

Cherwell District Council

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held at Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury, OX15 4AA, on 3 December 2019 at 6.30 pm

Present: Councillor Lucinda Wing (Chairman)
Councillor Mike Bishop
Councillor Phil Chapman
Councillor Chris Heath
Councillor Shaida Hussain
Councillor Ian Middleton
Councillor Perran Moon
Councillor Les Sibley

Also Present: Councillor Barry Wood - Leader of the Council
Councillor Andrew McHugh – Lead Member for Health and Wellbeing

Apologies for absence: Councillor Tom Wallis
Councillor Tony Mephram
Councillor Bryn Williams

Officers: Simon Furlong, Corporate Director - Communities
Robert Jolley, Assistant Director: Growth & Economy
Nicola Riley, Assistant Director: Wellbeing
Hedd Vaughan Evans, Assistant Director Performance and Transformation
Kevin Larnar, Healthy Communities Manager
Louise Tustian, Acting Assistant Director Performance and Transformation
Natasha Clark, Governance and Elections Manager
Emma Faulkner, Democratic and Elections Officer
Lesley Farrell, Democratic and Elections Officer

34 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

35 **Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 15 October 2019 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

36 **Chairman's Announcements**

The Chairman requested that Members asked one question and one follow-up question per item, due to the lengthy agenda.

37 **Oxfordshire Growth Board**

The Chairman welcomed Bev Hindle, Director of the Oxfordshire Growth Board, to the meeting to give an overview of the work of the Board.

The Committee was advised that the Growth Board had been established in 2015 as a joint Committee of the six councils of Oxfordshire, together with key strategic partners. The Board was set up to facilitate and enable joint working on economic development, strategic planning and growth.

Mr Hindle explained that a Housing and Growth Deal had been agreed and signed in 2018 between Oxfordshire and the Government. The deal provided a development framework for the county, and included £150 million government funding for infrastructure, and £60 million for affordable housing.

The Board oversees all the projects agreed in the City Deal and Local Housing and Growth Deal that fall to the councils to deliver, and has an overall responsibility to manage programmes of work alongside the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership. It also advises on matters of collective interest, seeks agreement on local priorities and influences relevant local, regional and national bodies.

The Growth Board had been anticipating an update from Highways England with regards to the proposed Oxford to Cambridge Expressway, however decisions had been delayed due to the General Election.

In response to questions from the Committee, Mr Hindle explained that there had been a lot of growth in the county already due to an increase in jobs, and there were not enough homes to meet the need for the additional jobs.

With regard to proposals around the East-West rail link, Mr Hindle confirmed that the Growth Board did have discussions with relevant authorities regarding the project.

The Committee thanked Mr Hindle for his attendance.

38 **Veterans, Armed Forces Covenant and Remembrance**

The Committee considered a briefing note from the Healthy Communities Manager, which gave details of current and planned future CDC support relating to veterans, the Armed Forces Covenant and remembrance events.

In response to questions from the Committee, the Healthy Communities Manager advised that the guaranteed interview scheme for veterans had only been running for a couple of months, so initial data was still being collected.

The Healthy Communities Manager added that the council would be actively promoting the various policies and schemes available relating to veterans, with the details from the briefing note being sent to parish councils.

Resolved

- (1) That the briefing note be noted.

39 **Monthly Performance, Risk and Finance Monitoring Report - September 2019**

The Committee considered a report from the Executive Director: Finance (Interim) and Assistant Director: Performance and Transformation which detailed the monthly performance, risk and finance monitoring for September 2019.

In response to questions from the Committee regarding indicator CDC2.2.08 - % of Council Tax collected, and whether it was being measured correctly, the Assistant Director: Performance and Transformation explained that it was a volatile measure which saw a lot of movement across the year. Due to the amount of development across the district the tax base was increasing, but the timing of properties being allocated a Council Tax band impacted on collection rates each month.

The Assistant Director: Performance and Transformation added that it was possible for residents to pay instalments towards Council Tax whilst they were waiting for bills to be issued. The Committee commented that this option did not seem to be proactively advertised, and suggested it could be useful to some residents. The Assistant Director: Performance and Transformation agreed to feedback the Committee's comments to relevant officers.

The Chairman advised the Committee that it was the last meeting the Assistant Director: Performance and Transformation would be attending, as he was leaving the council to start new employment at another Local Authority. The Committee thanked the Assistant Director for his help and support, and wished him well in his new role.

Resolved

- (1) That the monthly performance, risk and finance monitoring report be noted
- (2) That it be noted that the performance, risk and finance monitoring report was considered by Executive on a monthly basis.
- (3) That no areas for further consideration by Executive be identified at this time.

40

Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board/Oxfordshire Safeguarding Adult Board Section 11 Review and Endorsement

The Committee considered a briefing note from the Assistant Director: Wellbeing regarding the Section 11 Audit for the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Boards.

The Assistant Director: Wellbeing explained that the self-assessment contained 17 questions across four core standards that the Council had to complete. 15 questions had been graded green, 2 amber, and none had been graded red.

The accompanying action plan for the amber graded questions detailed improvements to be made in relation to training. This included increasing take up of Member training to 60%, and carrying out an impact analysis of staff training.

In response to queries from the Committee, the Assistant Director: Wellbeing confirmed that safeguarding resources were available from the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board website, and from Active Oxfordshire, to assist sports clubs and associations with the various requirements from sports boards and governing bodies.

Resolved

- (1) That the Section 11 Audit for the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board and Oxfordshire Safeguarding Adult Board be endorsed.

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Public Art

The Committee considered a briefing note from the Assistant Director: Wellbeing which provided an overview of the Council's role in relation to public art.

The Assistant Director: Wellbeing showed examples of public art across the district that the Council had been involved with. With regards to the 'Settlement' sculpture on the Bellway development at Southam Road, Banbury, the Assistant Director: Wellbeing advised that work was ongoing with the art as it was dependent on the correct type of wood being available.

In response to questions from the Committee, the Assistant Director: Wellbeing advised that there wasn't any guidance specifically for privately commissioned art.

Resolved

- (1) That the briefing note be noted.

42

Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2019/2020

The Democratic and Elections Officers gave an update on the status of topics suggested for Scrutiny, and the indicative Committee work programme.

With regard to topics suggested for Scrutiny, Democratic and Elections Officers reported that no scoping documents had been submitted by Members who had suggested potential topics for review. As and when scoping documents were received, they would be added to future agendas for discussion.

Regarding the work programme for the January 2020 meeting, officers advised that whilst the item was listed as Budget and Business Planning, the Committee would only be considering the Business Plan for 2020-2021. The Budget element of the item would be considered by Budget Planning Committee at its 6 January 2020 meeting, to which all Members had been invited to attend.

The Chairman advised the Committee that she would be sending out a short survey to all Members of the Council, via the Democratic and Elections team, to find out Members' views of the Overview and Scrutiny function. The results of the survey would be used to help shape the future work of the Committee, and the Chairman encouraged all Members to complete the survey.

Resolved

(1) That the work programme be noted

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Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

The meeting ended at 8.20 pm

Chairman:

Date: