford town centre public realm project and the replacement of Walnut Bridge were examples of projects featuring accessibility.

- The Lead Councillor for Housing, Access and Disability, Homelessness referred to the Guildford Access Group and the Mayor's Awards for Access, and indicated that the Council helped fund the first Changing Places toilet in the Borough and that a second one was planned. The Committee was advised that the availability of accessible car parking spaces was being added to the GEOMII Guildford Parking app. In addition, the Lead Councillor for Housing, Access and Disability, Homelessness referred to the local home improvement agency.

- In response to a question about the achievements of NDH since its establishment in 2016, the Lead Councillor for Housing, Access and Disability, Homelessness explained the objectives of the company and outlined its cumulative acquisition and development targets for the five-year period up to 2026. She suggested that the adoption of the Local Plan would deliver a step change in the pace of development over the next five years, although the rate at which the sites were built out was currently difficult to predict. The Committee was advised that over the next five-year period it was likely NDH would be heavily reliant on the Council to deliver development opportunities.

- The Committee was advised that forty-eight homes had been delivered by NDH since 2016.

- The Lead Councillor for Housing, Access and Disability, Homelessness advised that a driver for the establishment of NDH was to protect property from Right to Buy. She suggested that the reputation of NDH in the rental market was improved through its connection to the Council.

- In reply to a question, the Lead Councillor for Housing, Access and Disability, Homelessness indicated that the Council's aim was to build 3,000 new houses by 2029 and that, in light of central government changes, how to achieve this target was being considered. The Lead Councillor for Housing, Access and Disability, Homelessness indicated that the Council had a focus on providing social housing, the target of building 3,000 new Council houses was made before the adoption of the Local Plan, the October 2019 interest rate increase by the Public Works Loan Board could not have been anticipated, and government policy was not assisting local authorities that aimed to increase social and affordable housing.

- In response to a question about a pre-election pledge to build 3,000 Council houses, the Lead Councillor for Planning, Regeneration, and Housing Delivery indicated his support for a social rent option with properties not owned by the Council.

- The Lead Councillor for Housing, Access and Disability, Homelessness advised the meeting that Housing First was a two-year pilot project rather than a strategy. She informed the Committee that Housing First would work with up to seven individuals who had multiple support needs and chaotic lifestyles. The Committee was advised that the Housing First worker had been in post since early February 2020 and was about to complete her induction and begin working with identified clients. The Lead Councillor for Housing, Access and Disability, Homelessness stated that the Council

intended to recommission services for rough sleepers in 2021 and that this would be done in partnership with Surrey County Council. She stated that learning from the Housing First pilot would inform these future commissioning plans.

- In addition, the Lead Councillor for Housing, Access and Disability, Homelessness indicated that Housing First would be payment by results based on the time for which individuals held on to their tenancy.

- The Lead Councillor for Housing, Access and Disability, Homelessness alluded to information, provided to Councillors in advance of the meeting, on the number of people known to be rough sleeping and those at risk of rough sleeping in the Borough.

- In reply to a question about identifying ways to build more housing for social rent, the Committee was informed that all sites and schemes were assessed for provision of social rents within the overall development costs. The Lead Councillor for Housing, Access and Disability, Homelessness indicated these assessments had shown social rents would have meant delivering projects at a loss. She advised the Committee that a mix of social and affordable housing was necessary to meet housing needs in the Borough.

- In relation to a question about the housing costs element of Universal Credit, the Lead Councillor for Housing, Access and Disability, Homelessness advised the Committee that people migrating on to Universal Credit would not be worse off than under the benefits being replaced by it. She indicated that new claims for Universal Credit might find their Universal Credit entitlement was less than they would have received under the benefits it replaced. She indicated that she had been advised that the housing costs elements of Universal Credit were not at lower levels than the Housing Benefit it replaced.

- In response to a question about the delivery of social homes, the Lead Councillor for Planning, Regeneration, and Housing Delivery, confirmed that the Council's aim was the provision of both social and affordable homes in the Borough to reduce the housing waiting list.

- The Lead Councillor for Housing, Access and Disability, Homelessness, indicated that the Bright Hill site in Guildford town centre was in the process of being developed.

- The Lead Councillor for Planning, Regeneration, and Housing Delivery confirmed that there was scope for NDH to be involved in the Weyside Urban Village development.

- With reference to plans for further Council enforcement standards in the private rented housing sector, the Lead Councillor for Housing, Access and Disability, Homelessness indicated that a workshop with councillors would be arranged before any decision was taken.

- In reply to a question from a Committee member, the Director of Resources confirmed that the Council could borrow to fund social housing. In addition, she advised the meeting that the Council's Housing Revenue Account had significant reserves.

- The Lead Councillor for Housing, Access and Disability, Homelessness indicated that she hoped the number of rough sleepers in the Borough could be reduced by over half within the next five-year period.

The Chairman thanked both the Lead Councillor for Housing, Access and Disability, Homelessness and the Lead Councillor for Planning, Regeneration, and Housing Delivery for attending the meeting and answering questions.

OS47   ICT REFRESH PROJECT REVIEW

The Chairman welcomed the Leader of the Council, the Director of Resources, and the Managing Director. He explained that the Committee was invited to review the project update report, consider the recommendations and learning points, and comment.

The Director of Resources introduced the report submitted to the Committee. She explained that the report was initially intended to be a post-project implementation review of the ICT Refresh project, but the project was not complete. The meeting was informed that an independent interim review of the project was within the papers submitted to the Committee. The Director of Resources advised the Committee that the interim ICT Lead Specialist and author of the Socitm Advisory report was unable to attend the meeting.

The Committee was informed that the business case for the ICT transformation submitted to the Executive for approval in November 2017 focused too narrowly on the implementation of Windows 10 and other sundry end user computing technologies and excluded refreshing other assets. The Committee was advised that infrastructure, network / communications, and devices such as mobile phones and printers were not included in the original business case. The Director of Resources advised the Committee that the project had been scheduled to complete within 18 months and cost £1.25million. She indicated that the rollout of end user devices had taken longer than anticipated and that the project had not been completed prior to the start of the Future Guildford implementation as planned. The Director of Resources advised the meeting that the Council had commissioned Socitm Advisory to undertake a review of the project to identify lessons to be learn and applied to other projects. The Socitm Advisory report was attached as Appendix 1 to the report submitted to the Committee.

The Director of Resources referred to the prioritised improvement recommendations set out in the Socitm Advisory report. The Committee was informed of the main areas identified for improvement:

- ICT governance and project management
- Telephony resilience and WIFI coverage at remote sites
- ICT asset management, security and disposal
- Completion of the core network upgrade
- Movement of staff shared drives to cloud storage
- Decommissioning of Citrix

The following points arose from the ensuing discussion and questions:

- There was a legacy of underinvestment in ICT at the Council.

- The original budget had been revised upwards three times during 2019 to £1.485million. The forecast spend to the completion of phase one of the project was approximately £200,000 over the revised budget, with the costs of decommissioning legacy systems as yet unknown.

- The Director of Resources indicated that she had believed that an infrastructure refresh had been included in the original project proposal. The Director of Resources stated that the Council directors responsible for the project were not IT experts and were reliant on subject knowledge experts to advise on the needs of the project. Committee members suggested that outside technical expertise was perhaps necessary to specify the products desired and to identify dependencies and risks at the outset of a proposed project.

- The project should have included all infrastructure components and been scheduled over a 3-4 year period rather than 18 months.

- The Director of Resources undertook to provide the Committee members with the numbers of permanent and subcontracted ICT staff at the Council and the location of physical servers still in use.

- The Director of Resources stated that the Council's new intranet was staff focused and the Councillors did not have access.

- A member of the Committee suggested that the original budget was unrealistic for the project proposed and questioned whether financial inhibitions had affected proposed costings.

- In response to Committee members highlighting the Socitm Advisory report's conclusion about project and programme management shortcomings, the Director of Resources indicated that lessons had been learnt for project and programme management within the ICT team. In addition, she advised the Committee that further advice and project planning and management templates had been provided by Socitm Advisory. The Director of Resources advised the meeting that it was recognised that project management across the Council needed to improve.

- With reference to the resources and skills identified in the Socitm Advisory report as no longer present due to the ICT restructure, Councillors questioned whether some skills had been lost to the Council altogether. In reply, the Director of Resources referred to the movement of some project management and programme skills and the level of ICT staff turnover.

- Councillors welcomed the decision to publish the Socitm Advisory report. They commented on poor project planning, the past mismanagement of the project, the lack of governance and reporting of activities, the lack of a project board for the full duration of the project, the absence of a robust communications and training plan for staff, and suggested the importance of obtaining business analyst or solution architect support.

- Councillors commented on the lack of reviews of the project during its implementation and suggested these would have highlighted the additional work required and potential costs. The Committee members questioned the apparent exclusion of items from the project due to their high risk and the failure to report issues.

- Responding to the lack of dedicated project management on the ICT refresh, the Director of Resources indicated that the Council would buy-in project management resource when needed.

- The Director of Resources advised the Committee that a new ICT Lead Specialist was being recruited.

- The Project Board responsible for governance of the ICT refresh consisted of Council officers only. The Director of Resources indicated that she was the senior officer on the Project Board.

- The Director of Resources indicated that the delay to delivery of the ICT refresh had affected the agile working of Phase A of Future Guildford. She informed the Committee that there had not been an ongoing impact on the Future Guildford transformation programme as it was resourced separately.

- The ICT refresh had promoted simplification and process improvement, such as the customer relationship management (CRM) and the enterprise resource planning (ERP) software.

The Leader of the Council welcomed the Socitm Advisory report and the efforts of the Director of Resources.

Summarising the discussion, the Chairman sought the Committee's endorsement of the recommendations within the Socitm Advisory report. In addition, he highlighted the Committee' concern with the issues identified in the Socitm Advisory report around project governance and delivery.

The Chairman suggested that the concerns raised by the Committee be noted, that the Council's senior management team progress the necessary actions, that the Leader of the Council (as the Lead Councillor responsible for Governance) monitor the situation, and that the ICT Lead Specialist attend the Committee's next discussion of the ICT refresh project.

RESOLVED: (I) That the recommendations within the Socitm Advisory report, attached as Appendix 1 to the report submitted to the Committee, be endorsed.

(II) That the Committee's concern with the project governance and delivery of the ICT refresh project be noted.

(III) That an update on the ICT refresh project be provided to the Committee in six months' time or upon completion of the project if sooner.

OS48   AN UPDATE ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF FUTURE GUILDFORD

The Chairman welcomed the Chief Internal Auditor, the Customer Services and Business Improvement Manager, Dave Mullin from Ignite, and a local Unison representative.

The Leader of the Council introduced the item and advised the Committee of the progression of Future Guildford. She indicated that the Future Guildford transformation was the best way to streamline the Council and make the savings necessary. The Leader of the Council indicated that she had no issues with the progression of Future Guildford.

In response to a question about changes to Executive portfolios to reflect the Future Guildford transformation, the Leader of the Council indicated she would be making an announcement at the next meeting of the Executive.

In reply to questions, the Unison representative advised the meeting that staff reactions to the Future Guildford transformation varied according to the individual concerned. He

indicated that Unison was unable to change the decision to use the Ignite model and had advised its members to engage with the Future Guildford process. He indicated that the support and training provided for staff undergoing change appeared adequate. He informed the Committee that most difficulties had occurred around the post-consultation feedback.

The Committee was advised that the results of a staff survey carried out in June 2019 were attached as an appendix to the report submitted to the Committee. The Committee was informed that the survey results were used to help tailor aspects of the Future Guildford approach. The meeting was informed that the survey would be repeated in future.

In response to questions about the capacity of the public facing Council services after implementation of Phase B, the Committee was informed that detailed process redesign for Phase B of Future Guildford was ongoing and that the assumptions of the business case were being tested with staff that were subject-matter experts.

The Chief Internal Auditor confirmed that exit interviews were not compulsory. The Chairman suggested that the results of any exit interviews might provide useful information for the Committee's assessment of Future Guildford.

With reference to the current status of the ICT systems, a member of the Committee questioned whether the implementation of Phase B of Future Guildford was dependent on the CRM software being in place and whether such dependencies had been sufficiently planned for. In reply, the Chief Internal Auditor indicated that the Phase B and CRM were being progressed in parallel.

The Chairman and members of the Committee questioned the omission of the issues log from the information within the report submitted to the Committee. In response to a question about the issues log requested previously by the Committee, the Managing Director referred to the issues presented to the Future Guildford Project Board in January 2020.

The Chairman and members of the Committee requested a detailed breakdown of the monies spent on contractors to date, and a preference for written examples of business processes that had changed as a result of Phase A of Future Guildford.

The Customer Services and Business Improvement Manager listed examples of business processes that had changed as a result of Phase A of Future Guildford, including staff booking leave and the ICT service desk. She advised the Committee that written details of the new processes, including relevant business process flowcharts, could be provided. The Chief Internal Auditor stated that the issues logs and workstream dependencies would be shared with the Committee.

The Chairman indicated that the additional details requested by the Committee should be provided within the next Future Guildford update to the Committee.

Members requested details of the £241,000 used on project contingencies and were advised that the spend was on outplacement work, extending legal support during the Phase A consultation period, behavioural support, and a variation in the ERP project.

In response to a query about the lack of benchmark information about customer satisfaction, the Customer Services and Business Improvement Manager advised the Committee of customer engagement undertaken as part of the business process redesign work.

The Managing Director advised the meeting that the staff survey results from June 2020 and the outcomes of the Phase B consultation could be included in the next update to the Committee.

The Chairman thanked the Leader of the Council, the Managing Director, the Resources Director, the Chief Internal Auditor, the Customer Services and Business Improvement Manager, Dave Mullin from Ignite, and the local Unison representative for attending the meeting and answering questions.

RESOLVED: (I) That the update provided to the Committee be noted.

(II) That a further update on Future Guildford be provided to the Committee once the Phase B transition was complete.

OS49   MATTERS OUTSTANDING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

The Committee considered information on matters outstanding from previous meetings, including the traveller strategy and policy and a possible review of the decision-making on the Walnut Bridge project.

The Managing Director indicated that a discussion of traveller strategy and policy was scheduled for a March meeting of Surrey Council Leaders and Chief Executives. In addition, he undertook to liaise with the Deputy Leader of the Council and Lead Councillor for Personal Health, Safety and Wellbeing, and provide information to Committee members. The Committee was advised that the Director of Service Delivery had briefed the Committee's Chairman and Vice-Chairman and the Chairmen of the Executive Advisory Boards on traveller encampments.

With reference to the timescale around any possible consideration of the Walnut Bridge project, the Leader of the Council indicated that Committee members could be advised when construction was due to begin.

OS50   OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered a report setting out the Overview and Scrutiny work programme for 2020-21.

The Senior Democratic Services Officer – Scrutiny provided an update and asked the Committee to review and agree its work plan. He referred to the proposal to establish a task and finish group to examine governance of major projects at the Council. Committee members indicated their approval for such a task group. The Chairman indicated that the Managing Director and the Leader of the Council would be consulted over how the task group could be of most value to the Council.

With reference to previous work by Overview and Scrutiny, a member of the Committee proposed adding an item to the work programme to look at the potential mechanisms for managing the impact of HMOs in the Borough.

With reference to the issue of access to GP surgeries within the Borough, a member of the Committee informed the meeting that representatives of Guildford and Waverley Clinical Commissioning Group had accepted an invitation to attend the Committee to provide information and answer questions.

RESOLVED: (I) That an in-depth task and finish group examining the governance of major projects at the Council be established.

(II) That a report on the Borough's HMOs be added to the Overview and Scrutiny work programme.

(III) That the Committee's meeting with Guildford and Waverley Clinical Commissioning Group be scheduled.

The meeting finished at 9.34 pm

Signed .... Date ....

Chairman