

Surrey Heath Borough Council

Executive

18 July 2023

Short-term Plan to the end of 2023

Portfolio Holder:	Leader – Cllr Shaun Macdonald
Strategic Director/Head of Service	Damian Roberts – Chief Executive
Report Author:	
Key Decision:	No
Date Portfolio Holder signed off the report	6 July 2023
Wards Affected:	All

Summary and purpose

This report sets out a new Short-term Plan for approval covering the six-month period up to December 2023.

Recommendation

The Executive is advised to RESOLVE that the Short-term Plan, as set out at Annex A to this report, be approved.

1. Background and Supporting Information

- 1.1 A new Council term began after the recent all-out elections on 4 May 2023 and following the postponed Frimley Green election on 15 June 2023.
- 1.2 To ensure that the new Council term begins strongly and builds early positive momentum with a clear focus on the immediate priorities for the new Administration, a 'Short-term Plan' has been prepared for delivery over the next few months to December 2023.
- 1.3 The Plan includes a significant number of new actions not already reflected in the Council's current plans and strategies, as well as actions reflecting a change of emphasis on items in existing plans, and items that reflect a wish to drive forward implementation on topics that may have previously been at an earlier stage of development. The Plan seeks to get the balance right between initiatives already in train across the Council that should continue alongside delivering actions that more directly reflect the priorities of the new Administration. Care has also been taken to identify actions that can be delivered within the current staffing and budget envelope. However, where

additional resources are needed, for example following a feasibility study, this will be subject to a separate report and business case to the Executive.

- 1.4 The Short-term Plan recognises residents' priorities set out in the Five Year Strategy 2022-2027 and the Annual Plan 2023/24. The intention is to bring together the original Annual Plan and the Short-Term Plan during the coming months for monitoring purposes to ensure that the Council has a single robust and transparent approach, and is able to maximise what can be delivered over the course of this financial year. The Council's Policy and Finance Scrutiny Committee will also be invited to have a key role in monitoring progress.
- 1.5 The Short-term Plan includes six areas of focus for delivery:
 - Secure the Council's Finances
 - Protect our Environment
 - Make Council Property Work
 - Campaign on Behalf of Residents
 - Engage and Empower our Communities
 - Support those in Greatest Need
- 1.6 Initial work on the Short-term Plan commenced immediately following the elections in May ahead of this first Executive following the June election, so a few actions in the Plan are already implemented in part or in full (for example the initial launch of the Council's new website) and these are included in the new Council's Short-term Plan for completeness.

2. Reasons for Recommendation

- 2.1 The Short-term Plan ensures a strong focus on delivery at the start of a new Council Term and builds early positive momentum, following the inevitable period of uncertainty for all Councils associated with all-out elections.

3. Proposal

- 3.1 That the Executive approves the Short-term Plan set out at Annex A.

4. Contribution to the Council's Five Year Strategy

- 4.1 In the summer of 2021, the Council carried out an extensive engagement exercise with residents, partners and businesses. The priorities from this consultation informed the Council's Five Year Strategy 2022-27 which was agreed with cross-party support.
- 4.2 The actions in the Short-term Plan align closely with residents' priorities and the longer-term Five Year Strategy goals and targets.
- 4.3 Monitoring of the delivery of the plan will be combined with reporting performance against the delivery of the Council's Annual Plan 2023/24.

5. Resource Implications

- 5.1 The programme is planned to be delivered within existing budgets as set at Council in February 2023. Any requests for additional budget will be made in accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations (Constitution Part 4 Section H).

6. Section 151 Officer Comments:

- 6.1 The Council can amend its priorities and work within allocated budgets, provided there is not a fundamental change in the purpose the budget was already set for. Any such changes in the allocated budgets must be made through the Scheme of Virement as detailed in the Council's Financial Regulations.
- 6.2 It is not considered that there is a need at this point to make a virement from any budgets to achieve this plan.
- 6.3 Any additional budget required will need to be requested by a supplementary estimate to the annual budget in accordance with Financial Regulations. Given the Council's financial position it is expected that any requests for additional budget will be offset by either additional income, or budget reductions elsewhere in the service. Services are expected to remain within the budgeted expenditure limits.

7. Legal and Governance Issues

- 7.1 The Plan includes actions that will provide an opportunity to support and strengthen governance, for example the corporate peer challenge by the Local Government Association.
- 7.2 A framework to ensure delivery against the actions in the Short Term Plan is being put in place and regular monitoring of progress will be undertaken by Senior Management and service managers.

8. Monitoring Officer Comments:

- 8.1 All lead officers must ensure that decisions to implement the Short-term Plan are in accordance with the Council's Scheme of Delegation or taken by the relevant Committee if applicable.

9. Other Considerations and Impacts

Environment and Climate Change

- 9.1 '*Protect our Environment*' is a key area of focus in the Short-term Plan, and includes a number of actions relating to achieving Net Zero carbon emissions, improving biodiversity and improving the local environment.

Equalities and Human Rights

9.2 *‘Supporting those in greatest need’* is a key area of focus in the plan and there are a number of targeted actions including those relating to support for older people and a voice for younger people.

Risk Management

9.3 No specific impacts.

Community Engagement

9.4 *‘Engage and Empower our Communities’* is a key area of focus in the plan and includes actions that cover not only how the Council can communicate better with its residents but how engagement with residents and communities can be enhanced through ideas such as residents panels, public questions at Council meetings, a stronger petitions process and exploring more opportunities to empower residents.

Annexes

Annex A – Short-term Plan to end of 2023

Background Papers

Five Year Strategy Consultation Report, October 2021

Five Year Strategy 2022 – 2027

Annual Plan 2023/24