

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – SERVICES

10 July 2024

- * Councillor James Walsh (Chair)
- * Councillor Bilal Akhtar (Vice-Chair)

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| * The Mayor, Councillor Sallie Barker MBE | Councillor Maddy Redpath |
| Councillor Geoff Davis | Councillor Joanne Shaw |
| Councillor James Jones | Councillor Katie Steel |
| Councillor Steven Lee | * Councillor Jane Tyson |
| * Councillor Sandy Lowry | * Councillor Catherine Young |

*Present

Councillors Catherine Houston (Lead Councillor for Commercial Services), Richard Lucas (Lead Councillor for Finance and Property), Julia McShane (Leader of the Council and Lead Councillor for Housing), Carla Morson (Lead Councillor for Community and Organisational Development), Howard Smith, and Fiona White (Lead Councillor for Planning) were also in attendance, with Councillors Angela Goodwin (Lead Councillor for Engagement and Customer Services) and George Potter (Lead Councillor for Environment and Climate Change) in remote attendance.

OSS4 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

The Committee was advised of apologies from Councillors Geoff Davis, Maddy Redpath, Joanne Shaw, and Katie Steel. Councillor Vanessa King attended as a substitute for Councillor Joanne Shaw.

OSS5 LOCAL CODE OF CONDUCT AND DECLARATION OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS

There were no disclosures of interests.

OSS6 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 June 2024 were approved.

In response to a query from a Committee member, the Chair agreed that the gender-neutral terms 'Chair' and 'Chairperson' were to be used in the Committee's minutes.

OSS7 DEVELOPMENT OF A NEW CORPORATE STRATEGY (2024-2034)

The Lead Councillor for Community and Organisational Development introduced the item. She indicated that the draft Corporate Strategy being reviewed was the result of months of work by the Executive and officers. The Lead Councillor for Community and Organisational Development advised the meeting that the Strategy was the key strategic document for the Council, as it set out the Council's priorities for the next 10 years and provided a focus for all the Council's work.

The Lead Councillor for Community and Organisational Development gave an overview of the Strategy's five key priorities: a more sustainable Borough, a more prosperous Borough, a more inclusive Borough, decent and affordable homes, and a resilient and well-managed Council. The Committee was informed that the version of the Strategy circulated to members for comment was in draft form, with elements such as the design and photography to be finalised.

The Assistant Director, Strategy and Corporate Services, advised the meeting that beginning next spring an annual delivery plan for the Corporate Strategy would be published. He indicated that this plan would tie into the Council's Budget setting processes and link to actions over the coming year. In addition, he stated that service delivery plans and staff objectives and annual appraisals would correlate to the annual delivery plan. The meeting was informed that implementation of this plan would be tracked at a corporate level, including through quarterly performance reports to overview and scrutiny.

During the ensuing discussion, Councillors raised a number of queries and made suggestions to improve the draft Strategy:

- A member of the Committee queried the cover picture used on the draft Strategy document, particularly the prominence of the ring road. In addition to using images such as the Guildhall clock or Guildford Castle, the value of images to highlight the planned opening-up of the River Wey was suggested. Other Councillors suggested the use of photographs of Stoke Park, the Lido, the market, the river around Millmead, and Pewley Hill.
- Members asked how the Strategy's progress would be measured and advocated including specific targets within it, for example, the number

of houses that would be built over the next 10 years. In response, the Assistant Director, Strategy and Corporate Services, stated that it was not the intention to include such details within the Strategy document, and that such targets would feature within the delivery plan and the service planning process that he had outlined earlier in the meeting.

- With reference to equality, diversity and inclusion commitments and imagery, members of the Committee noted the need to both reference and include a wider range of groups and individuals within the Strategy document. The current lack within the document of images of people with disabilities or from different ethnic groups was pointed out.
- Members asked how much consultation had informed the preparation of the Strategy. In reply, the Assistant Director, Strategy and Corporate Services, indicated that there were commitments within the Strategy that the delivery of it would be done in partnership and in consultation with a wide variety of stakeholders, including Council committees and the public and partners. He suggested that some local authorities consulted prior to putting a Corporate Strategy in place, while others – like Guildford – focused on consulting on delivery of their Strategy. The Assistant Director, Strategy and Corporate Services, advised that the approach within the proposed Strategy was committed to engagement between the Council and the communities it served.
- With reference to comments within the draft Strategy document, the Assistant Director, Strategy and Corporate Services, suggested that the publication of the Strategy would be an opportunity to remind members of the public how to get involved in the Council's decision making processes.
- A member of the Committee welcomed the five priorities of the Strategy and the consistency of language throughout the draft document.
- The value in presenting information within the Strategy in pie charts, rather than as figures, was suggested. The need to replace the icon for veterans was agreed. Similarly, there was a consensus around the likely value in better explaining the CO2 figures in the About our Borough section of the draft Strategy.

- The Lead Councillor for Community and Organisational Development informed the meeting that she had asked for the photographs within the Strategy document to reflect all the Borough, rather than just Guildford town. Members of the Committee noted the need for the Strategy to address rural areas and for the Strategy document to perhaps reflect that not all areas of the borough were affluent or picturesque.
- The Lead Councillor for Community and Organisational Development indicated that the Strategy would be refreshed and revised over its ten year period.
- In response to questions from a Councillor, the Assistant Director, Strategy and Corporate Services, indicated that it was commonplace to have a mixture of continuity and new direction within a Corporate Strategy for a local authority. He advised that the review of strategies and plans required by the Corporate Improvement Plan would be informed by the direction of travel set out within the new Corporate Strategy. The Assistant Director, Strategy and Corporate Services, confirmed that the Strategy was a framework that would be refreshed during its ten year period, possibly because of other strategies and plans being developed.
- The Lead Councillor for Environment and Climate Change suggested that policy and direction in local government was a top-down process, not bottom up.
- Members discussed the credibility and importance of keeping the 2030 carbon neutral Council target within the Strategy and whether the importance of measures to protect mature and developed trees in the Borough should be stated.
- The Chair suggested that the Strategy acknowledge the importance of the Council working with water companies, central government, and other organisations, to ensure clean water for residents.

- A member of the Committee suggested a more explicit mention of the work with Surrey County Council on the nature recovery strategy warranted inclusion in the Strategy.
- Members of the Committee suggested the evening and night time economy should be included in the Strategy and championed the merits of the Purple Flag scheme for the Borough. The Lead Councillor for Community and Organisational Development undertook to take the suggestion to take part in the Purple Flag scheme back to the Executive.
- The life expectancy gap between the richest and poorest areas in the Borough was highlighted as an issue that should be central to the Council. In response, the Lead Councillor for Community and Organisational Development advised that the Strategy did discuss physical and mental well-being, health, and leisure and green spaces, but undertook to re-examine the concern raised. With reference to the Strategy, the Leader of the Council and Lead Councillor for Housing indicated that a new Health and Wellbeing Partnership Board would positively contribute to the wider determinants of health and issues such as life expectancy.
- A member of the Committee advocated including an explicit pledge within the Strategy to employ local people and support apprenticeships.
- A member of the Committee noted the omission from the Strategy of specific mention of older people and advised the meeting of the proportion of people in the Borough aged over 65 years and between 50 and 64 years. In addition, he suggested the photographs within the Strategy document could include more older people. In response, the Assistant Director, Strategy and Corporate Services, advised that most commitments set out within the Strategy applied across age groups. The Lead Councillor for Community and Organisational Development agreed the photographs within the Strategy document would be reviewed to ensure they better reflected the diverseness of the Borough.
- In response to questions, the meeting was advised of the Decent Homes Standard. In reply to a suggestion that the Strategy commit the Council to be a good landlord the Lead Councillor for Community and

Organisational Development informed the meeting that the draft Strategy stated that the Council would be a 'responsive landlord' and that tenant satisfaction was proposed as a key progress measure.

- The Committee queried the importance and future direction of the collaboration with Waverley Borough Council and were reminded by the Assistant Director, Strategy and Corporate Services, that the vision statement and objectives of the collaboration had been agreed in November 2023. He advised that meeting that the business case for the collaboration was to be revisited, with independent input, and the achievements and potential of the collaboration initiative ascertained.
- Councillors discussed the contribution, role, and variety of parish councils within the Borough.

The Chair confirmed that the notes of the Committee's discussion would be provided to the Executive for its consideration of the Corporate Strategy on 15 July.

OSS8 OFF-STREET CAR PARKING ENFORCEMENT CONTRACT

The Lead Councillor for Commercial Services introduced the item. She suggested that the proposed off-street car parking enforcement contract was an example of how the collaboration between the Council and Waverley Borough Council could benefit both councils.

The Lead Councillor for Commercial Services indicated that Waverley Borough Council's contract for off street car park enforcement with its current provider expired on 30 September, and there were a number of options available to Waverley Borough Council for providing the service after this date. She advised that a project undertaken by the Transformation Team at Woking Borough Council, car parking teams, and enabling services at both councils explored options for a joint service.

The Lead Councillor for Commercial Services indicated that bringing the off-street parking services together would increase resilience as a higher number of enforcement officers provided greater flexibility around both cover and recruitment. She informed the Committee that the proposal was supported by Waverley Borough Council's Executive the previous evening.

The Lead Councillor for Commercial Services undertook to take any comments from the Committee through to the Council’s Executive.

In reply to questions from members of the Committee, the Parking Lead advised that it was hoped the staff employed by the current provider in Waverley would TUPE across. He indicated that there would not be any increase initially in the level of enforcement, but having a larger body of enforcement staff available would enable resources to be directed to address particular issues in specific car parks as necessary. The Lead Councillor for Commercial Services and the Parking Lead suggested there might be economies of scale in future procurement under the proposed arrangement.

The Parking Lead confirmed that income from off-street car parking enforcement fines in Waverley would continue to go to Waverley Borough Council.

RESOLVED: That the off-street car parking enforcement contract proposals within the report submitted to the Committee be endorsed.

The meeting finished at 8.18 pm

Signed

Date

Chair

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