

## DRAFT ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2020/21

Surrey County Council has a responsibility for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, that there is a sound system of governance, appropriate controls are in place and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for. This Annual Governance Statement describes the key activities during 2020/21, progress against key issues raised in last year’s governance review, summarises the main elements of the council’s governance framework and identifies key areas of focus for 2021/22.

### 2020/21 context

During 2020-21, the council faced unprecedented challenges brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic, which have fundamentally changed the context in which the council operates. In response to the impact of Covid-19, the council conducted an in-year reset of its budget, strategic frame, and delivery plans to recognise that while the 2030 Vision remains the right destination, how we get there needs to change. Through the council’s response to Covid-19 several organisational priorities have come into sharper focus and these priority objectives form a new focus for the council and a basis of a refreshed Organisation Strategy.

# OUR FOCUS FOR THE NEXT 5 YEARS 2021 - 2026



We want Surrey to be a uniquely special place where everyone has a great start in life, people live healthy and fulfilling lives, are enabled to achieve their full potential and contribute to their community and where no one is left behind. Where our economy thrives and grows, in balance with our beautiful natural environment. While many residents and businesses thrive in Surrey, not everyone has the same opportunities to flourish so our focus for the next five years will be guided by the principle of **tackling inequality and ensuring no-one is left behind**

### PRIORITY OBJECTIVES

<p><b>Growing a sustainable economy so everyone can benefit</b> Support people and businesses across Surrey to grow during the economic recovery and re-prioritise infrastructure plans to adapt to the changing needs and demands of residents at a time of financial challenges.</p>	<p><b>Tackling health inequality</b> Drive work across the system to reduce widening health inequalities, increasing our focus on addressing mental health and accelerating health and social care integration to reduce demand on services while improving health outcomes for residents</p>	<p><b>Enabling a greener future</b> Build on behaviour changes and lessons learnt during lockdown to further progress work to tackle environmental challenges, improve air quality and focus on green energy to make sure we achieve our net zero targets</p>	<p><b>Empowering communities</b> Reinvigorate our relationship with residents, empowering communities to tackle local issues and support one another, while making it easier for everyone to play an active role in the decisions that will shape Surrey’s future</p>
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### TRANSFORMING THE COUNCIL

<p><b>Customer experience</b> We will make 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 digital self-service options.</p>	<p><b>Stronger partnerships</b> We will focus on building stronger and more effective partnerships with residents, other public services and businesses to collectively meet challenges and take opportunities</p>	<p><b>Transformation and reform</b> We will continue our comprehensive transformation programme to improve outcomes for residents, deliver efficiencies and make sure financial sustainability underpins our approach</p>	<p><b>Digital and data</b> We will embrace digital solutions and take a data-driven approach to transforming our organisation and services we deliver for residents</p>	<p><b>Agile, diverse and motivated workforce</b> We will embed new agile ways of working and provide staff with the tools and support to be high performing and outcomes-focused. We will put equality, diversity and inclusivity at the heart of everything we do, valuing the strength of a diverse workforce</p>	<p><b>Financial management</b> We will spend our money in the most efficient and effective ways, so we can have the greatest impact on improving people’s quality of life and ensure we provide the best value for money to our residents</p>
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To find out more about our priorities and read our full Organisation Strategy please go to [www.surreycc.gov.uk](http://www.surreycc.gov.uk)

Despite the challenges, the council adapted quickly during the year to continue to deliver the majority of services for residents, whilst also working as part of Surrey’s Local Resilience Forum (LRF). The work of the previous two years put the council on a strong foundation and has enabled us to continue providing services while making efficiencies.

The strategic reset has also enabled us to enhance or adapt our approaches based on the learning from our response to Covid-19, building on the increased community spirit that has emerged to develop new ways of working with communities and longer term, consider how public services can enable better outcomes for the people and place of Surrey. The council will continue to play a key role in managing the emerging challenges, being prepared to amend the strategic direction where necessary and maintain a crucial role in the continued response and recovery.

### **Covid 19 – ongoing response**

Robust governance arrangements were developed at the beginning of the pandemic, with clear reporting and escalation to ensure effective and swift decision making in response to COVID-19 activity. A process for capturing, recording, and reporting COVID-19 costs and risks was put in place to ensure a robust process with a clear audit trail.

The council implemented arrangements to enable remote committee meetings to take place so that Members could continue their decision-making roles. Any decisions that were taken under delegated authority have been published on the council's website, reviewed by the Audit and Governance Committee, and reported at the monthly Cabinet meeting.

The council has undertaken a phase 1 lessons learned review, the objectives of which were to recognise the strengths of emergency response activity to date, identify opportunities to improve practice in the short-term, facilitate transition into restoration and recovery; and strengthen the council's corporate resilience in readiness for future emergencies. Interviews were conducted with senior managers from across the council who had played an important role in the council's response to Covid-19. The review underlined the many strengths of the council's response, which offer a strong foundation upon which the council can increase its corporate resilience.

Community Impact Assessments (CIAs) have been produced, linked to the LRF Recovery Coordinating Group, which tell the story of Covid-19 and seek to understand the impact Covid-19 has had on communities in order to enable targeted short-term support and mitigations for the future.

### **Financial Management**

The last decade has provided a particularly challenging landscape for Local Government finances, continued reduced funding coupled with ever increasing demand for services. 2020/21 was a particularly difficult year due to the pandemic, which saw costs rise and income fall. Albeit assistance was provided from Central Government, it continues to challenge how we provide services in the future and what the new post-COVID normal will look like. The ongoing pandemic creates an element of uncertainty particularly at a time when we are continuing to receive one-year only funding from Government. This was the case in 2020/21 and will be the case for 2021/22.

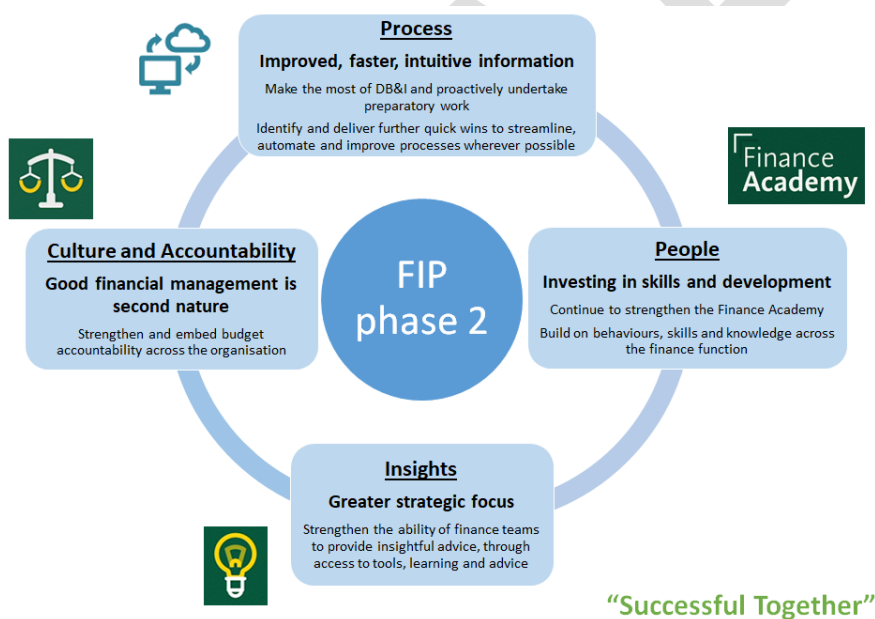
Despite this, collectively the council has worked incredibly hard to ensure costs and income are managed effectively to achieve a **surplus balanced** position. The council has continued to focus on a smaller set of priorities, as outlined in the Organisation Strategy, meaning a better alignment of resources and activity to deliver the outcomes that will make the most difference to the lives of residents, and ensuring this is done in the most financially sustainable way.

Success should be measured against the positive impact on the residents of Surrey on the delivery of priority objectives and the considerable investment made over the last 2 years with the transformation agenda.

For the third successive year, the council prepared a budget which did not rely on the use of Reserves to balance the budget, allowed for continued investment in the Transformation programme and created a Feasibility Reserve which will support increasing investment in the community. The contingency and Reserves have been built year-on-year to provide flexibility and enable a risk managed approach to support financial sustainability in the medium-term.

As part of our journey for continuous improvement, the council’s Finance Improvement Programme (FIP) was closed in June 2020 and FIP Phase 2 was launched. The success that was FIP Phase 1 culminated in a CIPFA Public Finance 2020 award with the Finance Team receiving a “Highly Commended” accolade.

The four cornerstones of the next phase of the Improvement Programme are: Improved, faster and more intuitive data; further investment in upskilling of staff; providing greater insights and strategic focus and inciting a culture of good financial management which comes with clearly defined and understood accountability.



As part of striving for financial excellence the draft 2019/20 Annual Accounts were produced by 31<sup>st</sup> May despite the challenges of COVID. Grant Thornton, the council's external auditor, commented on the strides the council had made in one year to increase both the timeliness and quality of the Accounts. A much-improved Value for Money (VFM) conclusion was received which no longer (after some years) provided an adverse conclusion due to financial resilience.

**Transformation**

The progress the Council has made in recent years has been underpinned by an ambitious and effective approach to transformation. Since its inception in 2018/19 the Transformation Programme has improved vital services for residents, introduced innovative new service models, built capacity

and competency, and made a significant contribution to stabilising the Council's finances. This includes the achievement of ~~£74m~~£70m of ongoing efficiencies by the end of 2020/21 and containing costs in areas of growing demand, thereby ensuring we can operate within available resources and protect investments in key services. We review and refresh the Transformation Programme annually, ensuring we continue to build on and improve what we do for our residents.

We continue to use robust assurance mechanisms, co-ordinated through the Transformation Support Unit, to track delivery of the transformation programme. Transformation governance arrangements are in place to oversee this including a Member Transformation Assurance Board (Chaired by the Leader of the Council) that meets monthly to help shape and review the overall portfolio of change, along with Select Committees continuing to inform and scrutinise programmes within their respective remits.

### **Systems and Process Transformation**

The Digital Business & Insights (DB&I) Programme is enabling the council to achieve its ambitions to drive service transformation, improve management decision making, deliver sharper insight, and move to a more flexible and mobile workforce. The design phase of the programme has been completed and we are now in the build phase, with go live in December 2021.

The Executive Director of Resources (Section 151 and Senior Responsible Officer for the Programme) chairs the Strategic Programme Board comprising corporate directors, directorate leadership and programme delivery leads, which sponsors the transformation, makes strategic decisions, allocates resources and ensures the effective management of escalated issues and risks.

### **Workforce**

Inevitably, the focus in 2020/21 has been to support the council through the Covid pandemic. In particular, and in response to the council's strategy to keep staff and communities safe and to keep critical services running, we very quickly mobilised staff across the council alongside redeployment of SCC staff to support the Local Resilience Forum. Of note is our contribution to the creation of a new community hospital; NHS Seacole Centre, where we worked with District, Borough and Surrey Heartlands ICS colleagues to stand up the new facility in record time.

Within the council, a significant focus continues to be on staff wellbeing, particularly mental health, with extensive support provided to help our workforce manage anxiety, stress, fatigue, and isolation. Ongoing monitoring of Covid related and other staff sickness absence is reported on a weekly basis, together with the recording and reporting of staff vaccines.

In tandem with the considerable amount of work undertaken to maintain service delivery during the pandemic, a significant transition to home and remote working has been successfully achieved in 2020, to ensure staff who previously were required to attend an office space were equipped to work remotely, reducing the footfall in council buildings. This not only enabled us to keep staff as safe as possible and reduce the spread of Covid 19, but also laid the foundations for future working and the successful move out of County Hall, despite the national lockdown.

This cultural shift is the progression of the work that started in 2019/20 through the council's Agile Transformation Programme, but which has seen real acceleration during the last year, with staff adopting different working practices and using technology to facilitate virtual collaboration. There

has been a surge in online communications through the council's internal Jive platform (alongside correspondence sent to people's home addresses for those staff without access to SCC systems), where practical information, advice and support is shared. This has transformed how the council works now and, in the future, and has delivered a real cultural change towards a more collaborative, modern, and agile organisation.

Leadership has remained a vital element in the growth of our people over the last year, with an increased focus on supporting managers at all levels (and with an emphasis on leading remotely and in an agile environment), through the introduction of a new Leadership Hub, consisting of a range of development opportunities for everyone in leadership roles, from new managers through to executive directors.

We have re-doubled our efforts to provide entry to work schemes for our young residents, including our participation in the new Kickstart programme, which aims to support young people aged 16-24 who are at risk of long-term unemployment into work. We are targeting our focus on the young people who we know often face barriers in transitioning to the workplace, e.g., Looked After Children, Care Leavers, NEETs and young people with SEND, and have offers across the council for 42 places to start from April 2021.

Finally, the latter part of 2020/21 has seen the development of our new workforce strategy: Workforce of the Future. This is ambitious and future focussed and recognises that the workforce we need in the future will be strongly influenced by the economic, social, demographic and technological trends we are seeing emerge at a local, national and global level. The pace of this change and the impact it has on work has accelerated due to the pandemic and it is critical we respond to be a modern employer that can attract the best talent and maximise the contributions of its workforce, for the benefit of Surrey's residents.

The strategy, which will be delivered in an agile way through a series of pilot projects to trial new approaches, in parallel with work to develop the necessary enabling capability and capacity (e.g., skills, policies, processes), has five key areas of focus:

- Workforce insight & management
- Strategic workforce planning
- Work & job design
- Resourcing
- Employee experience

The strategy's overarching vision is for the council to "Be representative of the communities we serve; a place where people aspire to work, where everyone feels able to bring their whole self to work and know that they are making a difference every day. We will be at the forefront of innovation and best practice in people management to ensure that we maximize the value of our workforce in a rapidly changing world. We will have high expectations of our staff, and in turn invest in them and offer a compelling employee value proposition."

### **Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)**

The council is starting to take a broader, more radical approach that embeds EDI into everything we do. The new Action Plan sets out a vision for EDI that changes the processes, systems and behaviours affecting the experiences of all Surrey residents and staff who work for the council. The plan is a living document that will continue to evolve as we make progress and as our strategic context

changes. A Corporate Leadership Team sponsor for this work will be the accountable officer for implementing the plan.

A new EDI Policy Statement has been developed that clearly sets out our commitment to embedding EDI in all our activities and what this means for residents, Members and staff. It confirms that the authority will take a zero-tolerance approach to bullying, harassment and discrimination and that it will deal with any incidents of such behavior decisively.

This year has seen our existing networks flourish, (Women's and Early Careers), as well as the launch of a raft of new networks, e.g., Parents and Carers, MEGA (Minority Ethnic Group & Allies), Disability, LGBTQI+ and Men's Networks; the networks are proving hugely valuable in helping us to better understand and respond to the challenges (and opportunities) faced by our diverse workforce. Alongside this, we launched unconscious bias and anti-racism training as well as targeted development for specific staff groups and elected Members.

### **Major Procurement Governance**

The Procurement Service operates under The Public Contracts Regulations (PCR) 2015, these regulations are reinforced and embedded into the Councils constitution via the Procurement Standing Orders (PSOs).

The council spends approximately £900 million per annum on third party goods and services. Each procurement project that is run by the council is assessed for project complexity and contract management. All projects over the PCR threshold are included on the Procurement annual forward plan, which is approved annually by Cabinet.

All Procurement projects undergo two internal governance checks in addition to the PCR regulation report. The first check is undertaken prior to any approach to the external market to validate the approach and procurement process, the second and final check is completed prior to any award decisions being undertaken, which includes, as a minimum, sign offs from the stakeholder, legal and finance. **Social value and financial value for money are of key importance and are taken into account when awarding contracts as part of the procurement process.**

### **Service specific governance considerations:**

In addition to the organisation-wide areas discussed above, there are several service specific governance arrangements to consider:

#### **Children's Services**

Following the major restructure of children's services completed in 2019, the improvement programme has continued in 2020 throughout the Covid-19 pandemic and while some resources have shifted to support other parts of the service, improving frontline practice is critical and it remains a priority for the CFLLC directorate. The improvement programme is in the final year of delivery and is embedding the new ways of working to ensure profound and rapid improvements to children's services in Surrey so that all children in the county receive the right help at the right time.

With agreement from the Department for Education (DfE), Essex County Council has been appointed as a Partner in Practice (PiP) for Surrey's children's services. Essex CC is rated as 'Outstanding' for Children's Services and specialises in working alongside other authorities to improve social work practice, and outcomes for children and their families. In September 2020 a full stocktake of our services was carried out and initial feedback shows how far the council has come since 2018 and has reinforced our improvement plans and the priorities set out in the 'Getting to Good' plan.

Ofsted inspectors were 'virtually' on site during March 2021 to review how well our children's social care has been delivering child-centred practice and care within the context of the Covid-19 restrictions. The inspectors acknowledged our significant improvement journey, the council's commitment to driving forward the required changes and the fact that progress continued, notwithstanding the challenges of the past year. Inspectors saw several service changes which are having a positive impact on outcomes for children and families and recognised senior leaders' swift response to the challenges of the pandemic. As well as recognition of areas of progress, there are some areas for further improvement, which reflect aspects that we had identified ourselves in the self-assessment and which the service is already addressing.

### **Health Partnerships**

The health and care system in Surrey is complex, with a complicated governance architecture across multiple NHS partnership boundaries. There are many meetings needing attendance and servicing which have contributed to making working towards closer integration between the County and the NHS challenging. During 2020/21, the Council and NHS partners have worked in close partnership to coordinate and deliver our operational response to the pandemic, including coordination around hospital discharge, supporting care homes to implement infection control procedures, managing health and care outside of hospital settings and supporting the testing and vaccination programmes, including insight generation to ensure equitable uptake of both testing and vaccines in harder to reach communities. During the year the Surrey Heartlands Integrated Care System (ICS) commissioned a review of governance processes to streamline the governance framework. This work was superseded by the publication of a government White Paper, 'Enabling Innovation and Integration' which proposes legislation to disband Clinical Commissioning Groups and establish ICSs as legal entities, which will assume many of the statutory responsibilities previously held by CCGs. The legislation is expected to be implemented from April 2022 and may lead to new responsibilities and new ways of working for the Health and Wellbeing Board in relation to the component parts of the ICS.

Surrey Heartlands ICS has restructured its executive team and now includes two joint appointments with the Council - the Executive Director for Public Service Reform and the Executive Director for Integrated Commissioning and Adult Social Care.

Considering the impact of the pandemic, the Health and Wellbeing Strategy was refreshed to bring a more explicit focus to addressing health inequalities and ensuring an equitable recovery from the Covid-19 Pandemic.

### **Organisational Governance**

The covid pandemic led to the implementation of new decision-making arrangements within the Council through remote meetings. Additional emergency delegations were put in place by Council to ensure business could continue uninterrupted with the Audit and Governance Committee keeping these under review throughout the year. Member and public engagement benefitted from live webcasting of all meetings and the Council is supportive of being given the flexibility in future to hold remote meetings when appropriate. This will mean a proportionate approach which also recognises the value of face-to-face meetings to promote inclusivity, visibility and accountability in decision making.

The Council has strengthened its ethical framework with the adoption by Council of a new Code of Conduct for Councillors for the 2021 municipal year. In December 2020 the Council appointed 2 Independent Persons to consider any complaint made against members in a revised process to give

increased objectivity and openness. All members have received induction and training on the new Code and the declarations of interest required both generally and when making Council decisions.

A gap analysis of governance arrangements for Council companies has been undertaken further to recommendations of good practice. This concluded that current arrangements were good but would benefit from further work on the responsibilities of Council appointed Directors, greater clarity on the role of Council shareholder representatives and ensuring greater confidence in member oversight. These improvements will be implemented in 2021/22.

The annual review of governance policies and process carried out by the Council's Governance panel concluded that governance systems are in place with many being updated and improved throughout the year, however, accessibility, training and communication could be improved to give more confidence these were understood and embedded across the organisation.

In the year ahead the Council will meet the challenges and opportunities of its ambition to become best in class and an exemplar of good governance. This will be achieved by meeting all its governance duties through compliance with its legal, financial, procurement and other obligations, and in addition, by establishing a framework of behavioural characteristics and values to promote and assess good governance in all its forms.

The governance framework will emphasise the responsibilities of all members and officers, both individually and collectively, to create the self-aware, frank and reflective environment needed for good organisational governance for the long term. The solution will focus as much on values and behaviours, as it does on systems and process change.

#### **Compliance and Risk**

The council's financial management arrangements during 2020/21 fully complied with CIPFA's Statement on the Role of the Chief Finance Officer (CIPFA, 2010). The Executive Director of Resources (£151) met his financial responsibilities during the year and ensured financial management arrangements were in place. He reports directly to the Chief Executive and had regular contact with the Leader and key Members, Monitoring Officer, Chief Internal Auditor and other Executive Directors.

During the year the council completed a high-level assessment against the new CIPFA Financial Management Code (FM Code) standards. The review concluded that the Council demonstrates overall compliance with the standards with several areas exceeding the standards and a small number of improvement areas.

In 2020, EY were appointed as a risk management partner to review the council's risk management approach. Risk sessions were held with management teams and the output from a risk culture survey was reviewed to develop a high-level risk strategy, purpose and vision alongside a new strategic risk register. Progress updates were presented to the Audit and Governance Committee throughout the year. **An interim risk manager has recently been appointed to further develop the council's risk arrangements and embed the new approach.**

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic led to a partial suspension of the annual **internal** audit plan, and the **Internal Audit** service supported the needs of the organisation in a variety of ways. This included providing advice and assurance where processes and controls were changed to facilitate faster and different responses to pressures on services and providing assurance around the robustness of operating practices in key activities such as business continuity arrangements and COVID-19 response protocols. Remaining **Internal Audit** resource was prioritised to look at core financial systems and processes and to address emerging risks as the year passed.

Despite this disruption to planned work, **the involvement of Internal Audit during the pandemic and the assurance the service provided over the redesigned processes and controls enabled** the Chief



Internal Auditor ~~has to~~ determined that sufficient coverage has been achieved to provide Reasonable Assurance that the council has in place an adequate and effective framework of governance, risk management and internal control for the period 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021. Based on management responses to audits, and the implementation of actions agreed for improvement following them, significant effort continues to be made by the organisation to strengthen governance, risk management and internal control. Transformational programmes continued to deliver their anticipated benefits during the year, whilst a new programme is underway to redesign and replace the main accounting system that underpins the council’s finances. Ongoing audit work continues to support this programme and will also provide assurance that the newly relaunched risk management process is embedded across the authority.

**2019/20 Annual Governance Statement Action Plan – Follow Up**

Issue identified during 2019/20	Action taken during 2020/21
<p><b>Covid-19 Recovery Programme</b></p>	<p>An internal Operational Group consisting of senior managers from across the organisation, and co-chaired by the Executive Director for Corporate Resilience and the Director for Public Health has continued to coordinate Covid 19-related activity, identify and manage risk, and ensure effective information flows.</p> <p>The council continues to work with partner organisations to ensure on-going response activity is sustainably resourced and overseen by appropriate governance structures, including the council’s Corporate Resilience Group. This is further supported by the Local Resilience Forum Recovery Coordination Group.</p> <p>The council has also maintained a continuous focus on staff wellbeing, providing a range of resources, advice and guidance. Regular staff communications have clearly set out the council’s position on key issues, and a comprehensive risk assessment process has enabled the council to identify and put in place mitigations appropriate for individual staff members, including those most at risk.</p> <p><b>Covid-19 recovery is ongoing and arrangements are regularly reviewed to reflect changes as required.</b></p>
<p><b>Agile workforce</b></p> <p>Changing our culture and the way we organise ourselves as a council, as well as the practical aspect such as technology.</p>	<p>The Agile Organisation Programme <del>has been</del> was fully established <b>during the year</b>, bringing together HROD, Land and Property, IT&amp;D and programme change to drive the adoption of Agile working.</p> <p>All teams have been engaged with to build their own plans for adopting Agile, with particular focus during 2020 on the move out of County Hall.</p> <p><b>The Agile Organisation Programme is ongoing to support new ways of working and transitioning out of lockdown.</b></p>
<p><b>Children’s Services</b></p>	<p>The Family Resilience improvement programme has continued in 2020 throughout the Covid-19 pandemic and while some resources have shifted to support other parts of the service, improving frontline practice remains a priority.</p>

Issue identified during 2019/20	Action taken during 2020/21
Greater focus on the impact of the Children's Improvement Programme.	<b>Focus on Children's Services is ongoing and is included in the 2021/22 AGS action plan.</b>
<b>Performance Reporting and Risk Management</b> Embedding the performance management and risk management frameworks.	EY were appointed during the year to develop the council's approach to risk management and strengthen the risk culture. The project team met regularly to review progress and updates have been provided to Audit and Governance Committee.  <b>Development of the council's risk management arrangements is ongoing and is included in the 2021/22 AGS action plan.</b>
<b>Land &amp; Assets</b> Improving the effectiveness, efficiency and commercialisation of the Land and Property function to ensure it supports service delivery to residents and organisational objectives for the council.	An improvement program was established in September 2020 and work commenced: Business Performance: assessing current processes and identifying improvement areas. Systems: Engaged with the implementation of the Integrated Workplace Management System and adding a user experience lens to deployment. People: Mapping current structures and engagements.  <b>Development of the Land and Assets service is ongoing and is included in the 2021/22 AGS action plan.</b>
<b>Governance</b> Improvements to the council's governance including the Member Code of Conduct and Governance Panel.	A Member task and finish group was established over summer 2020 and recommended a new Code of Conduct for councillors to Audit and Governance Committee. The Standards complaints procedure has been revised by the task group and two new independent persons have been recruited.  The Governance Panel meets quarterly to review governance across the council and an AGS action tracker has been established for reporting.  <b>Completed.</b>
<b>Digital Business and Insights Programme to enable transformative process improvements.</b> To facilitate the transformation of our core processes through the replacement of the existing SAP corporate system	The DB&I project team, supported by subject matter experts from both the functional areas (Finance, Procurement, HR and Payroll) and the Directorates, have been working with our implementation partner Unit4, on the Design stage which was signed off by the Strategic Programme Board in January 2021.  <b>The DB&amp;I programme is ongoing with implementation planned for the end of 2021.</b>
<b>Pensions Administration Improvement Programme</b>	A pension administration "Turnaround Board" was established during the year to oversee the dissolution of the Orbis pension partnership, along with reversion to sovereign authorities including a review of the fundamentals for delivering pensions administration. The progress of this board is reported to the Chairman of the Local Pension Board and the Pension Fund Committee monthly.

Issue identified during 2019/20	Action taken during 2020/21
	<p>The pension administration team have made progress on improving areas highlighted by internal audit as having control weaknesses, including making significant headway in clearing down the backlog of legacy cases that had been built up over a considerable period.</p> <p><b>Improvements in Pensions Administration are ongoing and included in the 2021/22 AGS action plan.</b></p>

**2020/21 Annual Governance Statement Action Plan**

Issue identified during 2020/21	Action to be taken during 2021/22
<p><b>Childrens’ Services</b></p> <p>To continue to make improvements in our Children’s Services.</p>	<p>Continued focus on Children’s Services improvement through oversight and scrutiny of action plans and ongoing activity.</p>
<p><b>Pensions Administration</b></p> <p>To continue improvements in the Pensions Administration service and integrate with the Pension Fund team.</p>	<p>The Pensions Transformation Programme will address planned improvements in people, process and technology. The new organisational structure will deliver a single team encompassing, investments, accounting, governance and administration for a sovereign Surrey Fund.</p>
<p><b>Governance</b></p> <p>To promote good governance not only through systems and process but emphasise behavioural characteristics and values.</p>	<p>A governance performance framework will be developed based on the organisational characteristics, behaviours and values which evidence good governance in all its elements, to promote high standards across the organisation.</p>
<p><b>Land and Assets</b></p> <p>Improving the effectiveness, efficiency and commercialisation of the Land and Property function to ensure it supports service delivery to residents and organisational objectives for the council.</p>	<p>A Land and Property “purpose and Strategy” program focused on the Council’s vision will be delivered, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-implementing Planon – an integrated property work management system,</li> <li>-a new project planning and risk framework for all capital projects,</li> <li>-a culture, values and skills project for all staff,</li> <li>-a new operating model for facilities management,</li> <li>-a review of finance, risk, audit recommendations, performance and stakeholder engagement</li> </ul>

Issue identified during 2020/21	Action to be taken during 2021/22
<p><b>Risk Management</b></p> <p>To continue to develop the councils risk management approach and embed across the organisation.</p>	<p>An interim risk manager has been appointed to develop the risk management capabilities across the organisation <del>will be developed</del> with the implementation of risk <del>assessments across the organisation</del> and a standardisation of the approach. A risk framework will also be finalised to reflect the new risk management processes.</p>
<p><b>Company Governance</b></p> <p>To ensure Surrey CC companies meet best practice in oversight, planning and governance arrangements.</p>	<p>Further improvements will be made to the governance arrangements for Council companies including, business planning, oversight, training and development on the role and responsibilities of directors and conflicts of interest, risk management reporting and scrutiny.</p>

Tim Oliver  
 Leader of the Council  
 July 2021

Joanna Killian  
 Chief Executive  
 July 2021