

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 26 March 2019 at 6.45 pm

Present: Councillor Neil Prestidge (Chairman)

Councillor Mark Cherry
Councillor Chris Heath
Councillor Tony Mephram
Councillor Cassi Perry
Councillor Bryn Williams
Councillor Lucinda Wing

Also Present: Councillor D M Pickford - Lead Member for Clean and Green
Carol MacKay – Oxfordshire Emergency Planning Officer

Apologies for absence: Councillor Sean Gaul
Councillor Mike Bishop
Councillor Phil Chapman
Councillor Sandra Rhodes
Councillor Les Sibley

Officers: Graeme Kane, Chief Operating Officer (Deputy CEO)
Claire Taylor, Director: Customers and Service Development
Geoff Kent, Assistant Director: Customer and Corporate Services (SNC)
Richard Webb, Assistant Director: Regulatory Services and Community Safety
Natasha Barnes, Shared Contact Centre Services Manager
Paul Almond, Street Scene & Landscape Manager
Emma Faulkner, Democratic and Elections Officer
Lesley Farrell, Democratic and Elections Officer

50 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

51 **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

52 **Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 19 February 2019 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

53 **Chairman's Announcements**

There were no Chairman's announcements.

54 **Show and Tell - Customer Services**

The Assistant Director Customers and Corporate Services gave a presentation on the improvement plan that was in progress for Customer Services. It was called the "Customer Services Marathon" to energise the team, emphasise the scale and length of the improvement and also used the 26 mile marathon distance to make a point of reference as the "Customer Services Marathon" was a 26 week journey that had started in October 2018 and was due to conclude in May 2019.

The Assistant Director Customers and Corporate Services explained that whilst the team were already showing high standards of customer service and wanted to offer the best service, they were hampered by systems used in the team and its culture. There was also a lack of praise and recognition for great customer service. The Customer Services Marathon was focussed on four themes: Customer Service Excellence; Maximise capacity; Staffing; and, Using IT.

The Assistant Director Customers and Corporate Services advised the Committee that an additional major project was the separation of South Northants and Cherwell District Council. The Customer Services team was currently fully integrated both in terms of service delivery to customers and staffing. As incremental changes were made, customers would not see any difference as existing telephone numbers, email addresses and service delivery approach would remain tailored to the two Councils as was currently the case. The priority was to ensure excellent customer service was delivered as the service is separated over the coming months.

In response to Members' comments regarding the welfare of the Customer Service staff who sometimes experienced difficult calls, the Assistant Director Customers and Corporate Services explained training had been given in resilience technics and staff were able to take time away from their desk after particularly challenging calls. Good training had made a big difference and an Employee Assistance Programme was in place, should it be required.

Resolved

- (1) That the presentation and briefing note be noted.

55 **Show and Tell - Landscape Maintenance Contract**

The Chief Operating Officer and the Street Scene and Landscape Services Manager gave a presentation of the overview of the Landscape and Arboriculture Service including the landscape maintenance contract.

The presentation covered the make-up of the Landscape Team; the landscape contract; partners in the contract; services covered; performance of the contract; and how the landscape service contributed to the Council's overall priorities.

In response to questions from the Committee, the Street Scene and Landscape Manager confirmed that a complaints process was in place and any complaints made in relation to landscape maintenance were discussed with the contractor as they had regular meetings. The Street Scene and Landscape Manager was confident in the service provided by the contractor.

Resolved

(1) That the presentation be noted.

56 **Emergency Planning**

The Assistant Director: Regulatory Services and Community Safety submitted a briefing note on Emergency Planning and Business Continuity.

The Oxfordshire Emergency Planning Officer explained that the Cherwell District Emergency Plan formed part of the Oxfordshire/Thames Valley Emergency Plan.

The Chief Operating Officer explained that Cherwell District Council (CDC) had entered into a partnership arrangement with Oxfordshire County Council (OCC). This meant that, over the coming months, the full time Emergency Planning team at OCC would assist CDC with training and development of relevant officers in relation to Emergency Planning.

The Chief Operating Officer said that the contact numbers would be updated and circulated to Members.

Resolved

(1) That the briefing note be noted.

57 **Overview and Scrutiny Committee Annual Report 2018/19**

The Committee considered the draft Overview and Scrutiny Committee Annual report for 2018/19.

The Democratic and Elections Officer explained that there were areas of the report still to be finalised, and this would be done in consultation with the Chairman prior to its submission to Council.

Resolved

- (1) That the draft Overview and Scrutiny Committee Annual report 2018/19 be noted.
- (2) That authority be delegated to the Director – Law and Governance (Interim), in consultation with the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, to finalise the areas highlighted in the report prior to its submission to Council.

58

Committee Work Programme - 2018/2019

The Democratic and Elections Officers updated the Committee on progress of topics raised at previous meetings advising that this was the last meeting of the municipal year and all topics and work programme items would be considered by the Committee at their first meeting of the 2019/20 municipal year.

Resolved

- (1) That the Committee work programme be noted.

The meeting ended at 7.50 pm

Chairman:

Date: