

# Organisation

Overview & Scrutiny Committee  
12 October 2023

**Reigate & Banstead**  
**BOROUGH COUNCIL**  
Banstead | Horley | Redhill | Reigate



# Summary

Portfolio Holder	'Organisation' elements of portfolio
Cllr Biggs	Communications & Customer Contact Corporate Plan Review oversight
Cllr Lewanski	Human Resources & Organisational Development Procurement Legal & Governance Revenues (Council Tax & Business Rates) & Counter Fraud Finance
Cllr A King	Property Assets Companies Charities
Cllr J King	Information Technology Corporate Policy Performance, Risk and Programme Management Office Data & Insight

# Leader's Portfolio

## CLlr R Biggs

Reigate & Banstead  
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# Comms & Customer Contact

## Relevant Portfolio Holder Objective(s):

1. To work with the team to develop the Customer Contact Strategy
2. To adopt a clear Social Media output programme
3. To promote the development of a high quality and fully indexed photo and video library
4. To review the use and provision of Data and Insight (D&I)

## Progress

1. Officer Customer Contact Strategy working group established
2. Communications annual forward plan created, including details of planned social media; communications toolkit in development, containing social media templates for Services use
3. Communications toolkit in development, to include library of resources (photo images, templates etc.)
4. D&I contributing to council priority areas including Financial Sustainability Programme projects, strategy development, and rolling out PowerBI (data visualisation and utilisation self-service tool)



# Comms & Customer Contact

## Next steps

1. Customer Contact Strategy: PH engagement; progress research work
2. Communications: Annual Forward Plan to be updated and reviewed monthly with PH.
3. Communications: User engagement on Toolkit content, design and functionality
4. Data & Insight:
  - Consider outcomes of D&I trial project e.g.. data quality improvement, policy evidence base preparation, officer upskilling, generating efficiency through automation, customer insight.
  - Determine objectives for any continuation of D&I project deliverables including for example to help improve resident outcomes, inform decision making, and identify income generation and efficiency opportunities.
  - Then as part of budget setting process agree the suitable scale of resource to invest in and the best way to fund this
  - Revisit PH objectives as necessary to reflect nature of ongoing work

# Corporate Plan Review Oversight

## Relevant Portfolio Holder Objective(s):

- To work with the team to develop the new corporate plan for implementation from 2025/6 onwards

## Progress

- A project plan has been developed for the review, and the initial evidence gathering phase is underway, including engagement with Executive Members on future priorities

## Next steps

- Further engagement with stakeholders as part of the evidence gathering stage. This will include a member workshop later this year.
- An outline plan will then be developed for informal discussion, before a final draft plan is prepared and formally, publicly consulted on
- This will include consultation with the O&S Committee

# Corporate Plan Review: Process

## Phase 1: Evidence gathering

- Review of wider context within which the Council operates, opportunities and challenges
- Engagement with Exec Members, Management Team, Group Leaders, other Members, Staff, key external stakeholders

Sept '23 – Mar '24

## Phase 2: Outline Plan

- Develop outline plan with emerging vision and broad priorities
- Informal engagement on emerging priorities with residents, businesses, members, staff and partners

## Phase 3: Finalising the Plan

- Refinement and preparation of draft plan
- Public consultation on draft Plan, including with O&S
- Final plan endorsed by Executive before being presented to Full Council for agreement

Mar '24 – Mar '25

# Portfolio for Finance, Governance & Organisation

Cllr V Lewanski

Reigate & Banstead  
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# Organisational Development & Human Resources (OD & HR)

## Relevant Portfolio Holder Objective(s):

- Deliver the 2023/24 elements of the OD & HR Strategy

## Progress

- Revised OD & HR operating model agreed and implemented – delivering an ongoing saving of £100k per annum from 23/24 budget.
- Improvements to our establishment management controls implemented, including vacancy scrutiny via Heads of Service and the Senior Management Team (SMT)
- Staff survey – to obtain key baselining data from all staff. Development of suite of questions commenced in Q2, in consultation with relevant stakeholders.

# Organisational Development & Human Resources (OD & HR)

## Next steps

- Permanent recruitment to fill the seven vacancies within the team – ambition to have all positions filled by early 2024
- Seek Employment Committee endorsement (Dec 2023) of the revised OD & HR Strategy, through to 2026/27
- Transformation – corporate recruitment and onboarding processes internal audit in Q4 (part of work around building a through and independently scrutinised improvement/transformation plan).

# Organisational Development & Human Resources (OD & HR)

## Next steps (cont'd)

- Refocus of performance management and appraisal process – clarifying expectations for managers and staff
- Roll out of real time people data reports to Senior Management Team and Heads of Service
- Staff survey – launch planned for early Q3, with analysis and presentation of results to Senior Management Team and Heads of Service by the end of Q3. Q4 onwards – publication and implementation of OD actions arising.

# Procurement

## Progress

- Interim Procurement Advisor recruited, who is progressing the creation of:
  - Procurement and Contract Management improvement plan (including sustainable & ethical elements)
  - Procurement pipeline
  - Contracts register
  - Options paper for how to resource RBBC procurement and contract management requirements

## Next steps

- Review of all spend over the past five years to:
  - identify Tier 1, 2, 3 suppliers
  - areas where spend could be consolidated
  - conversations with Districts & Boroughs re: possible synergies



# Legal & Governance

## Governance and democracy (1/1)

- **Promoting Standards:** Standards Committee to start a review of the Code of Conduct, including Member-Officer relations protocol and Social Media guidance for Members.
- **Promoting transparency:**
  - Group Leaders have endorsed new guidance from Democratic Services / Deputy MO regarding handling of exempt business and access to information, which will be shared with all Members.
  - Chamber IT Upgrade – project to upgrade the hybrid meeting and webcasting equipment commences October 2023. This will improve reliability, reduce resourcing to run the equipment, and maintain the accessibility of the Council’s democratic process.
- **Learning from complaints:** LGSCO Annual Review Letter 2022/23 published in August. Analysis of complaints performance considered by Corporate Governance Group and Group Leaders for assurance of the Council’s performance.
- **In the pipeline:** Reviews of Constitution (Full Council) and Code of Corporate Governance (Audit Cttee).

# Legal & Governance

## Elections (1/2)

- Elections Act 2022:
  - Voter ID successfully delivered May 2023 and now 'business as usual'.
  - [Electoral Commission's analysis and report on May 2023 elections now published.](#)
  - Further changes effective for PCC and Borough elections on 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2024—changes to:
    - postal and proxy voting rules
    - undue influence and intimidation
    - online postal vote application system
    - extension of overseas franchise
    - digital imprint requirements
    - candidate address and commonly used names
    - EU voting and candidacy rights
    - Postal vote handling and secrecy.
    - Police and Crime Commissioners will now be elected by the 'first past the post' voting system, instead of supplementary vote.

# Legal & Governance

## Elections (2/2)

- Review of Parliamentary Boundaries – Order expected in October. Implemented for next General Election (which must be held by January 2025). Final recommendations have been published by the Boundary Commission: <https://boundarycommissionforengland.independent.gov.uk/2023-review/>
- Review of County Divisions – Initial proposals published on 1 September 2023: <https://www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/surrey>. Next scheduled County Elections in 2025.
- Review of Polling Places and Districts – By law must be conducted within 18 month period every 5 years, from 1 October 2023. Extraordinary Full Council meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> Jan 2024 expected to designate changes to polling places and districts in readiness for next General Election. Further review in Autumn 2024 in line with final recommendations of SCC Boundary Review expected next year.

# Legal & Governance

## Mayoralty and Civic events (1/1)

- **Recent events:**

- Heritage Open Day – 9<sup>th</sup> Sept
- Official signing of Coronation Scroll – 13<sup>th</sup> Sept
- ~~Volunteer Awards – 26<sup>th</sup> Sept (cancelled)~~

### **Upcoming events:**

- RBL Banstead 'thank you' event visit to Reigate Caves – 17<sup>th</sup> Oct
- Remembrance Sunday – 12<sup>th</sup> Nov
- Mayor's Wacky Races Night – 24<sup>th</sup> Nov
- Mayor's Civic Carol Service – 17<sup>th</sup> Dec



# Revenues & Fraud

- **Council Tax collection** – previous year debt is still feeling the effects of the pandemic, when the Courts were closed for almost a full year. From 2022/23, the in-year collection rate has been recovering. At the end of Q1 2023/24, the in-year collection rate was 38.44%, compared to 38.28% in the previous year
- In 2022/23 we had a Council Tax collection rate of 98.60%, the 18<sup>th</sup> highest in the country (309 local authorities). This was also the second highest in Surrey
- **Business Rates collection** – the in-year collection rate at the end of Q1 2022/23 was 41.87%, compared to 42.67% in the previous year. Over the last few years, the collection rate during the year has shown variations, but we fully expect the final collection rate to meet our target of 99.8% at the end of the year
- In 2022/23 we had a Business Rates collection rate of 99.95%, the second highest in the country

# Revenues & Fraud

## Counter Fraud

- Using Cabinet Office figures, in 2022/23 savings achieved through counter fraud work was £725K, which includes cashable savings of £179K i.e. money that will be recovered
- Savings figures are recorded against fraudulent applications for housing, homelessness, Right to Buy (Raven), Council Tax, Business Rates and benefits
- In October 2022 the counter fraud team was recognised for its achievements by winning the national IRRV category for Excellence in Counter Fraud
- The counter fraud team has a partnership with Oxford City Council, providing resilience and joint commercial opportunities
- The team provides counter fraud services for five other Surrey Councils, as well as ad hoc work for housing providers

# Revenues & Fraud

## Other Areas of Service Delivery

- In 2023 we delivered a further energy support scheme on behalf of the government, providing payments to 480 households totalling £164K
- The service also provides debt recovery support to other Council services

## Commercial Activities

- Agreements are in place with other local authorities, housing providers and private sector organisations to carry out services – counter fraud, debt recovery, benefits, systems support, Business Rates and inspections
- The budget for income from external agreements is £570K. Although as a local authority we cannot make a “profit” we are able to make a net surplus which reduces our overheads. Additionally, this gives us greater resilience to ensure we maintain high levels of performance for Reigate & Banstead
- Agreements are in place with 27 different organisations

# Finance

## Progress 2023/24

- Revenue budget approved in February – Q1 position forecast as expected
- Capital Programme continues to be delivered within budget despite inflation pressures
- Medium Term forecast updated in July – budget gap predicted - *if no action is taken to address it*
- Financial Sustainability Programme continues to help identify opportunities for budget savings and income growth
- Ongoing uncertainties about Government funding
- ...But Reserves remain healthy

## Additional Government Funding continues to be distributed:

- Household Support Fund - £0.5m
- Syrian and Afghan Refugees - £160k
- Homes for Ukraine Funding - £1.0m



# Portfolio for Commercial & Community Assets

## CLlr A King

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# Assets, Commercial & Charitable Trusts

- Focus continues to be on:
  - Ensuring effective use of assets
  - Overseeing our company investments
  - Ensuring good governance of charitable trusts
- Seeking new investments remains a lower priority
  - Opportunities are assessed as they arise

# Property Assets

## Top income-producing assets are:

M&S, 51 High Street, Reigate

Old Town Hall, Reigate

Warwick Quadrant, Redhill

Beech House, Reigate

Regent House, Redhill

61E Albert Road, Reigate

Crown House, Redhill (Greensand Holdings)

55-63 Victoria Road, Horley

1-4 Quarrydene Parade, Merstham

Forum House, Redhill

Priory Gate, Town Hall site Reigate

Reading Arch Road, Redhill

Redhill Distribution Centre, Salfords

- Void rates remain stable and compare well to wider market comparators
- Minimization of void costs continues to be a priority

# Property Assets

## New Assets:

- 14-16 & 18 Reading Arch Road, Redhill
- The Rise, Marketfield Way, Redhill
  - The Light Cinema open
  - Posadero Lounge open
  - Tesco open
  - Creams undertaking fit-out

# Companies

- Active companies:

Greensand Holdings Limited	Property assets
Pathway for Care Limited	Supported Living

- Other:

- Horley Business Park LLP – dissolution in progress
  - RBBC Limited - inactive
- Updates are provided in the regular reports to O&S and PSTESC Sub-Committee



# Portfolio for Corporate Policy & Resources

CLlr J King

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# Information Technology

## Relevant Portfolio Holder Objective(s):

- Enable the delivery of the IT Strategy and ensure that our operational IT systems are fit for purpose

## Progress

- The new IT Strategy was agreed by the Council in April 2022 and initially focused on three objectives. All are expected to complete within the next few months:
- Cyber Security - Training has been provided to all staff who access IT and to Council Members. Additional software and security systems have been deployed. A fully managed Cyber security service is being implemented with completion expected in Q4
- Disaster Recovery - Business continuity plans have been improved across the Council. A fully managed Backup and Disaster Recovery solution is being implemented with completion expected in Q3
- Telephony System - A new MS Teams based system hosted in the cloud is currently being implemented with completion expected in Q3.
- Additionally - CRM continues to be developed to enable the delivery of online transactions

## Next steps

- Staff remote access system improvements, on-premise technical infrastructure upgrades, migration of some major systems to cloud hosting.

# Corporate Policy, Projects & Performance

## Relevant Portfolio Holder Objective(s):

- Deliver an agreed approach to the development of council strategies
- Ensure continued effective quarterly reporting on performance and risk, including implementation of the new Risk Management Strategy
- Ensure effective monthly corporate project and programme dashboard reporting to members via the modern.gov portal

## Progress

- Approach to the development of council strategies has been agreed and circulated to members for information
- Quarterly reporting of risk and performance continues, positive feedback from Audit Committee Members on new Risk Management approach
- Monthly dashboards continue to be published

## Next steps

- List of forthcoming strategies being compiled, team will support service areas to implement the guidance
- Implementation of corporate assurance framework from 2024/25 onwards – work underway to compile this
- Consideration being given to how to make KPI dashboard more interactive / interrogable for O&S committee members

# Data & Insight (D&I)

## Relevant Portfolio Holder Objective(s):

- Increase the visibility of D&I work and the offer available from the council resource.
- Promote and empower others to trust insights gathered from data and incorporate these behaviours into their work.

## Progress

- D&I contributing to council priority areas including Financial Sustainability Programme projects, strategy development, and rolling out PowerBI (data visualisation and utilisation self-service tool)
- Officer Data Community established to upskill officers in data utilisation

## Next steps

- Consider outcomes of D&I trial project e.g.. data quality improvement, policy evidence base preparation, officer upskilling, generating efficiency through automation, customer insight.
- Determine objectives for any continuation of D&I project deliverables including for example to help improve resident outcomes, inform decision making, and identify income generation and efficiency opportunities.
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