

WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY - SERVICES - 22 NOVEMBER 2022

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

Present

Cllr Kevin Deanus (Chair)	Cllr Joan Heagin
Cllr Peter Marriott (Vice Chair)	Cllr Ruth Reed
Cllr Martin D'Arcy	Cllr Richard Seaborne
Cllr Mary Forszyszewski	Cllr Michaela Wicks

Apologies

Cllr Carole Cockburn, Cllr Sally Dickson and Cllr Philip Townsend

25 MINUTES (Agenda item 1)

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 September 2022 and published on the Council's website was agreed as a correct record.

26 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS (Agenda item 2)

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Carole Cockburn and Philip Townsend.

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 from members of the public submitted for this meeting.

29 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS (Agenda item 5)

There were no questions from members submitted for this meeting.

30 SAFER WAVERLEY PARTNERSHIP (Agenda item 6)

Annie Righton introduced the document and welcomed the Safer Waverley Partnership (SWP) members to the meeting.

Comments made by the Committee

- Members questioned why there was not a lot of legislation linked to the tasks? It was explained that the legislation was an enabling tool to allow partners to address issues together.
- In response Members asked how they could be sure the SWP were doing what they should be doing? They were advised that the legislation was not there to be

prescriptive, but was there to guide the partnership in identifying issues and working collaboratively to address those issues.

- The partners were asked if issues were included on the council's risk register? Sam Hutchison advised that the SWP holds each individual partner to account but if a specific issue poses a potential risk to the Council it will then be included on the risk register.
- The members of the partnership were advised that the board of the Hale Community Centre had indicated they did not feel supported by the SWP around issues being identified on the Sandy Hill Estate. Members were assured this would be looked at and that a task and finish group had been established to look at issues recently identified.
- Members felt there was a lot of words in the report around successes but not many indicative figures. It was suggested that some KPI's could be established based around Waverley's responsibilities. It was agreed this would be looked at.
- Members asked for information about setting up Community Speedwatch in specific areas.
- Officers were asked that a link to the Suicide Prevention Strategy be included in the document.
- Members enquired if the Neighbour Dispute Action Group was focussed on any specific groups of tenants e.g. social housing? Officers advised it was there to react to any issue regardless of tenure.
- DV figures – were they analysed for reoccurring themes? Yes this is regularly considered e.g. Football, Cost of Living etc.
- It was suggested by members that Rural Crime was downplayed and needed more priority.

Action:

- **The SWP Executive to note the comments made by the Services O&S Committee.**
- **That a report be presented to Services O&S and the Executive outlining options for using existing data from the Council and its partners to rectify the current absence of KPIs on Community Safety.**

31 LEISURE MANAGEMENT CONTRACT (Agenda item 7)

Annie Righton reminded Members that the current leisure contract expires soon and that we must get a new contraction in place for July next year. A huge amount of work had been carried out by the project working group to look at how to maximize the opportunities for the council and provide great Leisure Services for the public.

Members were reminded that a task and finish group had been established which had influenced the process.

A questionnaire had gone out in August looking for expressions of interests and 11 expressions of interest were received. This has resulted in three proper responses which meet the criteria and those are now with the contract procurement team to review against the priorities that that have been set with the executive. This will move forward to a formal evaluation and tender so it's good news.

The time scales are quite tight and moving at pace and the evaluation is important because it's a big responsibility and has a big impact on the community, It is really intensive work for the teams but to have three decent submissions is wonderful.

Members agreed that it was not just about prices about quality of customer service and all those other things that we need.

Action: The Committee noted the update on the progress with the Leisure Management Contract.

32 LOCAL PLANNING ENFORCEMENT PLAN (Agenda item 8)

Beth Howland Smith attended for this item. She advised that the report seeks to update the 2013 plan that was adopted shortly after the first publication of the NPPF therefore it was time to update the former document which referenced a lot of policies that were no longer in place.

The document seeks to delete references to out-of-date documents and bring it up to date referencing the current corporate strategy and legislative provisions (for example the new general development order and the latest iteration of the NPPF).

It seeks to explain that enforcement action is discretionary, has to be proportionate, but that in combination with that we have to manage our own resources in ensuring the effective enforcement action is taken.

It aims to manage expectations because the public think officers have got lots of powers that we do not. It provides some accountability, where the previous plan does not,

It refers to publication of the performance report which reports against the performance indicators and lastly it includes a section giving an undertaking to review it more regularly (at least every two years if not more frequently) if new legislation comes in that changes the context in substantive ways.

Members questioned who made the decision to enforce or not, and whether this should be brought to the planning committee? They were advised this was the enforcement officers decision, in discussion with the Head of Service, as they were qualified as planners.

There was discussion around whether accesses should be higher than a priority 3 as there was a safety element involved. Officers advised the areas outlined under each priority were just examples and each issue was prioritised on their own merits, therefore, if the access had a safety element it would be prioritised higher.

Members queried why pending enforcement cases were not listed on the Planning Enforcement Register? It was highlighted that many reports were unfounded or not eligible for enforcement so were not put onto the register unless it was subject to enforcement. In addition it was suggested that informants and ward members should be updated more often.

Officers were requested to include hyperlinks alongside the Legislation outlined on page 8 of the report.

Members raised concern as to whether there was sufficient resources in the enforcement team as they appeared to have high workloads.

Members asked that the flowchart be expanded to include how officers decide how to know if it is a breach and which notice is applicable.

Actions:

- **The committee NOTED the updated plan and asks senior management and/or executive consider the comments made.**
- **That this document is restructured so that standard practice is followed such that there is a policy setting out high level objectives and principles, followed by a plan setting out how this will be implemented.**
- **Include more information on the criteria for issuing a notice and other steps leading up to that decision.**
- **Complete a benchmarking exercise for the workload of planning enforcement officers at Waverley relative to at neighbouring authorities.**

33 CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REPORT Q2 2022-23 (Agenda item 9)

Louise Norie advised the committee that a revised copy of the Communities section had been supplied at the meeting.

Environment

Richard Homewood gave a brief overview of the headlines from his section. Members were pleased at the emergency response to the flooding at Haslemere.

Members raised concern regarding the number of food hygiene warnings being issued but were informed this was because things had slipped during Covid with checks not being undertaken but it had been noted that upon reinspection the issues had more often than not been addressed.

It was highlighted that the table of complaint types received by the Environmental Protection Team was a useful indication of workload but not very informative on how many resulted in action etc.

Members also asked about KPI's E4a and 4b which showed a large number of bins being missed. They were advised that this number was due to a glitch in the Biffa software and that the crews knew which had or had not been collected.

Planning

Members were advised that the first five KPI's show a dip due to the backlog but that this had now been addressed and the next quarter should show a significant improvement.

Following on from the reintroduction of Pre-app advice KPI P6 would be removed from next quarter and two new KPI's would be introduced to better show the performance of the redesigned pre-application service offering a tiered system of Bronze, Silver, Gold and Platinum with differing delivery date options ranging from 21 days to 42 day .

Members requested that KPI's P1 and P4 be scrutinised at the next meeting to ensure they are showing improvement.

Members discussed the issues with indicator P7 and felt that developers should be questioned in the public arena on their commencements especially if they are coming forward with applications for new developments and have not commenced on previous ones in an adequate timeframe.

Action - In light of the declining number of requests for extensions of time for planning applications and the relaunch of the pre-application service, delete the KPIs P123(a), P153(a) and P151(a) and include proposed replacements P6 and P6a.

Communities

Officers were asked if there are any issues arising with the end of the 6 month requirement for sponsorship and how we are dealing with this going forward. The Strategic Director (Community Wellbeing) advised that Community Services would respond to this offline.

It was noted that 2/3rds of the Household Support Fund was for funding of people of pensionable age. Members asked what constitutes 'pensionable age'? It was highlighted this meant anyone in receipt of their state pension.

Members discussed the attendance figures to Leisure centres post Covid. It was noted that attendance was still only $\frac{3}{4}$ of pre Covid. They asked if we were likely to get back to the pre Covid figures? Officers advised this was difficult to predict.

Action:

The Overview & Scrutiny Committee:

- **considered the performance of the service areas under its remit as set out in Annexe 1 to the report and asks the Joint Management Team and/or the Executive, to note their comments and recommendations**
- **In light of declining number of the declining number of requests and and the relaunch of the pre-application service, endorses the proposals put forward by officers with regards changes to the corporate performance indicators for Development Management; the deletion of P123(a), P153(a) and P151(a) and the inclusion of proposed replacements P6 and P6a.**
- **The Executive Head of Community Services to circulate an update on the situation with Homes for Ukraine and support for Ukrainian refugees in Waverley.**

34 COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME (Agenda item 10)

Mark Mills outlined the current Forward Work Programme.

Part 1 - it was noted all recommendations put forward regarding the Carbon Neutrality Action Plan had been accepted. Members asked for updates to the next meeting on the pending items and progress on them. They also discussed the rejected recommendations set out for the Biodiversity Policy Action Plan and were informed that Matt Lank was developing a baseline.

Part 3 – Mark highlighted that the January meetings substantive item will be Service Plans. Update on the Suicide Prevention Plan and SCC Suicide Prevention Plan would be included as requested at the meeting.

Members were asked to consider items for future topics in 2023.

35 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC (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 9.04 pm

Chairman