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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 14 July 2009 at 6.30 pm

Present: Councillor Daniel Sames (Chairman)

Councillor Lynda Thirzie Smart
Councillor Ann Bonner
Councillor Alastair Milne Home
Councillor Tony Ilott
Councillor P A O'Sullivan
Councillor Chris Smithson
Councillor Trevor Stevens
Councillor Lawrie Stratford

Substitute Members: Councillor Devena Rae (In place of Councillor Nick Cotter)

Also Present: Councillor Michael Gibbard

Apologies for absence: Councillor John Donaldson
Councillor Nick Cotter

Officers: Claire Taylor, Community Planning Manager
Grahame Helm, Head of Safer Communities & Community Development
Paul Marston-Weston, Head of Recreation & Health
Philip Rolls, Recreation & Health Improvement Manager
Linda Rand, Design & Conversation Team Leader
Jenny Barker, Major Developments Team Leader
Craig Forsyth, Communications Officer
James Doble, Democratic, Scrutiny and Elections Manager
Natasha Clark, Trainee Democratic and Scrutiny Officer

10 **Declarations of Interest**

Councillors declared interest with regard to the following agenda items:

7. RAF Bicester.

Councillor Lawrie Stratford, Personal, due to an association with the Air Training Corp, who are users of part of the land.

11 **Urgent Business**

There was no urgent business.

12 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 9 June 2009 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to the following amendment:

- 1) That Minute 7, Resident's Parking, paragraph 10, first sentence should read: "In conclusion the Committee expressed serious reservations about the criteria set by the Executive on which to proceed with residents parking due to the fact that as little as 10 per cent might have been in favour."

13 **Sustainable Communities Strategy**

At the Committee's request the Community and Corporate Planning Manager was present at the meeting to update members on the Sustainable Community Strategy, in particular the current status of the project and the next steps.

The Community and Corporate Planning Manager presented the draft of the new Cherwell Sustainable Community Strategy which would be out for formal public consultation from mid-July for 3 months.

In response to questions, the Community and Corporate Planning Manager advised the Committee that it was a statutory requirement for counties to have a sustainable community strategy and local strategic partnership. The sustainable community strategy should be a long-term plan and be closely linked to the Local Development Framework. Most districts also develop their own plans. In the case of Cherwell, the 2030 vision timeframe for the strategy had been chosen because of the need for a similar timeframe to the Local Development Framework (2026) and Oxfordshire County Council's community strategy.

The new sustainable community strategy was commissioned by the Cherwell Community Planning Partnership, Cherwell's Local Strategic Partnership. The document was based on extensive research, analysis and community engagement. The Cherwell Community Planning Partnership was the 'owner' of the strategy and Cherwell District Council was one of the key partners (along with the primary care trust, the police, the voluntary sector and the private sector). The council had taken a coordinating role in developing the new strategy and the Cherwell District Council Executive had endorsed the draft document for formal consultation. The Community and Corporate Planning Manager advised the Committee that new leadership and governance arrangements were being developed for the Partnership. The Committee requested that a role for scrutiny be included within the new Terms of Reference.

Members of the Committee commented that the draft Sustainable Community Strategy was very aspirational and queried how progress would be measured. The Community and Corporate Planning Manager advised the Committee that each priority would have its own targets, projects and milestones within a five

year delivery/action plan framework. The delivery plan would be developed in autumn 2009 based on the outcomes of the public consultation. There would be ongoing monitoring to ensure the strategy remained responsive and fulfilled the needs of the district and its residents. An annual performance review and an in-depth review after 5/6 years would also be carried out.

Members of the Committee requested a number of minor editorial changes (indicated in italics) be made to the draft strategy (all page numbers refer to the draft strategy document and not the agenda):

- Page 3, “Cherwell in 2030”, paragraph 2, final sentence to read: “...to achieve appropriate skills, qualifications and jobs *and to be able to participate in the community in Cherwell.*”
- Page 8, “Community Challenges”, paragraph 3, final sentence to read: “Addressing residents’ perception of crime *and anti-social behaviour...*”
- Page 8/9: tourism should be added throughout these sections
- Page 11, “Adapting to an ageing population”: Incorporation of reference to the pre-retirement generation and how they will adapt to older age.
- Page 14/15, “A diverse economy – the economic pledge”: Stronger emphasis on tourism highlighting the important economic impact it has on the community through the provision of employment.
- Page 19, “Did you know”, bullet 6: Provide a breakdown of the 4% who do not classify itself as white and wards with a high proportion on ethnic groups and link this to page 21, “Draft Priorities – For Consultation and Review”, bullet 7.
- Page 26, “Draft Priorities – For Consultation and Review: Bicester”, bullet 5: Make reference to the proposed North West Bicester ecotown development.
- Page 26, “Draft Priorities – For Consultation and Review: Kidlington”, bullet 2: “Continue to explore the possibility of a new *railway* station.”

The Community and Corporate Planning Manager offered to attend a meeting of the Committee in the autumn to advise members of the outcomes of the consultation and present the draft delivery plan and new Cherwell Local Strategic Partnership leadership arrangements.

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Work Programme 2009/10 - potential topics for scrutiny

The Committee considered a report of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services on possible topics for inclusion in the overview and scrutiny work programme for 2009/2010.

Preparations for an Ageing Population

The Head of Safer Communities and Community Development briefed the Committee on the review that had been commissioned by the Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Oxfordshire County Council’s Social and Community Services Scrutiny Committee in 2006 and the subsequent report which had been considered by the Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Oxfordshire County Council Cabinet in November 2008 and January 2009 respectively.

The report had concluded that the Oxfordshire Health and Wellbeing Board was the appropriate body to ensure that progress was made on issues relating to the demographic challenge in Oxfordshire.

The Committee commented that preparations for an ageing population incorporated different elements and age groups with differing needs e.g. the over 85 year olds who need support at the present time in contrast to the pre-retirement age group who would have different needs. The Committee noted that the Sustainable Community Strategy delivery plan would address these issues.

The Committee agreed to invite representatives of the Oxfordshire Health and Wellbeing Board to attend a future meeting of the Committee for a question and answer session to enable the Committee to learn more about "The Demographic Challenge in Oxfordshire"

The Committee agreed to invite Councillor Mrs Rose Stratford, as the Cherwell District Council representative on the Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny, to monitor developments relating to "The Demographic Challenge in Oxfordshire" and to brief the Committee as appropriate.

Youth Service Provision

The Head of Recreation and Health and the Recreation and Health Improvement Manager gave a presentation on integrated youth support service which is a statutory requirement of the County Council and Cherwell District Council's discretionary services in support of young people.

The Head of Recreation and Health explained that there is a statutory requirement to have one plan for all services for children and young people that supports local authorities and partners with clear targets and priorities. The Oxfordshire Children and Young People's Plan is the single, strategic overarching plan for all services for children and young people in the county and the current plan would end in 2009. A new Children and Young People's Plan was currently being developed and officers advised the Committee that it was a statutory requirement for Cherwell to feed into the plan and be a local authority partner.

The Recreation and Health Improvement Manager explained that at district level provision of services in support of young people was a discretionary service and contact with young people was generally through housing, sport and recreation. He outlined some of the initiatives undertaken by the Council and informed the Committee that the budget for services for young people was currently in the region of £130,000. Officers informed the Committee that a Value for Money review of the council's work for young people was scheduled for the first quarter of 2010. The Committee requested that the outcomes of the review be brought to a Committee meeting at an appropriate time.

The Committee noted that the Council seemed to be offering a lot of initiatives for young people within a relatively small budget. The Committee felt that engaging with young people and ensuring delivery of initiatives and services to meet their needs was important. They commented on the difficulties of

engaging with young people in rural areas. Members of the Committee felt that youth service provision was a key area for the Council and this would emerge in the Sustainable Community Strategy consultation.

The Democratic, Scrutiny and Elections Manager advised the Committee that all local authorities have a duty to engage with young people and that this had never been reviewed at Cherwell. The Committee agreed that this was an important issue that they should consider and asked the scrutiny officer to bring additional information and scoping to the September meeting.

The Democratic, Scrutiny and Elections Manager informed the Committee that Oxford City Council and Oxfordshire County Council had identified the provision of discretionary services for young people as a topic for potential joint scrutiny with the district councils. In her County Councillor role, Councillor Bonner was the Chairman of the County's Children's Services Scrutiny Committee. She advised the Committee that there had been no decision to date by the county regarding a joint review of youth services. It was anticipated that the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee would make a decision regarding joint scrutiny in September. The Committee asked Councillor Bonner to advise the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee that they would be keen to participate in joint scrutiny and to inform the Committee of the outcome.

The Committee noted that the provision of and support for youth services and the promotion of youth democracy were emerging themes from the Crime & Anti-social Behaviour Task and Finish Group. The final report of the Group was due to be presented to the Executive in autumn 2009. The Committee requested that members of the Task and Finish Group be invited to the Committee's September meeting to brief them on the conclusions of the review.

Olympics 2012: What is Cherwell doing to prepare for the games and to access the tourism potential for the district?

The Democratic, Scrutiny and Elections Manager advised the Committee that the Portfolio Holder Customer Service and ICT (with special responsibility for tourism) had commissioned a report into this issue, which would be available in the autumn. The Committee agreed to invite the Portfolio Holder Customer Service and ICT (with special responsibility for tourism) to a future meeting of the Committee to discuss the report.

Resolved

- 1) That Councillor Mrs Rose Stratford, as the Cherwell District Council representative on the Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny, be invited to monitor developments relating to "The Demographic Challenge in Oxfordshire" and to brief the Committee as appropriate
- 2) That representatives of the Oxfordshire Health and Wellbeing Board, be invited to attend a future meeting of the Committee for a question and answer session to enable the Committee to learn more about "The Demographic Challenge in Oxfordshire"

- 3) That the following topic should be added to the work programme for further research and scoping assessment and brought to the next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for consideration:
 - How Cherwell District Council engages with young people
- 4) That the outcomes of the Value for Money review of the Council's work for young people be presented to the Committee for consideration in spring 2010.
- 5) That Councillor Bonner, as the County Council's Chairman of the County's Children's Services Scrutiny Committee, be invited to advise the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee would be keen to participate in joint scrutiny of discretionary youth service provisions and to inform the Committee of the outcome.
- 6) That the Portfolio Holder Customer Service and ICT (with special responsibility for tourism) be invited to attend a future meeting to discuss the report relating to Cherwell's preparations for the 2012 Olympics 2012 and to assess the tourism potential for the district.

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RAF Bicester

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director Planning Housing and Economy on recent developments regarding the status and future of RAF Bicester and the implications for the policies of the Council.

The Portfolio Holder Planning and Housing presented the draft RAF Bicester Planning Brief incorporating Informal Development Principles and Management Guidelines which had been produced at the request of the Under Secretary of State for Defence at a meeting on 20 May 2009.

The draft Planning Brief set out the planning context, including a summary of the condition of the buildings on the site and what the Council, as the Local Planning Authority, considered appropriate for the future of the site. It had been produced in July 2009 for consultation with Stakeholders

The Portfolio Holder Planning and Housing advised the Committee that at their September meeting the Executive would be considering a report outlining the comments received on the consultation draft Planning Brief and Management Plan for RAF Bicester. The report would be seeking approval of amendments to the document made as a result and adoption of the document as Informal Development Principles to be used as a material consideration, in conjunction with other considerations, in the determination of planning applications on the site.

The Committee noted that the Domestic site would be put forward for sale before the Technical site with the sale being concluded by the end of the financial year. The Committee suggested that in light of the recent use of the domestic site for productive use with many refitted for office or laboratory use officers should investigate the potential opportunity for the Council to develop the site as a business park.

The Committee discussed the possibility of including a value for repair work in the Planning Brief. Officers advised the Committee that it had not been within the remit of the consultant structural engineer to place a value on restoring the buildings and any potential purchaser would undertake their own evaluation.

Officers informed the Committee that a visit to the site for Elected Members from the County, District, Town and Parish Councils was being arranged by Defence Estates prior to marketing of the site.

Resolved

- 1) That the update on recent actions relating to the RAF Bicester site be noted.
- 2) That the Democratic, Scrutiny and Elections Manager be delegated, in consultation with Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, to liaise with the Portfolio Holder Planning and Housing and comment on the draft RAF Bicester report to Executive.

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Work Programme 2009/10

The Committee considered a report of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services on the overview and scrutiny work programme 2009/2010.

Existing Work Programme

The Committee noted the existing work programme and noted that the Portfolio Holder Community Safety, Street Scene and Rural would be present at the Committee's meeting in October to report on progress against the scrutiny review recommendations on the district's markets, and in particular the status of Banbury market.

Monitoring of Past Scrutiny Reviews

Emergency Planning

The Committee had considered the Council's emergency planning arrangements in November 2008 and presented 6 recommendations which had been accepted by the Portfolio Holder. The Committee noted that all of the recommendations had been completed and agreed that the item should be deleted from the work programme.

Rural Affordable Housing and Exception Sites

The Democratic, Scrutiny and Elections Manager advised the Committee that the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing had presented the conclusions of the scrutiny review into rural affordable housing and exception sites at the Parish Liaison Meeting on 17 June 2009. These had generally been well received.

The Committee noted that the Executive had added three recommendations to the review and would be considering these in an update report at their August meeting, which would be circulated to the Committee.

The Committee agreed that the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing be invited to attend an Overview and Scrutiny meeting in autumn 2009 to update the Committee on further progress.

Concessionary Travel

The Democratic, Scrutiny and Elections Manager reported that the Executive had accepted the recommendations of the Task and Finish Group. The Leader had praised the Group for their work. The Committee agreed to keep the item on the work programme to review progress against the recommendations.

Residents Parking

The Democratic, Scrutiny and Elections Manager advised the Committee that the Executive had deferred consideration of this item to September 2009. The Committee agreed that they would continue to monitor the issue and agreed that it would be sensible for them to review the report before its consideration by the Executive.

Resolved

- 1) That Emergency Planning be deleted from the monitoring section of the overview and scrutiny work programme.
- 2) That the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing be invited to attend a meeting in the autumn 2009 to report on further progress on Rural Affordable Housing and Exception Sites.
- 3) That Concessionary Travel be retained in the monitoring section of the work programme to review progress against the recommendations.
- 4) That the Executive be requested to defer consideration of residents parking until their second meeting in September.
- 5) That the current overview and scrutiny work programme for 2009/2010 be agreed subject to the amendments detailed above, and as set out at appendix 1 of these minutes.



The meeting ended at 9.00 pm

Chairman:

Date:

Overview & Scrutiny Work Programme 2009/10 ~ as @ 22/07/09

Title	Committee/T&FG	Comments	Meeting				
			Sept	Oct	Nov	Jan	Later
Scheduling – to identify and agree potential topics for scrutiny							
Preparations for an ageing population	OSC	Cllr R Stratford to monitor developments Invite representatives of Oxfordshire Health & Well-Being Board to attend future meeting		?	?		
Youth Facility Provision	OSC	Work programme item for 15 September Possible joint scrutiny with other Oxfordshire authorities; to note developments.	✓				
Engaging with young people	OSC	Agenda item for 15 September Consider draft scoping document for possible review	✓				
Young People's VFM review	OSC	To consider the outcomes and conclusions of the VFM review into young people's services				✓	
Registered Social Landlords' Management Partnership and related standards	R&PSB	Work programme item for 20 October To consider as possible topic for partnership scrutiny		✓			
Scrutiny – agreed topics for consideration at committee meetings							
Sustainable Communities Strategy	OSC	Agenda item for 10 November Claire Taylor to present consultation outcomes, draft service delivery plan and leadership plans			✓		
Preparation for the 2012 Olympics tourism potential in the district	OSC	Agenda item for 13 October Invite PfH (Customer Service & ICT) to attend Head of Service has confirmed this as preferred date		✓			

Title	Committee/T&FG	Comments	Sept	Oct	Nov	Jan	Later
2010/2011 Budget	R&PSB	Agenda item for 22 September To agree approach/topic for budget scrutiny.	✓				
Partnerships: ORCC	R&PSB	Agenda item for Sept/Oct To review effectiveness of partnership with ORCC.	✓	✓			
Partnerships: Cherwell Safer Communities	R&PSB	Work programme item for 20 October To agree scoping document and project plan.		✓			
Improving Partnership Working	R&PSB	Agenda item for 22 September To consider the improvements proposals identified by the Improving Partnership Working project team.	✓				
Contracts review	R&PSB	Agenda item for 22 September To consider and agree an approach for contract scrutiny	✓				
Task & Finish Groups – agreed topics for review outside committee meetings							
Private Sector Housing Strategy	Cllr Rose Stratford (Ch) Cllr Stevens (VC) Cllr Smithson Cllr Tompson	Cllr Rae Cllr Sibley	Policy development work on the private sector housing strategy.				✓
Crime & Anti-social behaviour	Cllr Irvine Cllr Billington Cllr Tompson Cllr Smithson Cllr Sibley	Cllr Ahmed Cllr Cullip	Active – final report scheduled for Executive in autumn 2009 Chairman of T&FG to attend OSC meeting in Sept to brief on progress	✓			
Monitoring – to examine responses to scrutiny reports and to check on progress on implementation of recommendations							
Concessionary Fares	OSC	Work programme item for 5 January meeting PfH to attend and brief on progress on recommendations and developments on government consultation				✓	

Title	Committee/T&FG	Comments	Sept	Oct	Nov	Jan	Later
Affordable Housing & Rural Exception Sites	OSC	Agenda item for 10 November meeting PfH to attend and brief on progress on recommendations			✓		
Markets in Cherwell	OSC	Agenda item for 13 October meeting PfH to attend and brief on progress		✓			
Partnerships: Bicester Vision	R&PSB	Work programme item for 24 November To agree scope and project plan for review in early 2010.			✓		✓
Fees and Charges	R&PSB	Agenda item for 12 January meeting Review of progress against recommendations and in advance of next budget round				✓	
Food Waste Processing	R&PSB/PSWG	Review autumn 2010 6 months after final stage of roll-out programme.					✓
Sports Centre Modernisation	FSWG	Refurbished centres due to open summer 2009; new Spiceball due to open winter 2009. FSWG to review at July 2009 meeting.	✓				
Residents' Parking Schemes	OSC	Work programme item for 15 September To note current position	✓				
RAF Bicester	OSC	Work programme item for 15 September Chairman to brief on current position	✓				