

## Executive

\* Councillor Julia McShane (Chairperson)

\* Councillor Tom Hunt (Vice-Chair)

\* Councillor Angela Goodwin

\* Councillor George Potter

\* Councillor Catherine Houston

Councillor Merel Rehorst-Smith

\* Councillor Richard Lucas

\* Councillor Fiona White

\* Councillor Carla Morson

\*Present

Councillors Jo Shaw and Howard Smith, the Deputy Mayor were also in attendance.

### **EX75 Apologies for Absence**

There were no apologies for absence.

### **EX76 Local Code of Conduct - Disclosable Pecuniary Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **EX77 Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 November 2024 were agreed as correct. The Chairman signed the minutes.

### **EX78 Leader's Announcements**

The Leader of the Council made the following announcements:

The Spring round of Crowdfund Guildford funding is now open.

We are starting the next round of Crowdfund Guildford funding for community projects. As well as charities and community groups, we are also encouraging schools and Parish Councils to apply for funding to help bring their community centred ideas come to life.

There are funding options available for standard and large capital projects. We want to help fund projects that:

- help vulnerable groups.
- make rural areas better.
- improve green spaces.
- encourage people to enjoy nature.

- improve wellbeing.

Fundraisers can get the know-how, tools, and confidence they need to start their crowdfunding campaign at a free online workshop on Tuesday 28 January, from 12noon to 1pm. You can register for a place at the free online workshop at [www.eventbrite.co.uk](http://www.eventbrite.co.uk) and searching for 'Crowdfund Guildford'.

The deadline for project submissions is Wednesday 12 March.

Find out more about Crowdfund Guildford [and the p](#)rojects supported so far at [www.spacehive.com](http://www.spacehive.com).

About Guildford goes monthly

The Council's digital newsletter, About Guildford, will be published monthly from January 2025.

The newsletter features the latest Council news, events and opportunities for local people to get involved.

To [subscribe to our digital newsletter](#) visit [www.guildford.gov.uk/aboutguildford](http://www.guildford.gov.uk/aboutguildford). You will then receive future editions of About Guildford by email.

The Joint Chief Executive explained that the Government had published a White Paper concerning the devolution of local authorities in England on 16 December. The White Paper set out a vision for the future including a new structure. It was proposed that the new structure include a strategic mayoral authority and a number of principal unitary authorities. The aim was to make improved efficiencies and make local authorities more financially robust. Surrey County Council was to submit a request to Government for a priority devolution programme by the deadline of 10 January 2025. There would also be a request to postpone the County Council elections in May.

The Leader had attended a meeting of the leaders of all of the Surrey district and borough councils on Thursday of this week. The leaders acknowledged the need for reorganisation and were in support of working together. The leaders were not in support of postponing the County Council elections in May and would be making a separate submission to Government in this regard.

#### **EX79 Freehold Disposal of Land at Bright Hill and Robin Hood Car Parks**

The Executive considered a report concerning the future use of the Bright Hill Car Park. The Council had a long-held aspiration to redevelop the surface car park at Bright Hill to deliver housing for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) in accordance with the existing Local Plan allocation for the site. Ultimately, the site was not viable for the Council to develop itself and the report set out a proposal to release the lower level of the car park to AMA Buchanan Investments Ltd. (ABI

Ltd.) to develop for housing in accordance with agreed heads of terms and subject to planning permission. The capital receipt received from the transaction would be used in part to undertake remediation works and bring the other levels of the car park back into use. The remainder of the income would be returned to the HRA to provide social housing and housing support to residents.

It was confirmed that Appendix 2 to the report contained commercially sensitive information in regard to a transaction that had not yet taken place and consequently must remain restricted from public access.

It was noted that should the development proceed then the developer would be contractually obliged to complete the works within the agreed timescale of 12 months. There would be recourse to remedy should this be exceeded.

It was expected that the planning application, when submitted, would provide for 36 new homes with 10% of those allocated as affordable. The Executive welcomed the report and considered the proposals a good use of the site in principle, whilst noting it would be a matter for the Planning Committee to determine if those proposals were appropriate in due course.

The Executive,

RESOLVED:

1. To approve the sale, subject to planning permission being granted, of part of the Bright Hill Car Park and the Robin Hood car park to AMA Buchanan Investments Ltd, as set out in the Heads of Terms at (exempt) Appendix 2 to the report submitted to the Executive;
2. To approve the allocation of up to £250,000 of the capital receipt from the sale to be spent on ground stabilisation works to bring all the car park retained by the Council back into operation.
3. To approve £50,000 capital expenditure to cover the Council's costs associated with the sale, to be recovered from the Purchaser upon exchange of contracts.
4. To delegate to the Strategic Director of Finance and Resources, in consultation with the Strategic Director of Democracy, Law and People and the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Assets, authority to procure, award and enter into all relevant contracts relating to the ground stabilisation works.

Reasons:

1. The proposed transaction will deliver a capital receipt to the Council's Housing Revenue Account, whilst enabling the delivery of housing (including a percentage of affordable).
2. The transaction requires the construction of a retaining wall by the Purchaser, within their ownership, that will bring 24 car parking spaces back into operation and therefore deliver an uplift in income to the Council. The proposed investment of part of the capital receipt into ground stabilisation works will further increase the number of operational car parking spaces across the remaining site.

#### **EX80 Procurement Pipeline and Delegation of Authority to award contracts**

The council defined a key decision, in terms of procurement, as those with a financial consequence of £200,000 or more. Under the new Contract Procedure Rules (CPRs) approved by full Council last year, Executive must give permission to Procurement to tender for and award contracts with a value greater than £200,000.

The Executive considered a report that provided advance notice of the planned or known forthcoming procurement activities upon which Executive would need to make a key decision.

The Executive approved the strategic, long-term planning approach to the Council's major procurement contracts. There was a discussion concerning what might be described as a 'minor adjustment' in costs or timescales. It was explained that the pipeline report set out a principle to proceed. The route to market was occasionally subject to change and prices did fluctuate. It was not proposed the Executive be consulted on each minor fluctuation. In conclusion, it was settled that the determination of 'minor' was at the discretion of the parties with delegated authority and that any circumstances where an adjustment was more than 'minor' it would be submitted to the Executive for consideration.

The meeting heard that any procurement decision taken under delegation would be published in the public domain. Firstly, in line with the Procurement Act 2023, any contract in excess of £30,000 would see the Council publish an Award of Contract. Secondly, it was explained an officer with the delegated authority to take a key decision<sup>1</sup> would publish the forthcoming decision on the Council's website for a 28 day notice period prior to the decision being taken. All councillors would be notified. Once the decision had been taken, a notice would again be published on the Council's website (with the exception of any exempt

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<sup>1</sup> For Guildford Borough Council a Key decision was one that incurred a cost or saving in excess of £200,000 or had a significant impact on two or more wards.

information) and all councillors notified. The published decision would not be acted upon for a further five working days during which time any councillor or member of the public could comment. All of the procurements set out in the pipeline report were key decisions.

There were some further questions from Executive regarding the detail of a number of the forthcoming procurements listed in the report. These questions would be taken up by the specific service areas involved.

The Executive,

**RESOLVED:**

1. To approve the procurement procedures listed in Appendix 1 to the report submitted to the Executive.
2. To delegate authority to the Strategic Director of Finance and Resources to proceed to procurement in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Finance and Property where there have been minor financial adjustments to the anticipated costs, or proposed minor changes to the timescales, as set out in Appendices 1 and 2.
3. To delegate authority to award the contracts as listed in the final column of the table in Appendix 2 to the report.

Reasons:

1. Executive authority is required to approve all key decisions with financial consequences of £200,000 or more. It is good governance therefore to provide Executive with a summary of all proposed forthcoming procurements, that individually are estimated to amount to a total value of £200,000 or more, prior to procurement procedures formally commencing.
2. Planning procurement activity ensures:
  - effective stakeholder management
  - effective procurement and sourcing
  - compliance with relevant procurement legislation and the Council's own Contract Procedure Rules

- how best value is to be achieved is clearly defined including how contract management will ensure that the Council attains best value during the life of the contract.
3. As Executive authority is required in respect of the award of any contract above £200,000, Appendix 2 to the report recommends three approaches to signing off such contracts:
- Executive
  - Delegation to Portfolio Holder and S151 Officer
  - Delegation to S151 Officer
4. The proposals in the report will avoid the need to submit multiple individual requests for approval to procure and award contracts, therefore being more agile in the approval process in relation to procurement activity.

**EX81 Contract for the provision of temporary agency staff**

The Executive considered a report seeking authority to procure a contract for the provision of temporary agency staff (contractors, interims, or agency workers) to Comensura for a period of two years. This was required to cover the occasions when the necessary skills and expertise was not available within the Council's own officer team or where time constraints or other external factors required external capacity. The current recruitment of temporary staff was fragmented across services and was not cost effective.

The compliant route of appointment was a direct award a contract under the Eastern Shires Procurement Organisation (ESPO) Managed Services for Temporary Staff Resources (MSTAR4) framework. It was estimated, subject to demand, that the total value of spend on temporary staff will be £4m per annum.

The Executive noted that the Council's past activity with Comensura had been reviewed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in the past and no concerns had been raised.

The Executive,

RESOLVED:

To authorise the Strategic Director of Finance and Resources, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Finance and Property, to enter into a contract with Comensura via the ESPO MSTAR4 framework to supply temporary agency staff

(temporary contractors, interims, agency workers for a period of up to two years with a contract value of up to £8,000,000.

Reasons:

1. The council is currently reviewing its temporary staff spend and is taking a number of actions to reduce the cost of temporary staff, notably, interims/contractors and how we source them.
2. These actions include consolidating spend at the council, so that we have more of the council's required external workforce appointed via Comensura, which will give the council lower margins, and a single point of all information on external staff therefore helping to manage costs better.
3. Additionally, the costs for changing the existing supplier via a tender, may deliver a small benefit of a reduction in costs (less than £36,000) over the next 18 months. The cost of this change is considered greater than the savings along with the disruption. In addition, tendering now would rule out any collaboration with WBC.
4. The contract rates will be the same rates as the council currently pays now with Comensura.

**EX82 Human Resources and Organisational Development Service: Joint Assistant Director Of People**

Effective from 6 January 2025, the Human Resources and Organisational Development (HR & OD) function would transfer to the Legal & Democratic Services Directorate with the Joint Strategic Director post to be known as the Joint Strategic Director, Democracy, Law & People. This change would increase the remit of the Joint Strategic Director role, and additional management capacity was required within HR & OD to provide senior level expertise within the function to ensure that statutory responsibilities and good governance was met.

To enable the closer alignment of working practices between the two Councils, and to support the Joint Strategic Director, it was proposed that a Joint Assistant Director post was created. It was considered that an HR specialist was needed to advise the Councils at a senior level and to be a part of the Joint Leadership Team (JLT).

This post would 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.

The Joint Chief Executive reflected that this post and the other three to be considered on this agenda would progress the strategic alignment between the two councils and strengthen their position during the forthcoming devolution reorganisation.

The Executive acknowledged the importance of the Council's staff and welcomed the new role. Although the role could only be realised when full Council adopted the budget, it was noted that it was because of the collaboration the Council was able to attract and afford an experienced specialist in this field.

An organisation chart setting out the new JLT structure would be provided.

The Executive,

RESOLVED:

1. To 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. To delegate authority to the Strategic Director for Democracy, Law and People to make any changes to the role, following the outcome of consultation with staff and the Union.
3. To 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.

Reasons:

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 6 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).



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. 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.
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.
5. 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.

**EX83 Finance and Resources Directorate: Joint Assistant Director of Finance**

Changes had been made to the staff structure at Chief Officer level in March 2024, which made the previous Joint Executive Head of Finance, the new Joint Strategic Director of Finance. Whilst this had strengthened the Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) and ensured that the finance functions were represented at the most senior level, it also created a gap at the Assistant Director level. It had become clear that additional management capacity was required within Finance to support the Joint Strategic Director.

The Finance Service at Guildford had been key in developing and implementing the Financial Recovery Plan for the Council over the past 18 months, but significant further work was required to finish the work which had commenced and to embed the changes made.

The post would also be responsible for leading the restructure of the two councils finance functions with a view to increased resilience, collaboration and the potential for future shared services.

The Executive welcomed the new role and agreed a skilled and experienced officer in this role was required.

The Executive,

**RESOLVED:**

1. To approve the creation of a permanent new role of Joint Assistant Director of Finance effective from 20 January 2025.
2. To delegate authority to the Strategic Director of Finance & Resources to make any changes to the role, following the outcome of consultation with staff and the Union.
3. To agree that the post of Joint Assistant Director of Finance will be a shared post with Waverley Borough Council which will be governed by the existing principles of the Inter-Authority Agreement.

**Reasons:**

1. To respond to the unsustainable gap created at the Assistant Director level arising from the restructure of the former Executive Head of Finance to the Strategic Director.
2. To ensure there is sufficient capacity to achieve successful implementation of the Guildford Borough Council improvement plan.
3. To deliver the capacity and capability to enable timely, effective, transparent and consistent decision making at all levels of both organisations, including at the most senior leadership levels.
4. To deliver the capacity and capability needed to embed successes in ongoing collaboration efforts and enhance the pace of future collaboration, transition to shared services and continuous improvement in service delivery and realisation of cashable and non-cashable savings.
5. To lead the restructure of the Finance Services 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.

**EX84 Senior Staff Resources: Joint Chief of Staff**

Changes were made to the staff structure reporting into Joint Chief Executive Officer in May 2024 with the creation of a new post, GBC Head of Business Improvement. Since the GBC Head of Business Improvement role was implemented the post holder had taken on responsibilities more associated with a Chief of Staff role, which is in use in a number of other local authorities. These

posts are focused on supporting a Chief Executive and the equivalent of Corporate Leadership Board and Joint Leadership Team.

To support the effective delivery of priorities and plan and support the closer collaboration between Guildford and Waverley Borough Councils, and specifically to support the Joint Chief Executive, it was proposed that a Joint Chief of Staff post is created. This would result in improving Council delivery, and a saving for Guildford Borough Council by a reduction of the GBC Head of Business Improvement post.

The Executive heard that the improvement work would continue and that there was a good saving to be made and good value for money for the Council by moving the role to a joint arrangement.

The Executive,

RESOLVED:

1. To approve the creation of a permanent new role of Joint Chief of Staff reporting directly to the Joint Chief Executive, subject to budget approval by full Council, and subject to the deletion of the Head of Business Improvement post.
2. To delegate authority to the Joint Chief Executive to make any changes to the role, following the outcome of consultation with staff and the Union.
3. To agree that the post of Joint Chief of Staff will be a shared post with Waverley Borough Council and will be governed by the existing principles of the Inter-Authority Agreement.

Reasons:

1. To respond to the need to better align the current role of GBC Head of Business Improvement created in May 2024, which reports directly to the Joint Chief Executive, with the work that Waverley will need to do as we move towards a review of their business by SOLACE, and to support wider improvement between both Councils.
2. To recognise that the current GBC Head of Business Improvement postholder is already undertaking tasks more aligned to a Chief of Staff post and this will clarify responsibilities for postholders and the Council as a whole. This would mean the current GBC Head of Business Improvement post would be deleted in the light of this new joint post being created.

3. To ensure that the Joint Chief Executive has additional capacity in liaison with the Corporate Leadership Board and Joint Leadership Team given the additional work associated with undertaking Head of Paid Services responsibilities for two sovereign councils.

**EX85 Chief Executive Officer Resources: Joint Assistant Director of Transformation**

Following changes in organisational structure at Joint Leadership Team (JLT) level, capacity and capability was 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 recommended this. To accelerate progress already made, it was proposed to create a Joint Assistant Director of Transformation post directly reporting to the Joint Chief Executive post.

The post would be responsible for supporting both Councils to deliver improved services and to exploit opportunities to reduce costs through Guildford and Waverley Borough Councils working together.

The Executive heard that role was likely to be taken up by a secondee from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). The role would provide the Council with specialist transformation guidance and especially provide direction in respect of preparing and developing both Councils for the devolution reorganisation.

The Executive,

RESOLVED:

1. To 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. To 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.
3. To 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.

Reason(s):

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.

- 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.

The meeting finished at 7.30 pm

Signed .....

Date .....

Chairman