

Guildford Borough Council

Report to: Executive

Date: 9 January 2025

Ward(s) affected: 'All'

Report of: Chief Executive Officer

Report Author: Pedro Wrobel, Chief Executive Officer

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Lead Executive Member: Cllr Julia McShane

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Status: Open

Key decision: Yes

Senior Staff Resources: Joint Assistant Director of Transformation

1.0 Executive Summary

- 1.1 Following changes in organisational structure at Joint Leadership Team (JLT) level, capacity and capability is needed to support both Councils in delivering future stages of the Councils' Transformation and Collaboration programme. The SOLACE report commissioned by Guildford Borough Council also recommends this.
- 1.2 To accelerate progress already made, it is proposed to create a Joint Assistant Director of Transformation post directly reporting to the Joint Chief Executive post.
- 1.3 This post will be responsible for supporting both Councils to deliver the Councils' intention to improve services and exploit opportunities to reduce costs through Guildford and Waverley Borough Councils working together. The current model, whilst delivering savings, has not moved fast enough or rigorously enough to ensure continued progress at an acceptable pace. This post will be part of remedying this.
- 1.4 Consistent with the council's policy on creating joint posts, this post will be appointed on Waverley Terms and conditions of appointment; and created as a two year fixed term post. Part of the post's target will be to deliver ongoing savings that at least cover its

cost. It should therefore be considered as an 'Invest To Save' proposition. The post is to be included in the Council's inter authority agreement relating to the sharing of staff and appointed in accordance with those principles.

2.0 Recommendation to Executive

That the Executive resolves to:

- 2.1 Approve the creation of a Joint Assistant Director post, on a 2-year fixed term basis, effective from 1 February 2025, subject to budget approval by full Council;
- 2.2 Delegate authority to the Head of Paid Service to make any changes to the role, following the outcome of consultation with staff and the Union;
- 2.3 Agree that the post of Joint Assistant Director of Transformation will be a shared post with Waverley Borough Council and will be governed by the existing principles of the Inter-Authority Agreement;

3.0 Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 To respond to changes in resources within the Strategy and Corporate Services team which provides an opportunity to further consider the structure of that service and whether it has the capacity and capability to deliver the next stage of the Transformation and Collaboration programme and other transformation opportunities.
- 3.2 To ensure that the Transformation and Collaboration programme is appropriately represented at Joint Leadership Team level, thereby delivering consistent visibility of the programme at senior officer level; and leadership focus on delivering programme objectives and ensuring sustainable improvements in services for the residents of Guildford and Waverley and improvement in value for money across both Councils at a time of stress on local government finances.

4.0 Status of Report

This report is not restricted.

5.0 Strategic Priorities

The work of the Joint Assistant Director of Transformation and team underpins the Council's strategic framework and delivery of Corporate Strategy and plans. Specifically, it delivers on being 'A Resilient and Well-Managed Council'.

6.0 Background

- 6.1 Changes in the recent structure of the Strategy and Corporate Services function have presented a need to consider whether a proposed restructure of that service would provide the additional capacity and capability needed to deliver the next stage of the Councils' Transformation and Collaboration programme.
- 6.2 The Transformation and Collaboration programme has delivered considerable savings with the creation of a Joint Leadership Team (JLT). Whilst these savings are expected to be sustainable over the longer term there should be other benefits that can still be leveraged for the benefit of Guildford residents.
- 6.3 In addition to the financial savings resulting from a shared JLT, the council has realised savings from a number of other joint posts below JLT. Other non-financial savings have also been delivered, for example through the alignment of some policies and processes. There is much more to do in this area.
- 6.4 Additionally Guildford and Waverley Borough councils have exploited opportunities to jointly respond to various national and other local consultations; and participate in joint events. Further extending these types of collaboration will significantly improve our ability to deliver a shared staffing model and shared service delivery model.
- 6.5 A review of the programme was undertaken in June 2024 and identified some standalone projects that could deliver a range of benefits, including financial savings, increased resilience, and reduced risk. It was also recognised that more substantial and sustainable savings will be delivered via the development of a joint operating model for both councils. Further, creating harmonised working practices is key to unlocking these opportunities.
- 6.6 In addition to the Transformation and Collaboration programme, the council is embarked on a range of other programmes, including

capital and non-capital programmes. A limitation of current organisation arrangements is that the accountability for these programmes is split across a number of programme board arrangements, leading to overheads in decision making and time pressures for a small number of key officers.

- 6.7 The council is embarked on a programme to deliver a joint portfolio, programme and project management approach with Waverley Borough Council which will considerably streamline overheads and improve decision making. Ensuring we have consistent ownership and leadership of these programmes is key to our being able to best leverage the benefits of closer collaboration and delivery a joint operating model.
- 6.8 With that in mind it is critical that at this important juncture of our collaboration efforts, we implement a leadership model that will ensure we can build internal capability and capacity that will allow for the strategic leadership necessary to drive direction and plans, enable us to obtain and secure ongoing buy in and properly support ongoing engagement activities with staff and key stakeholders alike.
- 6.9 Finally, we recognise that a key dependency in these next stages is developing a comprehensive business case and narrative that will provide the necessary assurance that we will deliver our collaboration partnership objectives. This leadership will come in the form of a new Joint Assistant Director of Transformation post.

7.0 Options

- 7.1 Three options were considered:
- Option 1 – Do nothing.
 - Option 2 – Create a permanent Joint Assistant Director post directly reporting to JCEX.
 - Option 3 – Create a two year fixed term Joint Assistant Director post directly reporting to JCEX and leverage expertise from MHCLG via a secondment arrangement.
- 7.2 Option 1 has been discounted as it would not provide the required capacity or capability to support the acceleration of delivering a joint operating model for both councils.
- 7.3 Option 2 would create additional capacity and capability but it would potentially expose both councils to longer term costs than

necessary, given the timescales for the Transformation and Collaboration programme should be significantly advanced in November 2026. A permanent post would increase establishment costs in a way that is unlikely to represent best value in the long term.

- 7.4 Option 3 would provide both the capacity and capability needed to support the progress needed by both councils to deliver a shared staffing model, shared services and realise a range of benefits which improve outcomes for residents and increase the impact of the services both councils deliver.
- 7.5 Obtaining sufficient senior level experience of council wide transformation is limited by a challenging recruitment marketplace for these key roles. A significant number of councils are already involved in transformation exercises and we wish to be creative in accessing the best possible expertise available at the most effective cost to the council.
- 7.6 Discussions with Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) suggest that we may be able to leverage the experience provided by a senior resource seconded from MHCLG for a 2-year period. This could present considerable benefits. Specifically, a seconded resource would offer a broader range of experience and knowledge obtained across the Local Government and public sector landscape than could likely be obtained from the recruitment market. They would also offer the additional benefits of comprehensive knowledge of central government policy towards local government. Therefore, MHCLG resources are advantageously placed to accelerate progress; leverage and exploit learning from other councils about best delivering sustainable change and service improvements in the context of ongoing budget challenges; and central government intentions for the sector as a whole.

8.0 Consultation

- 8.1 Consultation will need to be undertaken with affected staff and the Unions, as to the creation of this new post of Joint Assistant Director of Transformation. The Executive is requested to delegate any changes in the role as a result of consultation feedback to the Head of Paid Service.

8.2 The proposal to create a new Joint Assistant Director of Transformation has been subject to consultation with the Corporate Leadership Board and the relevant Portfolio Holder.

9.0 Key Risks

9.1 That by failing to appoint the requisite capacity and capability to effectively lead the next stage of the councils Transformation and Collaboration programme, we will fail to further exploit the benefits identified and miss the opportunity to deliver a shared staffing and shared services delivery model.

9.2 That the lack of a consolidated approach to managing programmes will impact Guildford Borough Council's ability to deliver a range of different programmes, many of which have interdependencies on closer collaboration with Waverley Borough Council.

10.0 Legal and Governance Implications

10.1 Section 112 Local Government Act 1972 provides a power to appoint staff on such terms and conditions as appropriate.

10.2 Section 113 Local Government Act 1972 provides a power to a Local Authority to enter into agreement with another Local Authority to place staff at their disposal for the purposes of their functions.

10.3 This proposal relates to a new joint post where the postholder will provide a service to both Guildford and Waverley Borough Councils. The Inter-Authority Agreement (Schedule 2, s3.3) provides that the Executive of both Councils will agree the provision of any new joint posts in excess of 12 months in term.

10.4 Under the Inter-Authority Agreement, the default position is that new JLT posts will be employed by Waverley Borough Council, and the costs will be shared 50:50 between the Councils.

10.5 In accordance with section 2(7) Local Government and Housing Act 1989 the post will be a Chief Officer by virtue of being a direct report of the Joint Chief Executive.

10.6 In accordance with the Guildford Borough Council Officer Employment Procedure Rules which form part of the adopted Constitution, the recruitment of this post, as a Chief Officer, is within the remit of the Joint Senior Staff Committee. However, the post, although a direct report of the Chief Executive, and therefore

a Chief Officer post, in terms of grade is on a level with other Assistant Directors, and forms part of the Joint Leadership Team.

- 10.6 In accordance with the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) Regulations 2001 and the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2015, an offer of appointment to the Joint Assistant Director of Transformation post cannot be made until statutory consultation has been undertaken by the Proper Officer with every Executive member of the Council.

11.0 Financial Implications

- 11.1 The Joint Assistant Director of Transformation postholder would be appointed on Waverley terms and conditions of employment and in accordance with the HR policy relating to the creation of joint posts. Costs would be shared equally between the two Councils. It is envisaged that the total cost of the post will be £123,000 and Guildford Borough Council would therefore be responsible for approximately £61,500 per annum.
- 11.2 This is an 'Invest to Save' post and the post is expected to generate savings from both transformation and collaboration in both authorities. The cost of the post will be funded by a savings target, of a minimum of the cost of the post, for Transformation and Collaboration as part of the FY 2025/26 budget process. For Guildford, this will be an additional target of £61,500k in 2025/26.
- 11.3 This post will be recruited to from 1 February 2025. The additional cost in 2024/25 for the two months of salary costs will be £10,600. This will be funded from in year savings within the General Fund.

12.0 Human Resources Implications

- 12.1 The proposed new Joint Assistant Director of Transformation post would be established and approved in accordance with the Council's interim HR Policy for the Creation of New Joint Posts, the Officer Employment Procedure Rules and all statutory requirements.
- 12.2 A secondment arrangement would be established between the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and Waverley Borough Council.

13.0 Equality and Diversity Implications

Equality and Diversity Implications have been taken into account in the HR Policy for the Interim Arrangements for new Joint Posts and in the Council's current recruitment procedures.

14.0 Climate Change and Sustainability Implications

There are no direct climate change or sustainability implications.

15.0 Background Papers

- 15.1 Guildford Borough Council's Constitution
- 15.2 Guildford Borough Council's Interim HR Policy for Arrangements for new Joint Roles with Waverley Borough Council.
- 15.3 Joint Assistant Director of Transformation Job Description.

Report clearance progress:

Finance	Richard Bates	12/12/24
Legal	Susan Sale	Comments 12 Dec 24
Human Resources	Robin Taylor	12/12/24
Chief Executive	Pedro Wrobel	12/12/24

Consultation

Portfolio Holder	Cllr Kiehl	
CLB	Pedro Wrobel, Richard Bates, Susan Sale, Julian Higson, Ezra Wallace	Pedro Wrobel 10 Dec 2024
Relevant Assistant Director	N/A	
Executive	Cllrs Follows, Fairclough, Crowe, Kiehl, Long, Merryweather, Mirylees, Rivers, Townsend & Williams	Executive Briefing Meeting 17 Dec 24