

WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY - SERVICES - 24 JANUARY 2022

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

Present

Cllr Kevin Deanus (Chairman)	Cllr Sally Dickson
Cllr Peter Marriott (Vice Chairman)	Cllr Jenny Else
Cllr Carole Cockburn	Cllr Mary Forszyszewski
Cllr Christine Baker	Cllr Ruth Reed
Cllr Martin D'Arcy	

Apologies

Cllr Philip Townsend and Cllr Michaela Wicks

Also Present

Councillor Richard Seaborne

25 MINUTES (Agenda item 1)

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 December 2021, and published on the Council's website, were agreed as a correct record.

26 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS (Agenda item 2)

Apologies were received from Cllrs Philip Townsend and Michaela Wicks. There were no substitutes for this meeting.

27 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS (Agenda item 3)

There were no declarations of interest submitted for this meeting.

28 QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC (Agenda item 4)

There were no questions submitted.

29 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS (Agenda item 5)

There were no questions submitted.

30 COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME (Agenda item 6)

The Chairman raised concerns regarding the number of items listed on the work programme for this and the next meeting. He advised that the agenda had been culled to allow time for appropriate scrutiny, however he felt with the items being quite indepth that there may not be sufficient time. He would endeavour to finish the meeting by 9pm.

Mark Mills outlined the work programme and items scheduled for future meetings. It was agreed that Planning Enforcement was a priority item.

It was suggested that officers be asked to avoid long presentations to allow more time to scrutinise reports and that some items could be scrutinised by means of working groups and then brought back to committee to agree recommendations.

31 SERVICE PLANS 2022-25 (Agenda item 7)

Nora Copping, Policy Officer, introduced the item and highlighted there were five service areas for the Committee to consider under their remit.

Commercial Services, Housing Operations, Housing Delivery & Communities, Environmental Services and Planning & Economic Development.

Commercial Services

The Committee raised the following queries:

- CS3.1 - Museum – it was felt the wording was misleading and premature as no decision had been taken on the collection as yet. It was also felt the wording could be more positive.
- CS5.1 - Careline – the committee asked if staffing levels were sufficient to meet the expectations set out? They were advised that the service was now fully staffed and further staff would be recruited to meet the service level.
- CS6.1 – Officers were asked to include mention of safety of greenspaces for example maintenance of footpaths. They were advised this is reflected in the management plans.
- CS6.2 – officers were asked why there were two end dates of 31/03/22 and 31/10/2024. They were advised the 2022 date was when the project will start implementation, however the contract was unlikely to be fully implemented until 2024.
- CS8.2 – There should be mention of Green Flag Awards as these contributed positively to parks and open spaces.
- CS10.1 – It was highlighted that the schemes mentioned (HLS, ELS and CS) will have come to an end before 2025 therefore ELM should also be mentioned. It was also highlighted that no target had been given.
- CS10.3 – It was felt there was a lot of action plans for one outcome and no real targets.
- CS11 – It was felt the narrative should be more active on this outcome with further targets and deliverability.

The Committee then proceeded to discuss the Service Plan document as a whole as they felt it was too large a document to scrutinise effectively in the time allocated.

Comments made were:

- Having a 'How' column linked to the appropriate action plan.
- More narrative on successes with quantifiable measures and what success looks like.
- It was felt the document tried to be 'all things to all men' and did not make much sense to lay persons.
- It was felt the document set us up to fail.

Officers suggested a way forward may be for the committee to set up small working groups to scrutinise each service plan in isolation and then to report back on their recommendations to the committee to agree. It was **resolved** that this was a good idea to allow comprehensive scrutiny and add value within the tight time constraints.

The Committee members thanked the officers for the work which had gone into the Service Reports. The Committee **RECOMMEND** to the Executive that Service Plans would be stronger if:

- a. they include hyperlinks to any policies or action plans referenced within the plan
- b. where possible they include specific targets which will usually be quantitative
- c. they state a rationale for the inclusion of an action
- d. they included a positive vision of what successfully delivering an action would look like. This might take the form of a column on the “impact of completing the action” to counterbalance the equivalent column on actions not being completed.

The Committee **RESOLVED** that when considering future Service Plans, it would form subgroups of Committee Members with a particular interest in a service area to explore the associated actions and outcomes in depth. These subgroups would report back to the main committee.

32 CARBON NEUTRALITY ACTION PLAN (Agenda item 8)

Fotini Vickers, Sustainability Manager, introduced the updated Carbon Neutrality Action Plan. The committee were asked to give their observations and comments on the document.

Cllr Steve Williams, Portfolio Holder for Environment & Sustainability, thanked the Sustainability Team and the members of the Climate Emergency Board for their work in developing this plan.

Cllr Richard Seaborne, member of the Climate Emergency Board, advised that page five was the third trajectory drawn up since 2015 and was the first based on actual data and not theory. He advised caution in looking at the graph as it showed a reduction in carbon emissions from Leisure centres but this was due to them being closed so gave a false impression.

It was felt the high level targets on page 109 for car journeys by Waverley staff being reduced by 60% was too crude. It should be the emissions from car journeys that need to be reduced, not the car journeys per se.

The Committee asked why the data being used as a baseline was 2015 when the work towards reduction was not started till 2018. It was explained that 2015 was the last time before 2019 that a complete set of data was available. It was also highlighted that 2020/21 had been an exceptional year and the data could show false successes due to Covid and the differing work practices. It was suggested that a note of explanation as to why 2021 was used should be included.

The committee commented that there was a lot of information in the report but it appeared to focus on heat pumps and there was little mention of other technologies. Officers were asked how this action plan fitted into the government

policies? The committee asked for the narrative to include reasons why we are going down this route.

It was suggested that heat pumps were very expensive, grants not substantial enough and the technology not advanced enough. Member recommended a costed business plan be provided.

It was felt that the document used a lot of 'should and could' which members felt was not strong enough and should be changed to 'will and must'.

B5 – Members asked for an update on the review of the Home Improvement Policy to be put in the narrative.

GE3 – Officers were asked if work had been started with Towns & Parishes.

Members asked if the engagement survey had started yet?

The committee next discussed Active Travel and the need for Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIP).

Fotini Vickers advised that Fig 5 of the report only refers to non-domestic properties and the team would be looking at funding opportunities for domestic stock. Peter David in the housing team is working on an Asset Management Strategy and will produce an energy action plan for our housing stock and at business cases for all areas.

Members cautioned the team on the manner of promoting efficiency measures as some residents may perceive it as 'bullying'. Emphasis on walking and cycling was not appropriate for some.

It was highlighted that although the council only had the ability to make changes within their own property and that other areas were outside their control. It was suggested that there was a need to educate responsibility to residents.

The Committee **RECOMMENDED** that:

1. The Carbon Neutrality Action Plan be accompanied by a costed business plan including assessments of the realism of delivery
2. The Indicative Action Plan be reinforced with additional [S.M.A.R.T.](#) targets
3. Given that the Action Plan is a "living" document and green technologies are rapidly improving, the Carbon Neutrality Action Plan should include a continuous assessment of how the costs and benefits of different technologies are changing. Solar power was given as a particular example
4. The Council should provide more public communications on actions to combat climate change which use a positive and proactive tone
5. If they do not already, then the Asset Management Strategy and other policies related to retrofitting residential properties should make explicit provision for ensuring the process is as smooth as possible for tenants and leaseholders

33 AFFORDABLE HOMES DELIVERY STRATEGY 2022-25 (Agenda item 9)

The committee **NOTED** the Affordable Homes Delivery Strategy 2022-25.

It was noted that page 130 (4.5) mentioned the Carbon Neutrality Action Plan and Climate Emergency Action Plan. Members were under the impression these were one and the same.

Members asked that the term 'Build for Life' be used with caution as this can encourage people to want to stay in homes that are too big for them instead of downsizing.

The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm and concluded at 9.03 pm

Chairman