

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 6 December 2011 at 6.00 pm

Present: Councillor Lynn Pratt (Vice-Chairman, in the Chair)

Councillor Tim Emptage
Councillor Leslie F Sibley
Councillor Daniel Sames
Councillor Trevor Stevens
Councillor Lawrie Stratford

Also Present: Councillor Nicholas Mawer
Councillor Nicholas Turner, Lead Member for ICT

Apologies for absence: Councillor Kieron Mallon
Councillor Chris Heath
Councillor Rose Stratford

Officers: Martin Henry, Director of Resources / Section 151 Officer
Pat Simpson, Programme Manager
Catherine Phythian, Senior Democratic and Scrutiny Officer

34 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

35 Urgent Business

There was no urgent business.

36 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 15 November 2011 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

The Chairman clarified a clerical error in the meeting agenda which listed Councillor Turner as a member of the Committee. She confirmed that Councillor Turner was present at the meeting as a guest to discuss agenda item 6.

37 **Exclusion of Press and Public**

Resolved

That, in accordance with Section 100A(4) of Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business, on the grounds that they could involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1, Schedule 12A of that Act.

38 **A shared Information Services/Information Technology (IS/IT) service**

The Chairman welcomed the Lead Member for ICT and the Chairman of the Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board to the meeting.

The Lead Member for ICT presented the report to the Committee and highlighted the key elements of the business case. He explained that the possibility of a shared ICT service was raised by the ICT steering group and that in July 2011 an in principle agreement was reached at both SNC Cabinet and CDC Executive to fully investigate the costs, benefits, risks and opportunities afforded by the proposal. The ICT Steering Group and the Joint Arrangements Steering Group had each met on 28 November 2011 supported in principle the business case for a shared ICT service pending a high level presentation of the capital costs on 7 December. As part of the consultation process the business case had also been considered at the SNC Community and Resources Review and Development Committee on 30 November 2011. A final version of the business case would be considered at CDC Executive on 9 January 2012 and at SNC Cabinet on 16 January 2012.

The Chairman of the Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board informed the Committee that his members had looked at the budgetary implications for CDC if the shared IS/IT service was not implemented. The Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board had concluded that implementation of the shared IS/IT service should be supported as it would reduce the pressure on the Council's capital budget.

The Committee considered the financial, legal and staffing implications of the business case for both sovereign authorities. The Committee noted that the future harmonisation of specific service related software across the two councils was not included in this business case; this was an area of potential savings that would be explored as part of a future work strand.

Finally, and on a separate point, the Committee noted that video-conferencing was being trialled on a limited basis by councillors and officers at both SNC and CDC. This would become more widely available in due course but this would depend on ICT staff resources which were currently focused on higher priority projects.

In conclusion the Committee agreed that the business case should be supported and they commended the work of the officers across both authorities for their hard work in bringing the case forward.

Resolved

That the implementation of a shared IS/IT service with SNC be supported.

39 **Re-admittance of Press and Public**

Resolved

That the press and public be readmitted to the meeting.

40 **Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2011 - 12**

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Law & Governance which updated Members on the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2011/12. The Committee noted that the presentation from Bomber Command Heritage on their plans for RAF Bicester had been cancelled. Bomber Command Heritage had indicated that they would prefer to present to a wider audience of councillors from the district and town and parish councils and that they were planning such an event for early 2012.

Forward Plan

The Committee agreed that there were no items on the Forward Plan for November 2011 – February 2012 that they wished to include on their work programme in 2011/12.

Potential Work Programme Items 2011/12

Local Development Framework

The Committee noted that the Local Development Framework was likely to be discussed at Executive in April 2012. They agreed that it should be presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on 13 March 2012 for pre-decision scrutiny.

Registered Social Landlords Policy Relationship Policy

The Committee noted the report prepared by Cllr Bonner, on behalf of the working party looking at the Registered Social Landlord's Policy, which explained how initial concerns about the Council's Registered Social Landlords Policy Relationship Policy had been resolved. The report concluded that there was no requirement for further scrutiny of this topic.

Agenda for 31 January 2012

The Committee requested that the scheduled discussion on the Empty Homes Policy should be broadened to include information on the use of a loan fund to assist home-owners and potential tenants in bringing empty homes back into circulation and that the relevant lead members and officers be invited to attend the meeting.

Resolved

- (1) That there were no items in the current version of the Forward Plan (November 2011 – February 2012) to include on the work programme for 2011/12.
- (2) That the current Overview and Scrutiny element of the work programme for 2011/12 be noted and that the Local Development Framework should be added to the work programme for March 2012.
- (3) That the report on the Registered Social Landlord's Policy be noted.
- (4) That it be noted that the 31 January 2012 meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee would consider an update on the draft Empty Homes Policy and that this should include information on the use of a loan fund.

The meeting ended at 6.50 pm

Chairman:

Date: