

# APPENDIX J

## WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

### COMMUNITY OVERVIEW AND SCUTINY COMMITTEE 9 NOVEMBER 2009 EXECUTIVE 1 DECEMBER 2009

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#### **Title:**

#### **SOCIAL INCLUSION STRATEGY 2008 – PROGRESS AND ACTION PLAN INCLUDING FINANCIAL INCLUSION APPROACH**

**[Portfolio Holders: Cllr Richard Gates, Cllr Stefan Reynolds &  
Cllr Keith Webster]  
[Wards Affected: All]**

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#### **Summary and purpose:**

The Council adopted a Social Inclusion Strategy in July 2008. The Strategy had been refreshed following work undertaken by a number of officers and a range of partners and other outside organisations whose work impacts on or is affected by Waverley's approach to social inclusion in the community.

This report detail progress against the objectives set out in this Strategy at Annexe 1. A new 'Financial Inclusion Approach' is set out at Annexe 2, which consolidates the ways in which the Council promotes and assists financial inclusion.

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#### **How this report relates to the Council's Corporate Priorities:**

The objectives in the Social Inclusion Strategy and the Financial Inclusion Approach support all of the Council's Corporate Priorities but particularly 'Improving Lives - improving the quality of life for all, particularly the more vulnerable in our society.' We know there are people in our society who need extra help and support, and who are at risk of being socially or financially excluded. We aim to provide the means for that support to be available to those who need it, by working in partnership with other organisations, local communities and the thriving voluntary sector in Waverley to fund care and support services, and by ensuring that our own services target those in need.

#### **Equality and Diversity Implications:**

The Social Inclusion Strategy supports the promotion of Equality & Diversity. It is a key part of ensuring Social Inclusion, and is referenced throughout the Strategy.

#### **Resource/Value for Money implications:**

Resource implications are included in the Financial Inclusion Approach action plan attached at Annexe 2.

#### **Legal Implications:**

There are no legal implications in this report.

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## Social Inclusion Strategy

1. The Council adopted a Social Inclusion Strategy in July 2008. The Strategy was been refreshed following work undertaken by a number of officers and a range of partners and other outside organisations whose work impacts on or is affected by Waverley's approach to social inclusion in the community. The Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee commented on the draft strategy, prior to it being considered by the Executive, at its meeting in June 2008.
2. At an event held in June 2008, representatives of partners and community organisations were asked to help the Council develop its understanding of the social exclusion factors in Waverley, and to determine whether the objectives identified in the draft Strategy were the right ones to benefit our residents.
3. In December 2008, the Executive endorsed an action plan which set out the objectives agreed in the Social Inclusion Strategy, the progress to date against actions under these objectives, and areas of work still to be completed. The Executive agreed that the Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee should be requested to monitor and review progress against the Action Plan on a regular basis.
4. The Community Overview & Scrutiny Committee last reviewed the Action Plan at its meeting in June 2009, and requested that it receive updates every 6 months. The Action Plan has been updated with progress to the end of September 2009 and is attached at Annexe 1.
5. The Committee are asked to note progress, and to pass any comments to the Executive.

## Financial Inclusion Approach

6. Over the years the Council has undertaken a range of financial inclusion work and initiatives such as:
  - Providing the Housing and Council Tax Benefit service;
  - Promoting the IN2 card, making sports and leisure activities more affordable to people on low incomes;
  - Funding the Citizens Advice Waverley, which provides debt advice amongst other advice services;
  - Welcomed the free swimming initiatives for children and older people;
  - Administration of free bus passes; and
  - Rent Advice service for tenants

This report builds further on work already in place.

7. The first objective of the Social Inclusion Strategy is to 'Combat poverty and financial disadvantage'. One major influence on this area of work since the adoption of the Strategy has been the recession, which led to the 'Don't lose your home or business' project.
8. Financial inclusion is an important area of social inclusion that ensures that everyone has the ability to access appropriate financial products and services needed to fully participate in modern-day society and the economy – for

example access to a bank account, affordable lending and saving rates, debt and money advice.

9. A draft 'Financial Inclusion Approach' and associated action plan are attached at Annexe 2. This approach aims to consolidate the many ways in which Waverley promotes and assists financial inclusion, building on the work that has already been achieved through the Don't Lose Your Home or Business project.
10. This approach will cover all residents of Waverley, which includes Waverley's tenants. This addresses recommendations from the Audit Commission's inspection in October 2008 of Waverley's Housing Management services. The inspection report, published in January 2009, recommended that Waverley strengthen its focus on customer care by developing a financial inclusion approach. This Committee has received quarterly progress reports against all recommendations arising from this inspection, and the latest update is also included on this agenda.
11. The approach has been drafted based on information from a range of internal officers and external partners and organisations. It is proposed that this approach is approved as an essential component of our Social Inclusion Strategy. The Committee are asked to comment on the draft approach and action plan, highlight any further areas for inclusion and submit their comments to the Executive.

### **Recommendation**

The Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee are requested to

- i) note progress made against the Social Inclusion Strategy Action Plan attached at Annexe 1 and submit any comments to the Executive; and
- ii) Consider the draft Financial Inclusion Approach and Action Plan at Annexe 2 and recommend to the Executive that this is adopted as an essential component of the Social Inclusion Strategy.

### **Background Papers**

Waverley Borough Council, Social Inclusion Strategy, adopted July 2008  
Audit Commission, Waverley Borough Council Housing Management Services, January 2009.

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