

WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL
STANDARDS & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

25 APRIL 2022

Title: Review of the remits of Resources and Services Overview & Scrutiny

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Paul Follows, Leader of the Council

Head of Service: Robin Taylor, Head of Policy and Governance and Monitoring Officer

Key Decision: No

Access: Public

1. Purpose and summary

1.1 To amend the remits of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) Committees to better balance the workload of these Committees.

2. Recommendations

2.1 Amend the terms of reference for the Overview and Scrutiny Committees (Article 6.1, Part 3, Waverley Borough Council Constitution) as follows:

6.1 Terms of Reference

Waverley has two Overview and Scrutiny Committees covering the following areas:

Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Remit (Service Areas)
1. Resources	Business Transformation Finance and Property <i>Housing Operations</i> <i>Housing Delivery and Communities</i> <i>[housing related]</i> Policy and Governance
2. Services This Committee will act as the designated Crime and Disorder Committee for the purposes of Section 19 of the Police and Justice Act 2006.	Commercial Services Environmental and Regulatory Services Housing Operations Housing Delivery and Communities <i>[non-housing related]</i> Planning and Economic Development

The Resources O&S committee may, with the agreement of the chairman and vice-chairman of the Services O&S Committee, assume responsibility for an item which would normally fall within the remit of Services O&S if it has substantial revenue or capital implications.

3. Reason for the recommendation

- 3.1 Since the introduction of two committees with remits based on service-areas, the experience has been that the Services O&S Committee's workload has been substantially larger than that of Resources. The changes set out in the recommendations propose what is anticipated to be a more even division of the committee workload.
- 3.2 The experience and skills in financial scrutiny developed by members of Resources O&S would be valuable in exploring the significant financial implications of the Council's housing development and operations.

4. Background

- 4.1 The current remits originate from a resolution agreed by Full Council on Tuesday, 19 October 2021 when it was agreed to move from four to two committees and to remits based on service areas rather than those based on an earlier Corporate Strategy.
- 4.2 There have been two regular Services O&S meetings since the implementation of these changes. Both of these exceeded 2 and a half hours.
- 4.3 In light of this experience, a working group was convened. Its membership consisted of the O&S chairmen and vice-chairmen, the Leader of the Council and the Chairman of the Standards and General Purposes Committee.
- 4.4 In advance of the recommendations in this report, Services O&S have implemented other steps to make their workload more manageable. For example, at their January meeting they agreed a new procedure to enable routine or uncontroversial items to be taken in writing unless flagged for discussion.

5. Relationship to the Corporate Strategy and Service Plan

- 5.1 An effective scrutiny function supports the Council's strategic priority of delivering local, open, participative government.

6. Implications of decision

6.1 Resource (Finance, procurement, staffing, IT)

None. Changing the divide in workload between the two committees would not alter the total resources devoted to O&S.

6.2 Risk management

Risk management procedures will not be altered by changing the committee remits.

6.3 Legal

The recommended remits make explicit provision to discharge the Council's obligations under S.19 of the Police and Justice Act 2006.

6.4 Equality, diversity and inclusion

Where appropriate, individual reports will continue to be subjected to the assessment of equality and diversity implications.

6.5 Climate emergency declaration

Where appropriate, individual reports will continue to be assessed for their climate change implications.

7. Consultation and engagement

N/A

8. Other options considered

8.1 The status quo based on service areas could be retained. However, the unbalanced workload would remain.

8.2 The Working Group considered a split based on a sequential set of criteria with subject matter being the primary consideration. This placed finance, procurement, large capital projects, asset management and corporate support functions within Resources O&S remit. Services O&S's remit would have consisted of items related to: the delivery and quality of services to the public, residents and businesses, planning, and issues not specifically Waverley Borough Council related but of concern to our public sector and not-for-profit partners or our residents. However, the working group considered this solution to be overly complex. In addition, it was noted that it failed to provide a straightforward way to divide items on Corporate Performance, Service Plans and Corporate Plans between the O&S committees.

8.3 Some councils have an internal/external split. However, scrutiny at Waverley has to date focused on the Council's own operations. Therefore, unless this was changed substantially, it would result in an extreme imbalance in workloads.

8.3 A split based on Corporate Strategy priorities could be introduced. However, these could change when the Corporate Strategy is reviewed. In addition, a policy can contribute to multiple Corporate Priorities. Hence, such an arrangement would not necessarily produce clarity.

9. Governance journey

Recommendations from the Standards Committee will be submitted to Full Council for ratification.

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

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