

WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - VALUE FOR MONEY &  
CUSTOMER SERVICE - 8 MARCH 2021

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

**Present**

Cllr Peter Martin (Chairman)  
Cllr Joan Heagin (Vice Chairman)  
Cllr Roger Blishen  
Cllr Jerome Davidson

Cllr Jerry Hyman  
Cllr Peter Marriott  
Cllr Stephen Mulliner  
Cllr Peter Nicholson

Cllr John Gray (Substitute)

**Apologies**

Cllr Julia Potts

**Also Present**

Cllr Peter Clark, Cllr Paul Follows, Cllr Mark Merryweather, Cllr Liz Townsend,

52. MINUTES (Agenda item 1.)

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 25 January 2021 were confirmed as a correct record and would be signed by the Chairman when the Covid-19 crisis had abated.

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

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Julia Potts who was substituted by Councillor John Gray.

54. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS (Agenda item 3.)

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

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

There were none.

56. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS (Agenda item 5.)

There were none.

57. SERVICE PLANS (Agenda item 6.)

It was stated that the new service plans were for the period April 2021 to March 2024.

The Head of Commercial Services said there had been no major changes to the Building Control Service Plan. The service wanted to break even. The Covid pandemic had resulted in a loss of income. The Asset Review would have an

impact on the service and the service would have to react to that. The Building Control Service wished to help towards the Council's goal of achieving a zero carbon target.

There was a question around the effectiveness of the performance measurements and another question about whether there was an opportunity for the service to be more proactive about building standards. The Head of Commercial Services said that there was and that consultation would help. There were quarterly performance reports to assess how the service was doing.

The Head of Business Transformation reported on the Business Transformation service plan. It remained broadly the same as previously but there were more references to the climate emergency. He also mentioned that there had been a new customer services team.

Councillors had picked up that the service plan was to 2023 and the Head of Business Transformation stated that most projects would be complete by then. The Staff Travel Survey was largely completed from a Business Transformation point of view. The HR team would go to consultation. There had been the removal of the essential car user criteria and the removal of some allowances and a more standardised expenses procedure. Forty five pence per mile was paid for business travel. It was estimated that the Business Transformation Project would make £150,000 to £200,000 savings.

With regard to outcome 12 of the Business Transformation service plans it was stated that Waverley owned 95 bus shelters.

The Head of Planning and Economic Development spoke about the Planning for the Future service plan. An action plan had been adopted in October 2020. Outward – facing support was provided and a Covid-19 action plan had been produced.

£60,000 had been invested by the Council in e cargo. The Head of Planning and Economic Development defended the Economic Development Service against comments about the measurability of success saying that he tried to use limited funds in the most appropriate way. The Chairman requested that he bring the detail of the Economic Development Strategy to the next Value for Money and Customer Service Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

It was stated that the setting up of Business Improvement Districts had been put back by a year due to Covid-19. It had planned to launch in March 2021 but would now be launched in April 2022. This project would be in conjunction with town councils and chambers of commerce. There was only funding to deliver one, but they were trying to deliver 4.

The Head of Planning and Economic Development stated that footfall monitors were partially installed. These footfall counters were fully funded through the Reopening High Streets Safely (RHSS) programme funded by the European Regional Development Fund. Waverley Borough Council were forward funding the installation of the counters and would claim the full cost back from the RHSS fund.

An application had been made regarding delivering e-cargo bikes for communal use by business for sustainable local deliveries. It was likely to be mostly grant funded.

The Head of Finance and Property said that the focus of the service was quality of customer service, value for money and service efficiency. The latter involved having efficient administration procedures. Over 68,000 properties were billed each year.

He noted that the Asset Management Service was reactive. They looked at all investment and tried to invest only in things which were carbon neutral. They were in the process of refinancing existing investment. The service remained fully compliant with statutes.

The Head of Finance and Property mentioned the Treasury's "not for yield" guidelines around the acquisition of new properties.

He noted there were now four full time equivalent staff within the acquisition, portfolio management and project delivery team.

The Head of Policy and Governance said the service were encouraging postal voting and would be using a mobile device to record returns.

There was a discussion around key performance indicators for legal services.

Councillors asked the Head of Policy and Governance how they would see effective project management. It was stated that risk registers were used. They also asked how were they going to ensure lessons were learned through the complaints system. It was stated that there were various quarterly and annual reports, some of which went to the Standards Committee.

58. RECOVERY CHANGE AND TRANSFORMATION PROJECT (Agenda item 7.)

The Head of Commercial Services said that the Recovery Change and Transformation Programme was set up in 2020 to identify immediate issues caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. It was moving into its final phase. He would bring the first of the project evaluations to the next meeting of the Value for Money and Customer Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

59. BUSINESS TRANSFORMATION PROJECT (Agenda item 8.)

The Portfolio Holder for Business Transformation and IT expressed the wish that people could get back to working in person. He thanked staff for keeping progress on track. The Business Transformation Project had already made a third of the savings planned.

The Head of Business Transformation provided more information. He said the savings forecasts were just projections at this stage. There were 35 projects on the go and most would conclude in the next 12 months. Councillors wanted to see the cost savings in each area. Many savings forecast were going to be exceeded.

60. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME (Agenda item 9.)

Councillors said they wished to have a presentation on the workings of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Advisory Board. They wished for this to focus

on the process in terms of whether the right processes were in place to make good use of the money.

The Chairman stated that if any of the committee members wished to see anything particular on the agenda of the next Value for Money Overview and Scrutiny Committee, please could they make their suggestions to him three to four weeks prior to the next committee meeting.

61. CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REPORT QUARTER 3 (Agenda item 10.)

It was stated that there had been problems with the Planning Portal due to the security upgrade.

The new Customer Service Team had been launched in October 2020.

The Chairman requested a new Key Performance Indicator (KPI) on property investment.

Councillors discussed how to measure the effectiveness of home working. The Head of Policy and Governance stated that staff still had to performance and had appraisals.

It was noted that there was a helpline for staff which was one measure to help manage long term sickness absence.

The Head of Finance and Property noted that 20% of Treasury cash was invested beyond one year.

62. PROPERTY INVESTMENT (Agenda item 11.)

The Head of Finance and Property stated that the investment sites were complex. When deciding whether a property investment is appropriate they have to look at the Corporate Plan and they are revising the Property Investment Strategy. It would be harder to invest outside of the Waverley economic area in future.

Discussions about shared workspace were still ongoing. The Chairman requested a timeline on the transformation of The Burys site to come to the next meeting of Value for Money Overview and Scrutiny.

**The meeting commenced at 7.00 pm and concluded at 9.09 pm**

**Chairman**