

Guildford Borough Council

Report to: Executive

Date: 9 January 2025

Ward(s) affected: 'All'

Report of Strategic Director of Legal & Democratic Services & Assistant
Director of Strategy & Corporate Services

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Status: Open

Key decision: Yes

Human Resources and Organisational Development Service: Joint Assistant Director Of People

1.0 Executive Summary

- 1.1 Following changes in the organisational structure and increased demands on the service, additional senior management capacity is needed within the Human Resources and Organisational Development (HR & OD) function to ensure that statutory responsibilities and good governance is met.
- 1.2 To enable the closer alignment of working practices between the two Councils, and to support the Strategic Director, it is proposed that a Joint Assistant Director post is created. It is considered that an HR specialist is needed to advise the Councils at this senior level and to be a part of the Joint Leadership Team (JLT).
- 1.3 This post will also be responsible for leading the restructure of both Councils' HR & OD functions with a view to increased resilience, collaboration and consideration of alternative delivery models including a shared service.

2.0 Recommendation to Executive

That the Executive resolves to:

- 2.1 Approve the creation of a permanent new role of Joint Assistant Director of People effective from 1 April 2025, subject to budget approval by full Council;
- 2.2 Delegate authority to the Strategic Director Legal & Democratic Services to make any changes to the role, following the outcome of consultation with staff and the Union;
- 2.2 Agree that the post of Joint Assistant Director of People will be a shared post with Waverley Borough Council which will be governed by the existing principles of the Inter-Authority Agreement.

3.0 Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 In December 2024, the Head of Paid Service made a change to the Senior Officer structure by moving the responsibility of the Council's HR & OD function from Strategy & Corporate Services to the Legal & Democratic Services Directorate. The Directorate will become known as the Democracy, Law & People Directorate from 6th January 2025 and the Strategic Director will be known as the Strategic Director for Democracy, Law & People. There will be a gap in the HR & OD structure between Guildford's Lead Human Resources Specialist and the Strategic Director and this is unmanageable; the support service is critical to service delivery of all functions across the Council and greater capacity in the team is required. Further, specialist knowledge is required at a more senior level; there is a need for an HR professional at Assistant Director level, to be a member of the Joint Leadership Team (JLT).
- 3.2 To respond to the concerns raised by Statutory Officers in relation to the robustness of governance arrangements for both Waverley Borough Council and Guildford Borough Council which has resulted in the need for an improvement plan, and continuous improvement thereafter to ensure good governance, and compliance with the Council's statutory duties relating to best value.
- 3.3 To undertake a comprehensive review of the service delivery, systems, processes and procedures in the HR & OD function and to develop and implement a service improvement plan.
- 3.4 To deliver the capacity and capability needed to embed success in ongoing collaboration efforts and enhance the pace of future

collaboration, transition to shared services and realisation of cashable and non-cashable savings.

- 3.6. To lead the restructure of the HR & OD service which will reduce dependency on expensive interim staff, drive alignment of the systems, policies and procedures of the two functions and implement succession planning and career development opportunities and provide resilience for the two functions.

4.0 Status of Report

This report is not restricted.

5.0 Strategic Priorities

The HR & OD function underpins the Council's strategic framework and delivery of the Corporate Strategy. It provides a leading role in delivering the Corporate Priority of being a Resilient and Well-Managed Council.

6.0 Background

- 6.1 Changes were made to the officer structure at Chief Officer level on 1 March 2024, including the creation of the post of Joint Strategic Director of Legal & Democratic Services. The Executive Head (Assistant Director) of Legal & Democratic Services was appointed to this post.
- 6.2 Whilst the March 2024 changes strengthened the Corporate Leadership Board (CLB) to ensure that the three Statutory Officers formed part, it also created a gap at the Assistant Director level. This has now been addressed within Legal and Democratic Services, with Assistant Directors appointed for both Legal Services & Information Governance and for Democracy.
- 6.3 Further changes are proposed for December 2024, to be effective 6 January 2025, for the HR & OD function to transfer to the Legal & Democratic Services Directorate with the Strategic Director post to be known as the Strategic Director, Democracy, Law & People. This change will increase the remit of the Strategic Director role, and additional management capacity is required within HR & OD to provide senior level expertise within the function.

- 6.4 The HR & OD service is a critical service enabling the effective relationship between the Council and its most valuable resource; its staff. The service undertakes some statutory activities and in aligning with finance and legal services it contributes overall to the effective governance of Council activities. At present the two Councils have HR & OD functions which are operating in very different ways, with different policies and procedures, different systems, different skills and different structures. Neither service has resilience, and it is clear that a review is urgently needed to ensure compliance with statutory requirements, efficiency in service delivery, robustness of systems, and optimisation of resources.
- 6.5 The review of each Council's HR & OD service will identify benefits, efficiencies and optimisation in terms of the sharing of systems to ensure resilience, the alignment of policies and procedures to govern staff in joint roles, and to consider alternative delivery models, including a shared HR & OD service. Such benefits are aimed at achieving excellence of service delivery, clarity, engagement, motivation and retention of staff, more specialist advice on corporate matters, and potentially savings in the longer term. Significant work is required to bring about and embed change within the service area.
- 6.6 Guildford Borough Council has recently had a governance review undertaken by Solace which has led to the Council adopting a 3 year improvement plan. The plan highlighted some improvement work required in the area of HR & OD. It is imperative that the HR & OD function is sufficiently well resourced to enable the improvement work to be completed.
- 6.7 Both Councils have indicated their desire to make progress with considering further collaboration between the two Councils including receiving and considering business cases for proposed shared services. HR & OD will be a key enabling service in bringing forward such proposals, together with legal, finance, business transformation and other key areas, and ensuring that they protect the Council from risk in terms of statutory employment matters and fulfil the duty of care we owe to our employees. It is imperative that the HR & OD services at both Councils are adequately resourced to support this key workstream.
- 6.8 It is proposed that the new Joint Assistant Director of People be appointed as part of the Joint Leadership Team, in accordance with the revised Inter-Authority Agreement dated 24 October 2024 and

made between Waverley Borough Council and Guildford Borough Council.

7.0 Options

7.1 Three options were considered:

- Option 1 – Do nothing.
- Option 2 – Create Assistant Director posts for each Council
- Option 3 – Create a Joint Assistant Director post

7.2 Option 1 has been discounted as it would not provide the required capacity to ensure that statutory responsibilities are met, nor the specialist knowledge at a senior level.

7.3 Option 2 would create additional capacity but would not align with the rest of the Joint Management Team and would not create the environment for more collaboration between the two Councils. There would also be additional costs for this option.

7.4 Option 3 would provide the capacity needed by the Council, and expertise at a senior level, as well as supporting the collaboration work.

8.0 Consultation

8.1 Consultation regarding the change in line management of the function was undertaken with officers directly affected and with the Union, in accordance with the Council's HR Policies.

8.2 Further consultation will need to be undertaken with affected staff and the Union, as to the creation of this new post of Joint Assistant Director of People. The Executive is requested to delegate any changes in the role as a result of consultation feedback to the Strategic Director Legal & Democratic Services.

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

9.0 Key Risks

- 9.1 That the current senior capacity within the HR & OD function is insufficient to ensure robust governance and continuous improvement in line with the Council's best value duty.
- 9.2 That the Councils Joint Leadership Team are sometimes without the input and understanding of Human Resources, Organisational Development and People matters due to the absence of an individual with this specialist knowledge at a senior level, and this can lead to poor decision making.
- 9.3 The HR & OD function has a corporate role in being a support service for all other services and the Council is at risk from not having a specialist HR & OD officer at a senior level of the Council's staff structure, and a specialist at Assistant Director level within the Joint Leadership Team (JLT), able to contribute to and advise on corporate matters.

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 for a Local Authority to enter into an agreement with another Local Authority for the placing of staff at their disposal for the purposes of their functions.
- 10.3 This proposal relates to a new joint leadership 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(8) Local Government and Housing Act 1989 the post will be a Deputy Chief Officer by virtue of being a direct report of a Chief Officer ie the Strategic Director of Democracy, Law & People.
- 10.6 In accordance with the Guildford Borough Council Officer Employment Procure Rules which form part of the adopted Constitution, the recruitment of this post, as a Deputy Chief Officer, is within the remit

of the Head of Paid Service rather than the Joint Senior Staff Committee.

- 10.7 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 People 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 Assistant Director for People would be appointed on the spot salary already in place for Assistant Directors, and the cost of the post is approximately £123k. Costs would be shared equally between the two Councils; Guildford Borough Council would therefore be responsible for approximately £61.5K per annum.
- 11.2 A growth bid in respect of this sum has been submitted to Guildford Borough Council for this post and the Executive's approval of the post, is subject to the Council approving the budget in February 2025.

12.0 Human Resources Implications

The proposed new Joint Assistant Director of People would be created, recruited and appointed in accordance with the Council's policies and the Officer Employment Procedure Rules and all statutory requirements, and will be included as a post within the Inter-Authority Agreement.

13.0 Equality and Diversity Implications

Equality and Diversity Implications have been taken into account in the 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

- 15.0 Guildford Borough Council's Constitution
- 15.1 Inter-Authority Agreement dated 24 October 2024

16.0 Appendices

None.

Report clearance progress:

Finance	Richard Bates	2 Dec 24
Legal	Susan Sale	2 Dec 24
Human Resources	Robin Taylor	4 Dec 24
Strategic Director	Susan Sale	2 Dec 24

Consultation

Portfolio Holder	Cllr Morson	By email 2 Dec 24
CLB	Pedro Wrobel, Richard Bates, Susan Sale, Julian Higson	By email August 2024
Relevant Assistant Director	Robin Taylor	By email 2 Dec 24
Executive		Executive Briefing Meeting 18 Dec 24