

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 23 January 2018 at 6.45 pm

Present: Councillor Neil Prestidge (Chairman)
Councillor Jolanta Lis (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Claire Bell
Councillor Mike Bishop
Councillor Mark Cherry
Councillor Andrew McHugh
Councillor Jason Slaymaker

Substitute Members: Councillor Tom Wallis (In place of Councillor Sean Gaul)

Also Present: Councillor Barry Wood, Leader of the Council

Apologies for absence: Councillor David Anderson
Councillor Chris Heath
Councillor Sean Gaul
Councillor Timothy Hallchurch MBE
Councillor David Hughes

Officers: Richard Ellis, Interim Executive Director: Wellbeing
Paul Sutton, Executive Director: Finance and Governance /
Section 151 Officer
Joanne Barrett, Strategic Housing Manager
Alison Adkins, Housing Options Team Leader
Emma Faulkner, Democratic and Elections Officer

44 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

45 Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

46 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 21 November 2017 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

47 **Chairman's Announcements**

There were no Chairman's announcements.

48 **Homelessness Reduction Act 2017**

The Committee considered a report from the Director of Operational Delivery that detailed new legislation coming in to effect from April 2018 regarding Homelessness Reduction.

The Housing Manager and the Housing Team Leader explained that it was not known what the level of change in demand would be as a result of the legislation.

A project plan had been put in place for use across Cherwell District and South Northamptonshire Councils. Government funding had been provided to assist with basic IT requirements, as there would be more information reported to government than was currently. Additional expenditure required was still being looked at.

With regard to the Homelessness Review, the Housing Manager explained that it was due every 5 years, however the next review would be conducted in 12 months' time, to compare and contrast the impact of the new legislation. The results from the review would then influence the new strategy.

In response to questions from the Committee, the Housing Manager said that the team had been preparing for the new legislation for 12 months, with the relevant tools in place to handle the changes. The main unknown was the volume of cases that would be generated.

The Committee requested that an update be provided in approximately 12 months' time.

Resolved

- (1) That the work being carried out to prepare the authority to implement the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 in 2018 be noted
- (2) That the potential impacts upon service delivery and resource implications affecting the Council in future years be noted
- (3) That the intention of the Shared Housing Service to adopt a collaborative approach to implement the new obligations imposed under the Act be noted

49 **Draft Business Plan and Budget**

The Interim Director, Richard Ellis, presented the report of the Chief Executive which sought consideration of the draft Business Planning and Performance Management documentation that would support the budget for 2018/19.

The Interim Director explained that the existing Business Plan was coming into the final year of its five year period. A 'light touch' refresh had been carried out, and as many of the South Northamptonshire (SNC) and Cherwell (CDC) themes and priorities were very similar, a joint plan had been put together. It was anticipated that over the summer, the process would start on a new plan for the next five year period, and a more detailed review would take place.

The Interim Director explained that the business plan for 2018-19 had been designed to fit on one page, rather than the 20 page document produced previously. The intention behind the one page document was to engage more people in the aims and priorities of the Councils.

In response to questions from the Committee, the Interim Director explained that some of the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) had been carried over from previous years. A wholesale review of all indicators would take place as part of the review process for the next five years of the plan.

The Executive Director – Finance and Governance gave an overview of the draft budget for 2018-19 and the current position with the Medium Term Revenue Plan.

The Executive Director – Finance and Governance explained that details of the provisional settlement had been received from Government shortly before Christmas. The term of New Homes Bonus had been reduced from 6 years to 4 years as expected.

In response to questions from the Committee, the Executive Director – Finance and Governance explained that a 1% increase in Council Tax would equate to approximately £60-£65,000.

Resolved

- (1) That the documentation be noted

50 **Work Programme 2017-18**

The Committee considered the draft work programme for the remainder of the 2017-18 Municipal Year.

With regard to the mobile phone signal review, the survey monkey questionnaire had now been sent to all parish councils. It would be available for completion until 23 February, and so far 28 responses had been recorded.

All parish councils had also been asked for suggested topics for consideration by the Committee in the new municipal year. Two suggestions had been received so far, and details of all suggestions would be submitted to the March 2018 meeting of the Committee for further discussion.

Resolved

- (1) That the draft work programme be noted

The meeting ended at 9.04 pm

Chairman:

Date: