

Overview and Scrutiny Committee Report

Ward(s) affected: All

Report of the Chief Executive

Author: Tom Horwood, Chief Executive

Tel: 01483 523238

Email: tom.horwood@guildford.gov.uk

Lead Councillor responsible: Cllr Julia McShane, Acting Leader

Tel: 01483 837736

Email: julia.mcshane@guildford.gov.uk

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Update on Guildford-Waverley collaboration

Executive Summary

Guildford Borough Council and Waverley Borough Council agreed in 2021 to commence a partnership aimed at improving the sustainability of local public services. The councils agreed to create a shared management team, which has now been created and took effect from 1 October 2022. This report updates the committee on the progress of the partnership.

Recommendation to Committee

The Committee is asked to note the update provided in this report.

Reason(s) for Recommendation:

The Committee Chairman has requested a regular update on the progress of the partnership between Guildford Borough Council and Waverley Borough Council.

Is the report (or part of it) exempt from publication?

No

1. Purpose of Report

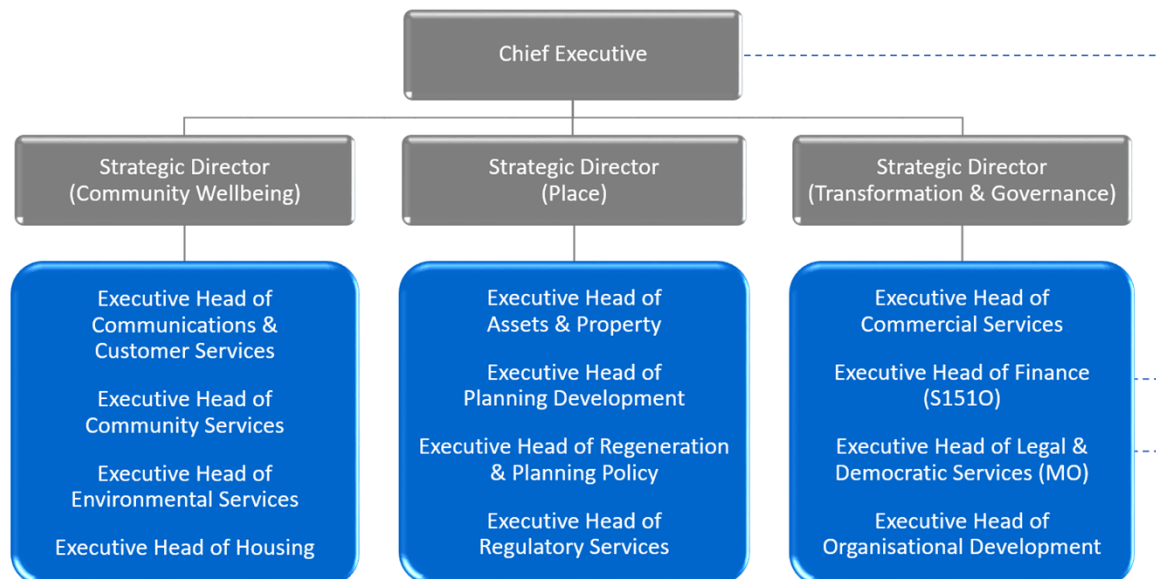
- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide the regular update to the committee on the progress of the collaboration with Waverley Borough Council (WBC). The Chief Executive has given an update in person at previous meetings but is not available this time because of a clash with WBC's Full Council meeting. The Strategic Director for Transformation & Governance, Ian Doyle, will attend the committee to answer any questions.

2. Strategic Priorities

- 2.1 The council's Corporate Plan 2021-25 includes a specific aim to collaborate with Waverley Borough Council to "deliver cost savings and protect or enhance frontline services in priority areas".

3. Background

- 3.1 In July and August 2021, Guildford and Waverley Borough Councils considered options for collaboration and agreed (a) to put in place governance arrangements for the partnership, and (b) to create a Joint Management Team (JMT), which would then be tasked with bringing forward proposals for further collaboration. A Joint Appointments Committee was established to oversee the appointment of the three shared Statutory Officers (Head of Paid Service/Chief Executive, Monitoring Officer, Section 151 Officer).
- 3.2 In April 2022, both councils agreed the governance framework for the partnership, comprising heads of terms for the inter-authority agreement and a Joint Governance Committee of six councillors from each council to oversee the risk register and review periodically any changes to the inter-authority agreement.
- 3.3 The Joint Chief Executive was appointed by both Councils and commenced work in December 2021. Three Joint Strategic Directors took office in August 2022.
- 3.4 A new structure of 12 Executive Heads was proposed and 18 existing roles were determined to be in-scope: 10 at GBC and 8 at WBC. Borough councillors were invited to a briefing on the proposals by the Chief Executive on 6 July. A formal consultation was undertaken in line with the council's HR policies and some elements were changed to reflect the feedback received. The organisational structure is illustrated below, with the list of functions in Appendix 1. The Monitoring Officer and the Section 151 Officer report directly to the Chief Executive on their statutory responsibilities.



- 3.5 A selection process for the new Executive Heads was carried out in August and September, including assessments and a final interview with the Chief Executive, relevant Director and a member of each Executive. The candidate for the role of Section 151 Officer was interviewed by the Joint Appointments Committee and the committee's recommendation agreed by both Full Council meetings in September.
- 3.6 Ten of the 12 Executive Heads were recruited. Interim arrangements for the Executive Heads of Planning Development and Legal & Democratic Services are being put in place and an external recruitment campaign will commence shortly.
- 3.7 The July 2021 Full Council meetings agreed to task the new Joint Management Team with bringing forward business cases for collaboration. Now that the JMT is in place, this piece of work commences and is led within the Organisational Development service. The team is developing criteria for business cases, as well as approval and management processes. The programme will move carefully and at pace. Proposals will be evidence-led and agreed by the councils' ordinary governance arrangements as set out in the Constitutions and the inter-authority agreement, with regular updates to Overview & Scrutiny Committees. In such large and complex public service organisations, it will be important to prioritise our capacity on proposals that have the most benefit with minimal disruption.

4. Consultations

- 4.1 Appropriate consultations with staff members have taken place in accordance with the council's relevant policies. All staff have been invited to a series of briefings by the Chief Executive and Directors to update them on progress. Both Councils have consulted with Unison, the trade union.
- 4.2 Regular verbal updates have been provided to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee. All borough councillors were invited to a briefing in July on the shared structure proposals.

5. Key Risks

- 5.1 A detailed risk assessment was developed with a councillor working group and will be reviewed periodically by the Joint Governance Committee.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 On an annualised basis, comparing the 2022/23 budget equivalent of the former standalone structure with the partnership, the saving from the senior officer restructure exceeds £500,000 for GBC. Linked to the senior manager roles and to enable them to perform effectively in this more complex environment, the JMT restructure will include investment in executive support roles. When that is finalised soon, the full annualised JMT saving for GBC is expected to exceed £400,000, with a total of over £700,000 for the partnership. Given that the JMT commenced on 1 October 2022 – i.e., at the mid-year point – the budget target of £150,000 in 2022/23 will be met.

- 6.2 Most of the JMT roles are funded equally by both councils. The roles for Environmental Services, Assets & Property and Regeneration & Planning Policy have greater GBC-related activity due to the in-house manual services, the larger asset portfolio and the scale of regeneration programmes and are weighted towards GBC on a 67:33 ratio. To reflect the strategic element of GBC's regeneration plans, the Strategic Director for Place is weighted 60:40. All of these allocations will be reviewed annually by the Section 151 Officer and the Corporate Management Board as part of service and budget planning.
- 6.3 There will be one-off costs associated with any redundancies. We are currently going through the relevant HR processes to identify alternative employment options and so the final cost is not yet known but will be reported in due course. Any costs are shared between the two councils according to the formula agreed by the Inter-Authority Agreement.

7. Legal Implications

- 7.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

8. Human Resource Implications

- 8.1 The partnership working arrangement between the two Councils has required the creation of a Joint Management Team through the restructuring of both Councils. Each Council has followed their respective policies and processes in relation to restructuring and change management.

9. Equality and Diversity Implications

- 9.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment screening was carried out for the Joint Management Team restructuring activity. As a result, it was concluded that the restructuring activity would not have a negative impact on those with protected characteristics. It is considered that the Council is acting in accordance with the public sector equality duty contained in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010.

10. Climate Change/Sustainability Implications

- 10.1 Both councils have declared climate emergencies and agreed targets for carbon reduction. The new structure explicitly places oversight of climate change within the service that plans organisational change. Sharing resources in this way is intended to help both councils achieve their challenging environmental ambitions.

11. Conclusion

- 11.1 The Guildford-Waverley partnership is on track to deliver the decisions and savings agreed by both councils in 2021. The JMT has started to develop proposals for further collaboration for discussion with councillors.

12. Background Papers

- 12.1 The councils' previous decisions on the partnership are documented in reports discussed at Full Council meetings since July 2021.

13. Appendices

- 13.1 Appendix 1 shows the new JMT structure and the accountable functions within each service area.

Please ensure the following service areas have signed off your report. Please complete this box and do not delete.

Service	Sign off date
<i>Finance / S.151 Officer</i>	<i>7/10/22</i>
<i>Legal / Governance</i>	<i>6/10/22</i>
<i>HR</i>	<i>7/10/22</i>
<i>Equalities</i>	<i>7/10/22</i>
<i>Lead Councillor</i>	<i>6/10/22</i>
<i>CMT</i>	<i>6/10/22</i>
<i>Executive Liaison</i>	
<i>Committee Services</i>	<i>6/10/22</i>