

**MINUTES** of the meeting of the **RESOURCES AND PERFORMANCE SELECT COMMITTEE** held at 10.00 am on 14 April 2022 at Council Chamber, Woodhatch Place, 11 Cockshot Hill, Reigate, Surrey, RH2 8EF

These minutes are subject to confirmation by the Committee at its meeting on 13 July 2022.

**Elected Members:**

- \* Nick Darby (Chairman)
- \* Will Forster (Vice-Chair)
- \* David Harmer (Vice-Chair)
- \* Bob Hughes
- \* Rebecca Jennings-Evans
- \* Robert King
- \* Steve McCormick
- John Robini
- \* Tony Samuels
- \* Lesley Steeds
- \* Hazel Watson
- \* Jeremy Webster

*(\* = present at the meeting)*

**14/22 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS [Item 1]**

None received.

**15/22 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING AND RESPECTIVE MEETINGS: 17 SEPTEMBER 2021, 17 DECEMBER 2021 AND 20 JANUARY 2022 [Item 2]**

The minutes of the Resources and Performance Select Committee held on 17 September 2021, 17 December 2021 and 20 January 2022 were formally agreed.

**16/22 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST [Item 3]**

None received.

**17/22 QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS [Item 4]**

None received.

**18/22 PERFORMANCE MONITORING SESSION UPDATE [Item 5]**

The notes of the Performance Monitoring session conducted informally on 20 December 2021 were agreed.

## **19/22 SUPPORTED INDEPENDENT LIVING – DESIGN & CONSTRUCTION [Item 6]**

Witnesses:

Natalie Bramhall, Cabinet Member for Property & Waste

Sinead Mooney, Cabinet Member for Adults & Health

Simon Crowther, Director of Land & Property

Elaine McKenna, Contracts Manager – Land & Property

Anthony Wybrow, Assistant Director – Project Delivery

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

1. A Vice Chairman asked if the proposal provided value for money and if there were any cost concerns. The Cabinet Member for Property & Waste said that the proposal provided good value for money and budgets had been well managed by the teams involved.
2. A Vice Chairman, in noting the reported reference to site availability from 2018 and 2022, queried the inclusion of the Byfleet Manor School site which had closed over 10 years ago. The Cabinet Member for Property & Waste explained that the school was demolished in 2018 resulting in the site being available after the demolition date, the reason for the building having remained standing for that period was unknown. The Vice Chairman suggested the report wording be clearer in the future.
3. The Chairman asked if final form specifications would be ready in time for contracted works to commence. The Cabinet Member for Property & Waste confirmed that the RIBA (Royal Institute of British Architects) plan of works had been followed and there had been close management between Adults Social Care, occupational therapists and the Adults Social Care Board (AwSC) with each design stage being signed off reducing the risk of any unforeseen changes. The Chairman queried if specifications and design stages were approved by users. The Contracts Manager, Land & Property confirmed that users of current services had been consulted with their feedback incorporated into design plans.
4. The Chairman asked what the key risks to the project were. The Contracts Manager, Land & Property stated that a risk avoidance strategy had been implemented with each element of the design being considered, including maintenance costs going forward, sustainability and building regulations.
5. The Chairman asked if risks had been identified with local planning advisors or the districts and boroughs for the three sites

in question. The Cabinet Member for Property & Waste advised that to address any potential issues before submission, all pre application documents had been reviewed against national and local planning by Surrey County Council's Planning Consultant. The Regulation 3 Team had issued preliminary reports and held review meetings for each of the three sites, with comments raised being worked into the designs. In preparation for formal planning application submission in June 2022, officers for Woking, Elmbridge and Reigate and Banstead Councils had been asked to review delivery proposals and provide timely feedback as part of the risk avoidance strategy.

6. The Chairman asked what reaction had there been so far and were there applications that did not comply with existing local plans. The Contract Manager, Land & Property confirmed that discussions had taken place between the Regulation 3 Team and district and borough planning officers. The local plan referred mainly to Horley and most comments received thus far referred to privacy, vernacular appearance, colour of bricks, and landscaping and have been incorporated back into the design. The Chairman asked if there had been any local opposition. The Contract Manager, Land & Property confirmed that there had been interest, not opposition.
7. A Member asked what the current and projected demand for Supported Independent Living sites was. The Cabinet Member for Property & Waste said that the published Accommodation with Care and Support Strategy committed Surrey County Council to providing 500 Supported Independent Living sites across the county for working age adults with learning difficulties and/ or autism. This current requirement would be met but the need was expected to increase in the next three to five years to a requirement of approximately 350 additional units with 22 per cent sourced from council owned sites. Surrey County Council Land & Property would continue to identify potential sites for additional Supported Living accommodation.
8. A Vice Chairman asked if the budget was adequate enough to allow the programme to be delivered to the timescale that Adult Social Care expected. The Cabinet Member for Land & Property confirmed that it was fully funded as part of the capital programme under the Mid-Term Financial Strategy.
9. A Member asked if The Squirrels in Banstead remained empty. The Cabinet Member for Property & Waste confirmed that property was not empty, the residential break service and residents with autism accommodation operated from the site.
10. A Member, in reference to page 51 of the report, asked for an explanation of the term 'local residents'. The Contract Manager,

Land & Property said that needs would be addressed according to the individual circumstances. The Cabinet Member for Adults & Health explained that the Adult Social Care service were in the early stages of working on a clear and concise allocations policy to set fair principles around the allocation of these properties. The needs of those originally from Surrey currently in placements outside of the county but wishing to return would also be included in this policy. It was suggested that the policy would be brought back to the committee when finalised.

11. A Member said that the report noted that residents could expect to pay lower fuel bills and asked how this would be achieved. The Cabinet Member for Property & Waste confirmed that the Batch 1 scheme buildings were designed to deliver energy efficient buildings, resulting in lower fuel bills and addressing fuel poverty.
12. A Vice Chairman asked if there were any restrictive covenants to be considered. The Cabinet Member for Property & Waste confirmed that a thorough appraisal of all land registry documents and title deeds had been completed by Surrey County Councils' legal team and external legal consultants and there were no restrictive covenants associated with Batch 1.
13. The Chairman asked if further information could be provided regarding Batch submission dates to Cabinet. The Assistant Director, Project Delivery confirmed Batch 2 would be submitted to Cabinet within the next six months and Batch 3 within the next financial year 2022/2023. The Chairman noted the current ambition to bring developments forward more quickly than in the past.
14. The Chairman thanked officers for a useful update, requesting the committee be notified of any issues or delays in good time and requested that the committee be given the opportunity to inspect sites at an appropriate and helpful stage.

*Tony Samuels left the meeting at 10:41am*

The Chairman paused the meeting 10:41am.

The Chairman resumed the meeting at 11:00am.

## **20/22 PEOPLE & CHANGE DEVELOPMENT PLAN [Item 7]**

Witnesses:

Tim Oliver, Leader of the Council

Sarah Kershaw, Chief of Staff & Interim Strategic Director for People & Change

Emma Lucas, Head of Business Partnering & Employee Practice

Tom Holmwood, Recruitment Manager

**Key points raised during the discussion:**

1. The Leader of the Council introduced the item and confirmed the appointment of Sarah Kershaw as Interim Strategic Director for People and Change until the recruitment of a permanent appointment to the post.
2. The Chairman asked how the recruitment and retention challenges being experienced nationally were being addressed at Surrey County Council, what were the challenges relating to the Council specifically and what had been learnt from other local authorities. The Interim Strategic Director for People & Change said that building on the positive culture of the organisation and communicating its successes were key and added that a shift was taking place in some areas, with joint roles being considered to help address current national difficulties. Digital insight was important to provide good data and a pilot was being tested by the Children's Families, Lifelong Learning & Culture Directorate (CFLLC) to create and develop a framework to roll out to all directorates. The Recruitment Manager added that the Council had worked to ensure effective engagement with prospective employees and would continue to develop a good working culture to attract applicants.
3. The Chairman asked what were the specific difficulties within children's services and care work areas. The Head of Business Partnering & Employee Practice explained that evidence based, targeted children's workforce planning was taking place to consider affordability, geographical placements, skills, resourcing and diversity. This information would help directors form a clear set of priorities during the next 12-18 months.
4. A Member asked if the Council had considered visiting schools in addition to Further Education colleges to raise awareness amongst younger students of the vast career opportunities available within the Council. The Recruitment Manager said that the Council's partnership with the Youth Employment UK Network ensured promotion of vacancies in an early-careers setting to attract young people. The Talent & Organisational Development Service had appointed an Early Careers Lead, responsible for the implementation of strategies to attract younger people. Developments were underway to ensure that young people would be offered a role at the end of apprenticeships or post graduate training programmes. Work

was underway to produce videos for school use to promote career opportunities within the council.

5. A Member noted the difficulties of appointing Section 151 Officers and asked if working partnerships with London Borough Councils would provide recruitment opportunities in addition to developing terms and conditions to attract candidates. The Recruitment Manager said that benchmarking combined with the market knowledge of employment agencies assigned to recruit for senior roles on behalf of the Council were utilised and terms and conditions remained competitive. The Interim Strategic Director for People & Change said that work was underway to ensure succession planning and career pathways were being addressed around specialist roles to reduce the risk of competition.
6. A Member asked if recruiting jointly with different authorities for non-director posts had been considered, for example, Building Control Officer posts. The Strategic Director for People & Change confirmed that joint recruitment with partners including the NHS had been taking place for some time in recognition of the integration agenda and the necessity of working together to solve the current difficulties in social care.
7. A Vice Chairman asked what benchmarking had taken place to compare SCC's pay and employment with other local authorities. The Strategic Director for People & Change confirmed that benchmarking was underway and completed annually.
8. A Vice Chairman asked what roles would be considered to appoint under 30s. The Strategic Director for People & Change said that any vacancy could be considered if the candidate had the specific experience or qualifications required.
9. A Member asked if it was possible to provide more flexibility around employment offers to attract applicants and provide flexibility for those with caring responsibilities. The Strategic Director for People & Change said that the organisation had proven its ability to be flexible during the last two years and continued to build on this as a long-term priority whilst ensuring that services to residents were maintained.
10. A Vice Chairman asked what exit interview data showed as the main reason for staff choosing to leave Surrey County Council. The Recruitment Manager noted reasons including culture, management, pay, development and training, and personal circumstances adding that these were anecdotal reasons offered in the absence of confirmed evidence. The Vice Chairman asked for more data gathering work to be undertaken and presented to the Select Committee or the People, Performance

& Development Committee at an appropriate time. The Chairman said that if exit interview data was not being collected, it was important that this should happen going forward. A Vice Chairman asked if managers received training on how to conduct exit interviews. The Strategic Director for People & Change said no specific training was available for managers but guidance was provided. A Member asked who staff could approach to express interest in a different role or more flexibility. The Strategic Director for People & Change said managers should be approached in the first instance

11. A Vice Chairman noted that exit interviews were not mandatory but handovers were and asked if the two could be linked. The Strategic Director for People & Change noted the suggestion.
12. A Vice Chairman asked if the figures reported would have been worse without the £2.7 million Social Care Workforce Retention Fund award. The Strategic Director for People & Change said that the Select Committee would be provided with a response.
13. The Chairman summarised three key areas raised in the discussion 'why come?', 'why stay?' and 'why leave?'. The Strategic Director for People & Change confirmed the data gathered in these areas would be critical with intelligence gathered and used to form an effective programme. The Head of Business Partnering and Employee Practice said 'itchy feet' sessions were being piloted in Children's Services to capture and process data and learn from its effectiveness.
14. The Chairman asked if Employee Reference Groups (ERGs) required development in their early stages to ensure that issues were identified in good time. A Member asked what was the role of ERG members and what did they discuss. The Strategic Director for People & Change explained that the groups were grown by staff members and open to all, with each group having a Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) sponsor in each network. Any change was driven by the group and their own action plans.
15. A Member said that in their view most professional disciplines were in short supply and Surrey County Council should improve strategies to 'grow its own', capitalising on its recently improved reputation. The Apprenticeship Levy, most of which was returned to the government was not a good use of funds. The Strategic Director for People & Change agreed this was an area for focus and work areas such as current offer, development and placements would be investigated.
16. The Chairman asked if there were courses offered by Royal Holloway, Kingston and Surrey Universities directly related to opportunities within SCC and if so, could SCC contribute to

these courses with graduate recruitment to follow. The Strategic Director for People & Change said that this happened in some directorates and added that a standardised approach to supporting this in all Directorates would be positive.

17. A Member asked for further information at the next Select Committee meeting regarding work being undertaken to identify and improve the culture within SCC, how often recruitment by managers was reviewed to ensure quality of work and timescales from advertising to recruitment. The Strategic Director for People & Change confirmed responses would be provided at a later stage.
18. A Member, in referencing page 66 and un-manageable workloads, asked how often workloads for Social Workers, in particular, was reviewed and was there an effective complaints procedure in place to mitigate risk. The Strategic Director for People & Change said that this subject did not fall within the People & Change remit adding that the usual procedures should be followed with line managers.
19. A Member noted Surrey County Council's difficulty in recruiting staff whilst there was a pool of people with disabilities who were unemployed and noted that engagement was required in this area. Diversity not only had to be valued but actively created within the Surrey County Council by its directorates. The Strategic Director for People & Change said that a reasonable adjustments service had started and would focus on this area.
20. The Chairman asked what was being done to increase the agreed 45 pence per mile fuel allowance to reimburse staff that needed to use their cars for work, without the increase being coming taxable. The Strategic Director for People & Change said that advice was being sought regarding this.

**Resolved:**

The Resources and Performance Select Committee:

1. Will seek to agree a scope for a future briefing session to further explore the issues raised in today's meeting ahead of future formal scrutiny.
2. Asks the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources to lobby HMRC directly and via the County Council Network (CCN) to review (enhance) the 45p mileage rate for business travel as non-taxable.

3. The Interim Strategic Director for People and Change to consider as part of their update to the Committee in six months' time:
  - a. Appropriate opportunities to use Members as advocates for the Council as a prospective employer.
  - b. As part of succession planning, explore the possibility of setting up a networked approach within the organisation and with partners to allow officers to gain experience in other industries and authorities (and vice-versa) to help develop skills and experience in younger employees.
  - c. Provide an explanation of how the Council currently collects leavers' data across Directorates and explore how this could be improved.
  - d. Explore how we can develop a systematic approach to answering the questions of 'why come to the organisation?', 'why stay?' and 'why leave?' building on the *itchy feet* pilot in Children's Services.
  - e. That videos continue to be developed to help explain and promote the work of the Council and its employment opportunities to school age children in Surrey for use this year.
  - f. Explore how recruitment can work with disability organisations such as the Surrey Coalition of Disabled People to better tailor its offer as an employer of choice for people with disabilities.

#### **21/22 RECOMMENDATIONS TRACKER AND FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME [Item 8]**

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

#### **22/22 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING: 13 JULY 2022 [Item 9]**

The Committee noted its next meeting would be held on 13 July 2022.

Meeting ended at: 12:53pm

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Chairman.

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