

## **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 21 September 2010 at 6.30 pm

Present: Councillor Daniel Sames (Chairman)

Councillor Ann Bonner  
Councillor Andrew Fulljames  
Councillor Alastair Milne Home

Substitute Members: Councillor Timothy Hallchurch MBE (In place of Councillor Lawrie Stratford)

Also Present: Councillor Michael Gibbard

Apologies for absence: Councillor John Donaldson  
Councillor Chris Smithson  
Councillor Trevor Stevens  
Councillor Lawrie Stratford

Officers: Philip Clarke, Head of Planning Policy and Economic Development  
Catherine Phythian, Senior Democratic and Scrutiny Officer

#### **16 Declarations of Interest**

There were none.

#### **17 Urgent Business**

There was no urgent business.

#### **18 Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 July 2010 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

## **Built Environment Conservation Area Policy Scrutiny**

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing and the Head of Planning and Economic Development joined the Committee for the discussion on the plans and timetable for the scrutiny review into the council's policies for conservation areas.

In discussion the Committee concluded that there were two main elements to this review. Firstly, the review should help councillors understand the powers and responsibilities that conservation area designation gives to an area and the extent to which it can and may wish to use any powers available to it (including the powers of enforcement) to improve the quality of conservation areas. Secondly, it should consider the scope for the Council to develop new or amend existing policies regarding conservation areas through the Local Development Framework.

The Committee noted that it was possible that the proposed changes to the planning system by the Coalition Government would have a direct impact on the way in which the council would deal with conservation areas. The detail of these changes was still unknown but the Committee learnt that the MP for Henley was actively involved in the Government's reform of the planning system. The Committee agreed that the Chairman should liaise with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing to invite the MP for Henley to visit the council for discussions on planning policy reform.

The Committee agreed that officers should provide a briefing on this topic at the meeting on 26 October 2010. The briefing documents should cover the following topics:

- ♦ Details of the types and number of conservation areas in Cherwell
- ♦ Current national legislation as it applies to conservation areas (what it allows and what it does not allow)
- ♦ Possible changes to national legislation
- ♦ The current procedures for the designation of a conservation area and examples of existing conservation area appraisals and the guidance documents made available to residents
- ♦ An example of the current procedure for planning applications within a conservation area and the type of advice/support provided by officers to the public
- ♦ Information on the number and incremental cost of processing conservation area consent applications
- ♦ Information on the frequency of instances where the advice of the Conservation Officer is overruled by colleagues or Planning Committee
- ♦ Details of the relationships with local amenity groups (e.g. the local Civic Society) with regard to conservation areas
- ♦ Clarity on the council's legal powers with regard to enforcement and cost recovery

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing observed that the proposed timescale for this scrutiny review might prove difficult in the context of the council's current work on the 2011/12 Budget and the implications of the Comprehensive Spending Review. The Committee noted the potential resource constraints and agreed to finalise the timetable for the conduct of this scrutiny review following the meeting on 26 October 2010. The

Committee supported the Chairman's proposal to move the final report and recommendation stage of the review from January to a later meeting in the spring of 2011.

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## **Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2010/11**

The Committee considered the report on the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2010/11.

### **Forward Plan**

The Committee agreed that there were no items on the Forward Plan for September to December 2010 which they wished to include on their work programme in 2010/11.

### **Executive consideration of scrutiny reports**

The Committee noted that the Executive had accepted the scrutiny reports on Democratic engagement with young people and Crime & Anti-social behaviour at their meeting on 6 September. The Chairman reported that in his role as Young People's Champion he had been tasked to work with officers to deliver the recommendation to develop a formal policy and action plan to promote youth engagement in local democracy.

### **Civil Parking Enforcement and Banbury Resident's Parking**

The Committee noted that the Executive report on this topic was on hold. They asked that, if the issue of resident's parking was to go back to the consultation stage, the Committee should be involved in the design and development of the consultation process.

### **RAF Bicester**

The Chairman and Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing reported that they had attended the recent public exhibition at RAF Bicester regarding development options for the domestic site. The new owners had made a strong presentation and appeared to be fully committed to recognising the historic importance of the site in any development. It was expected that a planning application would be submitted by December 2010.

The Committee were disappointed to note that there had been no response to the Chief Executive's 21 July letter regarding the future of the technical site. They asked that the matter be followed up by officers.

### **Centre for Public Scrutiny Annual Conference**

The Committee noted the feedback from the Centre for Public Scrutiny Annual Conference in June 2010.

### **R&PSB Work Programme**

The Committee noted that the Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board would be reviewing member and staff training as part of their 2011/12 Budget scrutiny exercise.

### **Future Meetings**

The Committee noted that there would be a joint meeting of the two scrutiny committees on 6 October to consider the draft business case for the shared management arrangements between South Northamptonshire Council and Cherwell District Council.

The Committee agreed that the meeting on 26 October 2010 should cover a detailed briefing for the scrutiny review into Built Environment Conservation Policy and an update on Olympics 2012 and the Kidlington Pedestrianisation project.

### **Resolved**

- (1) That the current Overview and Scrutiny Committee element of the work programme for 2010/11 be agreed.
- (2) That there were no items in the current version of the Forward Plan (September - December 2010) to be included on the work programme for 2010/11.
- (3) That the Executive agreement to the recommendations in the scrutiny reports on Democratic Engagement with young people and Crime & Anti-social behaviour be noted.
- (4) That the current status of the Civil Parking Enforcement / Banbury Resident's Parking schemes be noted and that the Committee should be involved in the design and development of any further consultation stages.
- (5) That the update regarding RAF Bicester be noted.
- (6) That the feedback from the Centre for Public Scrutiny Annual Conference be noted.
- (7) That the agenda items for the 6 and 26 October 2010 meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be noted.

The meeting ended at 8.10 pm

Chairman:

Date: