

WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - ENVIRONMENT - 29
SEPTEMBER 2021

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

Present

Cllr Carole Cockburn (Chairman)
Cllr Jenny Else
Cllr George Hesse

Cllr Anna James
Cllr Ruth Reed

Cllr Joan Heagin (Substitute)

Cllr Jerry Hyman (Substitute)

Apologies

Cllr Martin D'Arcy, Cllr Brian Edmonds, Cllr Maxine Gale and Cllr Paul Rivers

72. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS (Agenda item 1.)

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Martin D'Arcy, Brian Edmonds, Maxine Gale and Paul Rivers.

Cllr(s) Joan Heagin and Jerry Hyman attended as a substitutes.

73. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS (Agenda item 2.)

No declarations of interest submitted for this meeting.

74. QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC (Agenda item 3.)

No questions were submitted by members of the public.

75. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS (Agenda item 4.)

No questions were submitted by members.

76. COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME (Agenda item 5.)

Louise Norie updated on the current Work Programme for the Environment O&S Committee. She advised that the report on the Local Planning Enforcement Policy scheduled for this meeting had been postponed as an area of work under the Business Transformation Project was looking at this subject and make take over this subject.

It was noted that as the subjects reviewed by the current four overview and scrutiny committees were likely to be redeployed into the proposed two new O&S committees and therefore new work programmes would need to be drafted.

77. CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REPORT Q 1 2021-2022 (Agenda item 6.)

Nora Copping outlined the corporate performance report for Q1 of 2021/22.

Environmental & Regulatory Services

Challenging quarter with Covid infections and self-isolation affecting teams, especially the waste contractor who has had to divert crews from street cleaning to cover. Tonnages of waste have continued to be much higher due to lockdown and people staying at home.

Car parking income has been hit again due to the Covid restrictions but is slowly recovering in this quarter. A full review of parking charges is currently undergoing consideration.

Environmental Health teams have continued to support businesses affected by Covid.

Two policy reviews have been started and are currently out to consultation and will be taken to committee and Council in November and December.

Work continues around the Carbon Neutrality Action Plan.

Planning & Economic Development

It was noted that KPI's 151a, 152a and 153a had been included in this report for the first time as requested by the Committee.

Implementation of the Horizon software had been frustrating with some teething problems on roll out. These have now been addressed and a number of email progress updates were sent to Councillors. Backlogs are being addressed and it is hoped to have it cleared by end of year.

The Committee requested training for Councillors on how to best optimise Horizon and were informed this would be rolled out as well as a number of 'How to' being rolled out.

Further strides were taken to move LPP2 through the submission stage and good progress was made on a number of Neighbourhood Plans.

Greenspaces

The committee were updated on the issues at Frensham Great Pond over the summer where a record number of visitors were seen causing parking and littering issues. A number of measures were introduced by the stakeholder group such as double yellow lines around the area allowing for fixed penalty notices to be issued to anti-social parking; additional posts erected around the Green dispersed issues away from the school and the village centre; additional support staff were introduced to carry out enforcement of Covid restrictions, littering and dog fouling making the area safer and more enjoyable for visitors.

There was a major change of approach to grass cutting by the Council this year. The Council in consultation with our contractors has supported the 'No Mow May' and 'Let it Bloom June' initiatives being implemented by Plantlife UK, whilst also forming part of

the Councils plan to promote and encourage more biodiversity in the borough by allowing wildflowers and grasses to thrive in many of our parks, open spaces and roadside verge areas. The Committee asked that lessons be learnt as the approach taken this year had not been wholly successful with a number of complaints received. The Committee were advised that the Tree Management Team had taken on TPO's to support the Planning Team with the loss of their tree expertise.

78. ANNUAL AIR QUALITY REPORT (Agenda item 7.)

Jeanette Guy, Environmental Health Manager (Environmental Protection), outlined the report set out in the agenda.

Members were asked to support the development of a new Air Quality Strategy and Action Plan that aligns with the Climate Change and Sustainability Strategy (CCSS), the Carbon Neutrality Action Plan (CNAP) and the work underway on the Farnham Optimised Infrastructure Plan (FOIP) and to comment on the suggested ways forward for overseeing how we monitor, review, and take action on improving air quality.

The Committee were concerned that previously there had been a number of boards overseeing air quality and this had been reduced down to two but it appeared from the report these were now going to increase again.

The Committee noted the Key completed measures and WBC priorities for 2021/2022. There was concern raised around measures 2 (Infrastructure to support the use of electric and hybrid vehicles) and measure 6 (the new taxi licensing policy) regarding how this will effect those unable to afford to change to Electric or hybrid in the near future and if these measures could be perceived as discriminatory.

There was comments raised around the Annual Status Report which was difficult to understand as a 'layman' and was written for an expert. It was explained this was set out as prescribed by DEFRA.

The officer was also asked to comment on the way air quality was measured as some biasing was related to the readings on buildings and not people. It was highlighted that the measures related to different objectives. Long term objectives related to buildings and short term objectives to people.

The Committee **received** the report and asked that their comments and recommendations be considered by the Executive.

79. BIENNIAL SCRUTINY REPORT (Agenda item 8.)

Louise Norie, Corporate Policy Manager, outlined the report setting out the activities of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees over 2019/20 and 2020/21.

The Committee **ENDORSED** the report and thanked the officers and Members for their work.

80. BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN - PROGRESS UPDATE (Agenda item 9.)

Matt Lank, Greenspaces Manager, gave a verbal update on the progress of the Biodiversity Action Plan. He apologised in the delay in getting the report ready and advised that an outline draft had been circulated to the portfolio holder and

consultations had been started with town and parishes and appropriate stakeholders.

It was hoped to bring a draft action plan to the November overview and scrutiny meeting with a view to adopt the policy at full Council in February 2022.

The Chairman asked how this would fit into other policies and was assured it would be referenced in others and in turn would reference others.

81. ANY ISSUES TO BE CONSIDERED IN EXEMPT SESSION (Agenda item 11.)

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 8.43 pm

Chairman