

# Guildford Borough Council

Report to: Executive

Date: 24 August 2023

Ward(s) affected: N/A

Report of Director: Ian Doyle, Transformation & Governance

Author: Carrie Anderson, Senior Democratic Services Officer

Tel: 01483 444078

Email: [carrie.anderson@guildford.gov.uk](mailto:carrie.anderson@guildford.gov.uk)

Lead Councillor responsible: Merel Rehorst-Smith

Tel: 01483 610581

Email: [merel.rehorst-smith@guildford.gov.uk](mailto:merel.rehorst-smith@guildford.gov.uk)

Report Status: Open

## Executive Working Groups 2023

### 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Executive, Leader of the Council or a lead councillor may establish working groups as set out under Procedure Rule 24 of the Council's Constitution. Under Procedure Rule 24 (k), continuation of working groups should be considered annually by the appointing body, the Executive.
- 1.2 Consequently, the Executive is asked to review the working groups and their terms of reference. As part of this review, the report asks the Executive to determine whether these groups should continue or be dissolved. Where there is a preference for certain working groups to continue, the Executive is asked to agree in respect of each group, the chairman, the terms of reference, and to appoint councillors to them.

- 1.3 This year the review of working groups sits in the context of a new Executive and amidst a period of transformation and collaboration for the Council, together with significant financial uncertainty. There will be considerations of efficiencies and resources alongside setting up the most effective means of supporting the Executive in its decision-making in delivering on the Council's corporate priorities.
- 1.4 It should be noted, at the Council meeting on 25 July 2023, and in the context of the report on the Budget that an Executive working group would be established for the following purposes:
- to receive and comment on regular updates on the Council's preparations for the Medium-Term Financial Plan restatement in October and its implementation;
  - to provide a sounding board for the Executive and officers on the options that are coming forward to close the projected financial gap; and
  - to guide wider communication with councillors and beyond
- 1.5 The draft terms of reference of the Financial Recovery Executive Working Group are set out at **Appendix 9**.

## **2. Recommendation to Executive**

- 2.1. To consider the retention of the following working groups:
- Capital, Transport & Infrastructure (CTI) Delivery Board
  - Housing Development Programme Delivery Board
  - Shaping Guildford's Future Programme Delivery Board
  - Weyside Urban Village Development Delivery Board
  - Strategic Programmes and Projects Board (previously known as Major Projects Portfolio Board)
  - Climate Change Board
  - Guildford Community Covenant Panel
  - HRA Housing Management HRA Board
  - Planning Improvement Board
  - Planning Policy Board (previously known as the Local Plan Panel)
  - Property Review Group

- 2.2. To determine in respect of each of the working groups referred to in paragraph 2.1 above:
  - (a) any change to the group's terms of reference,
  - (b) the number of councillors on the working group,
  - (c) whether the working group should be cross-party (i.e. include councillors from more than two political groups),
  - (d) the time for which the working group is expected to continue operating.
  - (e) the appointment of individual councillors to the working group, (the Executive may choose to make such appointments itself or ask political group leaders to nominate councillors for membership of the working group in accordance with the number of seats each political group has been allocated).
- 2.3 To consider the dissolution of the Community Board.
- 2.4 To agree the terms of reference for the new Financial Recovery Executive Working Group at **Appendix 9**.

### **3. Reasons for Recommendation:**

- 3.1. To assist the Executive to select or set up appropriate, properly resourced groups to provide support or undertake work on its behalf.
- 3.2. To comply with the requirement on the part of the Executive to periodically review the continuation of the various Working Groups in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 24 (k).
- 3.3. With regard to the Community Board, this group has not met since being created and has made no contribution.
- 3.4. To comply with the recommendations of the Council meeting on 25 July 2023.

### **4. Exemption from publication**

- 4.1. None.

## 5. Purpose of Report

- 5.1. This report asks the Executive to review the existing working groups and to determine whether these groups should continue as presently constituted and, if so, to make appointments to them.
- 5.2. It should be noted that other councillor task groups exist, which report to other committees. However, this report is concerned only with the working groups appointed by the Executive, the Leader, or lead councillors.

## 6. Strategic Priorities

- 6.1. The councillor working groups' work should assist in the delivery of the Council's strategic priorities as set out in the Corporate Plan.

## 7. Background

- 7.1. This report sets out in **Appendix 1**:
  - (a) an overview each of the existing Executive working groups;
  - (b) the strategic theme that each working group supports;
  - (c) the terms of reference and current composition of each working group (where terms of reference are more expansive these are set out in in **Appendices 2-9**);
  - (d) an officer recommendation for continuation or dissolution.
- 7.2. The Council agreed in 2016 that as part of the review of the Constitution, to include for the purposes of clarity and avoidance of doubt, information in Council Procedure Rules on the appointment, terms of reference, composition and duration of:
  - working groups (appointed by the Leader, a lead councillor, or the Executive) and
  - task groups (appointed by Council, a committee, or an EAB),

including the appointment of working/task group chairmen and substitutes.

7.3. Council Procedure Rule 24 provides that the “appointing body” (which could be the Leader, a lead councillor, or the Executive) shall determine, amongst other things, the number of councillors on a working group and may appoint individual councillors to it. Where it is necessary to alter the membership of such a working group, the lead councillor with portfolio responsibility for governance is authorised to determine any change of membership of those working groups as and when required.

7.4. It is proposed the existing working groups listed below be renamed ‘Delivery Boards’ and share the same terms of reference as set out in **Appendix 2**.

- Capital, Transport & Infrastructure (CTI) Board
- Housing Development Programme Board
- Shaping Guildford’s Future Programme Board
- Weyside Urban Village Development Governance Board

7.5. It is proposed the progress of the Delivery Boards shall be monitored by the Strategic Programmes and Projects Board under the terms of reference set out in **Appendix 3**.

7.6. Proposed disbandment of working groups: Community Board

7.7. Proposed new working groups: The Financial Recovery Executive Working Group under the terms of reference set out in **Appendix 9**.

## **8. Consultations**

8.1. Consultation has been undertaken with the relevant officers across the council.

## **9. Key Risks**

- 9.1. There are no key risks arising directly from this report. Evaluation of any risk will be specific to the work undertaken by each individual working group.

## **10. Financial Implications**

- 10.1. There are no financial implications arising from this report. Any proposals, projects or suggestions from the groups with financial implications will either be contained within approved budgets or considered as part of the Service and Financial Planning cycle.

## **11. Legal Implications**

- 11.1. There is no legal requirement to establish working groups, but most councils use them for purposes similar to ours. We have made provision for their operation in our Council Procedure Rules.
- 11.2. As working groups have no decision-making powers, there is no requirement for them to be politically balanced.

## **12. Human Resource Implications**

- 12.1. Working groups are serviced from within existing staffing resources; however, it should be noted that currently directors and Joint Executive Heads of Service are operating across two councils.

## **13. Equality and Diversity Implications**

- 13.1. Each Working Group, panel or board will be responsible for having due regard to the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010) when making any policy recommendations.

## **14. Climate Change/Sustainability Implications**

- 14.1. Each working group, panel or board must have due regard to the Council's adopted Action Plan and act in accordance with the

commitments made by this Council to Climate Change and sustainability.

## **15. Summary of Options**

- 15.1. The Executive may modify terms of reference and create or disband working groups as it sees fit.
- 15.2. The Executive should note that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Executive Advisory Boards may also undertake work on its behalf.

## **16. Conclusion**

- 16.1. In the light of the information provided in this report the Executive (as the appointing body) should consider if existing working groups should continue their work or be dissolved. The Executive may also establish new working groups or revise terms of reference and composition of existing working groups or set a time by which it expects a working group to complete its work.

## **17. Background Papers**

None.

## **18. Appendices**

- Appendix 1: Table current overview of Executive councillor working groups.
- Appendix 2: Delivery Boards Terms of Reference
- Appendix 3: Strategic Programmes and Projects Board Terms of Reference
- Appendix 4: Climate Change Board Terms of Reference
- Appendix 5: HRA Housing Management HRA Board Terms of Reference
- Appendix 6: Planning Development Improvement Board Terms of Reference
- Appendix 7: Planning Policy Board (previously called Local Plan Panel) Terms of Reference
- Appendix 8: Property Review Group Terms of reference
- Appendix 9: Financial Recovery Executive Working Group