

WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - COMMUNITY WELLBEING  
- 20 JANUARY 2021

(To be read in conjunction with the Agenda for the Meeting)

**Present**

Cllr Kevin Deanus (Chairman)	Cllr Val Henry
Cllr Kika Mirylees (Vice Chairman)	Cllr Ruth Reed
Cllr Sally Dickson	Cllr John Robini
Cllr Jenny Else	Cllr George Wilson
Cllr Mary Foryszewski	

**Apologies**

**Also Present**

Councillor Paul Follows and Councillor Anne-Marie Rosoman

15. MINUTES (Agenda item 1.)

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> November 2021 were confirmed as a correct record and signed.

16. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTES (Agenda item 2.)

There were no apologies for absence submitted for this meeting.

17. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS (Agenda item 3.)

There were no declarations of interests in connection with items on the agenda.

18. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC (Agenda item 4.)

There were no questions from members of the public submitted for this meeting.

19. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS (Agenda item 5.) (Pages 7 - 8)

A question was submitted by Cllr Sally Dickson and attached to the agenda. The response to this question was then read out. (see attached)

20. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME (Agenda item 6.)

Louise Norie outlined the forward work programme. Highlights outlined and discussions were:

- Service Plans delayed until the March meeting.
- Cranleigh Leisure Centre had dropped off the programme but will be reinstated.

- Cllr Mary Forszewska will lead on the Mental Health issue.
- Farnham Museum item will have more clarity in work programme.

Cllr Wilson asked if it was in the committees remit to scrutinise the overnight coverage from Surrey Fire and Rescue. The chairman advised that it was not in the committees power to scrutinise outside bodies. He suggested that Cllr Wilson could ask the Executive to write to SCC to raise his concerns.

21. RECOVERY, CHANGE AND TRANSFORMATION PROJECTS (COMMUNITY RESILIENCE AND ECONOMIC RECOVERY) (Agenda item 7.)

Community Resilience

Andrew Smith, Head of Housing Delivery and Communities, updated the committee on the current priorities the Community Resilience Project were focussing on. They were advised that the group were working with partners to meet the needs of the community during the pandemic.

Key areas:

- Finalising the action plan which is due to come to committee in March;
- Digital inclusion;
- Support for carers;
- Mental Health of the community;
- Partnership working with health, Surrey County Council and the voluntary sector; and,
- Supporting the community coming out of Covid.

Also developing the Safe and Settled Project, which helps people when they are discharged from hospital to ensure they have everything they need.

The voluntary sector are helping with shopping, prescriptions, befriending, reducing loneliness and isolation.

Food banks say they are well stocked and we have been able to provide extra funding. Community meals continue to be delivered, hardship fund available for residents and we have a Waverley Helpline.

The Committee registered their thanks to the teams for the work they have done and it is a good legacy for the future.

Economic Resilience

Zac Ellwood, Head of Planning and Economic Development, outlined the action plan that had been circulated with the agenda. At the beginning of 2020 the team were planning to update the 2018 Economic Development Strategy, however when Covid hit it was apparent that a short term strategy was needed and therefore the action plan was developed to take us through the next 12 months. This includes embedding economic development and business support across the Council and developing performance targets.

A key function of the project has been to provide targeted business support to businesses who are suffering through the pandemic, promoting the grants available and administering them appropriately and working with the finance team to deliver them.

**Action: Zac Ellwood to be invited back to a future meeting to give a more in-depth update.**

A member of the committee asked if Covid had impacted the footfall counters? They were advised that it had delayed the project a little but it was being pushed forward.

### RCT Project

Kelvin Mills, Head of Commercial Services, commented that the RCT programme had established 10 projects in March 2020. These had created strands of work and greater resilience. He wished to express his thanks to all the staff who have carried out this work on top of their existing work.

## 22. FARNHAM MUSEUM (Agenda item 8.)

The Chairman reminded the Committee that their role was to scrutinise and as much as they would like to make a decision, they can't. Hopefully if they scrutinise and put some good options and good recommendations the Executive and Council will see them through.

There had been some confusions as to the recommendations made at the last meeting. The recommendation had been to split the decisions on the building and the museum itself and deal with them as separate entities. It was hoped this report would lead on from the last report and recommendations.

Charlotte Hall, Community Development Officer, outlined the report and the potential options going forward with the methodology to be used to assess those options.

The Chairman highlighted an inaccuracy in paragraph 1 as it stated that there was a decision to move out of Wilmer House.

It was felt:

- the museum options should read internal and external funding not just external;
- that the methodology should recommend looking at alternative funding not just the ACE project funding should this fail: and
- consultation should also include the community.

Kelvin Mills indicated that the options should be guided by the Montague Evans report.

Key comments from the committee members were:

- Montague Evans report should be made available as soon as it was available not left till June.

- Whether the building was fit for purpose, accessibility issues.
- Concern that the options document may preclude us from applying for the ACE funding as some options are to move out the museum.
- Researching other funding opportunities.
- Key to being successful would be political commitment.
- Timetable should include that we accept there could be additional time scales involved for funding applications.

The Committee **ENDORSED** the recommendations set out in the report, subject to the suggested amendments.

**AGREED** to consider having a dedicated meeting to discuss this issue in depth.

23. SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT WORKING GROUP UPDATE (Agenda item 9.)

The committee were advised that the working group had met recently and agreed that, as the Council were in the process of setting budgets and we were in unprecedented times, they would delay any decisions until the budget was agreed and it was known what moneys were available.

24. MENTAL HEALTH IN WAVERLEY (Agenda item 10.)

Louise Norie, Corporate Policy Manager, advised that at the last meeting it had been agreed she would carry out some research into mental health provision in the Borough with a particular emphasis on looking at the County's Suicide Prevention Strategy and whether this would be something this committee would like to recommend to the executive that we could adopt.

They were advised that the research on mental health provision is still ongoing but the committee would receive an update, along with Councillor Foryszewski's input on the Suicide Prevention Strategy and the role the council could play in this. They were advised that the strategy that the County had put together in 2019 builds on a previous strategy.

It was highlighted that the details are upsetting:

- there are 13 suicides a day in England and whilst these figures are lower in Surrey than elsewhere in the country every single death is a tragedy and the effect on family friends and the community is devastating.
- It is the leading cause of death for men under 50 and for young people
- there's now evidence that high rates of suicide are also occurring in older people 69 plus
- key factors are things like isolation, poor health and recent loss of partner or spouse and

It was highlighted that there are new challenges coming forward such as:

- rising rates of self-harm in children and young people;
- the influence of social media on mental health and well-being;
- economic changes such as recession; and
- most recent of all the impact of Covid particularly on mental health.

In 2018 the secretary of state announced that nationally they were aiming for a zero suicide ambition for mental health in patients. However Surrey's ambition is greater than that. They want to aim in their strategy for zero suicides throughout the whole community so the strategy is organized under six key priorities and they follow the national suicide prevention strategy.

The priorities are:

- understanding suicide and preventing suicide in Surrey;
- tailoring approaches to improve emotional well-being in particular groups;
- reducing access to the means of suicide by promoting suicide safer communities;
- reducing attempted suicide and self-harm especially amongst children and young people including those who have experienced adverse events;
- providing better information and support to those bereaved by suicide; and
- prevention of suicide among identified high risk groups particularly those with mental ill health.

The latest figures from CCG's are that North East Hampshire and Farnham CCG have the highest suicide rates in the county whilst the Guilford and Waverly CCG area have one of the lowest.

The strategy makes the point that no organization is able to directly influence any of these priorities and therefore a multi-agency approach is absolutely vital and so a strategy group has been set up to deliver the plan and it's made up of 45 partners. One of the main thrusts of the strategy is making training available for organizations including Boroughs and Districts that have contact on a regular basis.

Councillor Forszewski and Louise Norie met with the public health lead on suicide prevention to investigate how we could get involved as a council, and she advised that she had already started working with some districts in Surrey on local plans to prevent suicide. The bulk of the work will be providing training for staff to raise awareness, recognize signs and signpost to organizations who are already involved in this area.

The training would be things like mental health first aid training which actually Waverly staff have already embarked on. We had a pilot scheme and a few members of staff have already undertaken this training.

The Committee **commended** this approach and agreed we should look at what we can do as a committee.

It was **AGREED** the committee continue to investigate involvement in a local suicide prevention plan and bring back to the March meeting. If the committee agree to the report we could recommend to the Executive that we take part in delivering a local plan.

25. CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REPORT Q2 (Agenda item 11.)

It was **AGREED** that, as the Corporate Performance report set out was only up to September 2020, the committee members would raise any queries with the relevant heads of service.

26. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC (Agenda item 12.)

As there were no items to discuss in exempt session the Chairman closed the meeting.

**The meeting commenced at 7.00 pm and concluded at 9.01 pm**

**Chairman**

**Officer Statement in response to Councillor Dickson's question addressed to the Chair of the Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

Following the committee meeting on 17 November 2020, Councillor Dickson has asked for clarification in response to the following question:

“Please can you confirm that during our discussions at the meeting on June 30th about the future of Willmer House, 38 West Street, the current home of Farnham Museum, it was decided the O&S would recommend to the Executive Option 1 & 2, specifically:

**Option 1** The Council (Waverley Borough Council) pays for the repairs and continues to offer Willmer House as a Museum

**Option 2** The Council (Waverley Borough Council) pays for the repairs to Willmer House irrespective of future use”

**For clarity the Recommendations reported in the minutes of the meeting held on 30 June are as follows:**

**Action: The Committee RECOMMENDS to the Executive:**

- a) **That repairs to Willmer House be carried out**
- b) **That the consideration of the future of Farnham Museum be considered at a future date.**
- c) **To use some of the capital budget that was set aside in 2017/18 for the museum repairs to contract a specialist bid writer to produce funding applications for the conservation works.**
- d) **That O&S do not need to make a decision on the future of the building and/or museum as this is a tactical decision for Council.**

**Statement from Officers**

Following the discussion at Community O&S on 30 June regarding the condition of Willmer House, current home to the Museum of Farnham, CH and KM started a report, which was intended for the September meeting of the Executive. The purpose of the report was to gain the Executive's approval for carrying out the building repairs in accordance with the timeline and methodology specified in the tender documents in order to avoid delaying the necessary conservation works for a further year.

However, the report was impracticable because we were unable to identify a budget of the magnitude required to carry out the works from the Council's own resources. CH and KM were advised by the Head of Finance that there was no justification for the report going further until the Council was in a more informed position to weigh up all options regarding both the property and the museum service and collection.

In a meeting which took place in October, the Portfolio Holders for Health Wellbeing and Culture and Finance, Assets and Commercial took the decision with officers to instruct Montagu Evans to carry out a Property Options Appraisal for Willmer House. CH was also asked to initiate a process for reviewing different service delivery

models for the museum and collection. This includes exploring the possibility of separating the museum from its current home as well as investigating capital funding to repair Willmer House, which would enable the museum to stay put but with a commitment to developing a re-energised community offer and role.

To this effect, officers have become aware of a fund to be announced by the government in the spring. The Museum Estate and Development Fund (MEND) is a capital programme that focuses on the strategic repair and maintenance of local and regional museums across the country. The fund will be administered by Arts Council England and will focus on capital works which support the financial and operational resilience of museums enabling them to develop a more connected and joined up role in the community they serve.

At the January Community O&S Members are invited to comment on the outline proposition for the service delivery review so that the various options can be evaluated and considered alongside the findings of the property appraisal currently being carried out by Montagu Evans.

Councillor Dickson has also raised other concerns regarding:

1. The costs of the repairs and whether there is a potential to create savings by removing the project management elements of the tendered works.
2. Why an order for the hand cut bricks was not placed in November 2020
3. What external funders had been approached by the museum working group?

These matters have been addressed by the relevant officers in separate meetings held with Councillors on 9 December and 15 January.