

WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE - 22 JUNE 2021

SUBMITTED TO THE COUNCIL MEETING – 6 JULY 2021

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

Present

Cllr Paul Follows (Chairman)	Cllr Kika Mirylees
Cllr Peter Clark (Vice Chairman)	Cllr Nick Palmer
Cllr Andy MacLeod	Cllr Anne-Marie Rosoman
Cllr Penny Marriott	Cllr Liz Townsend
Cllr Mark Merryweather	

Apologies

Cllr Steve Williams

Also Present

Councillor David Beaman, Councillor Kevin Deanus, Councillor Peter Marriott and Councillor Stephen Mulliner

EXE 1/21 MINUTES (Agenda item 1)

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 30 March and 6 April were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

EXE 2/21 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS (Agenda item 3)

All members of the Senior Management Team declared in respect of item 10 (Options for collaboration with Guildford Borough Council) in particular the HR implications set out in the exempt annexe and left the room during consideration of this item.

EXE 3/21 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC (Agenda item 4)

The Executive received the following question(s) in accordance with Procedure Rule 10:

(i) From Mrs Kathy Smyth

“The page on the Council website which sets out the Local Plan Timetable states that the Council is currently working towards April 2021 as the date for submission of draft Local Plan Part 2 to the Secretary of State but this date has clearly been overshot.

So when will Waverley Borough Council be submitting draft LPP2 for examination?”

Response from Councillor Andy MacLeod, Portfolio Holder for Planning Policy

The Council received over 1200 separate comments from over 400 respondents when we consulted on a draft of Local Plan Part 2 earlier this year. We are currently considering our responses to the comments and how we will take Local Plan Part 2 forward. We intend to do this and agree a date for submitting the plan for its examination this summer. As soon as we do, the Council will update its timetable and put it on our website.

EXE 4/21 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL (Agenda item 5)

There were no questions from Members.

EXE 5/21 LEADER'S AND PORTFOLIO HOLDERS' UPDATES (Agenda item 6)

The Leader and Portfolio Holders gave brief updates on current issues not reported elsewhere on the agenda:

- The Leader welcomed Councillors Penny Marriott and Mirylees to their first Executive meeting; and the new Leader of the Conservative Group Councillor Mulliner.
- The Leader had been holding 1:1 meetings with Portfolio Holders to review portfolios and a revised list of portfolio descriptions would be issued at the conclusion of that process to address any discrepancies which had arisen over the past two years.
- It had been hoped to hold a full Council meeting in the Council Chamber on 6 July 2021, however due to the extension of Covid restrictions beyond 21 June 2021, it had become necessary to identify an alternative venue which would enable all Councillors to participate in the meeting.
- Due to the Government ending the provisions allowing remote participation in Council meetings, although Councillor Williams was present on the zoom call, he was not legally allowed to speak and vote in the meeting. The Council had submitted its comments to the Government consultation on remote meetings.
- Councillor Clark provided an update on the replacement of the pool cars which would be electric, to contribute to the Council's Carbon Reduction Strategy. The Council's new Horizon planning system was now fully operational and contributing to the planning improvement plan. A new Cyber Security Manager had been recruited.
- Councillor MacLeod advised that the planning improvement plan would result in an improved service to residents and applicants. A planning appeal against the decision of the Council to refuse an application for a development of 140 homes in Lower Weybourne Lane had been refused by the Planning Inspectorate, who had supported the Farnham Neighbourhood Plan. However the Planning Inspectorate had commented on the Council's 5 year housing supply, which could have an adverse effect on future planning applications.
- Councillor Penny Marriott welcomed the introduction of the new portfolio and advised that she had been carrying out research and would provide further updates to the next meeting, including on training which was being arranged for all councillors.

- Councillor Palmer advised that councillors had received a consultation on the review of parking charges for their comments. The CIL working group had completed its first year of activity and thanked all those involved.
- Councillor Rosoman advised that the modular housing had been delivered to Badgers Close and there would be a photocall upon completion. A planning application for 12 new homes in Crossway Close in Churt had been submitted and ward members in the parish would be kept informed. Planning permission has been secured for all five sites in Chiddingfold and housing officers were liaising with all affected residents. Five properties in Ockford Ridge had been identified for refurbishment and investigations were being carried out in respect of energy efficiency measures. The numbers of complaints in repairs and maintenance had been reducing. The Housing Strategy work was continuing and the new design build would be brought forward to the Executive and Council for consideration, and thanked the working group for its work on this to date.
- Councillor Townsend advised that there had been a large number of visitors to Frensham Pond which had generated a number of issues with parking, littering and abuse of staff. The stakeholder group had already met and the police were involved. Additional enforcement measures were being explored. The Economic Development Action Plan in progress and work was being carried out with the leisure and film industry.

PART I - RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE COUNCIL

Unless specified under an individual item, there are no background papers (as defined by Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) relating to the reports in Part I of these minutes.

EXE 6/21 LGBCE BOUNDARY REVIEW - WARDING PATTERN SUBMISSION (Agenda item 9)

The Leader of the Council introduced the item which set out a proposed submission on future warding patterns to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England, which had been recommended by the cross-party working group set up to consider the matter. The recommendation to Council would enable a submission to be made by the deadline of 19 July 2021.

RESOLVED to RECOMMEND to full Council that Waverley makes a submission on future warding patterns to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England comprising Option 2 on Annexe 1 and illustrated in Annexe 2; plus the qualitative comments on warding issues as set out in Annexe 3.

Reason: The recommendation enables the council to make a submission to the Commission on the future warding pattern for the council. The deadline for submissions is 19 July 2021.

EXE 7/21 OPTIONS FOR COLLABORATION WITH GUILDFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL (Agenda item 10)

The Leader of the Council introduced the item which provided an update on the development of the initial options appraisal by the Local Government Association/Local Partnerships (LGA) and sought direction on the next steps for collaboration with Guildford Borough Council. He emphasised the risk on inaction in light of the financial pressures faced by the Council and that alternative savings would need to be identified if the Council opted not to collaborate with Guildford. He also highlighted the benefits including improvements to public services which could come from collaborative working.

Councillors Stephen Mulliner spoke on this item, requesting clarity on the potential savings to be made from and any costs of a collaboration. He asked that the draft Inter Authority Agreement be shared with all Councillors at the earliest opportunity to reassure those with concerns that the proposals would work.

Councillor Hyman spoke on this item, echoing the comments made previously and expressing concern whether the savings identified would be sufficient to address the financial challenges of the council. He also requested that both parties agree to a duty of candour and this be written into the Inter Authority Agreement.

Councillor Merryweather spoke on the item, highlighting that the savings proposed would be the largest single contributor to closing the Council's budget gap and did not prevent the Council identifying further savings independently of any collaboration agreement.

The Leader proposed a refined recommendation which proposed the recruitment of a single chief executive subject to the receipt of further information on the financial implications of appointing a single joint chief executive and advised that the recruitment process would include the Leader of the Principle Opposition group of both Councils. Councillor Townsend spoke on the item, endorsing the request for additional information.

Members noted that the matter would also be discussed at a specially convened meeting of the Value for Money Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 29 June 2021 prior to consideration at the Council meeting on 6 July 2021.

The Executive RESOLVED to

- 1. Ask South East Employers to provide, in time for the publication of the 6th of July Council Agenda Papers, additional data in respect of the potential financial implications of appointing a single joint Chief Executive (acting as Head of Paid Service for both Waverley and Guildford Borough Councils) and advice on cost-sharing arrangements;**

And, subject to the receipt of financial and cost-sharing data and advice from South East Employers and any advice issued by the Council's Chief Finance Officer, or his appointed deputy, relating to the level of approval required, how any costs would be funded and the appropriateness of any cost-sharing agreement, RECOMMEND to full Council that:

- 2. Full Council pursues the option of creating a single management team, comprised of statutory officers (Head of Paid Service; Chief Finance**

Officer; Monitoring Officer), directors and heads of service as the most appropriate means for bringing forward business cases for future collaboration; and

- 3. Full Council asks the Council's HR Manager to take the necessary action, in consultation with Guildford Borough Council and with the support and advice from South East Employers and as set out within the addendum to annexe 3 of this report, to make arrangements for a recruitment and selection of a single joint Chief Executive (acting as Head of Paid Service for both Waverley and Guildford Borough Councils), including making arrangements for a senior officer recruitment panel (to include the Leader of the Principal Opposition Group and the Council Leader), so that a report may be brought to a future meeting of Full Council recommending the appointment of a suitable candidate.**

Reason: To seek direction on the next steps for collaboration with Guildford Borough Council or to close this project for the immediate future.

All members of the Senior Management Team left the meeting for the consideration of this item.

EXE 8/21 PROPERTY MATTER (Agenda item 15)

At 7.45pm, on the recommendation of the Leader, the Executive **RESOLVED** that, pursuant to Procedure Rule 20, and in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item on the grounds that it was likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the public were present during this item, there would be disclosure to them of exempt information (as defined by Section 100I of the Act) of the description specified in the report in the revised Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, namely: Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)

The Executive RESOLVED that recommendations 2.1 and 2.2 as set out in the exempt report be approved.

The Executive RESOLVED to RECOMMEND to full Council that recommendation 2.3 as set out in the exempt report be approved.

Reason: The reasons are set out in the exempt report.

PART II - MATTERS OF REPORT

The background papers relating to the following items are as set out in the reports included in the original agenda papers.

EXE 9/21 MENTAL HEALTH REPORT FROM COMMUNITY WELLBEING O&S COMMITTEE
(Agenda item 7)

Councillor Mirylees introduced the report, which had been considered by the Community Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Chairman of the Committee, Councillor Deanus, presented the report which set out proposals for raising awareness in the community of the mental health and advice support networks available; and the adoption of a Suicide Prevention Plan and thanked the contributors to the piece of work.

Councillor Hyman spoke on this item, expressing concern that the suicide prevention plan had not been published with the agenda and that the proposals suggested that the Council would be taking on work that should be carried out by trained professionals.

The Leader assured Councillor Hyman that the suicide prevention plan had been seen by Executive Members previously; many of whom had been present at the Overview and Scrutiny Committees at which the plan had been discussed.

Councillor Baker also spoke on this item expressing concern that she had not been called on to give evidence at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in light of her personal experience of this issue and urged the Executive Members to consider housing tenants as part of the piece of work, however acknowledged that the changes were urgently needed.

The Leader thanked Councillor Baker for her comments and her courage in speaking on this personal issue and assured her that there was value in adopting the recommendations but that more could be done in the future.

Councillor Rosoman spoke on the item, highlighting the need for staff to become aware of mental health issues, emphasising that staff were not expected to become experts but that talking about these issues was the first step.

The Leader welcomed the recommendations which would support staff and residents by signposting them to available resources.

The Executive RESOLVED that

- 1. 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 be noted; and**
- 2. that the Suicide Prevention Plan as set out at Annexe 2 to the Community Wellbeing O&S Committee Mental Health report attached at Annexe 1 to this report be adopted.**

Reason: The recommendations reflect the community leadership role that the Council has in supporting the most vulnerable in our communities in a wider mental health context as well as supporting the health and wellbeing of staff. Working in partnership with the Public Health team to adopt their recommendations on a local suicide prevention plan also supports another Corporate Strategy aim of working closely with Health and other partnerships “to achieve a more joined up approach for the whole borough to improve the health and wellbeing of all our residents.

(Agenda item 8)

Councillor Mirylees introduced the report, which had been considered by the Community Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Chairman of the Committee, Councillor Deanus, presented the report which set out the interim report of the Overview and Scrutiny Service Level Agreement Working Group for endorsement and ask that the Executive Working Group on Service Level Agreements ensure that it's proposals reflect the principles set out in the report.

Councillor Hyman spoke on this item, supporting the need for a review of the system although expressing some caution over some of the principles and how money is spent. He also asked for clarification on what the corporate priority issue means for organisations.

The Leader thanked all the SLA organisations for their work throughout the pandemic and highlighted the need to review how resources are spent to ensure that vulnerable sections of the community are supported. He advised that the recommendations were seeking support for a set of principles, and it would then be for the Executive Working Group to make recommendations on how to progress.

Councillor Mirylees thanked all the community organisations for their work during the pandemic, however emphasised that the current structures were not fit for purpose and this was a good opportunity to review where the areas of most need in the borough were and how resources could be best directed.

The Executive RESOLVED that

- 1. the Executive ask its working group to ensure that its proposals reflect the principles and recommendations outlined in Annex 1; and**
- 2. the Council should retain a six-month notice period for informing not-for-profit partners of any changes to their Service Level Agreement.**

Reason: To ensure that the Council's funding mechanism and approach to not-for-profit organisations is fit for purpose in meeting the Council's new corporate priorities and evidence-based community needs.

EXE 11/21 TAKE THE JUMP (Agenda item 11)

The Leader of the Council presented the item on behalf of the Portfolio Holder who could not be present at the meeting. The report proposed supporting the Take The Jump campaign, which supported the evidence that whilst the Government maintains responsibility for making strategic and potentially radical changes to reduce the impact of climate change, individuals and communities could make a difference by making 6 shifts in behaviour while still living a fulfilled life. The campaign had been supported by the Godalming Climate Forum.

Councillor Hyman spoke on this item, expressing concern over the proposed behaviour changes and that residents should be allowed to use their common sense.

The Leader of the Council and Councillors Townsend, Merryweather, Palmer, Mirylees and Clark all spoke on this item, acknowledging that some of the suggested behaviour changes would seem alien to some residents yet emphasising that the Take the Jump campaign would encourage, rather than require, residents to make small behavioural changes to reduce the impact of climate change.

The Executive RESOLVED that

- 1. The 'Take the Jump' campaign be supported;**
- 2. Waverley residents be encouraged to 'take the jump';**
- 3. Organisations within the public, private and voluntary sectors operating in Waverley be encouraged to roll out the "Take the Jump" seminar to employees/ members;**
- 4. Events be organised in Waverley to encourage people to promote the National 'take the jump' launch in June; and**
- 5. A 'Take the Jump' awareness-raising campaign be organised to inform Waverley staff members and councillors, who will be invited to try making at least one shift in the way that they eat, travel and shop.**

Reason: Whilst Waverley Borough Council and other tiers of government maintain responsibility for making many of the changes in the Carbon Neutrality Action Plan, to achieve significant reductions in the carbon footprint of the borough individuals and communities can help to make a difference by making some of the six shifts in behaviour.

EXE 12/21 CAPITAL PROJECTS (Agenda item 12)

Councillor Merryweather introduced the item which set out the recommendations of the Projects Co-ordinating Group, to approve additional projects for the 2021/22 capital programme.

Councillor Hyman spoke on this item, asking that money not be spent on unnecessary feasibility studies and projects without justification and that residents be involved.

In response, the Leader advised that feasibility studies often came before public consultations in order to present realistic options to residents. Councillor Merryweather advised that feasibility studies were part of due process, and that that funding received from Surrey County Council had been bid for and the spend justified to the County Council. The Woolmer Hill Project was a key part of the delivery of the wider Wey Hill Project and had been funded by CIL monies and the capital fund for the Project. The repairs to Farnham Museum were not able to be paid for by capital funds.

The Executive RESOLVED that the discretionary projects and their proposed funding for the 2021/22 Capital Programme as listed in Annexe 1 be approved.

Reason: In order that funds can be allocated, and the projects can commence.

EXE 13/21 CHANGE PROPOSALS TO THE CORPORATE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS SET FOR 2021/2022 (Agenda item 13)

The Leader of the Council introduced the report which set out changes to Corporate Performance Indicators for 2021/22, which had been discussed in detail at all four Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

The Executive RESOLVED that having considered the comments and recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committees, the changes to the set of performance indicators (PIs) as set out in the table set out in the report, starting from 1 April 2021, be approved.

Reason: the organisation conducts an annual review of the corporate performance indicators to evaluate their continued appropriateness in the light of any new legislation or changes to organisational needs and priorities.

The meeting commenced at 6.00 pm and concluded at 8.57 pm

Chairman