

Addendum

Executive

Dear Councillor,

Executive - Thursday, 20 October 2022, 7.30 pm

I enclose, for consideration at the meeting of the Executive to be held on Thursday, 20 October 2022 at 7.30 pm, the following reports which were unavailable when the agenda was published.

Mari Roberts-Wood
Managing Director

5. Environmental Sustainability Strategy: Annual Report (Pages 3 - 8)

The Executive Member for Corporate Policy & Resources.

6. Local Plan - Local Development Scheme (Pages 9 - 10)

The Executive Member for Place Delivery & Planning Policy.

7. Quarter 1 2022/23 performance report (Pages 11 - 14)

The Executive Member for Corporate Policy & Resources.

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Overview and Scrutiny Committee - 13 October 2022

Draft Minute 25 – Agenda Item 5 Annual Environmental Sustainability Strategy Progress Report

The Committee received an annual update on the work towards the objectives set out in the Council's Environmental Sustainability Strategy, adopted in July 2020.

Councillor Lewanski, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Policy and Resources, outlined the work that had taken place over the past year, challenges and next steps. In addition, the agenda pack included Annex 1 which set out the progress on Environmental Sustainability Strategy (ES Strategy) Actions and Indicators for 2021/22.

As well as carbon emission data, the priority topics were:

- The Council's own assets and buildings
- The Council's vehicle fleet
- Rolling out electric vehicle charging infrastructure; and
- Domestic retrofit

Several advance questions had been received. The questions and responses can be viewed here:

[Document Advance Questions OS 13 October 2022 | Reigate and Banstead Borough Council \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)

In addition, Members asked the following questions:

Natural Environment: Ecological Enhancement – Members commented that the planting of new trees was commendable but that some of these trees were dying due to lack of maintenance and watering and felt that a resource was necessary to care for the new trees. It was confirmed that residents were requested to water new trees and that the Council relied on residents' goodwill. Members observed that this was not feasible if the trees were well away from housing, such as in parks and open spaces. It was suggested by Members that new trees planted in these areas could be smaller trees which required less watering.

The Environmental Sustainability Strategy has an action encouraging trees removed due to new developments be relocated elsewhere in the borough; Members asked whether this practice was in actively place. It was confirmed that although this had occurred on a few limited occasions it was not regularly used and that this was an aspirational target.

Energy and Carbon: Renewable Energy – Members asked how retrofitting of homes was facilitated in older homes with solid wall construction. It was confirmed that retrofitting presented challenges and could not be made mandatory by the Council. However, there were several options available to

Agenda Item 5

residents including government grants such as the Sustainable Warmth Grant and officers asked Members to make their constituents aware of these grants. Options were not limited to cavity wall insulation, other options for solid wall construction homes were available such as external wall insulation, internal wall insulation, loft insulation and window and door insulation.

Although noting that the number of upgraded properties was low compared to the total number of homes in the borough, Members commended officers for their work on raising awareness of and facilitating retrofitting and commented that there had been some significant successes.

Members enquired whether the Home Upgrade Grant would be applied for. It was confirmed that this grant was included in the Sustainable Warmth package.

Effective Implementation: Communications – Members asked how the Council communicates with residents regarding energy saving tips and similar information. It was reported that information is available on the Council website and through the Borough News publication regarding issues such as the Sustainable Warmth Grant and sign posting to other sources of information. The Council provides a wealth of communication pertaining to general ways of saving and works with the Surrey County Council Campaign, the voluntary sector, parish councils and food banks.

Electrical Vehicle Charging – Members noted that of 29 charging points in the Borough, only 7 are owned by the Council and were concerned that this number should be increased. It was confirmed that the Council is working on an agreement with Surrey County Council to provide further electric vehicle charging points.

Members asked for the full fleet review and the consultant survey of buildings to be shared. It was confirmed that the fleet review report would be shared following the meeting but that the survey of assets had not yet been completed – the key outcomes from this work would be shared when it had been finalised.

Members asked that future information more clearly shows progress against targets with an analysis of targets met, factors resulting in reductions and next steps to address challenges. It was reported that the Environmental Sustainability Strategy had been written pre-COVID and was due to be reviewed next year, and a carbon trajectory is in the process of being produced; officers would be happy to work with Members to adapt future reporting to be more specific during the upcoming review.

RESOLVED that the Committee:

1. Noted the Environmental Sustainability Strategy Annual Progress Report at Annex 1 and made observations to the Executive.

Advance Questions

Agenda Item 5 – Annual Environmental Sustainability Strategy Progress Report

Question 2

Page 50 What measures are being looked at to reduce the carbon emissions and reduce overall energy usage from buildings?

Written Answer

In relation to the Council's operational buildings a wide range of measures is being considered. Examples include:

- Energy efficiency measures: eg LED lighting, antiglare film, glazing upgrades, wall / loft insulation, gas boiler replacement
- Energy management and behaviour change measures: eg building energy management systems, heating controls, sub-metering, motion sensors
- Renewable energy opportunities: eg transitioning from gas to electric heating, solar and battery storage

Question 3

- a) Page 53 Great that we have reached Bronze level Carbon literacy. What proportion of officers is 20 who are now carbon literate and what does it take to get to Silver?

Written Answer

The Council has over 500 employees in total, so 20 carbon literate staff is clearly only a small proportion of this.

However, there is already good representation of carbon literate staff across a range of service areas including at the senior management level. Service areas that have participated include communications; democratic services; corporate policy, projects & performance; fleet; place delivery; property; data & insight; licensing & regulation; economic prosperity; revenue, benefits & fraud; community partnerships; waste & recycling. Trained managers and staff are able to promote sustainability within their teams until more staff are able to be trained.

The Silver level award requires a greater proportion of staff to be certified carbon literate, and carbon literacy to be integrated in various ways in organisational procedures, eg recruitment, performance management etc.

Other forms of sustainability training, briefings and updates are also provided to staff, recognizing that carbon literacy training may not be appropriate for everyone. These include online training, briefing sessions and staff news items.

Agenda Item 5

- b) Would it be possible to increase ambition and plan to train all Councillors to be carbon literate?

Written Answer

All Councillors have been offered the opportunity of carbon literacy training, and further training will be offered in the future. However, we are very aware that the format of certified carbon literacy training may not work in practical terms for all Councillors, so (as for staff) other forms of training and briefings are also made available.

- c) What are the reservations about the ranking methodologies applied by Climate Emergency UK in ranking district and boroughs strategy and action plans?

Written Answer

Our concerns were primarily methodological, and included:

- Only looking at a single published strategy document rather than the wider range of information published by the Council over a period of time
- An expectation that operational details would be provided in said strategy document, which is not usual practice
- A simplistic (tick box) approach to assessment scoring

It was however positive that Climate Emergency UK engaged with local authorities on their draft assessment, and we took this opportunity to communicate our concerns to them.

Question 4

Page 53 What scope is there for the tree strategy to include anything to reduce instances of pre-emptive felling of mature trees by developers on sites not owned by Council?

Written Answer

This would unfortunately not fall within the scope of the tree strategy; instances of pre-emptive tree felling by developers is a planning issue, with council powers defined by legislation.

Question 5

Page 59 What progress has been made on investigating the potential for PV on Council operated assets? Mentioned in Actions but not in progress.

Written Answer

Opportunities for PV have been considered as part of the Energy Audits project (see Question 1 above). Surrey County Council also commissioned consultants to do a desktop assessment of potential opportunities.

However no detailed feasibility assessments have yet been carried out – where appropriate this will be done as part of our ongoing work to retrofit our operational buildings.

Question 6

Page 59 What is the measure used to decide if moving to Green tariffs is financially viable?

Written Answer

We use the energy management consultancy 'Beond' to manage our energy contracts; with bids invited from all types of suppliers, and the ability to then select based on cost or other considerations. Clearly financial cost to the Council is an important consideration at this time and a number of our electricity contracts are coming up this Autumn.

Question 7

Page 60 What is the progress on car club provisions? (I have personally asked for conditions re Car clubs to be added to Planning applications, so this doesn't seem to be done by Planning team and I have investigated with Surrey for one in my area and have struggled to get a response from SCC)

Written Answer

The Development Management Plan policy TAP1 encourages consideration of car pools/car clubs but does not mandate them, and such measures are only likely to be suitable to require on larger developments.

SCC offers discounted car club membership – we promote this via our website, and we continue to work with officers at the county in relation to how this could be further enhanced.

Question 8

Page 63 How is it possible that we cannot measure the waste generated in the council offices and facilities? How is this being addressed?

Written Answer

Organisational waste generation can be measured in two ways, by:

- a. weighing the waste at the time of collection, or

Agenda Item 5

- b. weighing on-site before it is collected (either as business-as-usual or by undertaking quarterly or annual 'snapshots').

In relation to (a), the way in which the Council (as collection authority) collects commercial waste (ie waste from businesses) does not allow for it to be weighed at the time of collection, this is due to not all vehicles having the technology to weigh the waste that is collected.

In relation to (b) options to do this are currently being scoped, however resource availability within the Waste & Recycling team (and the need to prioritise waste & recycling collection from residents) means that this is unlikely to be possible to introduce in the short term.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 13 October

Draft Minute 26 – Agenda Item 6 Local Plan – Local Development Scheme

The Committee received a report on the Local Plan – Local Development Scheme. Councillor Biggs, Portfolio holder for Planning Policy and Place Delivery, explained that the Local Plan Core Strategy was adopted in 2014 and, together with the 2019 Development Management Plan, is scheduled to run until July 2027, subject to a review in 2024. Beyond July 2027 it will become an out-of-date plan and therefore it is important work is started on a new Local Plan that will set out the vision and policies for development beyond 2027. It is a statutory requirement for Local Planning authorities to have an up-to-date Local Plan and will ensure that the Council remains a plan-led authority.

The first step in starting a new Local Plan is to agree a Local Development Scheme or LDS, which is the formal timetable setting out the key work programmes from evidence-gathering through to consultation, examination and then adoption.

Executive and Full Council will be asked to authorise this in the next couple of weeks, together with the anticipated budget costs over the period. A new plan takes time to prepare. Much of this time will be used to prepare the evidence, engage with stakeholders, local communities, and Members, and prepare the policies. The Local Development Scheme in Appendix 1 of the report outlines how this will be achieved, by who and when. The LDS considers the risks associated with the programme and the types of mitigation measures to minimise these. Throughout the process, all Members will be provided a variety of opportunities to engage in the process, working with officers through the different issues, consider different options and agree the draft policies. This is just the start of the process.

Members asked the following questions:

Members asked what the advantages to a one-step plan are as opposed to a two-step plan, with particular reference to the Five-Year Land Supply. It was confirmed that the Council could choose either a one-step plan or a two-step plan. The detailed planning policies contained in the part two plan or Development Management Plan, such as the environmental policies, sustainability policies and biodiversity policies are those which set out how development should be carried out and would all be reviewed to consider up to date national policy, guidance, and legislation. This part of the two-step plan would take a similar amount of time to develop as a single plan, and earlier implementation of such policies was an advantage of a single plan. The single stage plan would be less expensive than a two-step plan. With respect to the number of houses to be built, the Council could retain the current number of 460 houses until 2027.

Members felt that the contingency amount should only be used if absolutely necessary.

The Chair pointed out that other Surrey councils have taken a far longer time to develop their plans and would urge the Executive to ensure that the Council's plan was completed within the five-year period. He would also ask the

Agenda Item 6

Executive to consider if a two-step plan would present less risk in ensuring that the Council had an agreed housing target in place by the end of the current plan period in 2027.

Members noted that the housing land monitor for April 2022 was 8.72 years and that it was projected to be 5.40 in April 2023; if this trajectory continued, the Sustainable Urban Extensions would be used before 2027 and there was concern for the future of green belt land. It was confirmed that the housing monitor is a forecast prediction for the following year only and that large scale permissions could change the housing supply position. When published, the housing monitor anticipated the housing number for 2023 onwards based on 640 homes rather than the 460 stated in the Local Plan but has since been reverted to the 460 figure until 2027, following Council advice. It was also clarified that sustainable urban extensions are not green belt.

RESOLVED that the Committee:

1. Noted the Local Plan – Local Development Scheme as detailed in the Report and made observations to the Executive.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 13 October 2022

Draft Minute 24 – Agenda Item 4 Quarter 1 2022/23 Performance Report

The Committee received reports on the Council's performance for the first quarter of 2022/23 including Key Performance Indicator (KPI) reporting, as well as revenue and budget monitoring. The reports were due to go to the Executive on 20 October 2022.

The Portfolio Holder for Corporate Policy and Resources, Councillor Lewanski, introduced the KPI report by noting that the report outlined the performance of the Council from April to June 2022. Nine out of the ten KPIs were on target or within the agreed tolerance, the remaining red-rated KPI being recycling, which is reported one quarter in arrears. 52.4% had been achieved against a target of 60%, which had been set by the Joint Waste Management Strategy as a stretch target. However, the cumulative 21/22 performance of 55.6% was the highest recorded.

Members discussed and asked questions on the following areas:

Recycling – it was noted that the report stated that a reduction in residual waste per household continues to decrease to pre-pandemic levels, which may indicate that life is returning to normal. It was felt that this was an assumption, and the decrease could be attributed to residents' increased awareness of recycling. It was confirmed that the report says, "may indicate" and so could possibly be due to an increased awareness of recycling and levels would be monitored and reported on in future quarters.

Street Cleaning – Members noted that the levels for street cleaning and detritus were lower than other categories of local environment quality surveys. It was confirmed that all categories were on target at Grade B, but that graffiti, fly-posting and fly-tipping were exceeding the targets and were at Grade A.

Affordable Housing – Members requested a distinction between social rent and affordable rent. It was reported that there was no reliable information on a quarterly basis splitting social rent and affordable rent, as this was reconciled at the end of the year.

Homelessness – Members asked for a KPI for the cost of living. It was confirmed that this committee has the ability to review and recommend additional KPIs to the Executive annually and that data on this issue is currently monitored. The Executive Member for Corporate Policy and Resources and Managing Director would consider reporting on the cost of living issues following the meeting.

Members asked what steps are taken to support those who do not meet the support threshold for homelessness. It was confirmed that there were categories for prioritising need for homelessness support and those that did not meet the support threshold were supported in other ways including signposting, housing plan, help into private rented accommodation and other information and assistance.

Agenda Item 7

The Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Finance and Governance, Councillor Schofield, outlined the Revenue Budget and Capital Programme performance for Q1 2022/23. The projected full year outturn for the Revenue Budget was £19.558m against a management budget of £20.062m resulting in an underspend for the year of £504k (2.5%). Details of the more significant budget variances were set out as usual in the report.

The full year Capital Programme forecast at the end of Q1 of £37.42m was (45%) below the approved Programme for the year. The variance is as a result of £30.18m slippage and a £0.05m net underspend.

The reasons for the significant forecast slippage at this stage is purely because, while substantial budgets have previously been allocated for investment in Housing developments, the related business cases have not yet been developed. These will follow in due course as strategies are implemented in these areas. Details of other scheme variances were set out in the report. Councillor Schofield drew the Committee's attention to a typographical error on page 16 item 18 where "overspend" should read "underspend" regarding treasury investments.

An advance question had been received. The question and response can be viewed here:

[Document Advance Questions OS 13 October 2022 | Reigate and Banstead Borough Council \(modern.gov.co.uk\)](#)

Members discussed and asked questions on the following areas:

Investment income – Members noted that forecast investment income had decreased to £3.9 million compared to £4.3 million in the previous year due to expired leases and asked whether the forecast would increase in the next quarter due to renewed leases. It was confirmed that the decrease had been due to voids many of which had now been filled.

Service budgets – Page 16 mentions lower staff costs for car parking and an underspend due to vacancies in the Planning Policy and Development team, Members asked what the impact on the budget will be when these vacancies are filled. It was reported that vacancies are not automatically filled and that there is a thorough vacancy approval process in place. In addition, Surrey County Council would be taking over responsibility for car parking on the highway in April 2023 and any staff in post at the transfer date would be TUPEd to Surrey County Council. The Council is therefore keeping some roles vacant or covering them on a temporary basis to ensure that these transfers are kept to a minimum.

It was also reported the bulk of the underspend for car parking was due to an increase in car parking revenue. Members noted that the budget for car parking income had been set on a precautionary basis, reflecting the uncertainty of recovery from COVID.

Members commented on the forecast shortfall of approximately £0.620 million in rental income and asked for a breakdown of the properties this relates to. It was reiterated that the data in the report was based on the situation at the end of June 2022; since then the situation had improved and currently there was

only one significant vacant asset. It was confirmed that a breakdown would be provided to Members following the meeting.

Government funding distribution – Members asked whether the £415k grants balance would need to be repaid to the Government. It was confirmed that these funding streams, such as COVID-related funding and Ukrainian refugee funding, had been forward funded based on Government estimates and the unspent sums would need to be repaid to Government, following reconciliation. There would be some treasury income benefits from interest on holding this funding balance, however administering the funding was demanding on staff resource.

Members asked for an update on the approximate £1million energy rebates still to be paid to residents at the end of the quarter. It was confirmed that 95% of rebates had been paid to date and that the remaining outstanding payments were due in part to non-response from a small number of residents that were proving difficult to contact. A written update would be provided to Members following the meeting. Members further asked whether this performance included the discretionary payments. It was confirmed that this information would also be provided to Members following the meeting.

RESOLVED that the Committee:

1. Noted Key Performance Indicator (KPI) performance for Q1 2022/23 as detailed in the report and at Annex 1 and made observations to the Executive.
2. Noted the Budget Monitoring forecasts for Q1 2022/23 as detailed in the report and at Annexes 2 and 3 and made observations to the Executive.
3. Noted the update on the Financial Sustainability Programme (FSP) at Annex 4.

Advance Question

Agenda Item 4 – Quarter 1 2022/23 Performance Report

Question 1

Budget Monitoring Summary 2022/23 Page 32 on street cleaning

The budget amount has stayed the same for some time, but the streets / not including the town centres, should ideally be cleaned more often, especially when the leaves fall. RBBC have an elderly population, many disabled, so ideally the paths and road areas at the edges should be kept clear to prevent falls on the wet leaves and prevent blocked drains.

Firstly can RBBC increase the budget to help with this.

Secondly how often is this done.

The street cleaning used to be done on a regular basis, so hopefully you can tell us when the cutbacks occurred, as residents do complain about this.

Written Answer

To increase the budget for any activity, a growth bid would need to be submitted and approved by Executive and Council as part of the annual budget setting process.

Agenda Item 7

Growth bids are considered each year.

No reduction in service has taken place and the frequency of cleansing is unchanged. This is evidenced by the KPI's relating to Local Environmental Quality surveys (LEQ's) reported to this committee.

Each autumn, sweeping routines are adjusted to take account of leaf fall and resources are deployed accordingly. Details of the enhanced leaf sweeping schedule appear on the Council's Website and priority is given to areas of high pedestrian use, road junctions and those roads on hills.