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**WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL
CORPORATE PLAN
2012 – 2015**

This is the Corporate Plan for Waverley Borough Council from 2012 until the next Council elections in May 2015. The plan reflects the difficult financial times we live in, and sets the priorities of the Council for the next three years.

Our core priorities are:

Value for money.

The Council is committed to providing customer-focused services at the best value for money. We will ensure that sound financial management is at the core of everything we do.

Affordable housing.

Waverley will work hard to provide more affordable housing in the Borough for people in housing need. The Council aims to be an excellent landlord, managing its own housing stock well and improving the fabric and condition of its properties.

Leisure and lives.

The Council will continue to support opportunities for all to take part in sport, recreation and other leisure activities to promote health and well-being for all.

Understanding our residents' needs.

It is important to the Council that we understand our residents, and that we focus on providing the services they want, by consulting with them and ensuring that our services are designed to meet people's needs across the Borough. We will be active in consulting and working with residents, service users and local businesses.

Environment.

Waverley will continue to do everything within our powers to protect and enhance the area's unique mix of rural and urban communities throughout our towns, villages and hamlets. We will set an example in protecting the environment through our promotion of recycling and environmental sustainability.

Priority One: Value for Money

These are challenging times for Britain's economy. The government is committed to reducing the national budget deficit and to controlling public expenditure. Waverley's government grant resources have been reduced by 18% in 2011/12 and a further 14% in 2012/13, and it is to be expected that further reductions in central government financial support will follow in future years.

Since 2007, Waverley has demonstrated an excellent track-record in sound financial management. We have established strong financial planning and budget control mechanisms, and we keep costs under constant review. Our Foresight efficiency programme has saved over £2 million in the past two years, and has won Waverley national recognition for financial efficiency.

Our priority for 2012 – 2015 is to continue to demonstrate value for money across all our service areas and to maintain our standing as one of the best –managed councils in the country.

Our key delivery targets are to:

- Maintain a balanced and sustainable budget every year, encouraging investment that will generate future savings, and ensuring that we operate within our means;
- Maximise available revenue expenditure on front line services by developing innovative forms of service delivery and reducing overhead costs, empowering our service heads to be resourceful and entrepreneurial;
- Ensure that annual capital expenditure continues to be at least 85% of the approved budget on both the general fund and the housing revenue account;
- Ensure that our financial and performance information is open and transparent, so that residents can easily see and understand what we spend and how their council tax is used;

- Demonstrate our commitment to excellence by achieving overall satisfaction ratings for Waverley's services that place us among the best performing councils in England.

The Council will continue to strive to be an excellent customer to the many suppliers that depend on us as a large employer in the Borough. We will try to purchase goods and services locally where possible, and will pay our suppliers on time.

Priority Two: Affordable Housing

Waverley is landlord to some 5,000 individuals and families. Being a provider of social housing is a crucial aspect of what the Council does.

Waverley's landlord service has been for many years starved of resources as a consequence of the national system governing housing finance, which saw this council compelled to pay over 50% of its rental income to the Treasury. The Council was at the forefront of a national campaign to have this system changed.

In April 2012 a new regime of 'self-financing' is to be introduced. For the first time, Waverley's landlord business will have control over its own finances. Our 30-year business plan sets out our landlord service priorities:

- To meet the Decent Homes Standard by 2015
- To invest surpluses equally in building new affordable housing and in improving the fabric and condition of our existing housing stock;
- To manage our housing finances prudently to ensure maximum cash availability to invest in delivering new and improved homes.

We are committed to improving the quality and value for money of our housing management services, aiming by 2015 to be amongst the best housing providers in the country.

Waverley also has an important strategic role to play in the planning and provision of social housing, and in supporting and meeting the needs of social housing tenants. Our priorities are:

- To use our planning policy framework and work with landowners, developers and housing associations to encourage the development of new social housing, both in our towns and in our rural communities;
- To manage our housing register to give applicants choice over where they live, and to keep communities together by giving clear priority to people with a genuine local connection.

Many of our tenants are vulnerable, or have complex needs. Our aim is to ensure that vulnerable people are supported to lead fulfilling lives within our communities. We will continue to provide a range of support services to meet the needs of our most elderly tenants, and we will work with health and social service colleagues to provide effective support services to help the 200 most troubled families in our communities.

Priority Three: Leisure and Lives

Sport, recreation and leisure activities are incredibly important to our overall health and well-being. Waverley has a crucial strategic role to play in improving the quality of life for residents in our Borough by ensuring that everybody has access to a range of high quality sports and leisure opportunities.

Over the past four years, Waverley has invested £11m in our main sports centres in Farnham, Cranleigh and Godalming. This investment has paid big dividends:

- the usage of Farnham leisure centre has increased by 27% since its re-opening, and Cranleigh has seen increases of 37%.
- more than 1600 people now take advantage of Waverley's 'in 2 leisure' discount cards;
- the cost to the Council of operating the leisure centres has been managed down from an annual subsidy of £500,000 to a cost neutral position.

But we believe that there is still more to do. Our priorities for the next three years are:

- To open the new Godalming leisure centre in the autumn of 2012, on time and within budget;
- To invest £2million in improvements to the Herons leisure centre in Haslemere;
- To improve 30 children's play areas;
- To review the arrangements for the management of Waverley's sports pitches and recreation grounds, to ensure that local sports groups are given the greatest possible encouragement to take on devolved responsibility for their own local playing pitches;
- To encourage residents to use the Borough's open spaces and countryside as an important recreational resource, and to work with local residents and park users to develop appropriate management plans.

Priority Four: Understanding our Residents' Needs

Understanding the needs of our residents is important to the Council, and we will ensure that we listen and act upon their views, continue to improve service and support local community groups.

We have set up a Citizens' Panel to find out the views of a representative sample of Waverley residents, and we will continue to consult three times a year to ensure that we continue to listen to residents' wishes and aspirations, and use these to influence our decision-making.

Waverley is committed to improving and simplifying the way we deliver our services to make life easier for all our residents. We encourage feedback from residents, and we listen carefully to all complaints received and aim to learn from our mistakes.

We will make more use of new forms of communication to ensure that residents are kept fully informed of our services in the most cost-effective way. We will continue to communicate Waverley issues and news with all of our residents via our Making Waves publication, but we have listened to residents' concerns and have reduced the format and frequency, which has shown significant cost savings.

Waverley will continue to use its position as a community champion to defend the interests of our residents and to put Waverley first. We are committed to transparent local government, to ensuring participation in local democracy and to maintaining the highest standards of governance.

We will work with our parish councils and with community and voluntary groups to meet the identified needs of our residents. We will continue our policy of devolution of services and facilities to parish councils and community groups where appropriate, and we will aim to protect our voluntary sector grants budgets, aiming that the total funding available to community groups is not reduced by more than the amount of reduction in Waverley's budgets overall. We will seek to negotiate service level agreements with grant recipients, to ensure that Waverley's funds are used to deliver clear and identifiable outcomes for local people, especially the most vulnerable members of our society.

The Council will act as a community champion to businesses, and will intervene in issues and projects where we are uniquely placed to make a positive difference – such as the retention of the post office in Godalming, and the championing of high-speed broadband for our rural communities. We will be on the alert for opportunities to bring business resources into the Borough, and we will seek to be business-friendly in our planning role.

Priority Five: Environment

Waverley is a beautiful Borough, with a unique mix of rural and urban communities. The quality of our natural and built environment is one of our most important assets, and it is this Council's priority to protect and enhance our surroundings, preserving the special character of this area and the quality of life that we all enjoy.

Waverley's role as Planning Authority is crucial. The Council has worked hard over the past four years to improve the performance and the reputation of our planning service. We have improved the speed of the service and the quality of the customer experience, by providing a new pre-application advice service and by communicating more effectively with service customers. We have invested significant resource into enforcement against breaches of planning control, and we have championed high quality design through our support for village and town design statements and Conservation Area reviews.

Over the next three years, Waverley's priorities are:

- To publish a Core Strategy in 2012 and adopt in 2013;
- To develop a masterplan for Dunsfold Park which recognises its economic value to the Borough
- To deliver the East Street redevelopment;
- To put in place a Community Infrastructure Levy by 2014 to fund infrastructure improvements across Waverley
- To support parish and town councils to develop neighbourhood plans.

Waverley will respond with energy and enthusiasm to ensure a continued and sustained improvement in the environment of our Borough. The Council has, since 2007, been working to achieve challenging targets for household recycling, and it is our aim to achieve in excess of 60% recycling by 2015, thanks to our new recycling and household rubbish service which we are introducing in 2012. This will allow residents to recycle a wider range of materials more easily.

We will work to ensure that the highest standards of cleanliness and good maintenance are delivered in the public realm of our Borough: we will increase the amount of resources dedicated to street cleaning, and we will continue to improve our grass-cutting and grounds maintenance services.

We shall introduce more efficient systems with low emission collection vehicles that will help reduce our carbon imprint and the cost of waste collections.

An improved scheme will be introduced to meet the needs of residents who need garden waste and bulky waste collections.

The health and well-being of Waverley residents will continue to be a priority of the council. The “scores on the doors” scheme to publish food hygiene ratings for restaurants throughout the borough will be extended to all retail food outlets.

We will continue to monitor those pockets of poor air quality in the borough and to contribute specialist expertise towards the evaluation and provision of possible solutions. In addition, close monitoring of contaminated development land will ensure the long-term safety of future residents.

Waverley will aim to continue to expand its involvement in education for children and advice and assistance for residents themselves to achieve reductions in carbon emission, fuel efficiencies and sustainable energy options.