

WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY - SERVICES - 21 JUNE 2023

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

**Present**

Cllr Carole Cockburn (Chair)	Cllr Jacquie Keen
Cllr Philip Townsend (Vice Chair)	Cllr Gemma Long
Cllr Jane Austin	Cllr David Munro
Cllr Janet Crowe	Cllr John Robini
Cllr George Hesse	Cllr Ruth Reed

**Apologies**

Cllr Dave Busby

**Also Present**

Councillor Paul Follows, Councillor Andrew Law and Councillor Kenneth Reed

1 ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR (Agenda item )

The Committee noted the nominations of Cllr Carole Cockburn as Chair and Cllr Phillip Townsend as Vice Chair for the Municipal Year 2023-24. This was unanimously agreed.

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS (Agenda item 1)

Apologies were received from Cllr Dave Busby and Cllr Ruth Reed attended as substitute.

3 MINUTES (Agenda item 2)

The minutes of the meeting of the Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee held on 14 March 2023 and published on the Council's website was agreed as a correct record.

4 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS (Agenda item 3)

There were no declarations of interest submitted for this meeting.

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

There were no questions submitted.

6 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS (Agenda item 5)

There were no questions submitted.

7 COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME (Agenda item 6)

The Chair outlined the work programme and encouraged members to suggest items for future meetings. The committee were advised that Claire Upton-Brown had submitted apologies for this meeting but would attend the meeting in September to give a comprehensive update on planning development and the progress on the improvement action plan.

## 8 PRESENTATION FROM EXECUTIVE SERVICE HEADS (Agenda item 7)

The Committee received presentations from:

- Executive Head of Regulatory Services – Richard Homewood
- Executive Head of Environmental Services – Chris Wheeler
- Executive Head of Regeneration and Planning Policy – Abi Lewis

Each gave a brief overview of their teams and responsibilities.

Ian Doyle, Joint Strategic Director for Transformation and Governance, provided an overview on behalf of Kelvin Mills, Executive Head of Commercial Services, alongside Tamsin Macleod who updated the committee on the new Leisure Centre contract and Charlotte Hall who updated on the refurbishment work for Farnham Museum. Members were advised the Project Initiation Document (PID) was now drafted and agreed to circulate.

Sam Hutchison, Executive Head of Community Services was held up, however, it was agreed that a written overview would be circulated for members information.

As advised earlier in the meeting Claire Upton-Brown, Executive Head of Planning Development would be attending the meeting in September to give a comprehensive overview of her service as well as updating on the issues with Planning Development.

## 9 CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REPORT Q4 (Agenda item 8)

Jenny Sturgess, Policy and Performance Officer, explained to members the purpose of the Corporate Performance Report and what the committees remit was in relation to this. They were advised that the report was primarily the ownership of the Executive but that members were encouraged to consider the report and highlight areas that may need further investigation/action.

Cllr Jerry Hyman had registered to speak on this item and asked members to look at the planning performance relating to national indicators and how the improvement action plan was performing. Members were advised, as previously outlined, that this would be addressed at the next meeting with Claire Upton-Brown, Executive Head of Planning Development.

Members then commented on the Q4 report.

Chris Wheeler was asked about the indicators E3a and E3b which were showing as not meeting the target. He advised that software issues had meant some bins had been counted as missed when they had not been put out for collection as the operators had been unable to log them as not there for collection. He also highlighted that the numbers missed were a small percentage of the total number collected and that the target/aspiration was a high one.

It was noted RP1- *Actual number of dwellings commenced (all housing providers)* was still hugely under achieving. Abi Lewis advised this was an ongoing issue which was out of the control of Waverley Borough Council as the council were at the mercy of developers commencing their builds after applications are granted.

Officers were asked if the Saturday Night Project, launched at Godalming Leisure Centre, would be rolled out to other areas? It was explained that it was already in hand in Farnham and Cranleigh and would be rolled out to Haslemere in due course.

Members asked if the Planning Development – Improvement Action Plan could be circulated prior to the September meeting.

#### 10 LOCAL PLAN PART 1 UPDATE (Agenda item 9)

Andrew Longley and Matthew Ellis presented an update on the LPP1 review with a PowerPoint summarising the report.

It was highlighted there was a requirement to update the Local Plan every five years and that LPP1 was now due for review. Following a Full Council meeting in February it was agreed *'Having undertaken a review of LPP1 ... the Council resolves that LPP1 requires updating and instructs officers to explore all options including updating the plan immediately to make it broadly compliant with the latest NPPF (noting that the housing numbers produced by the new "Standard Method" are a starting point only) and taking particular account of any Habitat Regulations constraints on an increase in housing numbers, followed by a more detailed update of LPP1 and LPP2 together to produce a single Local Plan at a later date...'*

An external review had been carried out by DAC Planning and recommendations were made.

Two options had been put forward which was:

- a. Comprehensive update of the Local Plan.
- b. Partial alteration to the adopted LPP1 to address housing supply and related matters.

Officers advised that the initial focus would be to gather evidence and the pros and cons of each option were outlined. Officers recommendation was for option a as there was a high risk of us failing examination with option b.

The next steps and potential timetables were outlined.

Cllr Jerry Hyman had registered to speak and advised he had concerns regarding the timescales for the comprehensive review. He advised the agreement at full council had been for a minimal review not a full one and it would be important to

apply Waverley constraints first in order to ascertain how many houses could be justified. He suggested two working groups be established to look at the challenge toolkit and this review.

Members discussed the comments and felt officers should apply the council's constraints and get the numbers that could realistically be achieved and put forward our own Local Housing Need numbers. Officers advised that the constraints was certainly something that would be carried out as a priority and Waverley would not just accept the numbers the council had been given but provide evidence of what is achievable. The committee also raised concern about the unmet housing need from neighbouring authorities that is forced upon the council and felt this should not be accepted and argued against. Officers advised that paragraphs 7.16-7.18 explain these issues and how they will be addressed.

Members also raised the issue regarding the affordable housing numbers provided after applications are approved as developers often come forward with viability studies after approval indicating the affordable housing cannot be accommodated.

The Committee also discussed the impact this review may have on Neighbourhood Plans. It was requested that going forward the discussions on housing numbers and spatial strategy should be conveyed to all neighbourhood groups as soon as they are available.

The Committee **NOTED** the proposed recommendations to the Executive on the approach to updating the Local Plan and developing an detailed work programme for the comprehensive update, and agreed that the Executive should additionally consider:

1. A reinforcement of the importance of the Development Plan
2. A robust defence of a lower figure using a local calculation of the Local Housing Need.
3. The Housing figures and spatial strategy to be shared with Neighbourhood Plan groups at the earliest convenience.
4. Robust policies about delivering Affordable Housing on approved schemes to mitigate developers bringing forward viability studies after approval has been given.

11 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC (Agenda item 10)

There were no items to discuss in exempt session therefore the Chair closed the meeting.

**The meeting commenced at 7.00 pm and concluded at 9.09 pm**