

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 18 February 2014 at 6.30 pm

Present: Councillor Ann Bonner (Chairman)
Councillor Daniel Sames (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Alyas Ahmed
Councillor Melanie Magee
Councillor Alastair Milne Home
Councillor Jon O'Neill
Councillor Lynn Pratt
Councillor Nigel Randall
Councillor Lawrie Stratford
Councillor Rose Stratford
Councillor Douglas Williamson
Councillor Sean Woodcock

Also Present: Councillor D M Pickford, Lead Member for Housing

Officers: Tim Mills, Private Sector Housing Manager
Shirley Vaughan, Performance and Planning Officer
Natasha Clark, Team Leader, Democratic and Elections
Dave Parry, Democratic and Elections Officer

51 **Declarations of Interest**

Members declared interests in the following agenda items:

7. Housing Services Plan.

Councillor Nigel Randall, Non Statutory Interest, as a Custodian Trustee on behalf of CDC of the Cherwell Community Land Trust.

52 **Urgent Business**

There was no urgent business.

53 **Minutes**

The Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 14 January, 2014 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

54 **Chairman's Announcements**

There were no Chairman's announcements.

55 **Draft Quarter 3 Exceptions Report**

The Policy and Performance Officer presented the report of the Head of Transformation which set out the areas the Performance team had extracted from the Quarter 3 performance report as areas of concern and achievement, as measured through the Performance Management Framework.

In considering the report, the Committee noted the poor performance with regard to car parking revenue (performance reference CBP43.3L) and that this had largely been attributed to operating a reduced number of car park in Bicester and a greater impact from the opening of Sainsbury's that had been anticipated. Members commented that the projections may have been too ambitious and mindful of future development across the district that would reduce parking provision, requested that further information be provided to Members on projections, taking this factor into account.

With respect to the target for paying invoices within 30 days (CBP43.3h), whilst the recent slight under-performance had been expected in light of the increase in the number of purchase orders being raised and requirement for all invoices to reference a purchase order, it was anticipated performance would improve. The Committee noted that the Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee was monitoring the use of purchase orders across the authority and requested that Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be provided with further information should be provided.

The Committee noted the excellent performance with regard to the delivery of affordable homes across the district (CBP12.2), but commented with regard to the delivery of 500 new homes, (performance reference CBP12.1), whilst the Council might grant approval for the required level of development, failure to meet the target was due to developers not building properties.

The Committee requested further information be provided regarding the identification of the parties involved in the implementation of new policy for developer contributions (CBP13.3); retrospective sickness absence figures (HR001); savings accruing from printing committee papers in black and white only; and the percentage of people taking part in the Council's surveys.

Resolved

- (1) That the areas highlighted in the draft report be noted.
- (2) That further information be provided to Members regarding: Car Parking revenue – projections taking future development into account (CBP43.3L); Invoices paid within 30 days (CBP43.3h); identification of the parties involved regarding implementation of new policy for developer contributions (CBP13.3); retrospective sickness absence

figures (HR001); savings accruing from printing committee papers in black and white only; and the percentage of people taking part in the Council's surveys.

56 **Housing Services Plan**

The Chairman welcomed Councillor Pickford, Lead Member for Housing, and the Private Sector Housing Manager to the meeting.

The Lead Member for Housing presented the report of the Head of Regeneration and Housing, which provided an update on the work of Housing Services, including key challenges and achievement, and which had been given initial consideration at the informal meeting of the Committee, held the previous week.

In considering the report and having regard to the presentations made at the informal meeting, the Committee commended the work of Housing Services, and commented in particular on the excellent level of the cooperation coordination between the teams within the section.

The Committee supported the establishment of a Credit Union and appointment of a Credit Union Development Officer (shared post with South Northamptonshire Council) on a three year contract, and requested that further information be provided in this regard, and that consideration be given to the issuing of a press release.

The Committee considered a suggestion that any budget underspends at the end of the current financial year be allocated to Homelessness support. However, it was agreed that more information would be required before such a decision which, in any event, should be looked at during the next budget round.

The Chairman thanked the Lead Member for Housing for her presentation.

Resolved

- (1) That the admirable progress to date in preventing homelessness, delivering and enabling housing development, improving housing standards and commissioning housing related services be noted.
- (2) That the challenging financial context in which services are being delivered be noted.
- (3) That information be provided to the Committee in respect of those areas identified at the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 14 January, 2014 (Minute 50) not now addressed in the report.
- (4) That the provision of a Credit Union Development Officer be supported, and that further information be provided with regard to the establishment of a Credit Union, including the issuing of a press release.

- (5) That the principle of undertaking annual inspections of licensed Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO's) be supported.
- (6) That the benefits of the Build! Programme, in the context of not just housing, but training, education, health and economic activity be noted, and the continuation of the programme in the context of delivering new and improved homes be supported.

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Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Law and Governance, which presented the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2013/14.

Executive Work Programme

The Committee agreed that there were no additional items in the Executive Work Programme for March to June, 2014 that they wished to include on their Work Programme in 2013/14.

Wind Turbines and their locations – Councillor O'Neill advised that consideration of this subject was currently on hold whilst a planning appeal was in progress. Depending upon the outcome of the appeal, a review might be unnecessary, and he would report further to the April meeting.

Contract Scrutiny: Landscape Maintenance Contract – Councillor Lawrie Stratford reported that progress continued to be made with regard to the letting of the new Landscape Maintenance Contract, and he would continue to keep the Committee advised.

Items for inclusion on Work programme – The Committee agreed that the management of the self-build element of the Graven Hill development, and the possible development of a policy regarding the application of the mining technique known as 'Fracking' within the district be added to the Committee work programme as potential items for scrutiny review.

Resolved

- (1) That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2013/14 be noted.
- (2) That no items in the current version of the Executive Work Programme (March 2014 to June 2014) be included on the Work Programme for 2013/14.
- (3) That the management of the self-build element of the Graven Hill development, and the possible development of a policy regarding the application of the mining technique known as 'Fracking' within the district be added to the Committee work programme as potential items for scrutiny review.

Chairman:

Date: