

WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - SERVICES - 21
NOVEMBER 2023

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

Present

Cllr Carole Cockburn (Chair)	Cllr George Hesse
Cllr Philip Townsend (Vice Chair)	Cllr Jacquie Keen
Cllr Jane Austin	Cllr Gemma Long
Cllr Dave Busby	Cllr David Munro
Cllr Janet Crowe	Cllr John Robini

Apologies

Cllr Graham White

24 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS (Agenda item 1)

Apologies for absence were submitted by Cllr Graham White.

25 MINUTES (Agenda item 2)

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 September 2023 and published on the Council's website were agreed as a correct record.

26 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (Agenda item 3)

There were no declarations of interest submitted for this meeting.

27 QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC (Agenda item 4)

There were no questions by members of the public submitted for this meeting.

28 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS (Agenda item 5)

There were no questions by members submitted for this meeting.

29 COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME (Agenda item 6)

29.1 Members considered the forward work programme and discussed topics that may be considered for future meetings.

29.2 The Committee were advised that agenda Item 6, 'Economic Development Strategy Review' had been withdrawn from the agenda as it was not ready for review. It was scheduled to appear before the Executive on 9 January and Council on 20 February. The Chair was concerned that there would therefore be no opportunity for scrutiny before the decision is taken. It was suggested the strategy may be deferred to later Executive and Council

meetings - it was therefore requested that this item remains on the work programme should this happen.

- 29.3 Cllr Munro suggested that the committee should scrutinise the work of the Surrey Environment Partnership and consider how to reduce waste production before commencing work around recycling as per Government's Waste Hierarchy.
- 29.4 The Vice-chair asked that officers advise which upcoming decisions the committee may wish to consider.
- 29.5 It was agreed that a list of previous task and finish groups be circulated to inform members what had been considered in the past.
- 29.6 It was requested that, when the Safer Waverley Partnership comes to committee, the Police are also invited to attend.

30 CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REPORT Q2 2023-24 (Agenda item 7)

- 30.1 The Policy & Performance Officer introduced the Corporate Performance Report and advised there were no specific areas to highlight. The committee went through the service areas under their remit and commented on any areas of interest.

Regeneration and Planning Policy

No comments were raised.

Commercial Services

- 30.2 Members were advised that the number of visitors to leisure centres had been temporarily removed from this section as the new contractor (Everyone Active) uses a data collection methodology that is significantly different from that of the previous contractor, meaning that the data cannot be meaningfully compared.
- 30.3 Cllr Munro asked if the standard parking charge of £1.10/hour in Waverley car parks could be reviewed. The Policy and Performance Officer agreed to pass this to the Executive Head of Commercial Services.
- 30.4 Cllr Long queried the recent impact on car parking revenue considering their usage as bottled water distribution stations during the recent water supply outage. Members also asked if parking had returned to pre-pandemic rates and for the reasons if this was not the case. Members then discussed how to manage raising car parking income while simultaneously encouraging greater public transport adoption as part of our Carbon Neutrality Action Plan.
- 30.5 Non-voting member Cllr Hyman registered to speak on this item. He asked if there would be electric car charging stations at Brightwells Yard, Farnham, and requested an update on the status of the planned foot and cycle bridge there.

Community Services

- 30.6 Members queried the causes of the rise in safeguarding cases. The Executive Head of Community Services advised that there had been an increase correlated to the worsening cost-of-living crisis and that the threshold for intervention employed by Surrey County Council is very high, meaning that Waverley Borough Council now receive more referrals. A growth bid for a Safeguarding Coordinator post was approved at Executive on 28 November 2023, and it was noted that the addition of Community Triggers to case reviews will improve outcomes. It was suggested that increases in ASB since the Covid-19 pandemic could be considered at a future meeting.
- 30.7 Cllr Robini advised he would advise the Police and Crime Commissioner of his views when attending the *Policing your communities event* at the Farnham Maltings on Monday 4 December 2023.

Environmental Services

- 30.8 Members congratulated the Countryside Rangers service for their work over the summer, discussed the KPIs at E3a and E3b regarding missed bin collections, and stated that they felt that the target of 40 missed collections out of 100,000 is prohibitively difficult to meet. It was noted that missed bin collections are often associated a crew covering a route that is unfamiliar to them.
- 30.9 Cllr Keen noted an apparent decrease in street cleaning this year and asked that it be addressed.

Planning Development

- 30.10 Cllr Hyman noted that it would be useful for members to better understand the Planning Advisory Service (PAS) Development Management (DM) Challenge Toolkit. The Executive Head of Planning Development advised a recent workshop with the Planning Team had captured issues to address and the improvements to be made.
- 30.11 Cllr Hyman suggested that a target of 80% for Performance Indicator P151 (National Indicator 157a) was insufficiently challenging, although the committee disagreed. The Executive Head of Planning Development assured the committee that morale was high in the Planning Department despite a recent period of high turnover.

Regulatory Services

- 30.12 Cllr Hyman asked when the review of the Air Quality Action Plan will come back before this Committee, as it is due to be considered here every six months. The Chair noted that this has been requested.

31 ASB PSPO UPDATE (Agenda item 8)

- 31.1 The Anti-social Behaviour Officer updated the committee on the Godalming and Farncombe PSPO, its purpose, outcomes, and next steps.
- 31.2 Clarifying that breaches of the order are an offence, it was stated that the current Godalming and Farnham PSPO prohibits drinking or use of other intoxicants in public places, as well as containing a specific ASB prohibition. Unauthorised bonfires and BBQs on land within the restricted areas are also prohibited.
- 31.3 It was noted that the PSPO has been used to task policing resources and been heavily employed by Parks and Countryside Services. Extensive research and consultation will now take place while expansion is considered alongside the new ASB policy and training programme.
- 31.4 Cllr Gale enquired about expanding the current PSPO's area to include Witley and Milford due to rising numbers of incidents across the parish. It was agreed this could be an effective deterrent and could be considered.
- 31.5 Members were advised that the review would look at other areas members wish to have considered, and that fixed penalty notices could possibly be raised from £100 to £500.
- 31.6 Cllr Robini asked about CCTV policy and that greater collection take place. It was stated that incidents must be reported for this to occur, and asked members remind residents of that calling Crimestoppers can be an effective measure.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Services resolved to support the review of the PSPO and potential expansions if they are supported by the evidence.

32 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY REVIEW (Agenda item 9)

This item was deferred from the agenda as officers indicated that the strategy was not yet ready for review.

33 MEMBER ROLE IN MONITORING PLANNING CONDITIONS AND UPDATE ON DEPARTMENTAL RESOURCE (Agenda item 10)

Monitoring of Conditions

- 33.1 The Chair advised that Cllr Gale had raised the issue of members monitoring the implementation of planning conditions; Cllr Gale voiced concerns about the conditions or S106 agreements on planning applications that are challenged by developers, noting cases where conditions were discharged with errors and uploaded to the planning portal. She thus advised greater consultation with ward members and communication after paperwork is uploaded.

- 33.2 The current relevance of this now was noted, given recent staff turnover within the Planning team and the potential associated loss of expertise, as in cases of Transport Management Plans or Construction Transport Management Plans being revised by developers where ward members could have added valuable input. It was recognised that Parish and Town Councils should be informed when amendments are received by our planning team, as has been previously agreed with past Executive Heads of Planning Development.
- 33.3 The Executive Head of Planning Development advised that the online planning portal was now being updated in real time for members' comments, and stated that planning officers welcome input on specific items but did have to discharge conditions in a specific timeframe.
- 33.4 The Committee requested that members that speak on applications or specific conditions are notified of any developments regarding that condition. It was confirmed that ways of tagging these would be investigated.

Resources in Planning Department

- 33.5 The Committee discussed the current structure of the planning department following recent staffing changes. Cllr Hesse shared concern about resourcing in the conservation team. The Executive Head of Planning Development clarified that there was an examination underway to identify how work passes between teams and how resources can be best used. The Leader noted that these statements are anecdotal until a proper evidence base is commissioned. The Chair noted this.

Land Availability Assessment

- 33.6 It was noted that officers hope to carry out another call for sites and that it is key that the LAA aligns with the Neighbourhood Plans. Issues with a lack of Five Year Housing Land Supply in recent years were raised and the priority of addressing this was noted.

34 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC (Agenda item 11)

There were no items to discuss in exempt session so the Chair closed the meeting.

The meeting commenced at 7.00 pm and concluded at 8.30 pm

Chairman