

Cherwell District Council

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held as a Virtual meeting, on 1 September 2020 at 6.30 pm

Present:

Councillor Lucinda Wing (Chairman)
Councillor Phil Chapman
Councillor Chris Heath
Councillor Shaida Hussain
Councillor Tony Mepham
Councillor Ian Middleton
Councillor Perran Moon
Councillor Les Sibley

Also Present:

Councillor Barry Wood, Leader of the Council
Councillor Tony Ilott, Lead Member for Financial Management and Governance

Apologies for absence:

Councillor Tom Wallis
Councillor Mike Bishop
Councillor Douglas Webb
Councillor Bryn Williams

Officers:

Yvonne Rees, Chief Executive
Steve Jordan, Corporate Director Commercial Development, Assets & Investment & (Interim) Monitoring Officer
Ansaf Azhar, Corporate Director of Public Health & Wellbeing
Rob MacDougall, Chief Fire Officer
Paul Feehily, Executive Director: Place and Growth (Interim)
Jason Russell, Director Community Operations
Belinda Green, Operations Director - CSN Resources
Richard Webb, Assistant Director: Regulatory Services and Community Safety
Robert Jolley, Assistant Director: Growth & Economy
Ed Potter, Assistant Director: Environmental Services
Sam Thomas, Sustainability Project Officer
Sandra Fisher-Martins, Climate Action Mobilisation Manager
Richard Hawtin, Team Leader Property & Contracts
Natasha Clark, Governance and Elections Manager
Emma Faulkner, Democratic and Elections Officer
Lesley Farrell, Democratic and Elections Officer

10 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

11 **Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 14 July 2020 were confirmed as a correct record, to be signed by the Chairman in due course.

12 **Chairman's Announcements**

There were no Chairman's announcements.

13 **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

14 **Covid-19 Update**

The Committee received a comprehensive presentation from the Chief Executive and Directors, detailing the Council's response to the Covid-19 pandemic across the district.

Introducing the presentation, the Leader of the Council explained to the Committee that he was very proud of the way the Council and its officers had dealt with the covid-19 situation, particularly in light of the fast-changing processes around benefits, business rate changes and housing requirements.

The presentation covered the arrangements in Oxfordshire for managing and dealing with the pandemic, the number of cases across Oxfordshire, the Local Outbreak Control Plan, Environmental Health, reducing the risk of local outbreaks, support to local businesses, supporting economic recovery and council tax support for residents. Each director explained the challenges that had arisen in light of the pandemic within their service areas, and the actions that had been taken to address them. All of the directors reported that joint working between Cherwell District and Oxfordshire County Council staff had been used in some situations, and all officers had worked very well together.

In response to questions from the Committee, Chief Fire Officer Rob MacDougall confirmed that a number of debriefs had already taken place, and agreed to circulate the debrief notes to the members of the Committee.

With regard to the communication process that would be undertaken in the event of a local lockdown due to an increase of cases, the Chief Executive and Director of Public Health advised that the local outbreak plan was publicly

available, and each business in the district had been written to with contact details that should be used in the event of queries or concerns regarding a local outbreak. It was agreed that the information be circulated to Members for information.

In concluding the presentation and discussion the Chief Executive explained that work was ongoing in relation to the pandemic and its effects on the district, and staff would continue the hard work that had been undertaken so far.

The Committee echoed the comments of the Leader of the Council regarding the response of officers to the pandemic, and requested a further update in relation to the situation after Christmas.

Resolved

- (1) That the presentation be noted

15 **Update on Climate Change**

The Committee considered a presentation from the Assistant Director Environmental Services and the Sustainability Project Officer which gave an update on work underway in relation to Climate Change.

The Assistant Director Environmental Services explained that a number of workshops had been held with Members and officers, and the information gathered had helped to inform an action framework which it was anticipated would be presented to Executive in October 2020.

Other work completed so far included the formation of a combined team with colleagues from Oxfordshire County Council, and a Climate Change Champions Group that had been set up to look at car park charging points.

The Assistant Director Environmental Services reported on the Climate Change progress made in relation to the vehicle fleet used by the Environmental Services team.

A number of smaller electric vehicles were already in use at the waste services depot, but the technology was not yet available for larger refuse collection vehicles. Cost models currently estimated that an electric refuse vehicle would cost around £400,000, compared to the current £175,000 for a diesel vehicle.

As well as the initial cost of the vehicles, charging capability and the relevant upgrading of equipment and increase in electrical capacity would need to be factored in to cost modelling.

In response to queries from the Committee regarding the car park charging points project, the Assistant Director Environmental Services clarified that overnight charging points were being considered, not so called 'destination'

charging points that were available in some town and city centre car parks across the country.

The Committee thanked the officers for the presentation, and requested a further update early in 2021.

Resolved

- (1) That the presentation be noted

16 **Work Programme 2020/2021**

Democratic and Elections Officers updated the Committee regarding the status of the topic list and indicative work programme.

With regard to the Cherwell Industrial Strategy, officers advised the Committee that the Assistant Director – Growth and Economy had committed to providing a written update to the December 2020 or January 2021 meeting. The update would cover both the Industrial Strategy and the digital connectivity, due to the two streams of work being interlinked.

In response to a query from the Chairman relating to the fur free markets, the Assistant Director Environmental Services confirmed that an additional clause would be added to stallholder agreements as they were renewed.

Resolved

- (1) That subject to additional updates relating to Covid-19 and Climate Change being scheduled for early 2021, the work programme be noted

The meeting ended at 9.05 pm

Chairman:

Date: