

WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL
OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - COMMUNITY WELLBEING
25 MAY 2021

Interim Report of the Service Level Agreement Working Group

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Michaela Martin, Portfolio Holder for Health, Wellbeing and Culture

Head of Service: Mr Andrew Smith, Head of Housing Delivery and Communities

Key decision: No

Access: Public

1. Purpose and summary

1.1 To update the Community Wellbeing Overview & Scrutiny Committee on the Working Group's findings.

1.2 To ask the Committee to agree the interim report and pass on its recommendations for consideration by the Executive.

2. Recommendation

That the Committee agree the interim report included as Annex 1 and recommend it to the Executive.

3. Reason for the recommendation

To ensure that the Council's funding mechanism and approach to not-for-profit organisations is fit for purpose in meeting the Council's new corporate priorities and evidence based community needs.

4. Background

4.1 The Committee confirmed the scope of the Working Group at its meeting on 13 November 2019. However, this work was disrupted by the outbreak of Covid-19.

4.2 In February 2021, the Executive approved the renewal of the current Service Level Agreements (SLAs) with the 12 partner organisations for one year only, 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022.

4.3 In February 2021, the Executive also agreed the establishment of an Executive Working Group to review the council's funding mechanism to voluntary sector organisation from 1 April 2022.

4.4 In light of this, the Committee agreed a revised scope in March 2021, which provided for the Working Group to report in two stages. A provisional report in May 2021 to cover: *“What principles will allow funding [of] the charitable and voluntary sector to better enable the Council to achieve its Corporate objectives?”* and presenting its conclusion to the Executive Working Group prior to it beginning deliberations. This will be followed in the winter by a final report assessing: *“How well do the Executive Working Group’s proposals fit with principles identified in Phase 1?”*

4.5 If the Committee accepts the Working Group’s recommendations, then it will reconvene to consider the Executive Working Group’s proposals once these become available.

5. Relationship to the Corporate Strategy and Service Plan

5.1 As discussed in the body of the Working Group’s report (Annexe 1), a key objective of the recommendations is to ensure that the council’s funding mechanism to not-for-organisations is aligned with its corporate priorities.

6. Implications of decision

6.1 Resource (Finance, procurement, staffing, IT)

If the recommendations were implemented then officer time within the Communities Team would likely be required to implement and administer any agreed funding process.

6.2 Risk Management

Changing the approach through which funding is allocated may have adverse financial implications for existing funded partner organisations. Given that some of them are reliant on Council funding towards their running costs, this may impact their ultimate viability.

6.3 Legal

The current SLAs are legally binding documents and are reviewed by the council’s Legal Services team. The same would likely apply to any new funding agreements.

6.4 Equality, diversity and inclusion

An Equality impact assessment will need to be carried out to ensure the council is fulfilling its Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010.

6.5 Climate emergency declaration

Consideration of the Council’s environmental and sustainability objectives will need to be made when making decisions on levels of funding.

7. Consultation and engagement

7.1 The possibility of changes to the way the Council funds not-for-profit organisations from 1 April 2022 and beyond have been discussed with the current partner organisations and with statutory partners. Please see the Executive report from 9 February 2021 for more details.

8. Other options considered

8.1 The Committee could decline to make any recommendations to the Executive on this topic. However, that would remove the contribution of scrutiny from their decision.

8.2 The Committee could endorse the continuation of the existing SLA process. However, this would represent a missed opportunity to update the Council's approach to the way it funds not-for-profit organisations to meet desired outcomes including changing community needs, especially given the impact of Covid-19, and the Council's new corporate priorities, as well as the possible opportunity to work with "new" organisations.

9. Governance Journey

9.1 Executive – Tuesday 22 June

Annexes:

Annexe 1 – Interim report of Working Group, Community Wellbeing Overview & Scrutiny: Service Level Agreements

Background Papers

There are no background papers, as defined by Section 100D (5) of the Local Government Act (1972)

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