

WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - VALUE FOR MONEY &
CUSTOMER SERVICE - 10 SEPTEMBER 2018

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

Present

Cllr Brian Adams
Cllr Mike Band
Cllr David Beaman
Cllr Nicholas Holder
Cllr Stephen Mulliner

Cllr Nabeel Nasir
Cllr David Round
Cllr Richard Seaborne
Cllr Bob Upton

Also Present

Councillor John Ward, Councillor James Edwards, Councillor John Gray and Councillor
Christiaan Hesse

18. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN (Agenda item 1.)

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

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

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

20. MINUTES (Agenda item 3.)

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 25 June 2018 were confirmed as a correct record and signed.

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

There were no apologies for absence.

22. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS (Agenda item 5.)

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

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

There were no questions from members of the public.

24. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS (Agenda item 7.)

There were no questions from Members.

25. ECONOMIC STRATEGY (Agenda item 8.) (Pages 7 - 12)

Cllr Jim Edwards, Portfolio Holder for Economic and Community Development, was in attendance at the meeting, and, along with representatives from Atkins, delivered a presentation on the new Economic Development Strategy (attached).

He explained that the Council's Strategic Review in 2016 had identified a need to produce a new Economic Development Strategy to promote Waverley's future economic prosperity. Using an evidence based approach, an overarching strategic vision had been produced for Waverley for the period 2018 – 2032. The Strategy was also supported by an action plan that would be updated more regularly.

The Strategy set out how the vision would be achieved through six key themes.

- Support sustainable business and economic growth;
- Provide high quality business and economic support;
- Support healthy towns and village centres;
- Encourage a successful visitor economy that's right for Waverley;
- Develop links with and support the education sector; and
- Support the right housing developments in the local community.

Consultation had taken place with a number of key stakeholders including Town and Parish Councils and local Chambers of Commerce. 180 separate comments had been received which overall showed good support of the six themes.

The Committee thanked officers for arranging the workshop and tour of the borough which had taken place since its last meeting. The latest draft of the Strategy had incorporated many of the comments that had been raised during these events.

Cllr Gray was in attendance at the meeting and spoke on this item. He felt that the six themes still didn't fully address the rural economy, highlighting the distinction between businesses actually connected with the land, such as farming, and those simply based in rural locations. He suggested that some businesses were based in rural locations by necessity rather than choice and could struggle due to infrastructure issues.

Members agreed that Strategy could do more to engage with the rural economy, and Cllr Band suggested making reference to the Surrey Hills AONB Management Plan.

The Committee found the addition of the Executive Summary very helpful, and recommended that this be tightened up further as well as including the headline figure for the total value of Waverley's economy. Members also suggested that the vision needed to take into account of those who live in the Borough but work elsewhere, for example, commuters to London. Similarly, there were staff in lower paid sectors, such as the care industry and retail, who had to travel into the Borough due to the high cost of living.

Cllr Round also highlighted that the high cost of cost of businesses rates was a challenge for small businesses and suggested that this be raised with the Government.

Cllr Hesse was also in attendance at the meeting and spoke on this item. He expressed concern over the vision, and felt that the aspirations needed be more SMART in order to know whether the Council was achieving what it set out to do. He also suggested including a section on risks and opportunities.

Members acknowledged that as a local authority, Waverley's influence was limited, and therefore the inclusion of measureable targets would be challenging. Cllr Mulliner added that he felt Waverley's role was to monitor and support local businesses.

The Committee thanked officers for their hard work since that last meeting however felt that further improvements could be made on the Executive Summary and Vision sections. Councillors Mulliner, Seaborne, Nasir and Hesse agreed to provide further suggestions to officers after the meetings.

The Committee agreed to endorse the Economic Development Strategy to the Executive, subject to consideration of the comments raised above and further suggestions to be made by Councillors following the meeting.

26. DRAFT HR STRATEGY 2018-2023 (Agenda item 9.)

Katy Meakin, HR Manager, introduced the new HR Strategy to the Committee. She explained that the Strategy had been developed to align with the Corporate Strategy and had been formulated using strong workforce profile data.

The Committee thanked officers for producing a clear and accessible Strategy. It was suggested that the Strategy could be enhanced by the inclusion of a forecast as to how the workforce might change as a result of technological advances, for example, more remote working.

A Member noted that there was a large proportion of younger staff joining and leaving Waverley within two years and was concerned that this was due to low morale. Other Members however suggested that the level of turnover could be attributed to staff, particularly in areas such as planning, gaining experience at Waverley and then moving on to positions in London councils or the private sector.

The Committee was also pleased to note that the issue of talent management was addressed in the Strategy as it felt that it was important to show that there was career development within the organisation. Members also highlighted that different levels of staff within the organisation would have different career aspirations and suggested that this be taken into account in the Strategy.

The Committee also felt that a statement should also be included in the Strategy in relation to equality and diversity. Officers responded that the Council was part of the 'two ticks' scheme and agreed to make reference to this in the Strategy.

27. ANNUAL SCRUTINY REPORT 2017-2018 (Agenda item 10.)

Yasmine Makin, Scrutiny Officer, presented the Annual Scrutiny Report to the Committee. She explained that the purpose of the report was to reflect on the new O&S arrangements that had come into effect in 2017, with the report highlighting successes as well as areas for improvement.

The Committee agreed that the report was a fair reflection of the work that had been carried out over the last year. Cllr Band added that the test would be in the coming year, as the O&S Committees had made a number of recommendations that had been approved by the Executive and these would need to be carefully monitored to ensure that they are delivered.

The Committee agreed to endorse the Annual Scrutiny Report.

28. CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REPORT Q1 (APRIL - JUNE 2018) (Agenda item 11.)

Tom Horwood, Chief Executive, presented the new format performance report to the Committee. He explained that the same report was now being presented to all O&S Committees; it provided a more comprehensive view of performance and included enhanced narrative. Tom invited the Committee to provide feedback on the new format.

The Committee was pleased to note the generally good performance across the organisation as a whole, and particularly the areas falling within the remit of the VfM and Customer Service O&S Committee. Members welcomed the revised format of the report and found the RAG rating particularly useful. The Committee requested that future reports include further details of the action being taken to correct any 'red' indicators.

It was noted that the financial information was distorted by 'flow-through' budgets such as housing, the Committee therefore requested that this be separated out in future reports. Cllr Seaborne also highlighted that very large budgets were presented as showing no variance and queried if this was correct. Officers responded that this was a projected outturn based on regular meetings with budget managers and no major variance was anticipated.

29. TREASURY MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK - CAPITAL STRATEGY (Agenda item 12.)

Graeme Clark, Strategic Director, presented the Capital Strategy to the Committee. He advised that every year the Committee received a suite of documents making up the Treasury Management Framework. New Government rules now added a requirement to include a separate Capital Strategy. The Strategy set out how capital proposals were put together and then monitored going forward.

The Committee reflected on its recent review of Capital expenditure and felt that while the wording of the Strategy presented an ideal scenario, Waverley was not yet at this point. The review had highlighted several areas for improvement in relation to the capital programme, and Members hoped that they would soon be able to see what had been done to implement the recommendations coming out of the review. Yasmine Makin advised that an update on the progress made on the implementation of these recommendations would be presented to the Committee in the near future.

Members agreed that changing the tense from present to future would not only make the document read better as a Strategy, but also more accurately reflect the

current situation and aspirations of the Council in relation to its Capital process and management.

Graeme Clark agreed to review the phrasing and tense of the Strategy, particularly paragraph 2.2, so that it better reflected the current situation. He also agreed expand the covering report to include reference to the O&S review of Capital expenditure and the recommendations arising from this.

Subject to the above suggestions, the Committee agreed to endorse the Capital Strategy to the Executive.

30. BUDGET SHORTFALL COMMITMENTS - PROGRESS (Agenda item 13.)

Graeme Clark, Strategic Director, reminded the Committee that in January, a number of proposals had been agreed in order to meet the budget shortfall for 2018/19, and highlighted some key examples. A £40k procurement saving was on target and officers were confident that this would be achieved. With recent property acquisitions and rent reviews, officers were also confident that the £250k property income target would be achieved.

The Committee was pleased with the progress that was being made with these and other cost saving measures for 2018/19.

31. BUDGET STRATEGY WORKING GROUP - PROGRESS UPDATE (Agenda item 14.)

Cllr Mulliner, Chairman of the Budget Strategy Working Group, provided an update on the progress made to date. He advised that work stream 1 had now been completed and asked the Committee to endorse the approach to work stream 2 as set out in the report.

Members were pleased to note the progress that had been made to date and endorsed the proposed approach to work stream 2. Cllr Adams queried whether the Group had considered new sources of income. Cllr Mulliner responded that this had not yet be done, but would be incorporated into future work streams.

32. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME (Agenda item 15.)

The Committee noted its future work programme. Cllr Beaman commented that the item on CIL governance arrangements would be particularly interesting.

33. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC (Agenda item 16.)

At 8.38pm, 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 the 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).

34. PROPERTY INVESTMENT STRATEGY QUARTERLY PROPERTY ACQUISITION REPORT (Agenda item 17.)

The Committee received an update on the performance of properties within the Council's investment portfolio. Members requested some changes to the presentation of the report and that further details be added for the next quarter.

The meeting commenced at 7.00 pm and concluded at 8.48 pm

Chairman