

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 10 July 2018 at 6.45 pm

Present: Councillor Neil Prestidge (Chairman)
Councillor Sean Gaul (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Mike Bishop
Councillor Mark Cherry
Councillor Chris Heath
Councillor Tony Mephram
Councillor Cassi Perry
Councillor Les Sibley
Councillor Bryn Williams
Councillor Lucinda Wing

Also Present: Councillor Andrew McHugh, Lead Member Health and Wellbeing

Apologies for absence: Councillor Phil Chapman
Councillor Sandra Rhodes

Officers: Graeme Kane, Executive Director: Environment
Jane Carr, Executive Director: Wellbeing
Ed Potter, Assistant Director: Environmental Services
Trevor Dixon, Environmental Protection Manager
James Doble, Assistant Director: Law and Governance / Monitoring Officer
Natasha Clark, Governance and Elections Manager
Lesley Farrell, Democratic and Elections Officer
Emma Faulkner, Democratic and Elections Officer

3 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

4 Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

5 Minutes

The minutes of the meetings of the Committee held on 27 March and 15 May 2018 were confirmed as correct records and signed by the Chairman.

6 **Chairman's Announcements**

There were no Chairman's announcements.

7 **What is Scrutiny?**

The Assistant Director – Law and Governance welcomed members to the meeting, and gave a presentation which provided a brief overview of the function of Scrutiny within local government.

The Assistant Director – Law and Governance explained that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee should be seeking to make meaningful recommendations relating to the subjects that were scrutinised. Therefore if an outcome couldn't be envisaged or if the process would not be adding value to anything, a review should not be undertaken.

The Committee could scrutinise issues that were not part of the Council's responsibility, as long as members were mindful of the need to make meaningful recommendations.

The Assistant Director – Law and Governance explained that to support work programme planning, quarterly meetings would be arranged between the Chairman and vice-Chairman of the Committee and the council's Leadership team. The aim of the meetings would be for officers to make the Chairman and vice-Chairman aware of work that was coming up in their directorates, and could benefit from early involvement of members via Overview and Scrutiny. The meetings would also be an opportunity for the Committee to find out about the priorities of Executive, and carry out early work on policy development.

In response to questions from the Committee, the Assistance Director – Law and Governance advised that as soon as Members became aware or thought of potential subjects for consideration, they should be flagged to Democratic and Elections Officers. This would allow officers to do some initial information gathering for the Committee to enable a detailed and informed discussion at the next available meeting. The Assistant Director – Law and Governance emphasised that potential review subjects didn't have to be raised at a formal meeting, and reiterated the 'iceberg' analogy regarding two thirds of the work of the Committee being carried out outside the formal meeting structure with the remaining third in committee meetings.

The Assistant Director – Law and Governance finished his presentation by explaining it was important for members to understand the work of each directorate and team within it, and to have an overview of what each department was looking at to help them select possible review subjects. The "Show and Tell" items scheduled on the work programme going forward would support this.

Resolved

- (1) That the presentation be noted

8 Show and Tell - Environment Directorate

The Executive Director – Environment gave a brief overview of the Environment directorate, and introduced the Assistant Director – Environmental Services who gave a brief presentation on the work of the Environmental Services team, which concentrated on the work it does in keeping the district clean.

The presentation covered: Overall Strategy; Street Cleansing Team; Vehicle Fleet; Scope of work; Performance; and Enforcement

In response to questions from the Committee, the Assistant Director – Environmental Services explained that any enforcement action taken in relation to flytipping was driven by the quality of evidence. He added that flytips were usually cleared within 24 -48 hours of being reported, but it did depend on the nature of the rubbish that needed removing.

In response to members' questions regarding the clean ups that took place after traveller encampments had moved on, the Assistant Director – Environmental Services explained that the involvement of the team depended on who the landowner was. If it were private land it was the responsibility of the landowner to clear the site. The Executive Director – Environment suggested that, if the Committee agreed, officers could request an update from the Travellers Unit for submission to a future meeting, to go through processes and procedures in more detail.

The Executive Director – Environment introduced the Cherwell and South Northamptonshire Environmental Protection Manager, and Victoria Fletcher of Oxfordshire County Council Highways, who gave an update on the Air Quality Action Plan.

The Environmental Protection Manager explained that where levels of Nitrogen Dioxide exceeded recommended levels, an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) had to be declared. There were currently four AQMA's across the district, two in Banbury, one in Bicester and one in Kidlington.

The AQMA was reviewed every year, with actions being updated as required. The location of the diffusion tubes which collected the data was also kept under review.

The Committee commented that the health impact of poor air quality was an issue that was being raised more often in some of the AQMAs, and asked if it would be possible for officers to discuss with the Communications Team a Communications Strategy, in order to reassure residents that action was being taken.

The Environmental Protection Managed explained that with the increasing interest around electric vehicles, the department had started to request that

conditions be applied to planning permissions for new homes that required infrastructure for at home charging points to be included in the build. This would then allow subsequent residents the capability to charge vehicles more easily. The Committee requested that further information regarding the number of such conditions applied, and consideration of Air Quality in the planning process as a whole, be submitted to a future meeting.

The Committee expressed concern that the work on the AQMA could be affected by construction of HS2, as Hennef Way in Banbury had been identified as a route for construction traffic. The Executive Director – Environment said that there would be an impact, but suggested that the Committee may wish to invite representatives from HS2 to a future meeting of the Committee to discuss the emissions plan for development.

With regards to the Bicester specific measures in the Air Quality Action Plan, the Committee asked if it was possible for the role of Community Travel Planner to be extended to cover Banbury and Kidlington. Victoria Fletcher explained that a Bicester specific role had been created due to the amount of growth that was taking place in the town, and the Assistant Director – Law and Governance suggested that the Committee could ask the Executive to look at the feasibility of a similar role for Banbury and Kidlington.

The Committee thanked the officers for their attendance and informative presentations.

Resolved

- (1) That the Keeping the District Clean presentation be noted
- (2) That the Air Quality Update be noted
- (3) That the following items/issues be discussed with relevant officers with a view to more detailed consideration at future meetings of the Committee:
 - a. Update on Travellers across the district
 - b. Communications Strategy in relation to the Air Quality Management Plan
 - c. Further details regarding the number of planning conditions relating to the infrastructure for home charging points for electric vehicles in new build properties
 - d. How air quality is considered during the planning process
 - e. Consideration of the emissions plan for HS2, and inviting HS2 representatives to address the Committee on this matter
 - f. Request Executive to look at the feasibility of a Community Travel Planner for Banbury and Kidlington as well as Bicester

9 Overview and Scrutiny at Cherwell District Council in practice

Further to the presentation by the Assistant Director – Law and Governance earlier in the meeting, the Democratic and Elections Officers gave a short presentation that explained how it was anticipated that Overview and Scrutiny would work in practice going forward.

The officers explained that following an inquiry by the Communities and Local Government Select Committee into the effectiveness of local authority scrutiny committees, the Chief Executive and Assistant Director - Law and Governance and following discussions with the Chairman of the Committee, it had been decided to relaunch overview and scrutiny at Cherwell District Council.

The relaunch would encourage members of the Committee to undertake more work such as research, evidence gathering, meetings with officers, residents, organisations, outside of the formal meeting setting, which would help to increase the number of scrutiny reviews completed by the Committee over the municipal year and therefore add value to the council.

The Democratic and Elections Officers explained that potential subjects for scrutiny review would be scored using a system called 'TOPIC' which had been developed by Oxford City Council. Each potential subject for consideration would be scored against the following headings – Timely; Organisational Priority; Public Interest; Influence; and Cost. Subjects which scored 9 points or higher would be added to the work programme.

Resolved

- (1) That the presentation be noted

10

Work Programme for 2018-2019

The Democratic and Elections Officers gave an update regarding items that were currently scheduled for the work programme.

The Committee worked in groups and discussed potential scrutiny review subjects for consideration across the municipal year. Democratic and Elections Officers agreed to liaise with the members who had identified particular topics and discuss the subjects with relevant officers and provide an update and suggested next steps for each subject to the next meeting of the Committee:

- a. Castle Quay update
- b. County Lines drug issues
- c. Tree Management Strategy
- d. Social/Affordable Housing Strategy
- e. Masterplans for Banbury, Bicester and Kidlington
- f. Travellers
- g. East/West Rail link
- h. Attracting high street retailers
- i. Provision of cycle footpaths
- j. Canalside Strategy
- k. Cost vs benefit of delivering free parking in town centres

Resolved

- (1) That Democratic and Elections Officers be requested to liaise with the members who had suggested them and with relevant officers, with a view to providing an update and suggested next steps for consideration at the next meeting of the Committee:
- a. Castle Quay update
 - b. County Lines drug issues
 - c. Tree Management Strategy
 - d. Social/Affordable Housing Strategy
 - e. Masterplans for Banbury, Bicester and Kidlington
 - f. Travellers
 - g. East/West Rail link
 - h. Attracting high street retailers
 - i. Provision of cycle footpaths
 - j. Canalside Strategy
 - k. Cost vs benefit of delivering free parking in town centres

The meeting ended at 9.20 pm

Chairman:

Date: