

WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - COMMUNITY WELLBEING
- 15 SEPTEMBER 2021

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

Present

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

Cllr Mary Foryszewski

Apologies

Cllr Val Henry and Cllr George Wilson

Also Present

Councillor Paul Follows, Councillor Kika Mirylees, Councillor Anne Marie Roseman

69. MINUTES (Agenda item 1.)

The Minutes of the meeting held on 25 May 2021 were confirmed as a correct record and signed.

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

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Val Henry and Councillor George Wilson.

71. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS (Agenda item 3.)

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

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

There were no questions from members of the public in relation to the items on the agenda.

73. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS (Agenda item 5.)

There were no questions from Members.

74. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME (Agenda item 6.)

The Scrutiny Officer presented this agenda item. He confirmed that Planning had held a workshop.

The Options Appraisal for Farnham Museum was being progressed. Tenders had closed and applicants would have been interviewed by the end of the month.

The Scrutiny Officer suggested that if the Health and Wellbeing Board went ahead that should be a standing item.

The Leisure Centre Contract was going to Executive so it should be brought to the November 2021 meeting of the committee.

The Chairman praised the work of the Waverley Training Services.

The Committee asked where the neighbourhood scheme engagement was happening. The Community Service Manager updated the Committee regarding the parishes where work was being carried out.

The Committee also wished to know the Mental Health Plan was being updated. The Scrutiny Officer said a lot was going on behind the scenes where they were assessing their current position and setting targets. The Chairman requested that the Scrutiny Officer update the work programme with dates. The Committee suggested that for actions to be implemented councillors needed to form sub groups and begin on actions.

The Corporate Policy Manager said that there had been a new webpage and training was being carried out for staff. A lot of the Housing Team had already been trained.

The Committee asked for the Work Programme to make it clearer what was currently being worked on.

The Leader of the Council said the Suicide Prevention Strategy would be mentioned in the new Corporate Strategy.

The Scrutiny Officer reported that other items on the Work Programme would be discussed in greater detail at agenda item 8 – Health and Wellbeing.

RESOLVED

- That the Scrutiny Officer would provide a more substantive update regarding mental health work at the November 2021 meeting and meet with the councillor leading on this work, Councillor Forszewski, beforehand.
- That the Scrutiny Officer formally ask the Head of Environmental Services for an update on JET to be provided for the November 2021 Committee meeting.
- That the Community Services Manager would send categorisation and information regarding rural crime to the Committee.
- That the Scrutiny Officer would check whether the Corporate Strategy specifically talked about mental health

75. CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REPORT Q1 (Agenda item 7.)

The Chairman requested page numbers on the performance information.

The Head of Commercial Services reported that the leisure centres were now fully open but they had still been subject to some Covid restrictions within the first quarter. Attendance figures were high.

Waverley Training Services had been a pilot for Ofsted for their inspection framework which showed how well thought of it was.

The Careline Service had struggled to grow since the pandemic. All critical calls were dealt with. There needed to be more work done on reaching out to vulnerable adults.

The majority of the performance indicators were on track. The number of visits to leisure centres (C1), although still in red, had improved greatly from the previous quarters. The Chairman asked for further details on the performance of the indicator C4 (percentage of building control applications checked) to be brought back to the committee in quarter 2.

Some of the Committee felt that the policy to let the grass grow longer earlier in the year had been confusing and suggested that there was a correlation between the feedback received and the 56 complaints in June 2021. Some of the Committee had received a lot of complaints. It was stated that the grass cutting equipment was now struggling to mow the grass as it was too high. It was felt that the intentions had been good but that it had led to a lot of complaints. The Scrutiny Officer stated that grass cutting would be raised at Environment Overview and Scrutiny where the same comments were expected. The Head of Commercial Services stated that lessons had been learned and that catching up from the no mow had been challenging but that the contractor had a clear plan going forward. One lesson to take forward was about the importance of sight lines. Some of the Committee felt that the benefits to the environment were well worth it when set against the number of complaints received.

The Committee asked what the contractor had been doing whilst the grass wasn't being cut. The Head of Commercial Services stated that there had been changes to weed control, it was being done manually rather than using a spray which harmed biodiversity. The Leader of the Council and the Head of Commercial Services agreed to find an email which had been sent which had set out exactly what the contractor had been doing and circulate this information to all councillors.

The Committee stated that the abuse and injury to staff which had been reported was unacceptable and that the weather over the spring and summer had contributed to the grass situation.

The percentage of building control applications carried out was getting poorer so this was flagged up. The Head of Commercial Services stated that all planned checks were made within the statutory times and there was no risk to the public. There had been some issues surrounding the new IT.

It was stated that mental health work was a high priority for the Council, with youth being a particular priority.

A new funding process was being developed and there had been communication with organisations funded through service level agreements.

The Community Trigger was a key piece of work.

Internal processes were being reviewed regarding safeguarding.

The Scrutiny Officer was going to feedback questions regarding licensing to the Head of Environmental Services.

76. HEALTH AND WELLBEING (Agenda item 8.)

The Head of Commercial Services reported that the Safer Waverley Partnership was being aligned to incorporate Health and Wellbeing as there was a lot of overlap. Surrey County Council had also merged their partnership and health and wellbeing board although they had amalgamated them the opposite way in terms of which group was subsumed by the other.

It was stated that the impact of health inequalities and community tensions had been highlighted as a result of the pandemic.

The Chairman stated that he had discovered about the changes to the partnership at a briefing and was concerned that he had not been updated. The Head of Commercial Services stated that this was an oversight and apologised.

It was confirmed that the Committee would still scrutinise the Aging Well Strategy.

RESOLVED

- That the Committee supported the alignment of the shared priorities and establishment of a shared Board and a shared strategy
- Councillor Jenny Else was nominated to take part in a workshop with partners and stakeholders to shape priorities and outcomes
- That the Committee would continue to scrutinise the strategic function of the Safer Waverley Partnership along with the delivery of the shared Health and Wellbeing and Community Safety Priorities

77. BIENNIAL SCRUTINY REPORT (Agenda item 9.)

The Scrutiny Officer reported that the report covered two municipal years instead of one as a result of the Covid -19 pandemic.

78. COVID AND COMMUNITY ACTION (Agenda item 10.)

Unfortunately the Head of Environmental Services was unable to be present at the meeting. The Scrutiny Officer was asked to request a report.

79. CRANLEIGH LEISURE CENTRE NEW BUILD UPDATE (Agenda item 11.)

The Head of Commercial Services said there would be a full report on this item in the next committee cycle in November.

A feasibility study regarding a new leisure centre for Cranleigh was out to tender. This would involve checking that the financial package was viable. The consultants

had been asked to provide examples of where leisure centres had been used as partners with health facilities.

The current Leisure Management Strategy runs until June 2023. In the light of the Guildford collaboration the Head of Commercial Services and the Leisure Contracts Manager were looking at the options to tender for a larger joint contract with Guildford Borough Council. They were tendering for a report regarding this which would take about five weeks. It was anticipated that it would be brought to the November committee meeting. There would be some exempt elements but they would try to do as much in open session as possible.

80. NEW FUNDING ARRANGEMENT FOR VOLUNTARY SECTOR ORGANISATION 2022 / 2025 (Agenda item 12.)

The Community Service Manager explained that it had initially been anticipated that this agenda item would be dealt with in exempt session but only small elements of the report needed removing for it to be able to remain in open session. They had discussed specific conversations with particular organisations.

The paper set out new funding proposals. There was an open fund which local voluntary organisations could bid for.

There were four priorities:

- Improving people's health and wellbeing
- Enabling access to information, advice and guidance
- Reducing social isolation and loneliness
- Building stronger, connected communities

The Chairman expressed his gratitude to those who had worked on this.

The committee noted that the scoping report had changed due to Covid and the Executive had decided to have an Executive Working Group.

There was concern from the committee that funding allocations would be reviewed every year when there was the expectation that organisations would be funded for three years. The Community Service Manager explained that the budget needed to be agreed every year. The committee still felt that the statement in the document that the council could withdraw funding was very blunt and they wanted to see an additional sentence stating that the council would seek to work with the organisations. It was explained that Service Level Agreements had the same caveats in case the council had to change its funding priorities.

It was felt important to ensure that all groups had a fair chance of getting funding as they had different priorities, e.g. some focussed on the young.

Some of the demographic statistics were questioned by the committee, including the statement that there was a lot of loneliness in Farnham Castle ward. The Corporate Policy Manager stated that it was a large ward which included a lot of rural areas as well as Castle Street in Farnham town centre.

It was stated that there was a lot of juxtaposition in Waverley between areas of low deprivation and those which were comparatively more deprived.

It was felt that there needed to be more support for people in the early stages of dementia

RESOLVED

- That Councillor Jenny Else be nominated as a representative to sit on the assessment panel and review applications
- The committee recommends that the Executive does not implement the proposal to ring fence funds for youth provision referred to in paragraph 4.5 of the covering report. The committee members felt it would be premature for this decision to be taken prior to applications being received. The committee members would prefer instead to see the principle also outlined in paragraph 4.5 that “the process should not separate population types” applied consistently. A paragraph would be added stating that the council sought to support minorities and other vulnerable groups
- In addition to the recommendations above the Community Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee ask the Executive to note the following comments:
 - I. That the Committee supports the broad principles and design of the proposed new funding arrangements for the voluntary section. They thanked officers for the substantial work which had gone into producing them.
 - II. Most, but not all, committee members felt that paragraph 6.3 of the covering report gives an unduly harsh impression of how the Council would deal with concerns about whether an organisation is complying with its funding requirements. They felt it would be valuable to make clear that the Council would take constructive steps to address any unmet requirements before withdrawing funding.
 - III. The Committee felt that the discussion of population data for Waverley would be strengthened by also considering:
 - a) the diversity of the Borough in terms of ethnicity, religion and refugee status; and
 - b) the distinction between people in different stages of dementia, as early stage dementia places a disproportionate burden on community organisations relative to latter stages, when in general statutory health and social care agencies take on a larger role.
 - IV. The committee notes that whilst the Community Meals service no longer receives Council funding, in many cases their ability to provide meals is dependent on access to kitchens in buildings run by organisations which do. These synergies should be accounted for in the assessments of applications. In addition, contingencies should be made for the eventuality that the service can no longer use these kitchens.

The meeting commenced at 7.00 pm and concluded at 9.01 pm

Chairman