

WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - VALUE FOR MONEY &  
CUSTOMER SERVICE - 25 JUNE 2018

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

**Present**

Cllr Nicholas Holder  
Cllr Stephen Mulliner  
Cllr Nabeel Nasir

Cllr David Round  
Cllr Richard Seaborne  
Cllr Bob Upton

**Apologies**

Cllr Mike Band

**Also Present**

Councillor David Beaman

1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN (Agenda item 1.)

RESOLVED that Cllr Stephen Mulliner be appointed as Chairman of the Value for Money and Customer Service O&S Committee for the 2018/19 Council year.

2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIRMAN (Agenda item 2.)

RESOLVED that Cllr Mike Band be appointed as Vice Chairman of the Value for Money and Customer Service O&S Committee for the 2018/19 Council year.

3. MINUTES (Agenda item 3.)

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 26 March 2018 were confirmed as a correct record and signed.

4. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTES (Agenda item 4.)

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Mike Band.

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS (Agenda item 5.)

There were no declarations of interests in connection with items on the agenda.

6. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC (Agenda item 6.)

There were no questions from members of the public.

7. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS (Agenda item 7.)

There were no questions from Members.

8. NEW ECONOMIC STRATEGY FOR WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL 2018-2023 (Agenda item 8.)

Kelvin Mills, Head of Communities, presented the draft Economic Strategy to the Committee. The strategy had been updated following the Strategic Review and was

currently out for consultation. The purpose of the document was to set out the strategic vision going forward. It would be kept under review and updated every couple of years.

Leanne Kelly, from Atkins Consultancy, provided the Committee with some background to the development of the strategy. Firstly, a socio-economic data analysis had been carried out using information from the ONS, Experion, etc. Secondly, a SWOT analysis had been undertaken for businesses in Waverley, looking at various factors including independent high streets, and infrastructure issues. Finally consultation had been undertaken with key partners including the UCA and Chambers of Commerce. The product of this work was the identification of six key themes that would form the basis for a more detailed action plan going forward.

The Committee thanked officers for producing a good quality first draft, however Members felt that there was some gaps in the data and it wasn't yet ready to go on to the Executive and Council. Cllr Seaborne raised a number of points relating to the structure and content of the document. He stated that a clear introduction was required in order to set out what the strategy was seeking to achieve. He highlighted that key employers, such as private schools, the care sector, and major retailers had been omitted from the consultation. He also felt that there was a bias towards the town economy, particularly Farnham. Members found the section on the births and deaths of businesses very interesting, however noted that this section failed to highlight that growth in Waverley was the lowest in Surrey and it was suggested that a target be included to find out why this was the case.

In relation to home businesses, Cllr Holder queried whether these were assessed for business rates, and also whether they had access to superfast broadband. Graeme Clark, Strategic Director, advised that the council did periodically undertake an exercise to ensure that everyone was paying the correct rates. Access to superfast broadband was covered under Theme 2 of the strategy – High quality business and employment support – and Surrey County Council was working on key areas where there had been connectivity issues.

Members were concerned that very few businesses had been consulted, as the Chambers of Commerce were not representative of all businesses in Waverley and, in particular, did not include the larger retailers. The Committee also felt that it was important to show a breakdown by business sector.

Kelvin and Leanne advised the Committee that the Strategy would be would be updated to take into account the various consultation responses. They would revise the format of the document to include an introduction and include a breakdown by business sector.

The Committee felt that ideally the document would benefit from an O&S working group looking into it, but given the timescales for adoption acknowledged that this wouldn't be possible. Members therefore requested that the updated version be circulated to them before it was included on the Executive agenda.

*[Secretary's note: Following the meeting, the Chairman relayed the Committee's concerns to the Executive, who agreed to extend the timescales for adoption to allow a working group to look at the strategy in more detail.]*

9. SERVICE PLANS ANNUAL OUTTURN REPORT 2017/18 (Agenda item 9.)

The Committee was pleased to note the good overall performance against service plan targets. Members, however, felt that the status could be presented in a more meaningful way to enable the Committee to better analyse the outturn. Officers responded that the Chief Executive was currently leading a project to review performance monitoring, and would welcome any further feedback on the presentation of these reports.

The Committee queried the status of CCS3.3, Successful Delivery of the Planning System Project, which was currently at 65%. As the system would not be in place for the whole of the service area until around January 2019, Members felt that 65% did not accurately represent the status, and suggested that this should in fact be around 15%.

Members noted that 14 out of 17 objectives for Policy and Governance had been achieved. It was noted that the targets for SH1.2 and SH1.3, regarding addressing staffing gaps in the organisation, were not SMART targets and therefore the progress was difficult to quantify. Nora Copping, Policy and Performance Officer, advised that progress had been made with these actions and they would be carried forward into the next year. The Committee emphasised the importance of using SMART targets going forward.

Cllr Seaborne noted that new corporate brand standards had been adopted as part of PG3.1 and asked whether these could be shared with the Committee. Robin Taylor, Head of Policy and Governance, agreed to circulate these after the meeting.

10. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT QUARTER 4, 2017/18 (JANUARY - MARCH 2018) (Agenda item 10.)

The Committee was pleased to note the continuing good performance against all but one of the targets relating to Finance, however noted that the payment of invoices to small/local businesses had been affected by the implementation of a new purchase order system. Officers explained that the new system was now running smoothly, and improvements would be visible from the next quarter.

The average number of working days lost due to sickness had increased slightly in Quarter 4, however Nora advised that this trend was to be expected due to seasonal illness.

Members noted that the number of complaints received had generally decreased throughout the year, with the exception of Housing Operations, which had seen a notable increase. Officers explained that had been due to issues with the customer service provided by the contractor. The Committee felt that it was important that when there were such exceptions, the Head of Service should be asked to provide some narrative by way of explanation. Officers agreed to circulate further details on the housing complaints after the meeting.

11. WORKFORCE PROFILE UPDATE (APRIL 2018) (Agenda item 11.)

Katy Meakin, HR Manager, presented the workforce profile report to the Committee. This was the first time she had produced the report and so welcomed the Committee's views on the content and format.

The report included some benchmarking data in relation to staff turnover, and Katy explained that she would be doing further work on this to ensure that Waverley's data was collected in the same way as other councils so that an accurate comparison was presented. The report also included an analysis of leavers in terms of pay grade. The Committee saw that the highest turnover was in grades 10 – 12 and also that a high proportion of leavers were in pay band A, potentially indicating that they left the organisation when no further salary progression was available. There was no identifiable correlation in relation to the age of leavers. Officers would conduct further analysis in order to identify whether skills and knowledge were being lost from the organisation due to the turnover rate.

The Committee thanked Katy for producing such a detailed report. It was suggested that in future years, it would be useful to see more conclusions drawn from the data and recommendations for actions to address any issues. Cllr Mulliner also suggested removing the cleaning staff from the analysis as the high turnover in this area distorted the data.

Members noted that there was a reasonably large number of staff who left during their first year and queried whether a reason for this had been identified. Officers responded that there was no single reason for this, however a new exit interview process had been developed, and going forward, this would help to provide meaningful feedback on reasons for leaving.

In regard to staff sickness, the Committee noted that the primary absence driver over the last year had been mental health issues, which accounted for 21% of all working days lost. Members suggested that officers do some more work in this area to see if there were any hotspots.

In terms of benchmarking with other councils, the Committee noted that data was not available from all other authorities. Officers explained that this was all that was available at the moment, but they were actively working with the Surrey Partnership to try to collect more data. Cllr Round added that it would also be useful to know how each council collected its data to ensure that Waverley was measuring like for like. Officers agreed to look into this.

12. COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY - GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS  
(Agenda item 12.)

Graeme Clark advised the Committee that there were two strands to the council's work on CIL. The first was the charging schedule that was currently out to consultation, however this was not a matter for this committee. The second aspect was the governance arrangements. It was anticipated that CIL money would start being received in around December/January and so the criteria and arrangements for allocating the funds would need to be in place by then. Officers were seeking the Committee's initial views on the proposed governance approach, and would then work in more detail on the assessment criteria and bring these back to the Committee's September meeting.

The Committee noted that quarterly bidding rounds were proposed, with a Governance Board made up of both councillors and officers. Members also found it useful to see the approach taken by other councils set out in the report.

Officers provided some clarification on the amounts that could be received by Town and Parish Councils. They would automatically receive either 15% or 25% depending on whether or not they had adopted a neighbourhood plan, however would also be entitled to bid for additional funds as part of this process. A new CIL Offer would be engaging with partners including Towns and Parishes to encourage them to put forward credible bids.

Cllr Round queried whether there would still be separate s106 and s278 agreements for certain developments. Officers responded there would be for bespoke infrastructure, but it wasn't possible to apply both a s106 and CIL, so officers would assess what would be most appropriate in each case.

The Committee was keen that the proposed Governance Board was geographically representative, and recommended that it comprise one Member from each of the four planning areas. Members also highlighted that under the PIC regime, funding had to be spent in the same geographical area as the development giving rise to the charge, and recommended that a similar approach be applied in regard to the CIL criteria.

Graeme Clark thanked Members for their comments, and agreed that a transparent and objective process was key. The Committee looked forward to receiving the proposed criteria for assessing bids at its September meeting.

### 13. BUDGET SHORTFALL COMMITMENTS (Agenda item 13.)

Peter Vickers, Head of Finance, reminded the Committee of the report that it had received in January which set out proposals for addressing the budget shortfall. One aspect of this work was the Budget Strategy Working Group, which had recently had its first meeting and Cllr Mulliner briefly summarised the work streams that would be undertaken by the Group. Another aspect of the proposals was for the VfM O&S Committee to monitor Heads' of Service ongoing progress in addressing the budget shortfall. The report highlighted the key initiatives that were under way to make efficiencies within the service areas.

The ongoing Channel Shift project aimed to rationalise the various telephone call groups and IT systems to streamline customer contacts and encourage more self-service. There was also work being done to streamline the financial administration processes, with particular reference to procurement. A more centralised approach to procurement would eliminate inefficient practices and reduce costs. Cllr Seaborne queried how the streamlined procurement would work in practice and officers explained that it would not be an absolute centralisation, but would be more standardisation of practice.

The Committee also learnt of proposals to review the current office accommodation, alongside a new HR Strategy which would endeavour to rationalise the travel allowances scheme and salary structures. Cllr Holder also suggested that it could be mutually beneficial to hire out committee room space to local small businesses.

Heads of Service were also investigating alternative delivery models for some services, such as potentially working with partners to share the burden of cost while not reducing service delivery. Members welcomed this thinking outside the box and looked forward to learning more about any potential proposals in due course.

14. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME (Agenda item 14.)

The Committee reviewed its work programme, noting the items that were due to come to the September meeting. Cllr Mulliner felt that it was important to concentrate on a small number of items and give them proper consideration rather than rush through many items.

Cllr Seaborne requested that the Committee receive an update on the Economic Strategy at its next meeting.

15. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC (Agenda item 15.)

At 8.48pm, it was:

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 items on the grounds that it is 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 the items, there would be disclosure to them of exempt information (as defined by Section 100I of the Act) of the description specified in paragraph 3 of the revised Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act, namely:

Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

16. PROPERTY INVESTMENT STRATEGY MONITORING REPORT (Agenda item 16.)

The Committee received an update on the performance of certain properties within the council's property portfolio. Officers advised that only limited information was available as it was not yet the end of the quarter. Members asked for more details to be included in the report to the September meeting.

17. BUILDING CONTROL - BUSINESS PLAN UPDATE PAPER (Agenda item 17.)

The Committee received an update on the Building Control Business Plan. A new team structure was in place and new surveyors had been recruited. The service was now pursuing various routes in order to gain business and maximise its income.

The Committee thanked officers for the update.

**The meeting commenced at 7.00 pm and concluded at 8.58 pm**

**Chairman**