

## Notice of Meeting

# Resources and Performance Select Committee



**Date & time**  
Thursday, 21  
January 2021 at  
10.00 am

**Place**  
REMOTE MEETING

**Contact**  
Kunwar Khan, Scrutiny  
Officer

kunwar.khan@surreycc.gov.uk

**Chief Executive**  
Joanna Killian

We're on Twitter:  
@SCCdemocracy



**Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this meeting will be taking place remotely.**

**A live webcast of the meeting can be viewed here:  
<https://surreycc.public-i.tv/core/portal/webcasts>**

### **Elected Members**

Mr Nick Harrison (Chairman), Mr Will Forster (Vice-Chairman), Ms Ayesha Azad, Mr Mark Brett-Warburton, Mr Tim Hall, Mr Naz Islam, Mr Graham Knight, Rachael I. Lake, Mr Wyatt Ramsdale, Dr Peter Szanto, Mr Chris Townsend, Mrs Hazel Watson

### **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The Committee is responsible for the following areas:

- Finance
- Orbis Partnership Functions including Orbis Public Law
- HR&OD
- IT and Digital
- Business Ops
- Property
- Procurement
- Equalities and Diversity
- Internal/External Communications
- Legal and Democratic Services
- Customer Services

## AGENDA

### 1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

**Purpose of the item:** To receive any apologies for absence and substitutions.

### 2 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS: 18 DECEMBER 2020

(Pages 5  
- 18)

**Purpose of the item:** To agree the minutes of the Resources and Performance Select Committee held on 18 December 2020 as a true and accurate record of proceedings.

### 3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

**Purpose of the item:** All Members present are required to declare, at this point in the meeting or as soon as possible thereafter:

- I. Any disclosable pecuniary interests and/or
- II. Other interests arising under the Code of Conduct in respect of any item(s) of business being considered at this meeting.

#### NOTES:

- Members are reminded that they must not participate in any item where they have a disclosable pecuniary interest.
- As well as an interest of the Member, this includes any interest, of which the Member is aware, that relates to the Member's spouse or civil partner (or any person with whom the Member is living as a spouse or civil partner).
- Members with a significant personal interest may participate in the discussion and vote on that matter unless that interest could be reasonably regarded as prejudicial.

### 4 QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS

**Purpose of the item:** To receive any questions or petitions.

#### NOTES:

1. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic all questions and petitions received will be responded to in writing and will be contained within the minutes of the meeting.
2. The deadline for Members' questions is 12:00pm four working days before the meeting (*15 January 2021*).
3. The deadline for public questions is seven days before the meeting (*14 January 2021*).
4. The deadline for petitions was 14 days before the meeting, and no petitions have been received.

## 5 FINAL 2021/22 BUDGET

**Purpose of the item:** For the Select Committee to review and comment on the final 2021/22 budget – *report to follow*.

## 6 TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

**Purpose of the item:** For the Select Committee to review and comment on the 2021/22 Treasury Management Strategy (TMS) – *report to follow*.

## 7 CABINET MEMBER PRIORITIES UPDATES

**Purpose of the item:** To share details of Cabinet Members' priority areas of work including strategy and policy developments and provide an overview of the budget position and performance of services within their portfolios.

a CABINET MEMBER FOR CORPORATE SUPPORT UPDATE (Pages 19 - 24)

b DEPUTY CABINET MEMBER FOR RESOURCES UPDATE (Pages 25 - 28)

8 EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION (Pages 29 - 56)

**Purpose of the item:** To present a draft action plan to radically improve equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) for Surrey residents and Surrey County Council staff, and a draft refreshed EDI policy statement.

9 TASK GROUP UPDATES (Pages 57 - 68)

**Purpose of the item:**

To provide updates to the Select Committee on the following Task Groups:

- a) Final report of the Customer Experience Task Group
- b) Notes of the 13 January 2021 meeting of the County Hall Move and Agile Programme Task Group – *notes to follow*

10 FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME AND RECOMMENDATION TRACKER (Pages 69 - 78)

**Purpose of the item:** For the Select Committee to review the attached Recommendations Tracker and Forward Work Programme, making suggestions for additions or amendments as appropriate.

## 11 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Resources and Performance Select Committee will be held on 18 March 2021 at 10:00am.

**Joanna Killian  
Chief Executive**

Published: Wednesday, 13 January 2021

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**MINUTES** of the meeting of the **RESOURCES AND PERFORMANCE SELECT COMMITTEE** held at 10.00 am on 18 December 2020 as a REMOTE MEETING.

These minutes are subject to confirmation by the Committee at its meeting on Thursday, 21 January 2021.

**Elected Members:**

- \* Mr Nick Harrison (Chairman)
- \* Mr Will Forster (Vice-Chairman)
- Mr Graham Knight
- Ms Ayesha Azad
- \* Mr Mark Brett-Warburton
- \* Mr Tim Hall
- Mr Naz Islam
- \* Rachael I. Lake
- \* Dr Peter Szanto
- \* Mr Chris Townsend
- \* Mrs Hazel Watson
- \* Mr Wyatt Ramsdale

**1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS [Item 1]**

Apologies were received from Ayesha Azad, Graham Knight and Naz Islam.

**2 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS: 8 OCTOBER 2020 [Item 2]**

The minutes were agreed as a true record of the meeting.

**3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST [Item 3]**

Rachael Lake declared a personal interest as a family member is an employee of Surrey County Council.

**4 QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS [Item 4]**

None received.

**5 SCRUTINY OF 2021/22 DRAFT BUDGET AND MEDIUM-TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY TO 2025/26 [Item 5]**

**Witnesses:**

Anna D'Alessandro, Director of Corporate Finance  
Mel Few, Cabinet Member for Resources  
Zully Grant Duff, Cabinet Member for Corporate Support  
Nicola O'Connor, Strategic Finance Business Partner (Resources and Transformation, Partnerships and Prosperity)  
Leigh Whitehouse, Executive Director of Resources  
Rachel Wigley, Director of Financial Insight

**Key points raised during the discussion:**

1. The Cabinet Member for Resources informed the Select Committee that the provisional settlement announced by central government had closed the budget gap, which had stood at £18.3m pre-settlement, without the need for the Council to make any further efficiencies. The Executive Director of Resources added that the settlement indicated around £20m Covid-19 funding at the beginning of 2021. These were the initial headlines; some news was still awaited at this stage.
2. The Director of Financial Insight explained that the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) would be updated every year. The provisional settlement only covered one year (2021/22), so the Council could not plan definitively beyond that. The Director of Corporate Finance added that there would be an increase in the tax base over the course of the MTFS due to a 1.99% increase in core council tax, while it was assumed that grant funding and business rates would steadily decrease. Due to the economic impact of the pandemic, central government was trying to reduce the Council's reliance on income from business rates and grant funding, in favour of locally raised income (i.e. from council tax). The Finance service was in the process of reviewing the Council's collection fund deficit in light of the provisional settlement; it was expecting to hear more about the government underwriting of 75% of the business rates deficit soon. The Director of Corporate Finance expressed confidence about the Council's prudence in Covid-19 recovery assumptions over the medium term, and added that the Council was in a healthy position on contingencies and reserves.
3. A Member noted that there had been a recent tightening of Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) lending criteria, and asked what impact this would have on Surrey County Council. The Director of Corporate Finance responded that the new criteria (from 26 November 2020) meant that Surrey County Council was not allowed to use PWLB money for commercial yield. It could, however, use this money for investment in the county as a result of the greater economic benefit to the county. The new criteria would not have any impact on Surrey, as the Council had no plans to invest outside of county. Also, the new rules did not apply retrospectively.
4. A Member enquired about the preliminary results and emerging themes from the consultation on the budget, who had been consulted, and whether there were further engagement activities planned. The Cabinet Member for Resources stated that the consultation had been presented to approximately 2,000 residents and approximately 200 responses had been received so far. The main themes and priorities were education, Adult Social Care (ASC) and children's care. The results were still being looked at, but the response would be available in due course once analysis was completed.
5. Referring to the fact that the Leader had announced that the Cabinet had recommended not to increase council tax by the maximum amount (5% including the ASC precept), a Member asked why that decision had been taken and why there had not been consultation with Select Committees on this. The Cabinet Member for Resources replied that this decision had been made taking into account the economic hardship caused by the pandemic: the Leader of the Council

had decided that 5% would not be realistic given that the economic situation was likely to continue for some time. The decision had been taken to increase council tax by 1.99% but not to increase the precept beyond that.

6. A Member noted that efficiencies amounted to over £40m in 2021/22 and over £100m over the course of the MTFs to 2025/26, and asked how the Council could continue to make such efficiencies without reducing important services. The Cabinet Member for Resources explained that the projected shortfall over the period currently amounted to a £170m gap and this outcome did not include any further government financing such as the Fair Funding Review (FFR). Efficiencies were made through the transformation programme, and many aimed at saving money without reducing services for residents; agile working was an example. Efficiencies were about using resources more effectively.
7. A Member asked whether it was anticipated that the £4.6m of Covid-19 budget pressures would be reversed as Covid-19 was overcome. The Executive Director of Resources responded that the anticipated Covid-19 pressures for 2021/22 were a combination of assumptions around when tiers or lockdown restrictions would end, the impact on service budgets (such as increased cleaning and social distancing), and service impact, particularly in ASC and Children's services. It was anticipated these impacts would lessen in future years, as the pandemic eased. An exception would be corporate parenting, as there had been an increase in the number of looked after children over the course of the pandemic, and longer term costs in ASC. However, the government had provided the Council with adequate funding to cover the pressures so far.
8. A Member questioned whether it was realistic to look for alternatives to the £10.8m of red RAG (red, amber, green) rated efficiencies. The Director of Corporate Finance stated that when an efficiency was rated red, this did not mean it was undeliverable, but rather that it would be difficult to deliver. If red rated efficiencies were undeliverable in-year, then services would always try to find compensating savings as part of the business-as-usual budgets. The Member enquired whether that would work for 2021/22, in light of Covid-19. The Director of Corporate Finance said that central government had been rather generous so far in terms of Covid-19 funding and it looked like this would continue into next year. No doubt, delivering red rated efficiencies would be difficult, but the Council had delivered surpluses in the last few years and even had some Covid-19 funding in reserve, so it was in a relatively stable position.
9. A Member asked what the basis was for growth over the MTFs period and where identified efficiencies over the MTFs came from, and requested that officers give Members more detail on the budget envelope, which was forecast to shrink over the MTFs period. The Director of Financial Insight replied that, having worked closely with services and developed fully costed budget principles, growth was anticipated in terms of inflation, demand and economic factors. At the same time, the Council had looked at efficiencies and taken some of those forward into the medium term. Programmes such as Digital

Business and Insights were anticipated to lead to efficiencies in the medium term. The Director of Corporate Finance added that the Council was awaiting the FFR, including the Business rates reset, for more guidance around business rates; it was anticipated that the FFR would result in a reduction in business rates, but the Council would have transitional arrangements in place, so the level of funding would not suddenly plummet. The Director of Financial Insight stated that the message to convey was that things would get tougher over the medium term, as indicated in the provisional settlement.

10. A Member enquired how closely the Council was working with districts and boroughs. The Director of Corporate Finance responded that there was a strong dialogue with district and borough councils. Officers in the Surrey County Council finance team had close working relationships with their counterparts in districts and boroughs, and collected a detailed spreadsheet on district and borough collection fund positions on a bi-monthly basis. The Director of Corporate Finance and the Director of Financial Insight both sat on the Surrey Treasurers' Group, where they had ongoing and honest conversations with districts and boroughs about levels of prudence.
11. A Member asked whether it was anticipated that the £9.9m Covid-19 emergency funding reserve would be used in 2021/22. The Director of Corporate Finance stated that the £9.9m was money from Covid-19 funding from central government that had been unspent so far in 2020/21 and been put into an earmarked Covid-19 reserve for use in-year or to be carried forward into 2021/22. The Cabinet Member for Resources added that due to the increase in use of Children's services due to Covid-19, that £9.9m might be spent quite soon.
12. A Member enquired whether efficiencies included reductions of services to Surrey residents. The Director of Financial Insight said that the efficiencies came from proposals across the Council and delivering services better at lower cost, not cuts to services. The Cabinet Member for Resources added that the objectives, outcomes and financial benefits of all efficiencies were shown in the transformation programme.
13. Noting that earmarked reserves had increased, a Member asked how the level of earmarked reserves were arrived at and whether there were plans to use them over time. The Director of Corporate Finance replied that, as aforementioned, the Covid-19 Emergency Funding reserve of £9.9m was the balance of Covid-19 funding not yet used. The general contingency had increased by £21.7m, which was composed of a £20.3m base and a £1.4m repayment from the Environment, Transport and Infrastructure directorate. These were the only two movements in the use of earmarked reserves for 2020/21 or planned for 2021/22. It was agreed that the Director of Corporate Finance would provide written information to the Select Committee on the proposed purpose and use of earmarked reserves.
14. A Member remarked that the money in the reserves could be put to good use improving services for residents, and that sitting on the money might not be beneficial. The Executive Director of Resources clarified that there was a distinction between whether reserves were

earmarked and whether the Council was planning to spend them. These reserves were not set aside to be spent on a specific plan, but rather were earmarked for potential future emergency need.

15. The Cabinet Member for Corporate Support introduced the Resources and Transformation, Partnership and Prosperity (TPP) service-specific section of the budget, referring to the enabling of the Council's key priorities through efficiencies and digitalisation.
16. A Member enquired what activities were contained within the £3m planned efficiencies in the Land and Property service. The Strategic Finance Business Partner responded that detailed proposals were being worked up, but the areas of focus were reducing the leased portfolio and rationalising the wider property estate. The service was also doing a review of energy costs to identify buildings with high energy costs in order to focus attention on reducing these costs. The Member asked whether the Land and Property service could involve councillors by using the knowledge of long-standing councillors prior to the election in May 2021 to identify which buildings were not being used effectively. He referred to a list of leased properties that had been circulated in the past, and the Cabinet Member for Resources agreed to follow this up. A Member requested that the appropriate divisional Member was kept informed of property proposals before a leasehold property changed hands.
17. A Member was pleased to see a substantial capital budget going forward. How could it be ensured that the appropriate Select Committees were involved in scrutiny of business cases? The Director of Corporate Finance outlined scrutiny arrangements surrounding the capital programme, including the Capital Programme Panel, which she chaired. Any project or business case that affected the pipeline of the capital programme was presented to the Capital Programme Panel and reviewed by all panel members using the HM Treasury green book model. Furthermore, all business cases valued over a certain amount had to go through and be approved by Cabinet before progressing.
18. A Member enquired whether Your Fund Surrey (YFS) had gone through the business case assessment process as a whole, or whether individual bids within YFS would be assessed case-by-case. The Director of Corporate Finance informed the Select Committee that each bid would undergo a financial or business case assessment, the extent to which was dependent on size.
19. A Member asked what the budgeted headcount for the Resources and TPP directorates were for each department, how this changed year-on-year, and how many posts were vacant or filled by temporary contractors at present. The Strategic Finance Business Partner stated that she could not give specific headcount numbers at present, as this level of detail was still being worked on. A vacancy factor was incorporated into staffing budgets. It was agreed that the Strategic Finance Business Partner would provide more detailed information to the Select Committee on headcount and vacancies.

20. A Member requested more information on what was behind the £3.2m pressures under central income and expenditure. The Director of Corporate Finance explained that this area included corporate budgets, such as the portion of the transformation programme funded from revenue, the feasibility fund, Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP), and the budget contingency, as well as redundancy provision. The pressures were relatively large because of the size of the Council's overall budget. The Executive Director of Resources added that the central income and expenditure section of the budget did not comprise the Council's corporate services; rather, it was a series of statutory costs and provisions. More information on Central Income and Expenditure would be provided to the Select Committee at its meeting in January 2021.

**Recommendation:**

The Select Committee recommends that the Cabinet Member for Resources works with each district and borough to agree the assumptions about receipts for council tax and business rates to ensure the 2021/22 Surrey County Council budget is based on robust figures.

**Actions/further information to be provided:**

1. The Cabinet Member for Resources to provide a briefing and details about the budget consultation;
2. The Director of Corporate Finance to provide, at the 21 January 2021 Select Committee meeting, information on the overall level of reserves, the purpose of each earmarked reserve and the anticipated usage in 2021/22;
3. The Cabinet Member for Resources to provide a list of vacant Council properties in each division to support discussions on their ongoing use and disposition;
4. The Strategic Finance Business Partner to request that local divisional Members are in future advised of property proposals in advance of changes;
5. The Strategic Finance Business Partner to provide a high-level departmental breakdown of headcount vacancy on an FTE basis;
6. The Director of Corporate Finance to provide, at the 21 January 2021 Select Committee meeting, an analysis of Central Income and Expenditure.

**6 PERFORMANCE REPORT [Item 6]**

**Witnesses:**

Sarah Bogunovic, Head of Customer Strategy and Futures

Anna D'Alessandro, Director of Corporate Finance

Mel Few, Cabinet Member for Resources

Jacqueline Foglietta, Director of Human Resources and Organisation Development

Susan Grizzelle, Head of Customer Services

Nicola O'Connor, Strategic Finance Business Partner (Resources and Transformation, Partnerships and Prosperity)

Marie Snelling, Executive Director of Communities and Transformation

Adrian Stockbridge, Head of Portfolios

Gary Strudwick, Head of Business Intelligence

Leigh Whitehouse, Executive Director of Resources  
Rachel Wigley, Director of Financial Insight

**Key points raised during the discussion:**

1. The Head of Business Intelligence mentioned that some changes had been made to the report formatting based on recommendations made at the previous meeting of the Select Committee, in October 2020.
2. A Member asked why the Council was so far off-target on Land and Property capital receipts (the end of year target was £20.5m, and the latest result was only £2.5m). The Cabinet Member for Resources explained that the Council expected to receive a significant part of this target figure when the Kingston County Hall was sold.
3. A Member asked what the forecast value of unpaid rent and service charges was for the Council's properties. The Cabinet Member for Resources stated that on average in 2020/21, the Council had been receiving a gross percentage of approximately 80% of rental income budgeted for. The Executive Director of Resources explained that this was what had been collected to date, not what was collectible – it was expected that the further 20% would be collected. In real terms, the figure stood at about £1.5m uncollected funds for properties held directly by Surrey County Council and just in excess of £1.5m for properties held by the Halsey Garton Investment subsidiary.
4. A Member noted that the Council was a long way off its target for spending the apprenticeship levy (the target was 100%; the latest result was 76.56%) and wondered whether that target was actually feasible. The Director of HR&OD explained that the Council was required by law to spend a certain amount on apprenticeships, and therefore it could not reduce the target spend. Moreover, it was likely that the number of apprentices employed by the Council would soon increase due to additional government funding, the Kickstart programme, which committed the Council to taking on 30 young people on placement programmes, offering a pathway into apprenticeships, and a new strategy to increase employment more broadly across Surrey.
5. A Member asked whether there was a measure of the number of vacant positions in the Council. The Director of HR&OD replied that at present, overall vacancies amounted to 1,715 posts, which equated to 19% of the workforce. However, it was important to note that this figure included bank workers and the Council did not plan to convert bank workers' contracts into permanent or fixed-term contracts.
6. Commending the performance of the Council's transformation programme, a Member requested that the Select Committee be provided with a written response on how the results recorded under the transformation indicators section (TRN 01 and TRN 02) matched up with the transformation programme updates section of the annex.
7. A Member enquired how many apprentices employed by the Council finished their apprenticeship and how many stayed on as employees post-apprenticeships; it would be useful to see these figures going back a couple of years. The Director of HR&OD agreed to provide this

information after the meeting, and emphasised the Council's desire to keep apprentices on after their apprenticeships had ended.

8. The Executive Director of Resources explained to the Select Committee that there had been some challenges in Land and Property over the last few years, but the Corporate Landlord model had helped the Council to pull together its estate and there had been progress on remedial works, meaning the remedial programme was now on target for the year ahead.
9. A Member noted that there was a £10m overspend on the Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture directorate. He asked what the reason for this was, whether there was an action plan to address this, and whether the overspend had been taken into account for setting a realistic budget for 2021/22. The Cabinet Member for Resources responded that the overspend was caused by issues in spending on special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). There was a task force looking at this and a new lead for Children's services had recently started her post. The overspend on SEND had accrued over a number of years and, unfortunately, it showed no sign of decreasing and there were still issues forecast for 2021/22. However, the task force had a number of plans to bring the overspend under control. The overspend was driven in part by the cost of out of county specialist placements for children with SEND, which the Council was looking to address by constructing more places for children with SEND at school sites within county. The SEND overspend was a significant risk and continued to be watched carefully. It was anticipated, however, that there would be some improvements over the course of 2021/22. The Director of Financial Insight added that, to tackle the overspend, the Council was lobbying the government for increased funding, looking at reducing costs and also at contributing funds to the reserve, in order to ensure funding was sufficient in SEND going forward. A Member highlighted that constructing more sites in order to bring children in-county would take time, and surmised that the overspend might actually increase in 2021/22 and drift into 2022/23. The Director of Financial Insight replied that the Council was not only looking at the sufficiency of new places, as this would indeed take time, but also other initiatives within the system such as including children with SEND in mainstream schools and early intervention initiatives, working with schools. Furthermore, the Council was lobbying for increased funding within the high needs block.
10. A Member observed that as at month 6 of 2020/21, the amount of red RAG (red, amber, green) rated efficiencies (red indicating a high risk of not being achieved) stood at £5m, having decreased by only £3.5m since the original budget plan. Was it realistic to expect that the £5m red rated efficiencies were at all achievable? The Strategic Finance Business Partner stated that the RAG ratings of efficiencies were reviewed monthly as part of the budget monitoring process and the finance team worked closely with budget holders to determine whether red ratings were still appropriate for these efficiencies, or whether they should be changed to black (unachievable) efficiencies. The majority of the red rated savings related to SEND.

**Actions/further information to be provided:**

1. The Head of Portfolios to provide to the Select Committee a written response linking the transformation indicators TRN 01 and TRN 02 and the information presented in the annex to the report;
2. The Director of HR&OD to provide figures going back a couple of years on how many apprentices finished their apprenticeships and how many stayed on as employees post-apprenticeship.

## **7 COUNTY HALL MOVE AND AGILE PROGRAMME UPDATE [Item 7]**

### **Witnesses:**

Dominic Barlow, Assistant Director – Corporate Landlord

Brendon Kavanagh, Portfolio Lead – Corporate

Leigh Whitehouse, Executive Director of Resources

### **Key points raised during the discussion:**

1. The Executive Director of Resources summarised that the closing of County Hall in Kingston upon Thames was on track to be completed by the end of December 2020; Woodhatch Place, the new civic heart, was on track to be open by the start of 2021. All staff had been written to about their new administrative bases. Approximately 20% of staff had been told their new base would be located at Ashley Park House in Walton; however, it had not been possible to use this space, so the decision had been made (and approved by Cabinet) to obtain space in an extra building in Weybridge in which these staff would be located instead. The uncertainty this had created amongst some staff was unfortunate, but the outcome of moving the base to Weybridge was a better outcome, as the commute was easier and cheaper for many staff. Finally, the sale of the Kingston County Hall was progressing as planned and the 'for sale' sign outside the building would be updated today (18 December 2020) to read 'under offer'.
2. A Member asked what the reaction was amongst staff to the alternative office bases they had been allocated. The Executive Director stated that there might be a sense of frustration among staff whose administrative base had been changed from Ashley Park House to Weybridge – while the outcome had been good, there had been a trade-off with uncertainty. A travel study had been commissioned for all office bases, which would provide guidance. Another main issue was the decant from County Hall, and communications would be sent to staff today about how to collect their belongings. Staff were being reasonable and showing fortitude towards the move.
3. A Member asked if officers were incorporating disabilities into the travel plans. She noted that, while Surrey's bus services worked well for people with disabilities, there were many train stations that were not disability compliant. The Portfolio Lead – Corporate replied that disabilities were indeed being incorporated into travel planning, and added that he had met with the Inclusion and Diversity Group the previous day to discuss this topic.
4. A Member requested that a detailed analysis of the complete results of the travel survey – including the results of the survey conducted with Members – be presented to the County Hall Move and Agile

Programme Task Group at its next meeting. The Portfolio Lead agreed to provide detailed analysis.

5. A Member asked whether any more detail on the sale of County Hall could be shared publicly, and whether the Council would be keeping an interest in the property after selling for long-term income or was selling the property as a capital item. The Executive Director replied that the site was under offer and the Council had a preferred bidder. The details would go to Cabinet in January 2021 and this information would be shared with the Task Group in due course. There was not much more that could be said publicly at the moment.
6. The Executive Director provided assurance to Members that everything mentioned in the Select Committee's recommendation (below) would be reviewed and overseen by the County Hall Move and Agile Programme Task Group early in 2021.
7. After some discussion on the recommendation, the Select Committee agreed the recommendation. Wyatt Ramsdale abstained on section 'c' of the recommendation as below.

**Recommendation:**

1. The Select Committee recommends that the County Hall Move and Agile Programme Task Group is to receive the following information:
  - a. The Agile Office Estate Strategy;
  - b. The results and analysis of the Woodhatch travel plan survey and agile workforce programme survey;
  - c. Details of the County Hall sale and bids – the Task Group should have an opportunity to review and comment on any bids to buy County Hall before any decision is made.

**8 BROADBAND IN SURREY [Item 8]**

**Witnesses:**

Katie Brennan, Engagement Manager

Amanda Richards, Network and Asset Management Group Manager

**Key points raised during the discussion:**

1. The Network and Asset Management Group Manager introduced the report by mentioning the Superfast Surrey programme, delivered in partnership with BT. The programme had resulted in more than 90,000 homes and businesses having faster download speeds, meaning that Surrey was in a good position regarding superfast broadband at the moment. Over the last eight or nine months, many people had been working from home in Surrey, and yet despite this, there had not been a large number of complaints about broadband speeds. However, it was important that Surrey continued to make progress in this area as technology was developing and there would be a need for faster technology in Surrey.
2. The Group Manager continued to detail what Surrey County Council was focusing on at the moment, which included improving broadband speeds in rural areas by accessing government funding to upgrade a few schools and promoting government gigabit vouchers to communities in rural areas. Network operators such as Openreach

had announced several areas in Surrey and were working on improving and expanding their gigabit-capable broadband, taking inspiration from other parts of the country. Surrey County Council was in the process of developing a Digital Infrastructure Strategy and this would be reported on in the coming months and brought to the Select Committee before being progressed.

3. A Member asked how big the broadband team was and where the two witnesses present fitted into the structure. The Group Manager explained that currently the superfast broadband team comprised the Engagement Manager only. The Group Manager worked in the highways department and the Engagement Manager reported to the Group Manager. Both witnesses worked together to look at how superfast broadband could tie in with and improve highways going forward, amongst other things.
4. A Member enquired how Surrey's gigabit broadband coverage compared with neighbouring authorities. The Engagement Manager responded that currently, Surrey had about 16% gigabit-capable coverage. Network operators such as Openreach or Virgin Media generally looked for areas that were commercially viable, which were usually more urban areas due to their denser population. Urban areas such as London had been more heavily covered by operators such as Virgin Media; also, Virgin Media had regularly upgraded broadband coverage in London, meaning London had a high rate of gigabit-capable coverage. Surrey, on the other hand, had a relatively high rate of Virgin Media coverage at 66%, but this technology was ultrafast and had not yet been upgraded to be gigabit-capable. Discrepancies between coverage related primarily to how urban or rural an area was, rather than varying county by county.
5. A Member asked whether the government's expectation that the private sector deliver gigabit-capable broadband to around 80% of premises in the UK was reasonable in the Surrey context. The Engagement Manager explained that this depended on operators upgrading their infrastructure, and Surrey was covered by few operators, including Virgin Media, Openreach and a few smaller companies. It was likely that Surrey would reach around 80% gigabit coverage, but this depended on factors such as decisions taken by operators and central government. In November 2020, the government had allocated £1.2bn to spend on increasing gigabit-capable coverage, focusing on the 20% of premises that it was forecast commercial operators would not reach in the next few years. The government would be looking to address these areas using a mixture of both demand side interventions (such as vouchers and top-ups) and supplier side interventions where they would work directly with operators to expand coverage. It was anticipated that these interventions would begin in 2021.
6. A Member asked how the Council was ensuring there were more than one or two infrastructure operators to ensure a competitive market in future. If coverage did not become more comprehensive, there could be an issue in future when people might continue to work from home much of the time, meaning demand might be less localised. The Engagement Manager emphasised the importance of small operators,

which included Box Broadband, Broadband for Surrey Hills and Surrey Hills Internet. Unfortunately, there were few smaller scale operators in Surrey, due to the expense and difficulty of setting up these companies. However, the Engagement Manager was keen to encourage and promote them.

7. A Member enquired how Surrey County councillors could get involved and help improve broadband coverage, perhaps through promotion on social media. The Engagement Manager welcomed Members' help and detailed engagement that had already taken place, such as a postcard that had been sent to more than 40,000 premises, and a flyer that had been sent to residents who were keen to set up a community fibre partnership. She agreed to liaise with the corporate communications team to develop a template that Members could post on their Facebook page or other social media, or include in a newsletter or email signature.
8. Noting that, as part of the Superfast Surrey programme, the Council had received one 'clawback' pay-out from BT and reinvested this in phase 2 of the programme, a Member asked whether another pay-out was expected and whether this had been built into the contract. Currently, Surrey County Council was investing millions of pounds in outside organisations; in line with the Surrey Vision for 2030, investment should come back into the county, so contracts should entail a profit on residents' investments. The Engagement Manager responded that financial assumptions included a clawback mechanism for the duration of the contract, which was due to expire on 2 April 2023. Contracts had been developed in conjunction with Building Digital UK, which was part of the government's Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport. The financial assumptions included in the contract had been made in 2012, and since then technology had changed significantly; the smart technology used in the present day, for instance, could not have been anticipated in 2012. The Group Manager added that return on investment would be looked at closely in future.
9. A Member remarked that there had been mention in the press of a report from consultancy firm EY on satellite technology and the urgency of fibre rollout and requested witnesses' comments on this. The Engagement Manager stated that, in the past, satellite technology had not been practical to use – it had been very slow. However, SpaceX and other companies had developed satellite technology to show that it could be used to provide faster broadband. Other examples of new technology being developed included 5G coverage using drones, but 5G required a lot of fibre to be installed. The Council was in a good position for now but it could not sit on its laurels; it had to take advantage of any government funding available. Community fibre partnerships worked best if there was a large number of residents involved, thereby reducing or covering the overall cost to the residents.

**Recommendation:**

The Select Committee recommends that it receives the Digital Infrastructure Strategy, before the strategy is finalised, for scrutiny at a future meeting.

**Action/further information to be provided:**

The Engagement Manager to work in partnership with the communications team to provide materials that Members can use on their social media, newsletters or email signatures to promote the broadband programme and community fibre partnerships.

**9 TASK GROUP UPDATES [Item 9]**

The materials of the County Hall Move and Agile Programme Task Group and the Budget Sub-Group were noted. Discussion of the Customer Experience Task Group report was deferred until the next meeting of the Select Committee, due to time constraints.

**10 FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME AND RECOMMENDATION TRACKER [Item 10]**

The Select Committee noted the Forward Work Programme and Recommendation Tracker.

**11 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING [Item 11]**

The next meeting of the Resources and Performance Select Committee would be held on 21 January 2021.

Meeting ended at: 1.01 pm

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**Chairman**

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## RESOURCES AND PERFORMANCE SELECT COMMITTEE



**DATE: 21 January 2021**

## CABINET MEMBER FOR CORPORATE SUPPORT UPDATE

### **Purpose of report:**

To share details of the Cabinet Member's priority areas of work including strategy and policy developments and provide an overview of the budget position and performance of services within his/her portfolio.

### **Introduction:**

1. This report updates the Committee on ongoing work in areas within the Corporate Support portfolio.

### **What does the Cabinet Member expect to achieve in 2020/21?**

2. Work is progressing to ensure service delivery is aligned to the Council's corporate priorities of Empowering Communities, Enabling a Greener Future, Tackling Health Inequalities and Growing a Sustainable Economy so Everyone Can Benefit, while focussing on the key enablers Customer Experience, Digital & Data, and Agile Workforce.
3. In conjunction with the preparation of the 2021-22 budget, a refreshed organisation Transformation Programme will set out outcomes for residents, service improvement measures and efficiencies.
4. At the time of writing services in my portfolio will have the lead role in the Digital, Agile Organisation, Agile Workforce, Customer Experience and Data Insights transformation programmes. I'm directly involved in the preparation of these programmes.

### **Detailed update**

8. See Annex attached.

**Conclusions:**

9. Services in the portfolio provide resources and expertise and lead on activities that equip and support the whole Council in the delivery of front-line services to residents. They have been, and will continue to be, instrumental in the Council's prompt and effective response to the demands of the Covid-19 national emergency. Notably, through the work of the digital delivery programme and by the continuous improvement of the customer experience.

**Recommendations:**

1. The Committee reviews the information contained in this update and offers feedback to the Cabinet Member.
2. The Select Committee considers where it may add value to the Cabinet Member's work through scrutiny and scopes topics as required.

**Next steps:**

The Cabinet Member(s) to return with a further update at a future formal meeting of the Committee.

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**Report contact:** Dr Zully Grant-Duff, Cabinet Member for Corporate Support

**Contact details:** [zully.grantduff@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:zully.grantduff@surreycc.gov.uk)

**Sources/background papers:** None.

## ANNEX

### CABINET MEMBER UPDATE TO FULL COUNCIL

**Name: Zully Grant-Duff**

**Portfolio: Corporate Support**

**Meeting Date: 8 December 2020**

**Updated on 6 January 2021 for submission to the Resources & Performance Select Committee**

**The Digital transformation** programme continues to build the council's digital capability and capacity through new tools, technology and skills development. Examples include the Surrey Family Help Hub, a portal to improve early identification of a child's need, which is being developed by the Digital Design Team in partnership with Children's Services and is expected to be released to stakeholders in January 2021. Also, in partnership with Surrey Heartlands, Tech 4 You, a new service model deploying sensors at home to support our most vulnerable residents to remain independent; and the work on the Surrey Care Record for Children's Services, its data scope and access governance arrangements. Both these projects are aligned to our organisation priority to reduce health inequalities in the county.

**Agile working practices** continue to be developed across the council; feedback from staff engagement shows a majority have a preference for a mixed office and home working arrangement with 2 days in the office for collaborative activities. This new way of working will reduce staff travelling and help us realise our organisation ambition for a greener future for Surrey by contributing to a reduction of the organisation's carbon emissions. Extensive engagement has taken place with all teams due to move out of County Hall, including those who are to relocate to Woodhatch, and specific plans are in place for teams that are heavily reliant upon an office environment including Business Operations, Customer Services and Legal team. The IT infrastructure at Woodhatch is now installed and live. It includes over 50km of cabling and WiFi provision that caters for staff, members, other public sector workers and the general public.

**The Digital Business & Insights programme** is progressing the implementation of the Unit 4 Software-as-a-Service Enterprise Resource Planning solution, which will be the new corporate system that will manage the organisation's business critical finance, procurement and HR & payroll processes. The programme is on track, has successfully completed the design stage and is in the process of moving to the build stage, which aims to complete by early April before starting testing. Preparation to procure an

archiving solution for legacy SAP data is also underway and on track to launch the procurement process in early February.

**The Covid-19 Local Contact Tracing Partnership (LTP)** went live on 26 November 2020 for 4 district & borough areas (Elmbridge, Epsom & Ewell, Runnymede & Spelthorne) to trace those people who have tested positive for Covid-19 but whom NHS Test & Trace has been unable to reach, Customer Services has managed 861 cases with a 63% successful contact rate. This is vital work to support the national effort to slow down the rate of virus transmission. Due to the dramatic increase in infection rates across the county and resulting caseloads, there will now be an incremental approach to rolling out the LTP to cover the remaining district & borough areas, beginning this month. In the meantime, contact tracing for those areas will continue to be carried out by the National NHS Test & Trace service.

**The Customer Experience transformation** programme has been refreshed with a renewed focus on making people's experience of dealing with the council quicker, easier and better by managing enquiries in a more efficient, proactive and connected way and increasing the use of digital self-service and automation. Joint working with services such as Home to School Transport is underway to devise specific service improvements. A proof of concept trial using chatbot AI technology (called Sur-i) has now successfully gone live on the school admissions pages of the council's website, as part of a joint project with IT & Digital, the Transformation Support Unit and School Admissions teams. Across all instances where Sur-i was used to raise a specific query on school admissions there has been a 97% *intent recognition rate*; this is where an enquiry is successfully recognised and responded to. This technology is now being procured for wider use and we are identifying further use cases where it can be deployed to reduce unnecessary telephone and email enquiries.

Customer usage of live web chat continues to grow, with over 2,400 chats served in the period 1 September to 31 December with an average customer satisfaction level of 95%. As an indicative average, a member of staff can serve 4 live web chats in the time it takes to handle a telephone call.

**The legal team Covid-19 response** has involved close working with Children's Services to meet the increased need for support in children's safeguarding cases and this commitment has been recognised by the Local Family Justice Board. Bespoke remote training has been delivered to 130 Social Workers, 30 Independent Reviewing Officers, and Child Protection Conference Chairs. The team has been expanded and strengthened at all levels to meet the significant and ongoing challenges. Work is ongoing with

district and borough legal teams and Public Health to support local Environmental Protection teams in the advice, support and enforcement of the increasingly complex Covid-19 regulatory regime and provide a single source of legal support to all districts and boroughs.

**The Community Impact Assessment**, published this month, is a suite of intelligence products that explore the health, social and economic impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic on communities across Surrey, as well as what support communities need as the pandemic continues and what are their priorities for recovery. It is a significant piece of insight, developed using a range of qualitative and quantitative research methods. Thousands of residents, people working in frontline services and partners have taken part in the research and had an opportunity to suggest recommendations. The aim is for partners to use the intelligence to provide targeted support to impacted communities. The Data Insights transformation programme is supporting data-led design in the Libraries and Communities transformation programmes, work aligned to our organisation priority to empower local communities.

**New corporate performance dashboards** showing key performance indicators have been developed utilising Tableau, an interactive data visualisation tool. Business intelligence teams across services have collaborated with the IT & Digital team in the production, with work in progress to fully automate the data collection and report preparation process. In the next phase we will focus the provision of business intelligence on performance reporting aligned against our four organisation priorities.

**A new easy-to-use Member Portal** via MS Teams has been set up following feedback from the recent Member Agile Working Survey, for a short video tutorial [click here](#) . Work is in progress to refine and optimise its functions ahead of the new council induction in May 2021. Virtual seminars and member development sessions have been successful in almost doubling attendance and are preferred by members. A new schedule will be trialled from January 2021 which we hope will be helpful to those with work or caring commitments. The seminars will remain online so reducing the need to travel across the county. This will help us realise our organisation ambition for a greener future for Surrey by contributing to a reduction of the organisation's carbon emissions.

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## RESOURCES AND PERFORMANCE SELECT COMMITTEE



**DATE: 21 January 2021**

### DEPUTY CABINET MEMBER FOR RESOURCES UPDATE

#### **Purpose of report:**

To share details of the Cabinet Member's priority areas of work including strategy and policy developments and provide an overview of the budget position and performance of services within his/her portfolio.

#### **Introduction:**

1. This report updates the Committee on ongoing work in areas within the Finance portfolio.

#### **What does the Cabinet Member expect to achieve in 2020/21?**

##### Cash impact:

Given the continuing pandemic situation the overarching focus is on cash management and the impact on maintaining 20/21 budgeted position. Building on SCC response to Covid-19 throughout the year we are rapidly assessing the impact of the new lockdown within directorates, the resulting impact on any outstanding efficiency saving programmes and the 20/21 yearend. Specific activities include:

2. Ongoing focus on delivering the 20/21 yearend within budget. Areas of concern continue to be Adult Social Care, Children's Social Care and Waste and are monitored through the monthly directorate budget monitoring meetings. Plans formulated to close any gaps.
3. Monitoring of the impact of lockdown January 2021 on directorate budgets and the resulting impact on FY20/21 close and opening budget 21/22.
4. Monitoring of cash flow – focus on ASC debt (provision/write offs) and Council Tax/Business Rate recovery (Base rates, collection fund deficit, government relief grants).

5. Monitoring of Transformation Programme; Review of programme delivery 2018 to date and scrutiny of renewed program 21-25. Monthly deep dives through the Transformation Board supplemented by detailed finance meetings. Value for money; funding model; progress.
6. Monitoring of Capital Programme and impact of non-delivery on future budgets.
7. Finalisation of 21/22 revenue and capital budget and approval at Full Council 9<sup>th</sup> February 2021.
8. Monitoring of the revised Internal Audit Assurance programme; follow up on “requiring improvement”.
9. Monthly monitoring of procurement activity.

Finance is the enabler for delivery of services across the Council, however within Finance BAU service delivery is aligned where relevant to the Council’s corporate priorities of Empowering Communities, Enabling a Greener Future, Tackling Health Inequalities and Growing a Sustainable Economy so Everyone Can Benefit. Commencing Q4 20/21, Procurement are undertaking a modernisation review which will be centered around the 4 priorities outlined above.

Non-cash impact:

In anticipation of the Council’s yearend work will be done to understand the impact of Covid-19 on asset valuations.

**Conclusions:**

10. The 20/21 financial position requires continual monitoring in order to respond to the ongoing pressures of Covid-19 and the unknown impact of the January 2021 lockdown. Careful management is required to deliver the 20/21 yearend within budget.

**Recommendations:**

1. The Committee reviews the information contained in this update and offers feedback to the Cabinet Member.
2. The Select Committee considers where it may add value to the Cabinet Member’s work through scrutiny and scopes topics as required.

**Next steps:**

The Cabinet Member(s) to return with a further update at a future formal meeting of the Committee.

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**Report contact:** Cllr Becky Rush, Deputy Cabinet Member for Resources

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**Sources/background papers:** None.

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21 JANUARY 2021



## Tackling inequality and improving diversity and inclusion for Surrey and Surrey County Council

**Purpose of report:** To present a draft action plan to radically improve equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) for Surrey residents and Surrey County Council staff, and a draft refreshed EDI policy statement

### Introduction:

1. The Organisation Strategy 2021-26, which was agreed at the County Council meeting on 8 December 2020, emphasised the key guiding principle that underpins all of our work– tackling inequality in Surrey by focusing on ensuring no-one is left behind. Four new equality objectives were also agreed in the Strategy. These support a statutory duty under the Equality Act 2010 to set equality objectives which aim to eliminate discrimination and harassment, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people with protected characteristics and those that do not have one.

2. One of these new objectives was:

**Deliver a radical work programme to strengthen the diversity of our workforce and move to a culture that values difference, where all staff feel they belong and have opportunities to succeed.**

3. This report presents the Committee with a draft plan setting out how this objective will be delivered. It will also complement the Organisation Strategy's other equality objectives, such as our work to make it easier for all residents to take part in local democracy, service design and decision-making. The report also describes the oversight and governance of the work and how we will monitor and communicate progress to stakeholders.

4. The Committee is also presented with a draft refreshed EDI policy statement, which includes our commitment to a zero-tolerance approach to bullying, discrimination and harassment.

## Why a radical approach is needed

### Vision for EDI and context

5. Over the previous decade, our policy development and decision-making has primarily focused on minimising discrimination and improving equality of opportunity for people with characteristics protected under the Equality Act 2010. These are:
  - a) Age, including older and younger people;
  - b) Disability;
  - c) Gender reassignment;
  - d) Pregnancy and Maternity;
  - e) Race, including ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality;
  - f) Religion or belief, including lack of belief;
  - g) Sex;
  - h) Sexual orientation;
  - i) Marriage and civil partnerships.
6. While securing greater equality for these groups remains important, we are starting to take a broader, more radical approach to EDI. This means not only changing the processes, systems and behaviours that prevent the council providing the best possible experiences for all residents and staff, but also ensuring that EDI is embedded into everything we do.
7. We also know that the Government has started setting out its thinking on equality, and we need to understand the implications for our work. The Minister for Women and Equalities, the Rt Hon Liz Truss MP, made a speech on 17 December 2020 which set out the Government's thinking on the inequalities that need to be tackled in the UK. The key points the Minister made included building a stronger evidence base on inequality, a greater focus on geographical and socio-economic inequality and the limited effectiveness of certain current initiatives to strengthen EDI, such as unconscious bias training.
8. The Government's intention to build a more robust evidence base is welcome, and we will prioritise this. Recognising the influences of geography and socio-economic factors are important, but protected characteristics also influence how the experiences, opportunities and outcomes of residents and staff are shaped

and so it will be recommended to Cabinet that our focus on these characteristics remains.

9. We also continue to find ways to improve our offer to support staff to deliver their EDI responsibilities. For example, unconscious bias training is just one element of a broader training package that will be commissioned and delivered this year.
10. As the Government's policy position on equality takes further shape, we will continue to assess the implications of this for our own EDI work.

### **The case for change**

11. There is a strong case for Surrey County Council to take a radical approach to EDI. Appendix C highlights some key data that supports this.:
  - a) **There is a moral imperative:** We have a moral obligation to have a culture of compassion, empathy and understanding as it will create a more tolerant, inclusive and happier working environment;
  - b) **Understanding our diverse communities and staff will enable us to deliver better services:** A better understanding of diversity will lead to more efficient and effective services, and a more productive workforce with a varied range of talents, skills and backgrounds.
  - c) **Diversity is a key driver of innovation:** Differences in thought based on differing knowledge, experiences and values foster greater creativity and problem solving to tackle some of the key challenges facing the county and this council.
  - d) **Inequality is having a detrimental impact on our communities:** We know that some of Surrey's residents are experiencing widening inequalities, some of which have worsened as a result of Covid-19. For example, the Community Impact Assessment, considered by Cabinet on 24 November, highlighted disproportionate impacts on some residents, such as greater feelings of isolation, stigma and exclusion among Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) residents.
  - e) **Our workforce does not reflect the diversity of our community at all levels:** Our workforce data shows we need to create more opportunities for colleagues from protected groups to further their careers, for instance, while nearly 10% of our staff are from BAME backgrounds, which is broadly representative of Surrey's population (9.6%), less than 1% are in a senior management position. Staff from protected groups are also over-represented in formal HR procedures, such as grievances and disciplinary processes.

- f) **There is a legal imperative:** We have legal duties under the Equality Act 2010, and the Public Sector Equality Duty, to eliminate discrimination and harassment, strengthen relations between different groups of people and advance equality of opportunity.
12. There are clear benefits for residents, Members and staff from our focus on EDI. We will work with all residents to provide them with opportunities to have the same chances for a high quality of life and feel they belong in their communities. Most of our resources will prioritise supporting Surrey's most vulnerable residents and strengthen relations within and between different groups in Surrey's population.
13. In addition, all Members and staff should feel welcome at the council, and that they belong and have the same opportunities to succeed as everyone else. Through our action plan, we will continue to engage them to identify and remove any barriers to such inclusiveness. Importantly, we will ensure that everyone who works with the council feel they are able to bring their full selves to work.

## EDI Action Plan

### Developing the plan

14. The draft action plan presented with this report (Appendix A) sets out a vision for EDI at Surrey County Council, and the actions we will undertake to deliver it. The origins of the plan started to be shaped in 2019 when the late Dave Hill, former Executive Director for Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture and previous EDI sponsor, facilitated a comprehensive staff engagement exercise, known as the Talking Diversity Tour.
15. The Tour was comprised of 11 face-to-face focus groups with 250 staff across the council's main sites, including targeted sessions with younger employees aged 25 and under, women, black and minority ethnic (BAME) and LGBTQ+ staff. A staff survey was run in parallel, which attracted 150 responses. Trade Union representatives have also provided input to the plan's development.
16. Staff feedback showed that, for them, EDI means helping all residents and colleagues feel they belong at the council, and they were made to feel welcome, supported and included. All colleagues would feel enabled and empowered to fulfil their potential. Having a diverse council would also lead to a higher performing organisation, better services and value for money.
17. They wanted EDI to be integral to how the council operates instead of being perceived by some staff as an additional consideration for their day-to-day work. They also wanted more visible leadership from Members and senior

officers on the agenda, policies that take a zero-tolerance approach to bullying and discrimination and more support to have sensitive discussions with colleagues on EDI issues.

18. Some activities in the plan have been inspired by best practice of other local authorities who are recognised for their EDI work. Examples include:
  - a) The London Borough of Hackney has produced an inclusive language guide for their staff to help them not cause offence to colleagues and residents when having sensitive discussions;
  - b) The Mayor of London has an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Panel, where representatives from community and equality organisations advise the Mayor on inequalities facing residents in the capital and hold him to account for delivering initiatives to address them;
  - c) Bristol City Council, which has achieved an 'Excellent' rating under the Local Government Association's (LGA) Equality Framework, uses data on grievances and disciplinary cases to act where there may be evidence of bias.
  - d) In addition to gender pay gap reporting, the London Borough of Tower Hamlets also introduced pay gap reports for disability, race and sexual orientation.
19. Most of the best practice we reviewed was from local authorities who have been awarded "Equality Excellence" under the LGA Equality Framework. These authorities participated in a voluntary self-assessment exercise, followed by a peer challenge to receive this award. We are considering taking part in this process to support and challenge ourselves to make even more progress and secure better outcomes through our EDI journey.
20. The evidence from colleagues and best practice research has supported development of the plan presented to this meeting, and, going forward, we will continue gathering evidence to support and shape the plan to evolve.

### **EDI Action Plan 2021-22**

21. This action plan sets out a new vision and activities for strengthening EDI at the council. Our new vision for EDI is for the council to **have a fair, compassionate and inclusive culture that genuinely values difference and makes everyone feel safe and belong.**
22. To achieve this vision, activities are grouped under five themes.

- a) **Employee Experience:** Strengthening workforce diversity and moving to an inclusive culture that values difference, where all staff feel they belong and have opportunities to succeed. Activities to support this theme include mandatory EDI training for staff, support for Employee Reference Groups (ERGs), strengthening workforce data to make better decisions, and reforming staff recruitment to minimise bias and attract the best talent to the council;
  - b) **Leadership:** Members and senior officers will become much more visible champions of EDI, acting as role models and demonstrating their commitment to tackling inequality – particularly through their direct sponsorship of our ERGs. Training for Members and senior officers will support them to lead on this effectively, and career development programmes will support positive action for colleagues who are less well represented in management positions;
  - c) **Knowing and engaging our communities:** Using the best information available and fostering good relations with and within our communities, to work with them to address their needs and maximise local participation. This theme focuses on making the best use of data and insight to better understand inequalities across Surrey, and working with partners and residents to overcome these inequalities and maximise participation of all residents in local democratic processes;
  - d) **Communication and engagement:** Promote and raise awareness of our radical approach to EDI to stakeholders, especially to our residents. We will equip colleagues with the tools they need for holding sensitive discussions with residents and staff, such as guidelines for how to communicate with different resident groups, and consistently promote Surrey’s diversity and the importance of EDI to the organisation;
  - e) **Delivering inclusive services:** We want our services to be responsive to individual needs so all residents can access services easily and fairly, giving them the best opportunities to improve their outcomes. These activities focus on strengthening EDI across our front-line and support services, so all residents have high quality services, no matter their background. It covers a wide range of issues, from ensuring the quality of Equality Impact Assessments for Member and officer decision-making, to how we approach procurement and work with suppliers to align with our EDI aspirations.
23. For this plan to work, we will commit to being open and transparent with residents, partners and staff about our intentions and how we will take responsibility to achieve them. Cabinet and CLT are fully committed to driving this agenda. Katie Stewart, the Executive Director for Environment, Transport and Infrastructure, is the CLT sponsor for this work.

24. The action plan will continue to evolve as we make progress on this agenda, so the focus and emphasis on priorities may change through the year. We have also started to make progress against the actions in this plan:

a) Colleagues across the council, with the support of HR and OD, have established seven Employee Reference Groups (ERGs). These are staff-led networks, that champion the interests of diverse colleagues and raise issues with the council's leadership. Each of these networks is sponsored by at least one Cabinet Member and one Executive Director. In practice, colleagues in the networks will agree priority issues to focus on each year, with support from their leadership sponsors, and act as a sounding board for council services as they develop policies and services.

So far, we have a Women's Network, Disabled Employees Network, Minority Ethnic Group and Allies Network (MEGA), Deaf/BSL Network, Young Employees Network, Parent and Carer's Network and LGBTQ+ Network. Some of them are new, while others have been supported to increase their influence at the council.;

b) A new staff training offer for EDI is starting to be rolled out across the council, which includes unconscious bias training. There has been high demand among staff to attend the course. As of December 2020, 42 unconscious bias training courses have been run with 470 colleagues attending them. A further 59 course dates have been arranged with 542 people booked on and 173 more staff members on the waiting list. We are also running 'train the trainer' schemes, so some staff are trained to deliver unconscious bias training to make this more sustainable. Race Relations training has also been delivered in Children's Services to 65 employees.

c) A new continuous training and development offer on EDI for Members is being developed. Member Seminars are being planned for early 2021 to raise awareness with Members on our radical EDI agenda and outline how they can support it. The wider development offer will be rolled out following the county council elections in May;

d) The council website is being reviewed, and webpages updated, to ensure the content is compliant with the new Public Sector Bodies (Web and Mobile Applications) Accessibility Regulations, so residents with visual impairments can access any of our web content easily.

## **Governance and communications**

25. Delivery of this plan is overseen by the EDI Change Group, chaired by Katie Stewart, and progress will be reported to CLT, Cabinet and this Committee. We will also regularly engage with the ERG chairs and trade unions to discuss

progress and seek to address any new issues that emerge as the year progresses.

26. The plan will be reviewed within a calendar year of Cabinet endorsing it, accompanied with a light-touch annual report covering progress and highlighting best practice, such as through case studies.
27. We are developing communications and engagement programme to continue to raise awareness of our progress, initiatives and achievements so residents, Members, staff and partners are part of our journey towards becoming a more inclusive, diverse organisation.

### **Updated commitment to EDI**

28. In addition to the action plan, we have also produced a refreshed policy commitment to EDI (Appendix B). This sets out our aspirations for EDI, what this means for residents, Members and staff, and the commitment we undertake to deliver them. It also reinforces the council's zero tolerance approach to bullying, harassment or discrimination of any kind, and any cases will be dealt with decisively.
29. The purpose of this document is to provide a visible and accessible statement that shows residents, Members, partners and staff the seriousness that we take on EDI. It demonstrates that our approach to EDI underpins everything we do, reinforcing the message that EDI is the responsibility of everyone connected to the council.

<b>Conclusions:</b>
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30. The action plan presented in this report is a key contributor that supports the council's mission to ensure no-one is left behind. Focusing on EDI will help us provide the best services possible for residents, attract the best talent to the council, and build our reputation as an inclusive employer.
31. We need a radical approach to drive the council towards being more inclusive for all residents and staff. The action plan will drive a major programme of work to make EDI integral to how the organisation functions and the responsibility of all Members and officers to practice.
32. We have already started to act to change the culture of the organisation. The action plan will continue to evolve, with the EDI Change Group leading delivery and working with Cabinet and CLT to adapt the plan as circumstances change.
33. The updated EDI policy commitment is an important tool that sets out our aspirations for this agenda, improve the experiences of all residents and staff

and sets out the activities we will carry out to deliver on the commitment. For this to make an impact, and signal our intent to stakeholders, we will share it widely with residents, staff and partners as the start of a broader programme of communications and engagement in 2021.

### **Recommendations:**

34. It is recommended that the Committee:
- a) Reviews and provides feedback on the draft action plan (Appendix A).
  - b) Reviews and provides feedback on the draft SCC commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion (Appendix B)

### **Next steps:**

The action plan and policy statement will be presented to Cabinet for endorsement on 23 February 2021. We will continue to deliver key activities identified in the plan, which the EDI Change Group will oversee and regularly report progress to CLT, Cabinet and this Committee.

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### **Report contact**

Adam Whittaker, Strategic Lead – Policy and Strategy, Insight, Analytics and Intelligence

### **Contact details**

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### **Appendices**

Appendix A – Draft Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan

Appendix B – Draft ‘Surrey County Council’s Commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion’ Policy Statement

Appendix C – Key EDI resident and workforce statistics

### **Sources/background papers**

Covid-19 Community Impact Assessment

Organisation Strategy 2021-26

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### V0.12 Surrey County Council EDI Action Plan

Surrey County Council’s core mission is to ensure no-one is left behind. This means tackling inequality should guide everything we do and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) needs to be integral to the council’s culture.

The council’s leadership has radical ambitions for EDI, reflected in this action plan. It commits them to be **open** and **transparent** with staff and residents about our intentions and how we will take **responsibility** for achieving them. The Chief Executive and Executive Directors will be proactive and directly involved in driving this agenda, through sponsorship of staff networks, championing EDI across all council services and taking part in reverse mentoring schemes. We will also support staff to have frank, open conversations about EDI, both to discuss where things are going well and where things still need to change.

**If we get this right and we all play our part, Surrey’s residents and our staff should see the council as a fair, compassionate and inclusive organisation that genuinely values difference and makes everyone feel safe and that they belong.**

Colleagues who attended the Staff Diversity Tour in late 2019 said we need to do much more to support all our staff to belong and retain existing top talent, make the council a more attractive proposition to a more diverse range of prospective employees, and leaders need to be more visible on EDI so residents, Members, partners and staff understand the need to increase our efforts on this.

This is something we must focus on if we want to be one of the leading councils in England and the most effective council for Surrey residents. It is:

- **Essential for residents** – local democratic arrangements and council services will be designed to be open, inclusive and accessible for all.
- **Essential for staff** – they will be encouraged to bring their whole selves to work and use their diverse experiences and skills to improve performance and create innovative solutions to make residents’ lives better.
- **Essential for the council** – developing a diverse workforce and a better understanding of residents who are being left behind means we can design more responsive services by focusing resources where they’re most needed, improving both value for money and outcomes.

Doing this will also help the council to comply with its legal obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty of the Equality Act 2010.

This plan does not capture everything the council is doing to tackle inequality, but it will play a key part in ensuring it is an inclusive and diverse organisation for staff and how we work with residents. These are reflected by the following five themes:

- Employee Experience
- Leadership
- Knowing and engaging our communities
- Communications and engagement
- Delivering inclusive services

**Objective 1 - Employee Experience: Strengthen the diversity of our workforce and move to an inclusive culture that values difference, where all staff feel they belong and have opportunities to succeed**

**Lead: Jackie Foglietta, Director of HR & OD**

Timeline:	Priority:
<p><b>By the end of 2020/21 (April 2021)</b></p>	<p>Update and work towards a mandatory EDI training package for all staff so they better understand and meet the needs of colleagues and residents with protected characteristics</p> <p>This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reverse mentoring for senior managers and members of the Employee Reference Groups;</li> <li>• Unconscious bias training for all staff and new starters;</li> <li>• Developing an unconscious bias network of 30 staff who are trained to deliver unconscious bias training to teams across the council</li> <li>• Putting out a tender in January 2021 for a training package for evidence-based training on experiences and issues faced by people with protected characteristics, such as disability awareness for managers and active bystander training</li> </ul> <p>Support the council’s Employee Reference Groups (ERGs) to develop their profile and role by:</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assigning each ERG an Executive Director and Cabinet Member sponsor so they can raise concerns directly with, and secure support from, the council’s leadership;</li> <li>• Provide support to the existing ERGs to enhance their effectiveness, such as annual action plans and protected time for staff to attend;</li> <li>• Providing encouragement, resources and support for colleagues who want to establish new ERGs.</li> </ul>
<p>Improve the quality and visibility of our staffing data to identify and monitor EDI issues across colleagues with protected characteristics. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workforce representation;</li> <li>• Promotion;</li> <li>• Bullying and harassment;</li> <li>• Discrimination;</li> <li>• Retention</li> </ul> <p>This data will support Directorates to develop local plans to support EDI across their business areas, including approaches to succession planning</p>
<p>Enable more staff to feel confident to declare information on protected characteristics, such as disability and sexual orientation, to improve the support we can provide them</p>
<p>Make the policies designed to support and protect our staff clearer, such as grievance, bullying and harassment policies, and ensure colleagues who use them have the right support in place.</p> <p>Use data on formal HR procedures to identify any bias hotspots and take action.</p>
<p>Ensure our approach to agile working benefits all staff and supports improved productivity and wellbeing.</p>

	<p>We will strengthen our support for colleagues with disabilities who require reasonable adjustments to deliver their roles effectively. This includes improving access to using technologies for remote working, Occupational Health and Access to Work.</p>
<p><b>Long-term actions to be progressed throughout 2021/22.</b></p>	<p>Strengthen our recruitment processes to focus on attracting the best talent and minimise potential sources of bias. This includes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introducing blind recruitment and develop ways to make recruitment panels more diverse;</li> <li>• Working with voluntary, community and faith sector partners to address the recruitment of underrepresented groups across the organisation.</li> <li>• Working with recruitment agencies to ensure we attract a diverse pool of candidates for senior leadership positions</li> </ul>
	<p>Continue monitoring and taking action to narrow the Gender Pay Gap</p>
	<p>Develop and introduce ethnicity and disability pay gap reporting</p>
	<p>Work with ERGs to identify accreditation from leading EDI organisations to work towards, such as Race in the Workplace accreditation.</p>

<p><b>Objective 2, Leadership: Members and senior officers are champions of equality, diversity and inclusion, acting as role models and demonstrating their commitment to tackling inequality.</b></p>	
<p><b>Lead: Katie Stewart, CLT Executive sponsor for EDI</b></p>	
<p><b>Timeline:</b></p>	<p><b>Priority:</b></p>
<p><b>By the end of 2020/21 (April 2021)</b></p>	<p>Each Directorate Leadership Team appoints an EDI champion who is responsible for identifying and acting on the local EDI issues, and provides support and challenge to colleagues. [local plans – to add]</p>
	<p>Prioritise staff from protected groups to attend the Career Sprints Leadership programme to increase diversity in the council’s leadership and management</p>
<p><b>Long-term actions to be progressed throughout 2021.</b></p>	<p>Work with partners to provide leadership on EDI across Surrey towards a common agenda and seek opportunities for collaboration.</p>
	<p>Support Members to lead on the EDI agenda by building their knowledge and awareness through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A refreshed Member EDI training programme as part of their continuing professional development;</li> <li>• Supporting the Leader and Cabinet to engage with Surrey’s diverse communities to strengthen relationships and further understanding of issues facing these communities.</li> </ul>
	<p>Hold a Member led review into councillor diversity and inclusion at Surrey County Council, ensuring that our practices support councillors of all backgrounds to work effectively</p>
	<p>Seek to integrate and learn from best practice with other local authorities to adopt approaches to improving the diversity of the council’s senior officer leadership.</p>

Objective 3, Knowing and Engaging Our Communities: Using the best information available and fostering good relations with and within our communities, to work with them to address their needs and maximise local participation	
Lead: Nicola Kilvington, Director for Insight, Analytics and Intelligence	
Timeline:	Priority:
<b>Short-term actions to be completed by the end of the financial year (April 2021).</b>	Work with the voluntary, community and faith sector EDI group to collaborate on and deliver initiatives to make Surrey a fairer place to live and work
	Support growth and development of a Faith Links Network across Surrey with faith partners
	Pilot a project across council services and with partners from January to April 2021 to eradicate period poverty and stigma across the county.
	Develop Locality Profiles to better understand the needs of all communities at neighbourhood level
<b>Long-term actions to be progressed throughout 2021.</b>	Provide guidance and tools, such as an EDI tool kit for Surrey County Council’s partners, for strengthening anti-discrimination in Surrey.
	Develop a Leader’s No-one Left Behind Advisory Panel, bringing together experts from equality groups and voluntary, community and faith sector organisations to shape, influence and guide the county’s approach to EDI
	Use insight gathered from Locality Profiles to identify key EDI issues in each place and develop measures with communities to address them.
	Ensure we gather robust equality information from our data and insight and ensure all consultation and engagement is inclusive. This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advice and guidance for services on how to capture and analyse data on EDI issues;</li> <li>• Support for services to ensure their consultation and engagement activities are as inclusive as possible;</li> <li>• Streamlining inclusive participation methods into the design of the new locality governance arrangements</li> </ul>

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<p><b>Objective 4, Communication and Engagement: to clearly communicate a radical approach to equality, diversity and inclusion across the organisation especially to our residents.</b></p>	
<p><b>Lead: Andrea Newman, Director for Communications and Engagement</b></p>	
<p><b>Timeline:</b></p>	<p><b>Priority:</b></p>
<p><b>Short-term actions to be completed by the end of the financial year (April 2021).</b></p>	<p>Develop tools, support and guidance for staff to improve the accessibility and inclusiveness of our communications. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Making the public website as accessible as possible in compliance with the new Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) Accessibility Regulations</li> <li>• Guidelines to support officers when communicating with diverse groups of residents;</li> <li>• Developing an inclusive language guide to support colleagues feel more confident in having sensitive conversations</li> </ul>
<p><b>Long-term actions to be progressed throughout 2021.</b></p>	<p>Raise awareness with residents, partners and staff of the organisation’s radical EDI agenda, by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Celebrating Surrey’s diversity, and that of SCC’s workforce, such as through a Surrey diversity festival</li> <li>• Sharing positive stories to promote work to tackle inequality including best practice stories</li> <li>• Facilitating Members and the Corporate Leadership Team regularly and openly talking about the importance of EDI to the organisation and issues</li> <li>• Highlighting initiatives to support staff, e.g., ERGs, policies to tackle bullying, harassment and discrimination, etc.</li> <li>• Reporting progress against our equality objectives, including a ‘you said, we did’ from the Diversity Tour</li> <li>• Promoting the work of the ERGs</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• EDI Champions within front-line services to promote the agenda through the wider organisation</li></ul>
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<p><b>Objective 5, Delivering Inclusive Services: our services are responsive to individual needs so all residents can access services easily and have opportunities to improve their outcomes.</b></p> <p><b>Lead: Katie Stewart, CLT Executive sponsor for EDI</b></p>	
<p><b>Timeline:</b></p>	<p><b>Priority:</b></p>
<p><b>Short-term actions to be completed by the end of the financial year (April 2021).</b></p>	<p>Ensure services are equipped to assess, and understand the importance of, the equality implications of their policies and service decisions through Equality Impact Assessments (EqIA)</p>
	<p>Support an inclusive approach in the Communities transformation portfolio, such as Local Community Networks, Your Fund Surrey and Libraries, so all residents can participate in decision-making and benefit from inclusive accessible services.</p>
	<p>Strengthen our policies and training in Procurement and Commissioning so we work with suppliers who share our commitment to EDI and support us to tackle inequalities</p>
	<p>Work with the Land and Property service to ensure the council’s buildings are inclusive and accessible for all</p>
	<p>Produce a digital accessibility policy and governance to support residents and staff to access digital information and products with ease</p>
<p><b>Long-term actions to be progressed throughout 2021</b></p>	<p>Monitor progress of the Organisation Strategy 2021-26 equality objectives through the council’s outcome-based plans for each of the four strategy priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tackle economic inequality and disparity so all residents have the opportunities to access the jobs, homes and transport they need to share in the benefits of growth</li> <li>• Work to close the county's healthy life expectancy gap by focusing our resources on children and adults who need our services most so they can be healthy, independent, and thrive</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with communities, through our new local engagement model, to make it easier for all residents to participate in local democracy, service design and decision-making</li> </ul>
	<p>Ensure equality impacts are understood as part decision making for emergencies and/or serious incidents and put mitigations in place where needed</p>

**How we'll know this is making an impact**

What will be different?	How will we know?
<p>Our workforce is more representative of Surrey's diverse population</p>	<p>Increase % of our workforce from the following protected groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disability</li> <li>• LGBTQ+</li> <li>• BAME, and</li> <li>• People aged 30 and under</li> </ul>
<p>People working for the council feel included and valued, they belong at the organisation and have the same opportunities to succeed</p>	<p>Pulse Survey measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % people who feel they are able to bring their whole selves to work</li> <li>• % people who feel fairly treated by the council</li> <li>• % people who feel the council is committed to creating a diverse and inclusive environment</li> <li>• % people who feel SCC acts fairly with regard to career progression/promotion</li> <li>• Number of people who have personally experienced discrimination at work in the past 12 months</li> </ul> <p>Reduce Gender Pay Gap average</p>
<p>The council's officer leadership better represents the community it serves</p>	<p>Increase % of colleagues in management from the following protected groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disability</li> <li>• LGBTQ+</li> <li>• BAME</li> </ul>
<p>Residents feel they have good relations within their</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % residents who feel strong sense of belonging in their local area</li> <li>• Measures of diversity among friendship groups, wider social networks and acquaintances</li> <li>• % residents who feel their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together</li> </ul>

**Appendix A – Draft EDI Action Plan**

communities and feel fully able to participate in public life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• % residents who participated in civic activity in last 12 months (e.g. registered to vote, formal volunteering, informal volunteering, formal culture and events)</li><li>• % residents treated unfairly in the last 12 months because of one or several protected characteristics or because of social class</li></ul>
All residents are able to access services easily	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Service satisfaction measures, broken down by protected groups</li><li>• Complaints data on accessibility and discrimination</li></ul>

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Tackling inequality so no-one is left behind is our guiding principle. We commit to being a fair, compassionate and inclusive council that genuinely values difference and makes everyone feel safe and they belong. We will be open and transparent with residents and staff on our intentions and will take responsibility to achieve them.

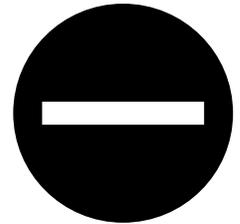
All residents should have the **same chances for a high quality of life and feel they belong in their communities**. We will champion our most vulnerable residents, including those who may suffer from prejudice and discrimination because of who they are or their circumstances



We are committed to **supporting all Members and staff** to feel they belong at the council and have opportunities to succeed. We will work with staff to identify and remove barriers that get in the way of inclusivity and diversity.



We take a **zero tolerance approach to bullying, discrimination and harassment**. Members and employees are expected to behave in ways that help us to support residents, partners and council colleagues. We will hold Members and staff to the high standards required, dealing decisively with instances of discrimination.



## How we'll meet our commitment

Focusing on equality, diversity and inclusion is vitally important to improve the experiences of residents and staff and ensure no one in the county is left behind. We also have a legal responsibility under the Equality Act 2010. We aim to eliminate discrimination, increase equality of opportunity and foster good relations across people from all groups protected by law\*. To do this, we will:

- Proactively look for potential discrimination and work with residents and partners to co-design services so they are inclusive, accessible and fair;
- Minimise bias in our employment practices, including recruitment, and support staff to carry out their responsibilities under this commitment;
- Facilitate and embed Employee Reference Groups for staff from protected groups to have a safe space to engage the council's leadership on equality issues.
- Develop a workforce that reflects Surrey's diverse communities;
- Ensure all contractors providing goods and services on our behalf share our commitment;
- Influence other employers and partners to work with us on this agenda through joint initiatives to tackle inequality;
- Use complaints feedback to identify unfair treatment and take steps to correct this

\*Protected groups cover Age, Disability, Sex, Gender Reassignment, Race, Religion and belief, Sexual orientation, Marriage and civil partnerships, Pregnancy and maternity. Carers are also protected by association.

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# Appendix C – Key resident and workforce equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) statistics

- This document presents key data to the Resources and Performance Select Committee that supports our case Surrey County Council to lead a radical EDI agenda. It is not exhaustive, but it highlights key issues that support the rationale for an increased focus on EDI.
- Data has been sourced from:
  - Organisation Strategy 2021-26
  - Surrey Health and Wellbeing Strategy
  - Covid-19 Community Impact Assessment
  - Population data, including Census 2011 and mid-year population estimates
  - SCC workforce and Member data

All based on latest data as of November 2020

# We need to deepen our understanding and further support residents at risk of being left behind



**A 14 year gap** in healthy life expectancy between the some wards in Surrey



An ageing population with growth in over 65s, including **29% growth in over 85s by 2030**, leading to more demand on services for vulnerable older people



The average GCSE Attainment 8 scores for children on Education, Health and Care Plans in Surrey in 2018-19 was **three times lower** than the wider pupil population



**37% of 16 – 34 year olds** are experiencing worse mental health, such as stress or anxiety, from the pandemic.



Surrey's employment rates for adults with learning disabilities **has decreased by 35%** since 2011



There were 1,931 incidents of hate crime in Surrey recorded by Surrey Police in 2019-20, **an increase of 92%** since 2015-16. 72% were racially motivated, and 12% due to sexual orientation



Black and minority ethnic residents are **much more concerned about the impact of Covid-19** on their finances, health and caring responsibilities compared to the wider population

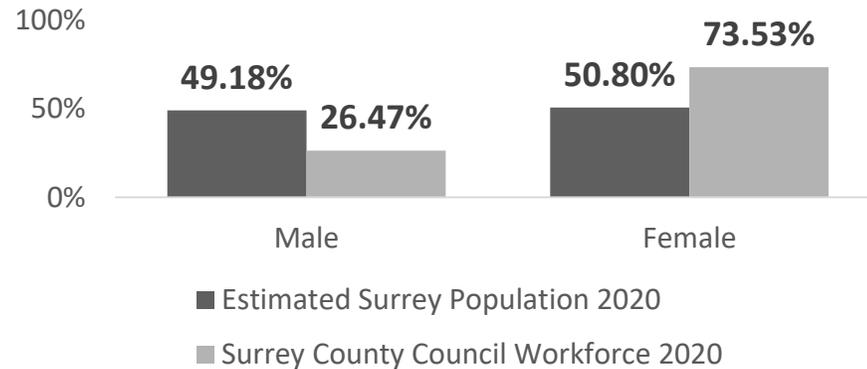


Women are at **greatest risk from domestic abuse**, particularly young women aged 16 – 24, pregnant women and those with young children, older dependent women and those with a long-term illness or disability. There has been a sharp increase in incidents during the pandemic

# We need to tackle barriers to developing a diverse workforce and inclusive culture

**9.6%** in community vs **<1%** in management

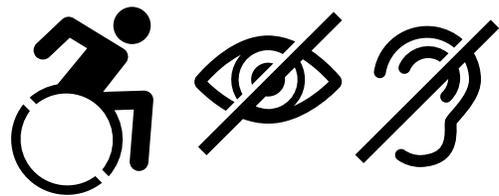
While the proportion of workforce from black and minority ethnic backgrounds is broadly representative of Surrey's population, they make up **less than 1% of senior managers**



Women are over-represented in SCC's workforce, but there is a significant **Gender Pay Gap, which was 16.8% in March 2019**

13.8% of SCC's FTE are aged 30 or below, against a target of 16%. However, colleagues aged 25 or under represent **only 5% of the workforce**.

**5%** workforce vs **6.3%** community



14% of residents have either a long-term illness or disability, but **only 3% of SCC's workforce** have declared they have one

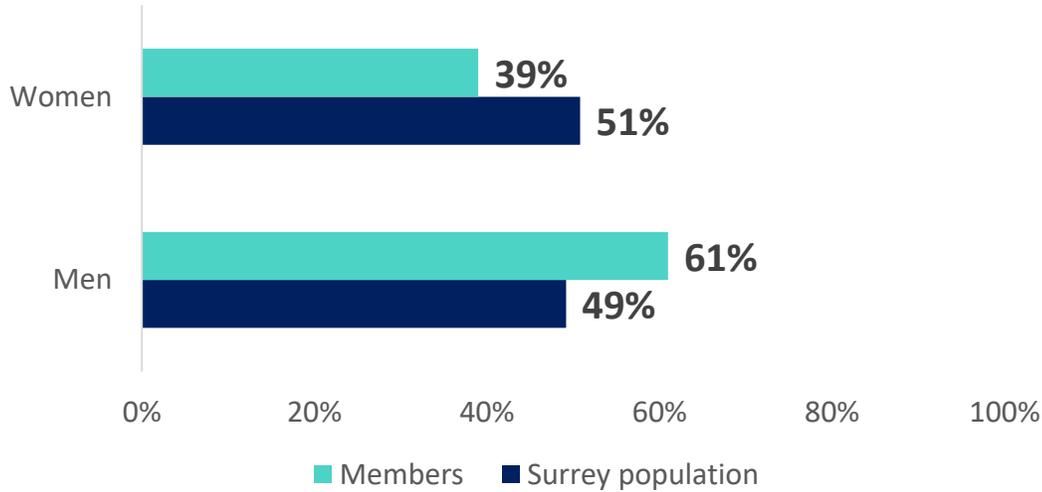


You are **less likely to be successful in a job application** to Surrey County Council if you are aged 20 – 24, a man, BAME, LGBTQ+ or disabled

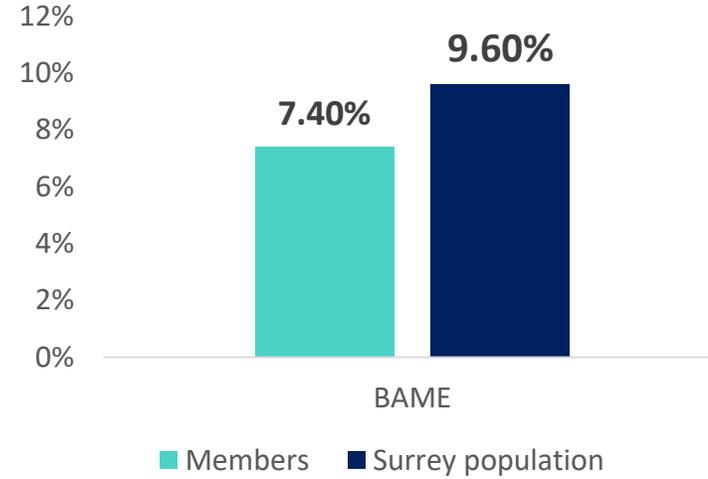
You are **more likely to be involved in a formal HR procedure (e.g. disciplinary or grievance)** if you are BAME, disabled, a man, aged 40 – 49 or 60 – 69 or LGBTQ+



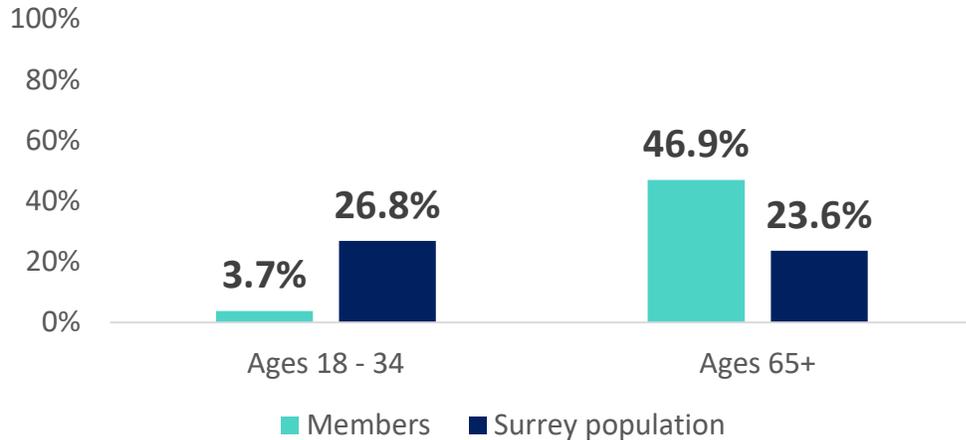
# We could do more to strengthen diversity among Members



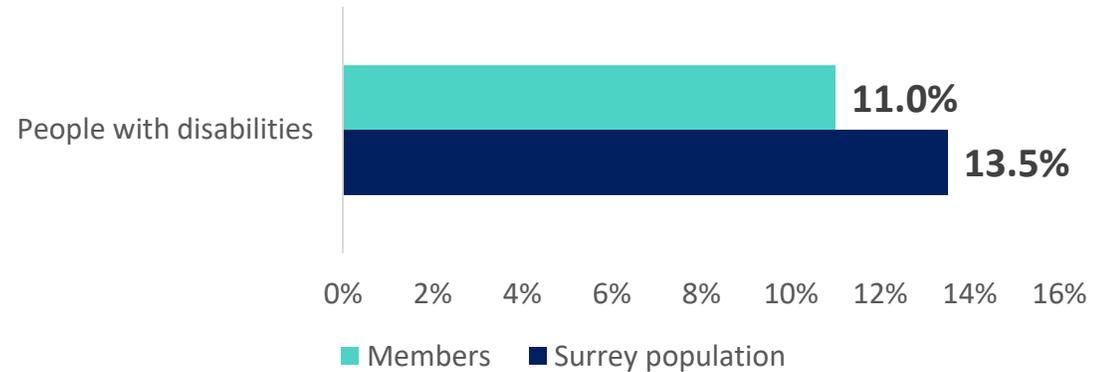
Women are under-represented in the council's membership compared to the Surrey population



BAME Members are under-represented



Young people below the age of 34 are under-represented, and over 65s are over-represented



The proportion of Members with disabilities are slightly under-represented compared to the Surrey population



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# CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE TASK GROUP REPORT

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RESOURCES AND PERFORMANCE SELECT COMMITTEE

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL

# RESOURCES AND PERFORMANCE SELECT COMMITTEE



6 January 2021

## CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE TASK GROUP REPORT

### Purpose of report

- To note the progress of the Customer Experience Task Group to date.
- To agree the recommendations.
- To conclude the work of the Customer Experience Task Group given the limitations placed by the Covid-19 pandemic.

### Introduction

1. The Customer Experience Task Group (the Task Group) was convened in early 2020 in response to discussion at the 18 October 2019 meeting of the Resources and Performance Select Committee. The aim was to conduct a 'deep dive' into customers' experiences when interacting with Council services, in the context of the major programme of transformation that the Council is undergoing. Its definition of customers focused on residents and other external customers, and their interaction with, chiefly, the Council's Contact Centre.
2. The Membership of the Task Group is as follows: Cllrs Nick Harrison (Chairman of the Task Group), Will Forster, Bob Gardner, Chris Townsend and Richard Walsh.
3. The Task Group undertook a creative and practical approach towards scrutiny that extended beyond formal committee meetings. This included in-person visits and a survey. Relevant materials from the Task Group's meetings were also published on the Council's website in order to encourage public engagement with its activity and to ensure its work was as open as possible.
4. Having met four times between February and April 2020, the Task Group's work, towards the end of its review, was unfortunately disrupted by the Covid-19 pandemic. Benchmarking visits to other county councils' customer services departments had to be postponed, as Members were keen to conduct these in person in order to get the most out of these visits. Due to the long-lasting and

volatile nature of the pandemic, and the recently rising impact of its second wave, however, it became apparent that in-person benchmarking visits would not be feasible.

5. In addition, given the limitations of remote meetings in this instance, as well as other pressing socio-economic priorities combined with the second wave of Covid-19, virtual visits to other local authorities are not deemed suitable to provide the desired 'real feel' and sense of customer experience and service.
6. Due to the pandemic, the Customer Services team had also been required to prioritise Covid-19 response activities to support vulnerable residents, such as operating the Community Helpline and working with Public Health to set up the Local Tracing Partnership for Surrey.

### **Meetings of the Task Group**

7. The Task Group first met on 4 February 2020 for a discussion on the general background and trajectory of its work. Background papers used in the formation of the Task Group, as well as the scoping document, have been published on the Council's website and can be found here: [4 February meeting papers](#).
8. Thereon, the Task Group met on 2 March 2020 for a session in which officers gave a presentation and answered Members' questions on the Residents' Survey. Relevant materials, including the minutes of the meeting, can be found here: [2 March meeting papers](#).
9. On 6 March 2020, the Task Group conducted a day-long visit to the Surrey County Council Contact Centre, which is often the first point of contact for residents. Materials from that meeting can be found here: [6 March meeting papers](#).
10. Subsequently, the Task Group met remotely (using Skype) on 3 April 2020 and discussed, among other topics, how the Task Group could function during the Covid-19 pandemic. Minutes of this meeting can be found on the Council's website: [3 April meeting minutes](#).

### **Members' Survey**

11. Simultaneous to its meetings detailed above, the Task Group conducted an anonymous survey for Members on their residents' and their own interactions with Customer Services.
12. An online link to the survey on the topic was sent to all County Council Members on 12 February 2020. Members were then reminded about the survey and the link was resent a month later, on 12 March.

13. Moreover, a number of paper copies were handed out to Members on 24 February at an all-Member seminar. The results from these paper copies were then input to digital form, so the final digital results represent all responses received.
14. The survey received 26 responses overall. It was conducted anonymously, but respondents were given the option to enter their name at the end of the survey, if they so wished.
15. A description and analysis of the survey results can be found below as Annex 1.

### **Summary of Members' Survey**

16. The key takeaways from the Members' survey are:
  - Highways was the most common topic of queries;
  - Respondents stated the belief that there are certainly advantages to residents being able to contact Members directly with their queries, with this existing alongside the Customer Services routes;
  - Respondents often referred residents to Customer Services routes;
  - Most respondents praised the efficiency and effectiveness of the Council's Customer Services, as well as the friendly and helpful nature of staff. However, some raised issues about inconsistency of response, lack of conclusion to some queries, and a lack of information shared with Members by Customer Services; and
  - Some respondents noted that Members' interactions with Customer Services depended on the particular case, the Member's division or the Member's roles, e.g. whether they were a Cabinet Member or on a Select Committee.

### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

17. Based on the Task Group's work, recommendations are:
  - a) **Changing the manner in which the Council conducts budget consultation with residents.** It is, however, recognised that responsibility for consultations does not fall under the remit of Customer Services.

Potential changes include:

- Using a multiple-choice format;

- Providing residents with detail and information so their response to a consultation is more informed
- Using an approach that is deliberative in nature so that residents can give reasoning and opinion that can add context to their responses  
Clearly differentiating between statutory and non-statutory services; and
- As appropriate, employing an approach that will engage with a wide section of residents as is practical and not just those who are interested in its outcome

b) **Distinguishing between open ended (all options open) and closed consultations for other consultations undertaken by the Council.** There was a need to:

- Ensure each consultation is clear about its aims and objectives and that respondents understand what can (and can't) be influenced by completing it Use a combination of two types of consultations which includes quantitative questions (e.g. multiple-choice format) and qualitative (e.g. open ended questions), providing relevant background information in an accessible format to inform respondents and set the scene; and Organise an ad-hoc private meeting of Members or to use relevant select committees for pre-scrutiny of public consultation, using expert advice to look at how consultation questions are formulated, types of questions asked and whether questions are pertinent and open-ended where appropriate, before they are put to residents, partners and stakeholders.

c) **Consolidating training on Customer Services offered to Members** by Democratic Services, including training on the uses of the Members' enquiry inbox while continuing with the current training provided to Members.

d) **Undertaking deep-dive benchmarking in Customer Services beyond the work of the Task Group and existing benchmarking exercises** in collaboration with a statistically similar Local Authority, such as Hertfordshire.

e) **Maximise the use of existing feedback mechanisms operated by Customer Services** to actively demonstrate to residents that the Council takes their opinions on board.

f) **Ensuring that digital avenues** (for example, using YouTube videos to explain reporting procedures; Members using the Members' enquiries email address) are publicised and utilised in Customer Services wherever possible.

- g) **Ensuring sufficient publicity and awareness amongst residents** about the Customer Services pathways to access, and actively signposting residents to these.
- h) **Organising visits to the Contact Centre for all Members, as part of the induction process after the May elections.**
- i) **Scrutinising the Customer Experience during the Covid-19 pandemic** and the social transformation that it has effected.
- j) **Assessing the desirability of a further review in two years** in the light of advances in digital technology, the implementation of new services such as the Learners' Single Point of Access, progress with the Customer Experience Transformation Programme and to keep up with best practice.

## Recommendations

- 18. Final recommendations of the Task Group, based on the emergent themes, have been considered and agreed at its meeting on 25 November 2020.

## Next steps

- 19. The Task Group concludes its work due to the limitations placed upon it by the Covid-19 pandemic. This final report will be presented to the Resources and Performance Select Committee at its 21 January 2021 meeting, and then reported to the Cabinet on 23 February 2021.

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## Councillor Nick Harrison

Chairman of Customer Experience Task Group | Chairman of Resources and Performance Select Committee

Report contact:

**Kunwar Khan**

Scrutiny Officer | Legal and Democratic Services | [kunwar.khan@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:kunwar.khan@surreycc.gov.uk)

## Sources/background papers

Minutes and background papers of all meetings of the Customer Experience Task Group can be found on the Council's website: [Customer Experience Task Group papers](#). Members' Survey, below, as Annex 1

## **Annex 1:**

### Customer Experience Task Group: Members' Survey

#### **Background information**

1. A link to the survey was sent to all Members on 12 February 2020. Members were reminded about the survey and the link resent a month later, on 12 March.
2. Moreover, a number of paper copies were handed out to Members on 24 February at an all-Member seminar. The results from these paper copies were then input to the digital form, so the digital results represent all responses received.
3. The survey has received 26 responses overall and is still available online for Members to complete should they wish.
4. The survey was anonymous, but respondents were given the option to enter their name at the end of the survey.

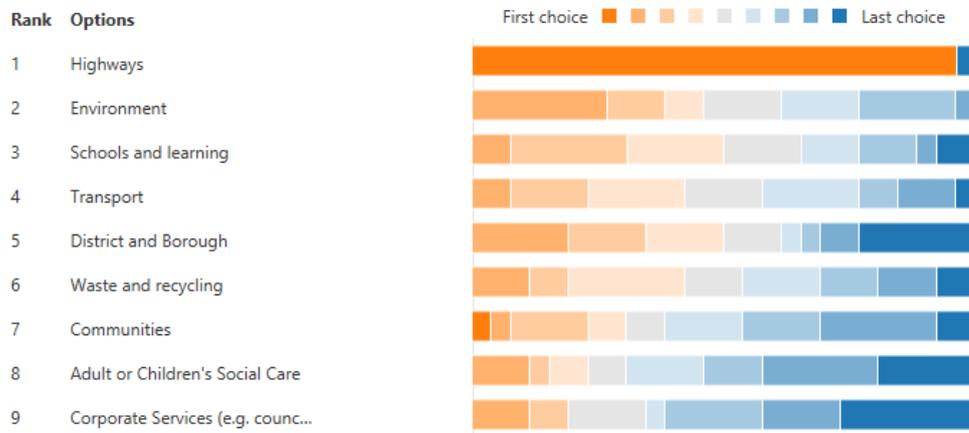
#### **Key findings**

5. Highways stands out clearly as by far the most common customer services topic for respondents. 25 of the 26 respondents rated highways number one out of the 'most common issues residents contact you directly with for resolution', and 21 of the 26 rated highways the number one issue that 'requires the greatest amount of your time and/or attention'.

**Figure 1**

What are the most common issues residents contact you directly with for resolution?

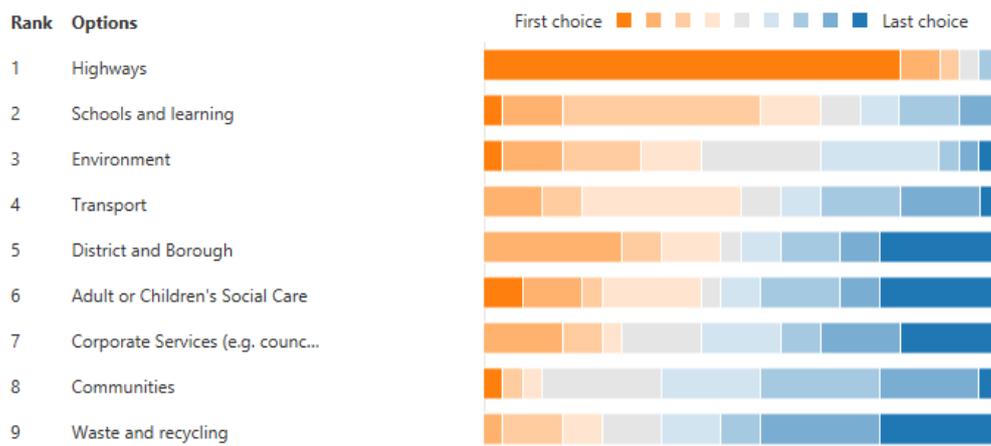
[More Details](#)



**Figure 2**

Which of these requires the greatest amount of your time and/or attention?

[More Details](#)

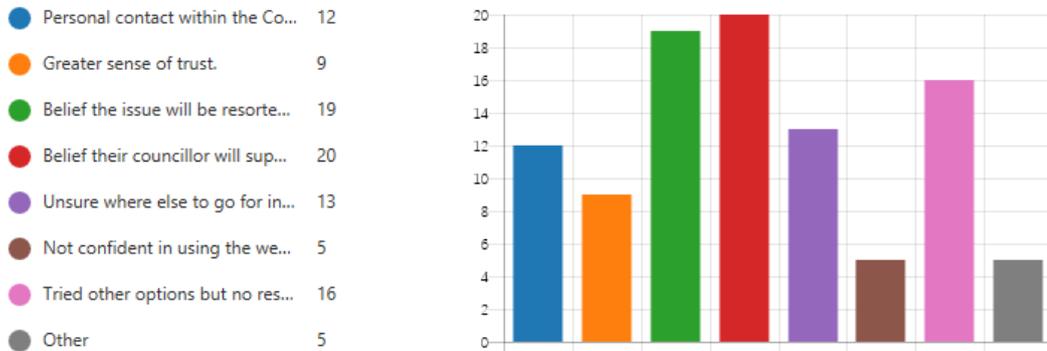


- For the questions in figures 1 and 2, environment, schools and learning, transport and districts and boroughs were the next most common and time-consuming topics after highways.
- Respondents responded that the reasons that residents contacted them directly rather than going to the Council's Customer Services or website were primarily 'belief their councillor will support their cause fully' and 'belief the issue will be resorted [sic] more quickly'.

### Figure 3

Why do you think residents contact you rather than going to the Council's Customer Services or the website?

[More Details](#)

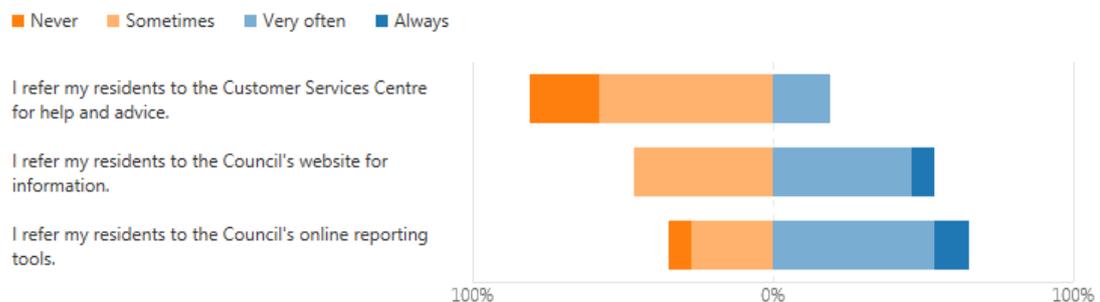


8. Respondents were less likely to refer residents to the Customer Services Contact Centre and more likely to refer residents to the Council's online reporting tools.

### Figure 4

Please rate how often you do the following statements.

[More Details](#)



9. Respondents expressed fairly high confidence levels in referring residents to all three of the information resources mentioned in figure 4.
10. In qualitative answers to the question 'why did you choose that confidence rating?' respondents' reasons to be confident included the greater efficiency of going through online/Customer Services routes, belief in the efficacy of the Council's Customer Services, and that residents could take responsibility when going through the online/Customer Services route.
11. Reasons to be less confident, meanwhile, included personal experience of poor service, lack of feedback when referring residents through those routes,

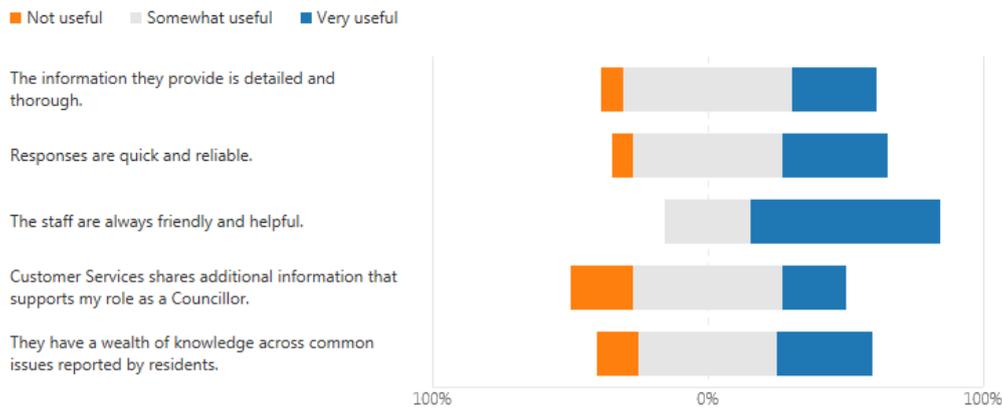
and a desire to provide personal assurance and not 'cop out' by referring a resident on elsewhere.

12. One respondent noted that whether or not they refer a resident depends on the nature of the enquiry.

### Figure 5

What aspect of Customer Services do you find useful?

[More Details](#)



13. Figure 5 shows that respondents found Customer Services staff friendly and helpful and responses quick and reliable. However, some respondents thought that Customer Services either did not share additional information to support their role as a councillor, or that if this information was shared, it was not useful (this is unclear due to the nature of the question in figure 5).

14. There was a wide variety of responses to the question of 'what information could Customer Services share with you in your role as a Councillor that would further support you and your residents?' All responses are shown below. It is clear from these responses that while a significant proportion of respondents are satisfied with the information Customer Services already provides, many respondents have more specific suggestions for what information could be provided. Amongst the information already shared with councillors, some respondents noted that the highways-related information was useful.

## Figure 6

They could advise us how many reports they have on issues we have raised

Future plans of the council

Put one thru to person requested

More divisional highways information

Resolution of issues reported in my Division

Clearer information on roles and lines of responsibility

An update when an enquiry has gone past time as to what progress has been made

Again, I do not understand what I am being asked. Officers within services should share any information which affects my Division and/or which could be raise issues (good or not so good) amongst residents. Officers in services should also share new initiatives or independent reports etc. that affects SCC' service users. But I am not sure where Customer Services role is in all that.

If the stats were easy to collate it would be interesting to see what type of contacts my residents were making with Customer Services, so I am aware of the issues

Who from my division is contacting them and for what purposes - a weekly or monthly report would be helpful

Good to be able to track progress but not always useful in resolving complex issues.

Customer Services should follow up random enquiries and build knowledge from experience.

A date when something will be resolved. Too many issues are open-ended.

Progress updates on issues

n/a

n/a

Information shared seems to be relevant - my responsibility to get other info that I might need

Satisfactory conclusions to problems raised.

Most of the questions are on highways so updates would be great

I don't understand the question.....if I need to know something I ask, how can I know what else I need in the way of information if I don't know what there is available!

Unsure.

None regularly. I think a system that ensures I get the information I need when I request it is good enough.

put me in touch with the responsible officer

Depends on the particular case

Info about what queries they get from residents and how we might help Customer Services

We get a lot of notifications. Highlighting of deadlines and categorizing the relative importance would be useful

## Figure 7

It would be helpful to develop customer experience panels in divisions

I use Customer Services on a constant basis, mainly through the dedicated councillors' email. I note that Sian Humphreys and Farrah Orr pick up most of these and their initial swift responses ("got your message"!) and understanding of the nature of the issue and follow-up when the promised action has not happened is excellent. I also use the councillors telephone

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line for issues where I need a quick response or when a discussion is required to confirm it is a SCC responsibility. My recent telephone conversations with Louise and Rashid (apologies I don't know their second names) have been excellent.

I sometimes have to send in a chaser email or telephone when a promised response has not been received by the promised date. In all cases the customer services agent has ensured a swift response from the relevant team.

In short Customer Services help me to do a good job for my residents and enable me to be an effective councillor. They need to know that, and I aim to convey that when I get the opportunity. OK, so I don't report on-line not least because my experience of that has been negative and I have no guarantee timely action will result.

Finally, just to clarify, the high level of Borough enquiries I receive is because I am also a Borough Councillor.

I have noticed that the title of the email usually gets lost so all the information in the title line must be repeated in the text - I think this is an IT issue

Overall, they are helpful and quick

Female input!

I find these questions ambiguous.

Question 2 for example- answers depend on which Scrutiny Committee one is on or responsibilities within the community that you are known for and therefore contacted about by residents. For example, being a school governor or a trustee of a charity etc. This question is going to mean different things to different councillors.

I don't think most Members understand what exactly the role of Customer Services in terms of assisting/supporting/providing information to Members is as opposed to the public/residents in general. Should CS do more than fast-tracking queries sent to the Councillors' email address, which seem to be the case at the moment? It is ultimately up to Members to decide what else would assist them with their job.

The service used to excellent but found the responses became more vague so used the service less

I think at the moment I regard Customer Services as a bit of a letter box for Highways queries. I think a bulletin every couple of months would help. Perhaps a short advice pack for members.

I had difficulty in answering Q. 8 - it somewhat missed the point.

Consultations should be better publicised to our residents

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15. As shown in figure 7, in response to the request to 'add anything you feel relevant to the work of this task and finish group, such as your experience of and expectations around Customer Services, if you would like to', some respondents emphasised the helpfulness of the Customer Services staff. Some said that it would be useful for Members to receive more information on what Customer Services does, while others highlighted the need for resident consultation/panels. All responses can be seen above.

## RESOURCES AND PERFORMANCE SELECT COMMITTEE

21 January 2021



## 2021 Forward Work Programme (FWP) and Recommendation Tracker (RT)

Purpose of report: To review and agree the 2021 Forward Work Programme (FWP). To track recommendations made by the Select Committee.

### Introduction:

1. The Forward Work Programme (FWP) and Recommendation Tracker (RT) update is a standing item on the agenda of the Select Committee.
2. The FWP covers the expected activity in 2021 (Annex A).
3. The RT tracks recommendations made by the Committee (Annex B).
4. The FWP includes regular items, task and finish groups reporting and the additional items the Select Committee would like to engage with in coming months. This approach should enable the Select Committee to consider planning and resourcing for its scrutiny and overview work across the year whilst retaining enough flexibility to consider essential additional items as needed from time to time. There should be no more than two task and finish groups taking place concurrently.

### Recommendations:

5. The Select Committee is recommended:
  - a) To review and agree the 2021 Forward Work Programme (Annex A);
  - b) To make any appropriate suggestions for possible amendments including programming of in-depth reviews and other agenda items; and
  - c) To monitor the update provided in Recommendation Tracker (Annex B).

### Next Steps:

The Select Committee reviews its Forward Work Programme and Recommendation Tracker at each of its meetings.

Kunwar Khan  
Scrutiny Officer | Legal and Democratic Services  
Surrey County Council | [Kunwar.Khan@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:Kunwar.Khan@surreycc.gov.uk)

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## RESOURCES AND PERFORMANCE SELECT COMMITTEE | 2021 FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

**Chairman: Councillor Nick Harrison | Scrutiny Officer: Kunwar Khan | DS Assistant: Xanthe McNicol**

Dates(2021)	Items to be scrutinised					
21st Jan	2021/22 Final Budget	Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)	Cabinet Member Priorities Update	Treasury Management Strategy		<b>Task Groups:</b> CHAP: office strategy (January)
18th Mar	Performance Monitoring	DB&I Update Report	IT & Digital Update, excluding DB&I	Covid-19 Update	Property Programme Update	CHAP (March)
24th June	Induction/Training			Cabinet Member Priorities Update		Budget Sub-Group - updates (July)
17th Sep	Performance Monitoring	Property Programme Update	HR Report	Strategic and Capital Investments Update	TBC	CHAP (September) Budget Sub-Group - budget preparation (September)
17th Dec	Performance Monitoring	2022/23 Budget	Cabinet Member Priorities Update	TBC	TBC	Budget Sub-Group - plans (November)

*NB: 1. TMS to the Audit and Governance Committee on 29 January and to Resources and Performance Select Committee on 21 January, 2. 2021 Draft Budget to go to Cabinet in November 2020 and to Resources and Performance Select Committee in December, final budget update in January.*

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## RESOURCES AND PERFORMANCE SELECT COMMITTEE ACTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS TRACKER

The recommendations tracker allows Committee Members to monitor responses, actions and outcomes against their recommendations or requests for further actions. The tracker is updated following each meeting. Once an action has been completed, it will be shaded green to indicate that it will be removed from the tracker at the next meeting.

<b>KEY</b>			
	No Progress Reported	Action In Progress	Action Completed

		<p>are in future advised of property proposals in advance of changes;</p> <p>5. The Strategic Finance Business Partner to provide a high-level departmental breakdown of headcount vacancy on an FTE basis;</p> <p>6. The Director of Corporate Finance to provide, at the 21 January 2021 Select Committee meeting, an analysis of Central Income and Expenditure.</p>	<p>Strategic Finance Business Partner (Resources and TPP) Director of Corporate Finance</p>	<p>4. The action has been sent to the Strategic Finance Business Partner and will be followed up with officers in Land &amp; Property for a response.</p> <p>5. The action has been sent to the responsible officer for a response.</p> <p>6. The action has been sent to the responsible officer and the information will be included in the report to the 21 January meeting.</p>
18 December 2020	Performance Report	<p><u>Actions:</u></p> <p>1. The Head of Portfolios to provide to the Select Committee a written response linking the transformation indicators TRN 01 and TRN 02 and the information presented in the annex to the report;</p>	Head of Portfolios	<p>1. The action has been sent to the responsible officer for a response.</p>

## RESOURCES AND PERFORMANCE SELECT COMMITTEE ACTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS TRACKER

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		2. The Director of HR&OD to provide figures going back a couple of years on how many apprentices finished their apprenticeships and how many stayed on as employees post-apprenticeship.	Director of HR&OD	2. The action has been sent to the responsible officer for a response.
18 December 2020	County Hall Move and Agile Programme Update	<p><u>Recommendation:</u> The Select Committee recommends that the County Hall Move and Agile Programme Task Group is to receive the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The Agile Office Estate Strategy;</li> <li>b. The results and analysis of the Woodhatch travel plan survey and agile workforce programme survey;</li> <li>c. Details of the County Hall sale and bids – the Task Group should have an opportunity to review and comment on any bids to buy County Hall before any decision is made.</li> </ul>	Executive Director of Resources	The relevant information has been sent to the Task Group in advance of its 13 January 2021 meeting.
18 December 2020	Broadband in Surrey	<p><u>Recommendation:</u> The Select Committee recommends that it receives the Digital Infrastructure Strategy, before the strategy is finalised, for scrutiny at a future meeting.</p> <p><u>Action:</u></p>	Director of Economic Growth and Prosperity	The recommendation has been sent to relevant officers and a date for the strategy to come to the Select Committee is being finalised.

## RESOURCES AND PERFORMANCE SELECT COMMITTEE ACTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS TRACKER

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<b>KEY</b>			
	No Progress Reported	Action In Progress	Action Completed

		The Engagement Manager to work in partnership with the communications team to provide materials that Members can use on their social media, newsletters or email signatures to promote the broadband programme and community fibre partnerships.	Engagement Manager	The Engagement Manager has contacted the comms team about this, but it has had to be postponed due to the Covid-19 pandemic third wave. The Engagement Manager will keep Democratic Services Officers updated on this.
8 October 2020	Property Programme Update	<p><u>Recommendation:</u> The Select Committee recommends that the Asset and Place Strategy Refresh be presented to the Resources and Performance Select Committee at its January 2021 meeting, alongside a schedule for continued updates to the Select Committee twice a year.</p> <p><u>Actions:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Director of Strategic Land and Property Assets to provide detail of contingency plans in the next property programme update to the Select Committee;</li> </ol>	<p>Director of Strategic Land and Property Assets</p> <p>Director of Strategic Land and Property Assets</p>	<p>The next Property Programme Update report has been deferred until the March 2021 meeting.</p> <p>1. The next Property Programme Update report has been deferred until the March 2021 meeting.</p>
18 October 2019	Quarterly Performance Report (Q1 2019/20)	<p><u>Recommendation:</u> The Select Committee is to receive on an annual basis information on how Surrey County</p>	Director of Intelligence,	The Select Committee's request has been forwarded to relevant officers and the

## RESOURCES AND PERFORMANCE SELECT COMMITTEE ACTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS TRACKER

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The recommendations tracker allows Committee Members to monitor responses, actions and outcomes against their recommendations or requests for further actions. The tracker is updated following each meeting. Once an action has been completed, it will be shaded green to indicate that it will be removed from the tracker at the next meeting.

<b>KEY</b>			
	No Progress Reported	Action In Progress	Action Completed

		Council's performance compares with other councils.	Analytics and Insight	possibility of including this in future reports will continue to be examined as performance reporting is reviewed.
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