

Service Area Plans for corporate areas and the Corporate Action Plan (Sarah Hall, Head of Business Planning, Projects and Performance)

Synopsis of report:

This report provides a summary of the 2023/24 Service Area Plans for Finance, Customer, Digital and Collection Services, HR, and the Chief Executive's (CEX) Office for approval. The full proposed Service Area Plans for these areas can be found in Appendix 1-4.

The collective Corporate Action Plan for 2023/24 is compiled from planned activity taken from all Service Area Plans. This is provided for approval at Appendix 5.

Recommendation(s):

- i) Members approve the Service Area Plans for Finance, Customer, Digital and Collection Services, HR, and the CEX Office for delivery during 2023/24.
- ii) Members approve the collective Corporate Action Plan for delivery in 2023/24 collated from planned activity across all Service Area Plans.

1 Context and background of report

- 1.1 The annual business planning cycle for 2023/24 commenced with each Corporate Head of Service submitting any planned activity for the next Financial Year which requires growth.
- 1.2 In addition, in conjunction with the relevant Service Chair and Chair of Member Working Party, priority areas arising from Corporate Strategies have been agreed for the 2023/24 MWP work programme. These form the majority of the Service area's planned activity for 2023/24.
- 1.3 Business cases for growth items have then been prepared either as outline documents (further refinement and more detailed exploratory work is required during 23/24 before a full business case can be developed), or final business cases. Final business cases will need to be approved by Corporate Management Committee prior to release of any funds, therefore reports will be submitted for approval during 23/24 where at this stage, only outline business cases can be provided.
- 1.4 Subsequent to review of growth bids, Service Area Plans have been further developed to include planned activity that does not require growth, a Mission Statement to document a narrative of the service area's current position and its direction of travel over the lifecycle of the Corporate Business Plan, and a summary of each of the teams that form the service area and their business as usual activity and key statistics.
- 1.5 To ensure a 'golden thread' between Service Area Plans and team and individual plans, Corporate Heads of Service will use the planned activity to set team and individual objectives for 23/24.

- 1.6 Any projects identified as part of planned activity will be added to the project portfolio for 2023/24 and progress monitored and reported on a quarterly basis to Corporate Management Committee as per the project management methodology. Progress of non-project activity (one-off tasks, reviews, new BAU) will form part of the staff performance framework as these will be set as team and individual objectives for 23/24. In addition, the corporate reporting system in place currently for projects and corporate KPIs will be developed further to capture updates of non-project activity to report holistic progress of activity against the Corporate Business Plan.
- 1.7 Non-corporate Service Area Plans go to their relevant service committee for approval first. Service Area Plans for Housing, Community Services, Planning Policy, Development Control and Environmental Services have been approved at the relevant Service Cttee during Jan-Mar 2023. The Service Area Plan for Assets and Regeneration was approved as part of the area's Strategy and Policies report in Feb 2023.
- 1.8 This paper seeks approval for the remaining corporate Service areas of Finance, Customer, Digital and Collection Services, HR, Legal Services and the CEX Office.
- 1.9 A final approval of all deliverables set out within all Service Area Plans is sought from Corporate Management Committee approving the Corporate Action Plan (which is an amalgamation of all the plans for the year).

2 Report

- 2.1 The service area plans for the corporate service areas of Finance, Customer, Digital and Collection Services, HR, Legal Services and the CEX Office are presented to CMC for approval.
- 2.2 The full Service Area Plans can be found in Appendix 1-5. A summary is provided below for each corporate area.
- 2.3 **Finance Service Area Narrative and Mission Statement:**
To ensure the Council carries out its financial affairs in a fair, proportionate and professional manner, by providing clear financial and strategic advice to all stakeholders whilst adhering to statutory and professional regulations in the dealing and reporting of all financial transactions.

In the last 18 months the Financial Services team have lost a wealth of experience, however, with every setback comes opportunity. A restructure was undertaken in 2022/23 to help bring in new recruits with fresh ideas and enthusiasm to help alleviate resourcing issues and make sure the service is fit for the modern era.

The first 12 months of the new Corporate Business Plan (CBP) will be spent bedding in the new structure, settling in new recruits, establishing new ways of working and replacing an over-reliance on paper hard copy files. This will be assisted by the implementation of the new joint HR/Payroll system followed by the tendering for a much needed new Financial Management System (FMS).

The current FMS system is now 20 years old and no longer fit for purpose. Whilst the replacement of the system will be costly, it is currently a barrier to change both for the Financial Services team itself and for the Council as a whole. Due to its age and lack of investment, it contributes to issues of retention of new staff coming in across the Council who are used to more modern technology and processes.

As well as the day to day activities of a busy finance department, the team are very much embroiled in many of the various projects and initiatives set out in the CBP from participating in service reviews, assessing benefits packages and assisting in reviewing and developing new policy creation. In all initiatives, the team will be ensuring the financial consequences of decisions are planned, analysed and are robust and financial governance procedures are adhered to.

2.4 Key new areas of work in 2023/24 for Finance include:

- Soft market testing to support the business case and procurement strategy for a replacement Financial system
- Key stakeholder supporting implementation of the new HR/Payroll system
- Review of BACS payment system
- Procurement of a new Treasury Management system
- Implement the new requirements of International Financial Reporting Standard 16: Leases.

2.5 **Customer, Digital and Collection Services (CDCS) Service Area**

Narrative:

From April 2022, Customer Services lost seven staff within three months which had a major impact in service delivery. An action plan was developed to fast track recruitment and staff training as well incentivise those staff who remained in post. Work has continued with the website and customer relationship management system to enable customers to self serve and reduce the need to contact the Council via more traditional methods such as telephone, letter, face to face and email. Staff retention has been an issue across all areas within the division with vacancies carried across Revenues, Benefits, Parking, Infrastructure & Operations as well as the Transformation Team.

Revenues and Benefits have faced legislative challenges with the cost of living crisis and having to administer various grants from the Government in a relatively short period of time. Not only are the Team preparing for the new Business Rates Revaluation from April 2023, the Energy Rebate scheme was administered to approximately 21k people in a matter of months whilst the Benefits Team are dealing with the third tranche of the Household Support Fund in addition to reviewing the Council Tax Support Scheme for 23/24 year.

The Homes For Ukrainian Team are responsible for the administration of the Government Homes For Ukraine initiative. The Team comprise of two resettlement co-ordinators and one translator. The team are responsible for supporting both host and refugees families, working with government agencies, voluntary sector and Surrey CC to ensure refugees are supported and assist them with integration into the community. Welfare checks are carried out every three months to minimise breakdowns in relationships and the need to re-match with other hosts. The scheme has recently been extended for another 12 months to reduce the risk of homelessness albeit with a reduced

budget per refugee which will bring challenges around how much support the team can offer with regards to housing costs.

Surrey CC have announced that they will not be renewing the Agency Agreement for On-Street Parking Enforcement beyond 1 April 2023 which has had a serious impact on Parking Services resources, finances, customer complaints and IT systems.

Both teams within Digital Services have been carrying vacancies whilst delivering 'The Getting Fit for the Future' Transformation Programme. Several back office systems will need replacing over the next four years and cyber security is becoming a high priority across the organisation with a need to protect personal data and ensure systems are safe and secure. A hardware refresh is planned to support the Hybrid Working Project where over 300 staff will move to secure access through laptops and enable hot-desking by standardising kit across the Council.

The new Corporate Business Plan will focus on five themes of which the Organisational Development Theme will be the main focus of the division with the four strands; People; Process; Technology and Green will provide a clear framework which will provide effective governance across the division. Investing in both staff and technology, legacy systems will be replaced with modern technology that will support new and better ways of working.

2.6 Key new areas of work in 2023/24 for Customer, Digital and Collection Services include:

- Provide cyber security training to all staff
- Member device refresh and replacement of legacy IT hardware devices across the civic offices
- Implement hybrid meeting rooms in the civic centre to improve hybrid virtual meetings
- Support soft market testing to support the business case and procurement strategy for a replacement Financial system
- Manage the implementation of the HR/Payroll system
- Source and implement welfare reform software to support a corporate view of resident debt
- Review the software available for waste and recycling to improve optimisation of waste rounds
- Deliver business continuity/ disaster recovery solution funded by DLUHC
- Ensure legislative requirements are implemented to deliver business rates revaluation, the council tax support scheme and distribution of any support grants
- In conjunction with Assets & Regeneration, review all council owned car-parks to establish the potential for ANPR and EV charging.

2.7 **Human Resources (HR) Service Area Narrative:**

The Human Resources service is a support service whose primary role is to provide a comprehensive professional advisory service and professional HR support to the Council and Council-owned companies. Our internal customers are the Leadership Team and Members, managers at all levels and individual members of staff. The HR service is responsible for Strategic and Operational HR including employee Health and Safety. We liaise closely with Payroll on

appointments documentation and any contractual changes affecting pay or pensions. Our external customers are the management of RBCI and RBCS and applicants for vacancies.

Key external contacts:

- Occupational Health
- Jobs Go Public – who host the Surrey Jobs Portal
- Surrey Learning Partnership, external trainers, e-learning provider
- Surrey County Council Pensions Service and DBS service
- Surrey Heads of HR colleagues
- Health & Safety Executive
- Surrey H&S Group colleagues
- Recruitment website providers

The success of organisations turn to a significant degree on the skills, motivation, experience and contribution made by their workforce. HR has a major part to play in supporting managers to attract, develop and retain this workforce.

Our priorities for the next year will be to improve our recruitment service by encouraging managers to explore and use a wider range of tools and talent sourcing routes to attract the best candidates and to look at a range of measures to retain them. This will include a flexible benefits package as well as employee well-being initiatives. In addition, we have been looking at options to re-model the lower end of the pay structure to deal with the annual increases to the National Living Wage and its impact on our grading structure and options on addressing the cost of living crisis. We will have completed the Tier 3 training for Senior managers by the end of March '23 including Change Management, Emotional Intelligence and Political Awareness training and then we will commence the Tier 1 and 2 Management Development Training for first line supervisors (Tier 1) and Middle Managers(Tier 2) in the spring. Leadership Development is one of the key strands to ensuring the most effective management and leadership of staff to achieve the best outcomes.

In terms of ongoing services to be delivered, HR introduced a new Business Partnering model as part of our restructure in the spring. We now have a Senior Business Partner and 2 Business Partners who each work with a group of service areas to ensure they get high quality advice to deal with their people issues and develop their staff. A new role of Recruitment and Retention Manager was created who supervises two HR Assistants who deal with recruitment and selection, onboarding and induction of new staff and all day to day operational HR issues including liaison with Payroll. One of the Business Partners also looks after employee health and safety and has been refreshing a range of Health and Safety processes and training new staff on Fire Safety, First Aid etc, produced new Stress Management Guidelines and is working with other staff with H&S responsibilities to ensure maximum synergies. Another Business Partner has been working with the Head of HR on re-tendering our OH contract and is running a series of refresher sickness management training sessions for managers. She is also looking along with other HR team members at Well-being initiatives for staff including Health checks for the over 45s and having some Mental Health first aiders in the council. Small growth bids were submitted to finance these last two initiatives.

In the New Year the Recruitment and Retention Manager will be running refresher training on Recruitment and Selection. A recruitment toolkit is being developed to assist managers. The OD and Talent Management Strategies have a strong emphasis on effective leadership, motivation and employee development. However clearly the investment in staff training is subject to sustaining the Corporate training budgets. These strategies include introducing a small graduate programme and internal staff development programme for high flyers as well as identifying training needs for the wider workforce and incorporating these in training plans. Part of the forward plans for HR are refreshing and modernising employment policies as well as carrying on with the heavy day to day pressures on HR from casework, organisational reviews and recruitment. We will also be introducing Equalities training recognising the more diverse workforce we now employ.

The challenges will be fulfilling our ambitious programme alongside the operational pressures of a busy HR team. The anticipated drivers for change and challenges are most likely to result from the financial backdrop facing local and central government and the cost of living crisis and its impact on the workforce rather than from fresh legislative pressures. The other significant pressure will result from the work to implement the new HR and Payroll system once this is chosen. This type of project normally places a lot of work pressure on the service area concerned for a year to 18 months. However, once an integrated HR and Payroll system with employee and managerial self-service is introduced this should drive future efficiencies within the organisation.

2.8 Key new areas of work in 2023/24 for HR include:

- Key stakeholder supporting implementation of the new HR/Payroll system
- Review of staff flexible benefits
- Provide recruitment training and resources for Managers
- Implement the Talent Management Strategy and programme
- Review of corporate HR related policies
- Support service areas to develop workforce plans
- Develop an annual health and safety plan
- Deliver staff training including mental health awareness, ongoing management training

2.9 **Legal Services Area Narrative:**

The Business Unit comprises seven teams that undertake a diverse range of functions. Some of the teams discharge a statutory function such as Electoral Services, Local Land Charges and Data Protection. Some support the overall work of the Council such as Democratic Services, Legal Services, Office Services and Information Governance. The Office Services team provides a complete suite of administrative support.

There are situations when a team will carry out dual functions such as supporting the overall work of the Council and discharging a statutory function e.g. Democratic Services, which in addition to the provision of support for the democratic process also deals with matters such as licensing of charitable collections and street closure orders. The various teams contribute to the Corporate Strategies in a number of ways. Democratic Services facilitate decision making by the Council, which allows for the delivery of the Corporate Strategies. Legal Services provide high quality legal advice to ensure that the Council complies with its various legal obligations and discharges its

regulatory functions for the benefit of the inhabitants of the Borough. The Electoral Services Team supports the exercise of the democratic process by enabling people to register to vote and by organising various elections. They will be delivering changes introduced by the Elections Act 2022 over the next twelve months. These changes will create greater confidence in the integrity of the electoral process. The Local Land Charges Team will have to deal with the transfer to HM Land Registry of some of certain functions in respect of providing information in response to Local Land Charges searches, which are part of the suite of information required by people when purchasing property. The Council collects a vast range of personal data in order to deliver the various services it provides to its residents and businesses. The Information Governance Team and Data Protection Officer provide extensive advice and assistance to departments to ensure that they comply with the various legal obligations which exist in respect of Data Protection. There are a number of challenges which the various teams in the Business Unit will face over the next twelve months. As has already been highlighted the Electoral Services Team will have to implement the various changes which have been introduced by the Elections Act 2022. The Democratic Services Team will have to deal with the desire of Members to webcast meetings of the Council. This is seen as an important initiative by Members and is viewed as enabling transparency of the way in which the Council works. The Legal Services Team will face the challenge of providing legal advice in an environment where the recruitment of staff is proving difficult. This is not a problem which is unique to the Council or Legal Services. There is a greater awareness amongst the public of the issue of Data Protection. Personal data has a value and valid concerns exist when any organisation collects personal data. Due to the types of services the Council provides it has to collect and use personal data. The Information Governance Team and the Data Protection Officer provide advice to the Council to ensure it meets its legal obligations and thereby provides reassurance to the public that their personal data is safe in the hands of the Council.

- 2.10 Key new areas of work in 2023/24 for Legal Services include:
- Introduction and implementation of Voter ID system for local elections
 - Review of process for making appointments to external bodies
 - Review of process for sign-off of Committee reports
 - Adoption of internal protocol for Member Behaviour

2.11 **Chief Executive's Office (CEX) Service Area Narrative and Mission Statement:**

The mission of the Chief Executive's Office is to enable and encourage quality, effective and efficient performance across the Council, through collaborative working, for the good of the Borough's residents and businesses. This is focussed on collectively achieving the Council's vision as set out in the Corporate Business Plan and delivering outcomes described within the five underpinning strategies. The unit specifically supports frontline and professional services in delivering these corporate plans as well as their service-level plans through the successful achievement of approved projects, initiatives and activities.

We are a single unit comprising of a multi-disciplinary, skilled team empowered to carry out this mission by providing professional project management, procurement, communications and external relations expertise. We identify sources of funding, carry out design work, review policy, analyse

performance and data and, in doing so, support the work of the Chief Executive and Mayor. We also ensure our emergency planning response is first rate so we can exceed the expectations of residents at even the most challenging times.

The Chief Executive's Office comprises a multi-disciplinary, skilled team with a broad and varied remit to:

- interact and liaise with all service areas to help deliver their Corporate Business Plan objectives
- facilitate and manage cross-service initiatives including projects and service reviews as delegated by the Chief Executive
- provide corporate training on project management and procurement
- facilitate and support best value, compliant procurement activity for all service areas
- facilitate and manage professional communications and marketing for all service areas
- identify and facilitate new funding bids to support service delivery within the Corporate Business Plan
- represent the Council's interests as key stakeholder on strategic external projects
- review and analyse emerging relevant policies and legislation to identify any changes required to existing corporate policy
- organise civic events and support the Mayor's commitments
- provide organisational and office support to the Chief Executive including management of escalated complaints
- monitor and report progress and delivery against corporate KPIs (including achievement of the corporate Action Plan)
- protect and enhance the reputation of the Council, instilling and embedding the corporate vision and values

2.12 Key new areas of work in 2023/24 for the CEX Office include:

- Completion of the work to set the Runnymede Standard Carbon baseline
- Source funding opportunities that will support delivery of the Corporate Business Plan
- Support delivery of the Service Review programme
- Ensure readiness for changes required by the passing of the Procurement Bill
- Reprocure Emergency planning services
- Develop further the corporate reporting system and coordinate delivery of assurance reports including dashboards to track progress of projects, CKPIs, corporate action plan activities and climate change activities.
- Develop and implement an engagement strategy and social media strategy
- Review of corporate style guide

2.13 The full list of all Planned Activity compiled from all Service Area Plans can be found at Appendix 5. This forms the Corporate Action Plan for 2023/24.

This comprises 96 activities that are linked directly to the corporate business plan and the corporate strategies (labelled as CBP Strategy Action in the Type of Initiative column.)

In addition are a further 119 service-specific planned activities for delivery in 2023/24 (labelled as Income generation, Legislative/Regulatory change, Service Efficiency or Improvement, Staff/ Resources).

Table 1: Summary of initiatives by type and service area

Type of Initiative	No. identified
Corporate Business Plan Strategy Actions	96
Climate Change/ Environmental Sustainability	22
Economic Development	13
Empowering Communities	11
Health and Wellbeing	28
Organisational Development	22
Service Area Specific Actions	116
Income generation	5
Legislative/Regulatory Change	37
Service/efficiency improvement	56
Staff/Resources	18
Grand Total	212

The PMO will continue to work with the Corporate Heads of Service to ensure projects are identified from the planned activities and these enter the project portfolio pipeline for regular quarterly project management monitoring and reporting progress to this Committee as per previous years.

The PMO is also developing tools to support Corporate Heads in monitoring and reporting progress on the non-project activity (reviews, one-off activity, new BAU) to provide updates on achievements across the year that support overall delivery of the Corporate Business Plan. In addition, to support specific reporting of climate change actions from across the organisation, the PMO is developing a reporting mechanism in conjunction with the Local Plans Manager and Climate Change Officer.

- 2.14 Once approved, all Service Area Plans and the Corporate Action Plan will be published on the runnymede.gov.uk website.

3 Policy framework implications

- 3.1 Service Area Plans support the delivery of the Corporate Business Plan.
- 3.2 Specifically, those actions arising from Corporate Strategies that will be addressed in delivering the Service Plans can be seen in the Corporate Action Plan in Appendix 5 described as CBP Strategy Action in the Type of Initiative column.
- 3.3 Monitoring progress and achievement of project and non-project activity from Service Area Plans will ensure delivery of the Corporate Business Plan 2022-2026.

4 Resource implications

- 4.1 Capital and revenue growth identified and prioritised from Service Area Plans have been reported to this Committee as part of the budget setting process for 2023/24.

- 4.2 Provisional budgets have been incorporated into the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) / Housing Business Plan and budgets will be released upon committee approval for the schemes to progress.

5 Legal implications

- 5.1 The Corporate Business Plan is a central component of the local authority business architecture, linking key elements such as policy, organisation, operational activity, governance, and performance management. Service Area Plans describe what will be delivered to support achievement of the Corporate Business Plan within the 12-month period.
- 5.2 Plans are drafted in line with relevant legislation, in particular the Local Government Act 2001, the Local Government Reform Act 2014 and, where applicable, the Local Government Act 2019.

6 Equality implications

- 6.1 None arising directly from this report.

7 Environmental/Sustainability/Biodiversity implications

- 7.1 None arising directly from this report.

10. Conclusions

(To resolve)

Committee are asked to approve the Service Area Plans for the corporate service areas of Finance, HR, Legal, CEX Office, Customer, Digital and Collection Services.

Committee are asked to approve the overall Corporate Action Plan for 2023/24 which is compiled from all planned activity from Service Area Plans from across the Council

Background papers

Appendix 1: Finance Service Area Plan 2023/24

Appendix 2: HR Service Area Plan 2023/24

Appendix 3: Customer, Digital and Collection Services Service Area Plan 2023/24

Appendix 4: Legal Services Area Plan 2023/24

Appendix 5: CEX Office Service Area Plan 2023/24

Appendix 6: Corporate Action Plan for 2023/24