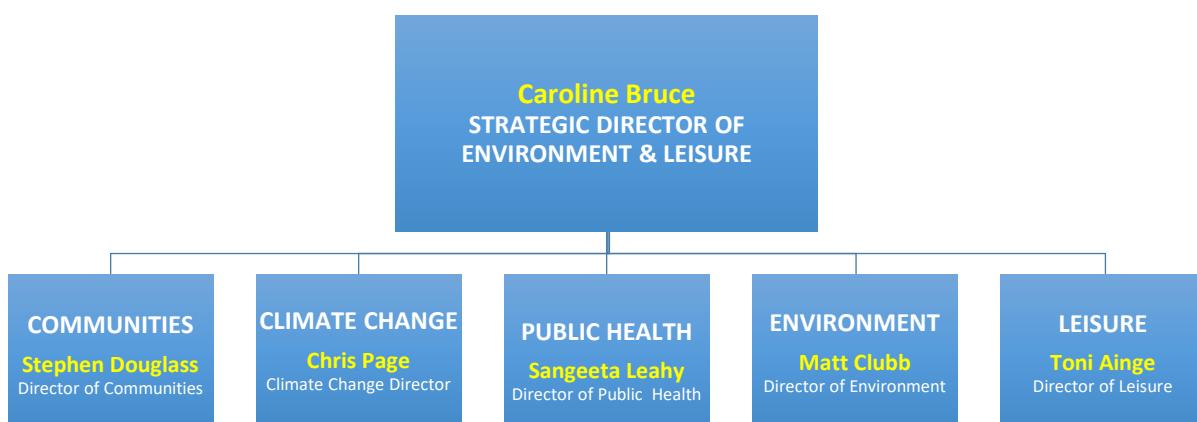


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|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|---|--|
| Item No: 6. | Classification: Open | Date: 17 November 2021 | Meeting Name: Audit, Governance and Standards Committee |
| Report title: | | Governance Conversation – Caroline Bruce | |
| Ward(s) or groups affected: | | All | |
| From: | | Strategic Director of Environment and Leisure | |

Introduction to the Department

1. The Environment and Leisure department delivers services that make a real difference to the everyday lives of all residents and visitors. The department is focused on providing high quality services to the borough's residents – the universal services we deliver are those recognised by our residents as being the face of the council – but there is significant range in what we do: parking and highways, bereavement services, culture and events, sexual health services, violence and community harm reduction, tenant and resident involvement, and civic services to name but a few.
2. The Environment and Leisure Department is made up of five divisions:
 - Environment
 - Leisure
 - Public Health
 - Climate Change
 - Communities
3. Public Health became part of the department in April 2019 and Communities in August 2020. The management team is set out below and has been in place since April 2021 following the recruitment of the three directors for Public Health, Environment and Leisure in the Autumn of 2020.



The Department in numbers

4. The gross expenditure budget for Environment and Leisure in 2021-22 is £196m with an income budget of £108m from grants, fees and charges. The biggest single source of external funding is the Public Health grant and the rest is determined through the annual review of fees and charges with this income covering discretionary charges (burial fees, parking charges, sport pitch charges for example) and statutory charges for elements of regulatory services.

| Directorate | Gross Expenditure | Income | Net Expenditure Budgets |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------------|
| | £'000 | £'000 | £'000 |
| Communities | 17,508 | (5,245) | 12,263 |
| Environment | 119,058 | (65,933) | 53,124 |
| Leisure | 29,393 | (6,673) | 22,720 |
| Sustainability / Climate Change | 845 | (1,140) | (295) |
| Public Health | 28,731 | (28,731) | (0) |
| TOTAL E&L | 195,535 | (107,722) | 87,812 |

5. The department also has a 10-year Capital Programme budget for 2021/22 of £140m.
6. The department has adopted the agreed corporate practices in all financial systems, financial management arrangements, financial governance arrangements and financial practices. The budget monitoring system adopted in Southwark requires each chief officer to produce a budget monitoring report monthly (with a four monthly report to Cabinet) in accordance with the corporate timetable.
7. The department has a bottom-up monthly budget monitoring process (from Budget holders reviews right through to chief officer) with rigorous challenges at each step of the process. This ensures that all projections are robust, sound and clearly owned by service managers in line with council objectives. The rigorous challenging process also aims to ensure that what takes place represents a complete, timely and accurate record of the use of resources and gives the assurance of reliable financial information for the council.
8. The department's approach to achieving savings follows the budget principles by focusing on core provision of quality services, efficiency savings, smarter procurement and robust contract management. The department is also seeking to increase income by raising demand for discretionary services.

Our workforce

9. Almost 1500 colleagues work in Environment and Leisure.
10. In contrast to the council's, almost, 50:50 ratio of men and women, the department has a 75:25 ratio, and women are underrepresented in our front-line, depot based services.

11. We also have a significantly larger number of staff in grades 1 to 6 compared with the rest of the council, and more of our staff are in the age ranges 16 to 24 and over 55 when compared with the rest of the council.
12. In February 2021, the council undertook a second survey to understand how staff were feeling as a result of the prolonged impact of covid and the changes to their working and personal lives.
13. 487 staff from Environment and Leisure responded to the survey, equivalent to 35% of the department's workforce. 327 respondents reported having had at least one health and wellbeing discussion with their manager.
14. The top three ongoing concerns identified by Environment and Leisure staff were:
 1. My mental health and wellbeing
 2. My physical health and wellbeing
 3. The health and wellbeing of loved ones
15. When asked questions regarding their mental health at the time of the survey, our staff responded by saying:
 - 68% of respondents felt that they could make up their own minds all the time or often
 - 56% of respondents felt useful all the time or often
 - 57% of respondents said that they thought clearly all of the time or often
 - 30% of respondents felt relaxed **rarely or none of the time**
 - 30% of respondents felt close to people **rarely or none of the time**
 - 19% of respondents were optimistic **rarely or none of the time**
16. We will continue to work hard with colleagues to ensure that they have the health and wellbeing support they need, and the council has a range of resources to enable staff to access support directly and confidentially.

Departmental Change Programme

17. Last year, as our services looked to renew following the initial impacts of the pandemic, we asked our management team to take the opportunity to assess their services against the key themes of what we deliver, why do we as the Council deliver this service, and how do we deliver it.
18. In the last twelve months, we have been building on this service renewal, with the delivery of the Department's Change Programme.
19. The key identified drivers of this programme are:
 - Ensuring we're fit to meet the challenges of the future – that we're fit for purpose, delivering excellent services at the right cost;
 - That we have a skilled, empowered and supported workforce who are motivated in everything they do and delivering the Southwark values consistently;
 - We resolve the issues of acting up and temporary management arrangements so that we have a permanent cohort of skilled managers and leaders throughout the department;

- We have a departmental identity and culture and the structure supports the most effective ways of delivering services;
- We have a departmental response to Black Lives Matter and Southwark Stands Together and we are making the disruptive changes necessary within the department to tackle racial injustice head on;
- We're responding to the challenges of Covid and a post-Covid world so that renewal focuses on the things that are important and priorities for members;
- We balance the books.

Departmental Governance Arrangements

Risk Management/Registers

20. The departmental risk register and associated controls and mitigations will be re-assessed with senior management during Q3 and Q4 21/22.
21. Our management teams have been undertaking individual risk assessments with all staff alongside Health and Wellbeing conversations throughout the pandemic, most recently with a particular focus recently for those looking to return to our workplaces safely.

Assurance Statements

22. Departmental Assurance Statements are completed on an annual basis. This year, as requested, a slimmed down version of the usual statement has been completed.

Scheme of Management

23. The Scheme of Management was updated in Q1 21/22 to reflect corporate updates, changes to SAP authorisation levels and recruitment of new permanent Divisional Directors into the department.

Regular Governance Meetings

- Departmental Liaison Committee Meetings are held quarterly, attended by:
 - Strategic Director (chair)
 - Departmental Management Team
 - HR Strategic Business Partner
 - Union Representatives
- Health and Safety Committee Meetings are held quarterly, attended by:
 - Strategic Director (chair)
 - Health and Safety Manager
 - Departmental Management Team
 - Union Representatives
- Departmental Contract Review Boards are held monthly, attended by:
 - Strategic Director (chair)

- Departmental Management Team
 - Legal and Procurement colleagues, Finance and Governance
 - Report Authors
- Departmental Management Team meetings are held weekly, attended by:
 - Strategic Director (chair)
 - Divisional Directors
 - Strategic HR Business Partner
 - Departmental Finance Manager
- Regular Standing Agenda Items include Departmental and Corporate Forward Plans, Financial Monitors and Contract Registers
- The Department's Senior Management Team is held monthly, attended by:
 - Strategic Director (chair)
 - Divisional Directors
 - Heads of Service

Current Governance Issues

Covid

24. As with all council departments, Covid was the most significant governance event for the department in 2020-21 and this has continued into 2021-22.
25. In order to protect Southwark's residents, Public Health established strong outbreak prevention control measures such as local testing facilities including targeted 'surge' testing for Variants of Concerns, local contact tracing, a response centre for outbreaks and incident management and community prevention schemes such as community health ambassadors.
26. In 2020-21, Public Health completed the following review work:
 - The Director of Public Health undertook a PHE led review and assurance process of the Southwark Outbreak Prevention Control Plan. This was managed together with the London Convenor as well as the lead London Council Chief Executive and Regional Director of Public Health to ensure that we provide high standards of outbreak prevention and control measures for our population.
 - An epidemiological assessment was conducted into vaccination rates together with deep dives into under vaccinated areas to inform targeted activities to address vaccine take up and hesitancy. This included an assurance process carried out with the CCG and reported to PHE and NHSE.
 - The impact of the pandemic on Southwark's population was reviewed using national and local surveillance data to identify lessons to inform the development of actions and policies with regard to tackling health inequalities and Black Lives Matter.
 - Weekly review and assessment of epidemiological data sources to ensure that high standards of public health surveillance are maintained.

- As needs assessment was carried out on food poverty to inform the development of a network of food insecurity measures such as food banks, community larders and holiday hunger programmes.
 - Working with partners to ensure data governance:
 - GP held records were reviewed to identify patients at higher CVD risk for health checks.
 - NCMP records were reviewed to identify overweight and obese children to provide online support.
27. Alongside Public Health, Regulatory Services worked with residents and businesses to engage, support and enforce social distancing and covid-safe workplaces. And highways and network management teams implemented streetspace initiatives.
28. At the start of the pandemic the covid response was under the Council's emergency response arrangements and the Gold and Silver command structure, but as soon as practically possible the Council's usual governance arrangements were reintroduced.

Key projects

29. There are a number of projects and programmes which are being delivered by the department and are significant for the council. These will need active management to ensure that they deliver the desired outcomes. Non exhaustive examples include:
- Insourcing the leisure service;
 - The Youth New Deal;
 - Delivering the climate change strategy and action plan;
 - Continuing the improvements to the tree service;
 - Private sector licensing schemes and the resultant application to the Secretary of State;
 - Community Harm and Exploitation Hub – reducing youth violence;
 - Streets for People including low traffic neighbourhoods and improved air quality;
 - Borough plan commitments;
 - Projects and programmes which form part of Southwark Stands Together.