

WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - HOUSING - 20
NOVEMBER 2019

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

Present

Cllr Richard Seaborne (Chairman)
Cllr Peter Marriott (Vice Chairman)
Cllr Richard Cole

Cllr Patricia Ellis
Cllr Michael Goodridge
Cllr Michaela Gray

Apologies

Cllr Christine Baker, Cllr Anna James and Hugh Wagstaff

Also Present

Councillor Jerry Hyman

29. MINUTES (Agenda item 1.)

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 23rd September 2019 were confirmed as a correct record and signed.

30. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTES (Agenda item 2.)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Christine Baker and Anna James. Apologies were received after the deadline so no substitutes were arranged.

The Chairman advised members of the unfortunate passing of Councillor Jack Lee and asked for a minutes silence before the meeting commenced.

31. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS (Agenda item 3.)

There were no declarations in relation to items on the agenda.

32. QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC (Agenda item 4.)

There were no questions submitted by members of the public.

33. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS (Agenda item 5.)

There were no questions submitted by members.

34. CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REPORT Q2 2019/20 (JULY -SEPTEMBER)
(Agenda item 6.)

Housing Delivery and Communities

AS outlined the Housing Delivery and Communities section of the Corporate Performance Report for Q2.

Areas highlighted were:

Community

- A Domestic Homicide Review had been triggered after the sixth domestic homicide since 2011 had taken place.
- Voluntary Action South West Surrey will be carrying out Organisational Health checks on the 12 local organisations the Council helps to fund through SLA's.

Housing Delivery

- Ockford Ridge regeneration project continues to make good progress.
- Contract with CALA Homes to acquire five new homes on their site in Cranleigh.
- Planning applications in the final stages for 3 sites in Chiddingfold and Churt.
- Four events held to celebrate 100 years of Council Housing.
- Private Sector Housing Team are currently reviewing their structure.
- Homeless Forum held recently.

Issues raised by members:

- Cllr Cole asked how the five applications in Chiddingfold and Churt were to be funded. AS advised this would be from the Council's resources.
- Cllr Seaborne asked if in future the number of homes reported could also indicate how many bedrooms this was.
- It was requested that the results of HDC8.2 could be reported back at the next meeting.
- Cllr Seaborne requested that in the finance section any adjustments to the budget are noted.

Housing Operations

AH outlined the Housing Operations section of the Corporate Performance Report for Q2.

Areas highlighted were:

- Recruitment of Compliance Manager and Recharge Officer posts remain vacant however a temporary resource has been identified. Tenancy and Estate Manager role has been filled via an internal promotion.
- Closure Order awarded on a troublesome home in the Borough.
- Rents Team performance remains excellent.
- Non-pneumophilia legionella bacteria issue remains, however, we continue to make changes to the treatments to reduce and ultimately eradicate the issue.
- HO2 and HO4 - Dip in performance as expected due to demobilisation and mobilisation of contracts. Handover arrangements were agreed with some vacant homes and responsive repairs held for new contract commencement

1 April 2019. There has been an improvement in performance as the contracts become established. The team are working closer to target.

- Complaints not performing as required but working with contractors and staff to resolve.

Issues raised by members:

- HO1.3 – Committee to see value for money strategy once completed.
- Legionella issue has taken a long time to resolve. HR advised there have been a number of mitigating actions taken place and level is low. Plans to new pipework are in place.
- The chairman asked for a report on the variance of £500K on the HRA budget.

35. TRANSFORM HOUSING AND SUPPORT (Agenda item 7.) (Pages 7 - 20)

Prior to the meeting the committee received a presentation from Transform Housing and support giving an overview of their work in relation to clients with mental health issues. (see slides attached).

The presentation outlined:

- The background to Transform.
- Types of client they support
- Funding streams
- How they are regulated
- The types of accommodation they provide
- The support that is available
- Referrals process

Issues raised by the committee following the presentation:

- Is there demand for more accommodation for Waverley residents in the categories of clients Transform support? AS advised that WBC could purchase more bed space if required.
- The Chairman asked what provision there was for managing the provision of dementia cases as this was becoming more prolific with residents living longer. Is this something WBC should consider.
- AS advised that the presentation had been set up to provide the groundwork for the committee. YM was asked to scope the needs of residents and unmet need for our clients.

Action: YM to scope out the needs (met and unmet) in Waverley.

36. HOUSING DEVELOPMENT UPDATE (Agenda item 8.)

LB provided an update on current development in Waverley.

These included sites in Chiddingfold, Ockford Ridge, Ryle Road, Aarons Hill, Godalming, Dunsfold, Wonerish, Churt and Cranleigh.

LB also outlines pipeline schemes at feasibility stage.

Issues raised by members:

- What is the thinking behind purchasing the 5 units at Amlets Way? AS advised it was an easy way to increase out stock without the outlay of development. Hyde Housing took most of the affordable stock but did not want these 5 units. Similar offers have been made on other sites.
- Chairman asked how long Site C at Ockford Ridge was likely to be deferred? LB explained it would only be whilst the new planning application goes through to agree the carbon neutral proposals.
- AS advised there would be a Members Briefing on December 4th on Zero Carbon Homes presented by Thakeham.
- LB advised that in the future all briefs will have zero carbon specifications written into them.
- JH asked why as a ward councillor he was unaware of the decision by the HDB to refer to Executive. AS explained that ward councillors will be consulted once the assessment has been carried out and prior to it going to Executive.

37. PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING (Agenda item 9.) (Pages 21 - 28)

The committee received a presentation from Simon Brisk, Private Sector Housing team, about the Council's functions and responsibilities regarding private sector housing within the borough. (slides attached)

The presentation included:

- Outline of the team
- Types of enquiries received
- Who the customers are
- Types of complaints
- Illegal evictions/harassment
- Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO's)
- Caravan Sites
- Public Health Funerals
- Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG's)
- Safe and Warm Grant
- Home Improvement Policy

Issues raised by members:

- How do we ensure that materials used in HMOs/blocks are 'fit for purpose' (eg Grenfell cladding). SB advised that we do ensure materials meet regulations but can only go by the information provided by the suppliers.
- Chair asked what the committee could do to help the private sector housing team? SB advised that promoting DFG's was a good way as they are underutilised.
- It was suggested that Simon presents the slides to Towns and Parishes also.

38. WAVERLEY COUNCIL'S CARBON NEUTRAL COMMITMENT (Agenda item 10.)

The Chairman asked for the members to suggest and discuss how the Housing O&S could support the Council to achieve its commitment to be Carbon Neutral by 2030.

PM advised that he has spoken to other councils who are ahead of us in this process and some initiatives have not worked. He suggested some investigation take place on 'lessons learnt' so we do not fall into the same traps.

YM advised we can focus the issues into the work programme so they can be monitored.

It was commented that housing contributes a large amount of carbon emissions but this was ratified by officers who advised that our leisure centres are the biggest contributor. AS advised that a borough-wide stock condition survey was planned to identify areas that required attention. This would include private residences also. The data would be input into the building strategy.

AH advised that the Asset Management Strategy would incorporate carbon reduction initiatives that can be considered.

The chair requested that the report be brought back to the committee when ready which was likely to be the second half of next year.

It was commented that getting people in the right places to reduce car journeys was important but it was recognised this would not be easy.

JH advised that he believed the condition around sustainability was removed from the planning conditions in 2016. YM agreed to find out if this was the case.

AH advised that the Housing Operations service plan incorporates promotion of energy efficiency education.

39. PROGRESS OF RECOMMENDATIONS FROM 'COUNCIL HOUSING: PRIDE OR PREJUDICE' REVIEW (Agenda item 11.)

YM updated the committee on the progress of the recommendations from the 'Council Housing – Pride or Prejudice' review. This review was set up to review the levels of stigmas in the Borough around social housing.

18 priorities/recommendations had been identified. Some timescales had been adjusted, some because the timescales were unrealistic and others because of resource restrictions. Others have been completed. Those outstanding officers are working on.

Priority 18 - The chairman asked if the committee could have sight of the dissertation when completed.

AH advised that the work carried out by this working group had been widely shared across the country.

40. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME (Agenda item 12.)

YM outlined the current work programme.

Januarys meeting was scheduled to cover Service Plans, HRA Budget and the Carbon Neutral commitment. All new items discussed at the meeting will be added to the work programme.

JH suggested some work around Voids and the time it is taking to carry out the works may be of use.

41. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC (Agenda item 13.)

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 paragraph 3 of the revised Part 1 Schedule 12A of the Act.

42. STATUS REPORT ON IMPLEMENTATION OF HOUSING MAINTENANCE CONTRACTS COMMENCED APRIL 2019 (Agenda item 14.)

The committee considered the exempt report and made comments.

The meeting commenced at 7.00 pm and concluded at 9.00 pm

Chairman