

WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY - SERVICES - 9 JANUARY 2023

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

Present

Cllr Kevin Deanus (Chair)	Cllr Mary Forszewski
Cllr Peter Marriott (Vice Chair)	Cllr David Munro
Cllr Carole Cockburn	Cllr Ruth Reed
Cllr Martin D'Arcy	Cllr Philip Townsend

Apologies

Cllr Joan Heagin and Cllr Michaela Wicks

Also Present

Councillor Sally Dickson, Councillor Paul Follows, Councillor Jerry Hyman and Councillor Steve Williams

36 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS (Agenda item 1)

Apologies were received from Cllrs Jon Heagin and Michaela Wicks. Cllr Sally Dickson attended via Zoom.

37 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS (Agenda item 2)

There were no declarations of interest submitted for this meeting.

38 WAVERLEY AQAP 2022 AND CLEAN AIR STRATEGY (Agenda item 3)

Richard Homewood and Clare Beattie, AQ Consultants attended for this item.

Richard introduced the reports advising that the Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) was produced as part of our statutory duties required by the Local Air Quality Management framework. He highlighted that there had been only marginal exceedances in 2019 onwards.

Clare Beattie gave an outline on the background and context of the AQAP and Clean Air Strategy. She explained the AQAP was a statutory process with set out criteria. There were currently an air quality management area in both Godalming and Farnham and the Clean Air Strategy was developed to provide a more flexible approach.

7 categories had been identified where actions are needed to influence improvement in air quality and from these 16 'commitments' were proposed. The committee requested that the timescales for these commitments be target dates rather than generic short/medium/long term'.

Concern was raised that many of the commitments were nebulous with so many others involved in their success that it would be difficult for us to control. Clare

Beattie advised there was a steering group set up which would look at the impact of others.

Members asked how these actions would be funded and were advised that the report would go to the Executive who would then determine the funding. The strategy would then be monitored by the Climate Emergency Board on behalf of the Executive and progress reports would be submitted to this O & S Committee.

The Committee were advised that DEFRA grants cover projects relating to air quality and reducing pollutants and WBC have a bid as part of SCC. Richard advised that grants had previously been made around work with schools and the most recent is for promoting electric taxis.

It was agreed the two documents were well presented but that the fact remained that there was little WBC could do to force change by others in situations where thresholds were not being exceeded and we needed some 'teeth' to address the issues.

Officers were asked why there was no mention in the action plan on how to quantify the 'uncertainty' and they would welcome some narrative around this to be included.

Members commented that apart from the relatively narrow scope of the AQAP which Waverley is addressing positively, the council has very few legal instruments at its disposal. The Clean Air Strategy, if it is to have any practical effect, needs a sustained and vigorous publicity campaign to persuade our residents to change some of their habits in areas such as avoiding diesel cars, switching to electric vehicles, not having bonfires and many others. The council needs to take a political, member-led view on how seriously to take this issue.

Officers were asked what powers we had around Bonfires and were advised that there was smoke nuisance legislation but it had to be proved a statutory nuisance for this to be used. Traffic was a more significant polluter than bonfires.

The Committee were also keen to look at illnesses caused by pollution and how it affects the differing areas in Waverley.

It was agreed that raising public awareness and educating people on the effects of the pollutants was a huge task and there was a need for a communications strategy to facilitate the awareness and education. It was also felt that Waverley need to lead by example and to change what we do have control of – Waverley Properties

Actions

- **A target date be included on each commitment rather than 'short, medium and long term'. This will allow the Services O&S and Executive to monitor progress.**
- **Annual update to be presented to Services O&S to allow monitoring of the progress of each of the commitments.**
- **AQAP to include how to quantify the uncertainty and ways to deal with this.**
- **Obtain information from Public Health on level of illnesses caused by pollution split down into ward level.**

- **Communications Strategy to be developed to raise public awareness and provide educational tools.**

The meeting commenced at 7.00 pm and concluded at 8.13 pm

Chairman