

WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE - 3 MARCH 2015

SUBMITTED TO THE COUNCIL MEETING – 14 APRIL 2015

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

Present

Cllr Robert Knowles (Chairman)
Cllr Julia Potts (Vice-Chairman)
Cllr Brian Adams
Cllr Tom Martin

Cllr Donal O'Neill
Cllr Stefan Reynolds
Cllr Adam Taylor-Smith
Cllr Simon Thornton

Apologies

Cllr Carole King and Cllr Stewart Stennett

146. MINUTES (Agenda item 1)

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 3 February 2015 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

147. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda item 2)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Carole King and Stewart Stennett.

148. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS (Agenda item 3)

There were no declarations of interest raised under this heading.

PART I - RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE COUNCIL

Background Papers

Unless specified under an individual item, there are no background papers (as defined by Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) relating to the reports in Part I of these minutes.

149. ECONOMIC STRATEGY FOR WAVERLEY (Agenda item 10)

149.1 The Economic Strategy will contribute to the evidence base for the new Local Plan, by clarifying the vision and objectives for the local economy. The previous Economic Strategy was in place from 2007-2012 - the economic climate and regional structures have changed considerably over the last few years and new objectives now need to be considered. Whilst the IED (Institute of Economic Development) advise there is no statutory requirement to have a formal Economic Strategy, they recommend it is important to display good governance and a clear direction. The new Economic Strategy will therefore provide a positive steer for the local economy over the next five years.

149.2 Atkins, who have been involved with the preparation of the Local Plan and the Employment Land Review, were recently asked to review the latest economic data for Waverley. They used the data alongside other developments in the local and regional economy to inform the development of a new Economic Strategy, attached as Annexe 1.

149.3 The Council is proud of its track record as a business friendly organisation and the steps taken by the organisation to support the local economy and businesses. Key examples include:

- Support to local businesses through the supply of delivery of a wide range of employment related training and the supply of apprentices through Waverley Training Services. Support is also provided to residents who are long-term unemployed to help them get back into employment.
- The Council offers free business advice and support to anyone wishing to start or expand a business in the borough, through a service level agreement.
- Rate relief provided to 916 local businesses including rural businesses such as general stores and post offices
- A commitment to pay all invoices to local businesses within 10 working days and actively encourage the use of local suppliers, and the use of local labour in the Council's main contracts.
- Removed unnecessary burdens on local businesses through the development last year of a new Council policy for Regulatory Services which promotes more efficient approaches to regulatory inspection and enforcement
- Free advice and guidance to local businesses from Waverley's Environmental Health Service regarding food hygiene, health & Safety, licensing etc
- Provides local businesses with 16 hectares of land for industrial use, 17 hectares for commercial leisure use, 246 square metres of commercial office accommodation, and 740 square meters of retail space through various lease arrangements.
- The provision of business support alongside Council run workshops and events for local businesses such as the recent Digital Skills Workshops, Compete on the Streets initiative, and Meet the Buyer Event and relevant information and opportunities through a quarterly e-bulletin to local businesses
- The Council helped secure £30,000 for the Portas Town Team Bids last year.
- Offer free parking initiatives at different times of the year to benefit local retailers

- Support the Maltings to provide incubator space for micro business working in arts and craft sector
- Meeting national and local targets for turning around planning applications including applications relating to business premises and providing pre application advice to developers

149.4 Atkins recently reviewed a wealth of local data from sources such as ONS, Experian and the council's own information. They used the data to create an economic profile of the borough which forms the background to the Economic Strategy. The headline statistics are:

Population - Waverley's population is growing at a slower rate than the county and national averages, having grown by 6.1% over the period 2000 – 2013 compared to growth rates of 9% across Surrey and 9.4% across England.

Qualifications - Waverley has a highly qualified resident population with 40% of residents aged 16 and over holding Level 4 qualifications and above. This is higher than both the England (27%) and Surrey (36%) averages.

Employment - The Borough has a higher than average economic activity rate, with 75% of the population aged 16-64 being economically active.

- The Borough also has higher than average levels of self-employment (12% compared to 10% across England)
- It also has a higher than average number of part-time jobs. Approximately 30% of all people aged 16 – 64 working in Waverley work part-time (compared to an average of 25% across Surrey and across England).
- Waverley also has the largest number of homeworkers in Surrey with nearly 10,000 people homeworking.

Gross pay - The Borough is one of the least deprived in England, ranking 320th out of 326 local authorities in terms of deprivation. It is an affluent Borough with the median gross annual pay of Waverley residents being significantly higher than the national average (£38,200 compared to £27,500). The median gross annual pay of people **working** in Waverley is approximately one third lower than the median gross annual pay of people **living** in Waverley which suggests that many residents commute out of the Borough to access higher paying jobs.

Business base - Waverley has one of the highest business densities in Surrey with over 7,000 VAT registered businesses in the Borough. There are 3,949 businesses currently paying NNDR (business rates) within premises in the Borough, of which 421 are currently empty.

- Waverley's business base is dominated by small and medium sized enterprises. Approximately 91% of Waverley's businesses are micro businesses employing fewer than 10 people. This is higher than the national average of 88%. At the same time, the Borough has only 15 large enterprises employing 250 or more people.

- Analysis of a sample of 2,000 businesses in the Borough shows that the average business size is 3 employees. That average however is skewed by a small number of large employers. The typical (median) business size is only 2 employees.

Town Centres - The health and vitality of Waverley's town centres is reflected in their low High Street vacancy rates which range from 4% in Haslemere to 7% in Farnham. The overall vacancy rate across the four High Streets is approximately 6% - significantly lower than the UK High Street average of 14%. While the above vacancy rates represent a snapshot (November 2014), they indicate relatively healthy High Streets and town centres.

Employment premises - Waverley offers a range of employment premises including business parks and industrial estates, which provide flexible and secure accommodation for both start-up firms and more established, smaller businesses. According to Valuation Office Agency data, Waverley has approximately 264,000 square metres of employment floorspace including office, industrial, and warehousing and distribution floorspace.

149.5 It is important that the Strategy sets out a clear vision to direct the objectives and actions within the work programme. Having reviewed the latest economic data for Waverley, Atkins have suggested the following vision:

'Waverley will enjoy continued economic prosperity and diversity while safeguarding and enhancing its attractive character and high quality of life'.

149.6 While the vision aims to provide the overarching direction, six objectives are suggested for the local economy:

- **safeguard and enhance the Borough's attractive character and high quality of life.** Including maintaining access to well paid jobs. Excessive levels of housing or employment growth would threaten Waverley's character and unique characteristics and would ultimately damage its economy.
- **maintain and enhance the attractiveness and vitality of the Borough's town centres**
- **support modest levels of employment growth** at the appropriate locations and without compromising what makes Waverley successful.
- **engage with local businesses and offering business support** – continue to help business start-ups and supporting existing businesses.
- **high quality infrastructure** - the Council will continue working with its partners (including the Local Enterprise Partnership and the private sector) to maintain and improve the Borough's infrastructure, especially in terms of transport and broadband but also wider infrastructure such as Health.

- **provide affordable housing to key workers** - Given the high average cost of housing in the Borough, it is important that Waverley is able to provide affordable housing to key workers as they are vital to the continued prosperity of the Borough and its economy.

149.7 The Executive

RECOMMENDS that

- 66. the Economic Strategy, attached as Annexe 1, be approved.**

[Reason: to formally adopt an economic strategy for the Borough].

150. RE-EMPLOYMENT POLICY (Agenda item 11)

150.1 The Re-employment Policy is attached as Annexe 2. It states that:

‘Any employee who leaves Waverley on the basis of redundancy or early retirement or for some other reason and receives compensation will not normally be re-engaged in any capacity, including as consultants or agency staff, for a period of **two years** from their leaving date. Any re-employment within the two year period will be determined by the Executive Director, in partnership with the Strategic HR Manager, on an exceptional basis.’

150.2 Any re-employment agreed by the Executive Director within a two year period on an exceptional basis will be subject to an agreed procedure included in the policy document. This has been custom and practice at Waverley for some years and it is timely to formalise this in a policy document.

150.3 Members will be aware of the Small Business, Enterprise and Employment Bill which if passed, will require recovery of exit payments if someone re-joins the same part of the public sector within one year.

150.4 The Executive

RECOMMENDS that

- 67. the re-employment policy, attached as Annexe 2, be adopted.**

[Reason: to adopt a re-employment policy].

PART II - MATTERS OF REPORT

The background papers relating to the following items are as set out in the reports included in the original agenda papers.

151. FORWARD PROGRAMME - MARCH 2015 (Agenda item 5)

RESOLVED that the forward programme of key decisions for the period March 2015 onwards be adopted.

152. BUDGET MANAGEMENT REPORT (Agenda item 6)

RESOLVED that the report be noted and approval given to

1. a virement of £50,000 from additional Planning Income to cover temporary Staff required to assist with planning applications (detailed in paragraph 2.4);
2. £15,000 additional expenditure on Tree Safety Works to be met from the overall revenue underspend (detailed in paragraph 2.5);
3. £15,000 expenditure on replacement ovens at day centres to be met from the overall capital underspend (detailed in paragraph 3.5);
4. £5,000 expenditure on the Address Resolution Project to be met from the underspend on the Contaminated Land revenue project (detailed in paragraph 3.6); and
5. £20,000 extra expenditure on the Signage Project to be met from the capital underspend (detailed in paragraph 3.7);
6. rescheduling of capital works within the HRA from 2014/15 to 2015/16, as detailed at paragraph 4.7; and
7. works exceeding £5,000 to void properties within the HRA capital programme as listed at (Exempt) Annexe 9.

[Reason: To consider a projection of the expenditure and income position for the 2014/15 budget compared with the approved budget]

153. LOCAL PLAN PROGRESS REPORT (Agenda item 7)

RESOLVED that

1. the outcome from the consultation be noted and the Executive supports in principle the way forward as set out in the report; and
2. the Statement of Principles attached as Annexe 2 be endorsed.

[Reason: to seek support in principle to an emerging preferred strategy for the distribution of new homes, subject to further testing].

154. OCKFORD RIDGE CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL AND MILFORD CONSULTATION REPORT (Agenda item 8)

RESOLVED that the draft Conservation Area Appraisal for Ockford Road and the proposed amendments to the Milford Conservation Area be approved for the purposes of public consultation.

[Reason: to gain authorisation to undertake formal public consultation on the draft Conservation Area Appraisal].

155. SERVICE PLAN ACTION PLANS 2015/2016 (Agenda item 9)

RESOLVED that the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committees be thanked for their observations and the Service Plan Action Plans for 2015-16 be endorsed.

[Reason: to set out the strategic actions for each service, delivering the Council's corporate priorities].

156. CALENDAR OF MEETINGS 2015/16 (Agenda item 12)

RESOLVED that the revised Calendar of Meetings for 2015/16 be approved.

157. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S ACTIONS (Agenda item 13)

To note the following action taken by the Executive Director after consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman since the last meeting. The Register of Decisions will be laid on the table half an hour before the meeting:

i. Council Offices Urgent Works

As a result of heightened national security threat for all public buildings, to authorise urgent security works carried out to the Council's Central Offices to provide protection for the building and building users by the installation of protective barrier posts. The cost of these works being £18,300 to be met by a virement from savings in the overall General Fund Capital Programme for 2014/15.

158. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC (Agenda item 14)

At 7.12 p.m. 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 item 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 this item, 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 Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, namely:-

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

159. PROPERTY MATTERS - WEYHILL (Agenda item 15)

RESOLVED that the recommendation set out in the (Exempt) Annexe to these minutes be agreed.

The meeting commenced at 6.45 pm and concluded at 7.18 pm

Chairman