

WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - COMMUNITY WELLBEING
- 16 MARCH 2021

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

Present

Cllr Kevin Deanus (Chairman)
Cllr Kika Mirylees (Vice Chairman)
Cllr Sally Dickson
Cllr Jenny Else

Cllr Mary Forszewski
Cllr Val Henry
Cllr John Robini
Cllr George Wilson

Apologies

Also Present

Councillor Chris Howard, Councillor Paul Follows and Councillor Anne-Marie Rosoman

32. MINUTES (Agenda item 1.)

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 20th January 2021, and published on the council's website, were confirmed as a correct record.

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

There were no apologies for absence received for this meeting.

34. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS (Agenda item 3.)

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

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

There were none

36. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS (Agenda item 5.)

There were none

37. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME (Agenda item 6.)

The committee noted the work programme and the following comments were made:

- Updates were needed on a number of the items set out in section A.
- It was requested a specific date be indicated on the update for Cranleigh Leisure Centre.
- It was asked for the Montague Evans report on Wilmer House to be presented to the committee.

- A report/update on rural crime had been requested but was not on the work programme.
- There had been a suggestion for a 'thank you' event to be held for voluntary organisations but no date set as yet.
- Request for a report/update on loneliness and how it is being addressed.

38. CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REPORT Q3 (Agenda item 7.)

The Heads of Service for Commercial Services and Housing Delivery and Communities presented the corporate performance reports for each of their respective services.

Commercial Services

- Leisure centres had been subjected to a great deal of upheaval due to being closed, re-opened and then closed again.
- Many of the teams have carried on providing their respective services throughout Covid with some staff re-deployed to Covid Response.
- Outside spaces have been continually in use meaning the parks and countryside staff have had to monitor the areas on a regular basis.
- Complaints have been low with all the KPI's being strong except for those associated with leisure centres.

Housing Delivery and Communities

- Team has had to work exceptionally hard over the pandemic engaging with community groups in the four main hubs. Volunteers have stepped up.
- The Waverley helpline has continued throughout the quarter signposting those in need to the help they require.
- Focus in the last quarter and going forward is to look at how we work with the voluntary organisations, our day centres, CAB, Hopper and those we support through Service Level Agreements.
- The new Neighbourhoods team is now settled in with Inspector Sam Adcock at the helm.

The Committee asked if there had been issues with rent payments over the Covid period due to the embargo on landlords evicting until June 2021? They were advised that we were working closely with our tenants and have found there has been very little arrears incurred. Andrew Smith highlighted that we were expecting a wave of evictions from private landlords after June and the Homeless and Housing Options team were braced for this.

It was requested that the new neighbourhoods team engage with town and Parish Councillors more closely in issues in their areas.

The Committee **NOTED** the updates on the corporate performance reports within their remit.

39. SERVICE PLANS 2021-24 (Agenda item 8.)

The Head of Commercial Services outlined the areas of the service plan relating to arts and culture, Careline, Waverley Training Services and leisure which were the areas of his service within the committee's remit.

Highlights were:

- Arts & Culture using outreach work through art to reach out to the community/
- Careline are a service that provides the safety alarm for residents allowing them to live independently longer at home, Careline were impacted considerably due to Coronavirus as they have been unable to bring new clients into the service and have had to focus on supporting the current client base.
- Waverley Training Services look after the apprenticeships, work based learners and young people who have been failed by the normal school system and need to get back into education or employment.
- Leisure which is split into community outreach which uses leisure in the same way as art above to reach out to the community, Health & Wellbeing which manages the leisure services and finally the Leisure Centres.
- Team are in process of updating the Health & Wellbeing Plan and Strategy which will be brought to committee when completed.
- Leisure Centres have been hugely impacted during Covid and the council is looking to re-open them in line with the governments road map.
- The next two years will also focus on the leisure Management contract which is up for renewal/retender in June 2023.

A member of the Committee commented on approaching partners to seek opportunities to attract new clients and asked if there were issues with working with partners? The committee were advised that the manager and team leader at Careline would be focussing on engaging with adult social care and GP's to improve referrals. It is hoped that with the lessons learnt from the pandemic that our partners will be more aligned to this way of working.

It was suggested that if this engagement does not happen these partners could be asked to come in and explain to the committee their issues in not engaging.

The Committee also enquired about the art piece for Brightwells in Farnham and whether a CIL bid had been submitted to fund it? It was explained that this piece of artwork was fully funded through a section 106 agreement with Crest.

The officers were asked about the proposed refurbishment of the Royal Hill Pavilion and when this was supposed to happen? It was highlighted that a number of applications for external funding had been submitted and once the decisions on these have been made officers would be able to give a clearer timeline.

Officers were asked when the tendering process for the Leisure Centre contract and the feasibility study for Cranleigh Leisure Centre were to start. They were advised both of these were in the planning stages and that a clearer timeline would be brought to the next meeting. It was highlighted that a new leisure centre at Cranleigh would not be built before the new contract is awarded so this is something that would need to be written in.

The Head of Housing Delivery and Communities then outlined the areas of the service plan relating to his service under this Committees remit.

He highlighted that the communities team have been heavily involved during the coronavirus pandemic in assisting the vulnerable and elderly and the workstreams that fall under prevention. The team have worked closely with communities and partners to provide support and help wherever possible.

Work with the Safer Waverley Partnership has blossomed with work on serious organised crime, modern slavery and prevent.

Finally safeguarding is always on the agenda. The team are working hard to develop the safeguarding work with the results of two audits, the Surrey County Council Section 11 Childrens Service audit and an internal audit, both due out soon. It is felt that there will be more requirements for record keeping and training for officers and members.

The Committee **NOTED** the updates on the service plans within their remit.

40. RECOVERY, CHANGE AND TRANSFORMATION PROJECTS (COMMUNITY RESILIENCE AND ECONOMIC RECOVERY) (Agenda item 9.)

Community Resilience

Katie Webb, Community Service Manager, updated the committee on the Community Resilience Project. She advised that the project was now completed and had moved on to developing an action plan to carry forward. One of the key actions is to review the Aging Well Action Plan to look at how the pandemic has impacted upon our older residents. Other areas of work include around loneliness, social isolation and social prescribing.

Jane Todd has developed a piece of work on all the different types of groups the team have worked with during the pandemic and the activities. The team are keen to build on the good work carried out by community food stores, food banks, helplines and harness that infrastructure going forward.

Cllr Foryszewski asked for the recognition of Cranleigh Village Hall to be noted as they had worked so hard during the pandemic to support the residents of Cranleigh. This was echoed in other areas by Members.

Officers were asked if Social Prescribing had been made use of? Katie Webb advised that social prescribing had really moved forward recently and was working well and it was hoped it would continue to increase coming out of the pandemic.

Economic Recovery

Catherine Knight, Economic Development Partnerships Office gave a brief update on the Economic Development Project. She advised that the Economic Recovery Project had now come to an end with a forward action plan approved.

Successes highlighted were the launch of 'Click it Local' to promote and encourage high street shopping. The project also secured £118k to assist in re-opening high streets.

The Committee **NOTED** the updates on the Recovery Transformation Projects within their remit.

41. FARNHAM MUSEUM (Agenda item 10.)

Wilmer House

Peter Vickers, Head of Finance & Property, updated on the discussions that have taken place around the future of Wilmer House. It has been assessed that it was going to cost in the region of £500k to repair and update the building to adequately house the Farnham Museum collection going forward. Montagu Evans have been commissioned to assess options for the building. Its conclusion was that the building as an asset would never be able to generate the revenue to pay its own way. The report was to go directly to the Executive to formulate a way forward and would then be brought to Overview & Scrutiny Committee to scrutinise.

It was highlighted that regardless of the decision on the future of the actual building there was also a decision to be made on the future of the collection itself.

The Chairman asked if the Montagu Evans report would go to Property Investment Board or Value for Money (VfM) O&S after Executive as this committees remit was more in relation to the collection rather than the building itself. Peter Vickers advised it was more likely to be VfM O&S.

A member of the Committee raised concerns that no premature decision should be taken on the future of Willmer House. The Deputy Leader of the Council offered reassurance that the executive had made no decision so far and that it would begin its formal deliberation on this question shortly.

Farnham Museum Collection

Charlotte Hall, Arts and Cultural Services Manager, outlined the report that had been circulated as a supplement of the agenda. She explained that at the present time there was no comprehensive understanding of the various legal and ethical issues and costs that are associated with the collection itself. There is a lot of evidence available of the experience of other museums who have not planned and sufficiently resourced at the outset.

With such a huge transition there is a potential to run into costs and controversy. Waverley are the owners of the collection and have a duty of care to it. There will be a lot of practical key decisions that have to be made as there are ethical considerations and a strict code of conduct governing museums.

The other side of the decisions is looking at potential sources of external funding. The team are currently awaiting the arts council's decisions on the applications to the Culture Recovery Fund. Concern was raised regarding any decision being made until all external funding applications have been exhausted.

It was highlighted that moving the Museum out of Wilmer House would have ramifications to the garden which leads to the gallery.

The Committee **NOTED** the information contained in the background section of the report, which responds to queries and comments from Committee members at the Committee's meeting in January 2021.

The Committee **NOTED** the verbal update from the Head of Finance and Property on the Property Appraisal by Montagu Evans.

The Committee recommends that the Executive engages external professional advisers to support the Property Investment Advisory Board (PIAB) with a comprehensive appraisal of available options for the museum collection and service. Including a detailed legal, ethical and financial analysis of these options.

42. SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT WORKING GROUP UPDATE (Agenda item 11.)

Cllr Jenny Else, Chairman of the SLA Working Group, updated the Committee on the latest discussions regarding allocation of SLA's to organisations.

She advised that the Executive would be establishing their own working group to look at various options for allocating SLA's to voluntary organisations. It had been agreed that the best way forward was for this Committee's Working Group should concentrate on the Corporate Priorities and advise the Executive Working Group on the preferred approach. This Committee's Working Group would then scrutinise the decisions made by the Executive Working Group.

The Committee **ENDORSED** the proposed approach.

43. MENTAL HEALTH IN WAVERLEY (Agenda item 12.)

Louise Norie, Corporate Performance Manager, outlined the report circulated as a supplement to the agenda. She advised that although Mental Health was not specifically in the committees remit that there was a duty of care to residents. The Committee were advised of the background to this piece of work and was advised that as an employer there was a lot that the Council could do. Proposals were to train front line staff to recognise the signs of someone struggling with their mental health and enable them to signpost those needing help to suitable organisations. The Housing O&S Committee were also wanting to be involved in these discussions with regards to residents living in Waverley properties.

Councillor Forszowski emphasised that suicide was the biggest killer of men under 50 and that mental health was something that this organisation needs to embed in their culture to allow staff to understand and be aware of the subject.

Sally Kipping, HR Manager, highlighted some important statistics. She advised that in the last 12 months over 1,000 hrs had been lost due to mental health sickness at Waverley Borough Council, much of this long term sickness. In response to this we have introduced wellbeing officers to help and advise staff who require it, a defined

line management pastoral responsibility, an employee assistance programme and mental health first aiders.

Committee members also raised the issue of Mental Health in young people as many organisations who work with young people have shut down. It was felt we should have a champion to take this forward.

Cllr Paul Follows, Deputy Leader, thanked the Committee and Officers for their comments and suggested the Executive have a conversation with relevant individuals to develop a mental health policy.

The Committee:

- a. **NOTED** the report and the need to raise awareness through all sections of the community of the mental health support and advice networks that are available to Waverley staff and residents.
- b. **COMMENDED** the adoption of the Draft Suicide Prevention Plan for Waverley to the Executive.
- c. **AGREED** to work together with the Housing Overview and Scrutiny committee to share good practice for staff and residents.

44. ASB PSPO (Agenda item 13.)

Richard Homewood, Head of Environment and Regulatory Services, outlined the proposal for an Anti-Social Behaviour Public Space Protection Order (ASB PSPO) in Godalming and Farncombe. He highlighted the background to the issues identified that have resulted in the Police asking for this to be agreed. The committee were advised that in order for this order to be agreed there were a number of tests that must be satisfied and there is a legal basis that must be met.

Cllr Maxine Gale raised concerns around potential displacement of the ASB to Milford should this PSPO be put in place. She was assured that there were a range of powers available in addition to the PSPO and there was no reason it could not be reviewed if displacement was identified.

There was concern from a member of the committee that this was a heavy handed approach and would stop people using the outdoor spaces to socialise. It was highlighted that this was not an absolute ban and was discretionary only to be used if ASB was occurring.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee **NOTED** the report and asked that their comments be taken into consideration on the proposed PSPO as part of the consultation process.

45. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC (Agenda item 14.)

There were no items to discuss in exempt session so the Chairman closed the meeting.

The meeting commenced at 7.00 pm and concluded at 9.22 pm

Chairman