

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 24 July 2012 at 6.30 pm

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

Councillor Colin Clarke
Councillor Tim Emptage
Councillor Melanie Magee
Councillor Alastair Milne Home
Councillor Jon O'Neill
Councillor Nigel Randall
Councillor Lawrie Stratford

Substitute Members: Councillor Lynn Pratt (In place of Councillor Chris Heath)

Also Present: Councillor Barry Wood

Apologies for absence: Councillor Chris Heath
Councillor Leslie F Sibley

Officers: Jenny Barker, Major Developments Team Leader /Eco Bicester Project Manager
Dave Parry, Interim Democratic and Elections Officer
Natasha Clark, Team Leader, Democratic and Elections

7 Declarations of Interest

Members declared interests in the following agenda items.

7. Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2012/13 (RAF Bicester)

Councillor Jon O'Neill, Personal, employee of Royal Academy of Engineering.

8 Urgent Business

There was no urgent business.

Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 19th June 2012 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Eco Bicester: A Garden City of the Future

The Chairman welcomed Councillor Barry Wood (Leader of the Council with Executive responsibility for this area) and the Eco-Bicester Project Manager to the meeting.

The Committee received a presentation from the Eco-Bicester Project Manager, on the background to the recent Executive decision to explore the possible identification of Eco-Bicester as a next generation garden city.

The Eco Towns programme was originally launched in 2007, with North West (NW) Bicester being identified as an Eco Town location in 2009. Since then work had taken place to provide highly sustainable new developments in NW Bicester, together with other developments elsewhere in the Town. However, recent Government guidance no longer referred to Eco Towns, but instead encouraged development that met the 8 Garden City principles, and a prospectus detailing how to apply these principles was due later in the year. As there were many areas where the Eco-Town standards were mirrored in the new Garden City initiative, it had been agreed to explore the opportunity of securing Government monies through identifying Eco Bicester as a next generation Garden City. The Eco Bicester Strategic Delivery Board had also considered this matter and were supportive of exploring the opportunity.

Councillor Barry Wood commented that although the new initiative could be seen as essentially a re-branding exercise and perhaps also an attempt to stimulate the provision of infrastructure projects, if it provided an opportunity to access Government funding, the Council should do all it could to secure investment in the District.

The Committee agreed the matter should be investigated further and, although it was also noted that care was needed to ensure expectations were not raised at this early stage, it was requested that a further update be provided to the Committee upon publication of the Governments Garden Cities prospectus, together with information on the rolling-out of the Eco-Bicester project.

Resolved

- (1) That the decision of the Executive to explore with the Department of Communities and Local Government the identification of Eco Bicester as a next generation Garden City be endorsed.
- (2) That the Committee receive a further report on the initiative upon publication of the Governments Garden Cities prospectus, together with information on the rolling-out of the Eco-Bicester project.

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Draft Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2011/12

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Law and Governance which presented the draft Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report, 2011/12.

Resolved

- (1) That the Overview and Scrutiny Annual report be noted.
- (2) That delegated authority be granted to the Head of Law and Governance, in consultation with the former and current Chairmen of the two Scrutiny Committees, to complete the forward and make any minor amendments to the annual report before submission to Council.

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Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2012/13

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Law and Governance which presented the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2012/13

Forward Plan

The Committee agreed that there were no items on the Forward Plan for August to November 2012 that they wished to include on their Work Programme in 2012/13.

Potential Work Programme items 2012/13

Impact of Employment Initiatives

Noting that the Council had contributed to various employment initiatives, it was agreed that the Committee should receive a briefing advising on what outcomes had been achieved as a result.

Identification of Service Priorities and Budget Resources

Consideration was given to the means by which the Committee might influence the identification of service priorities and budget resources. It was agreed that Councillor Lawrie Stratford would work with officers in preparing a scoping document.

Air Quality

It was agreed that the previously identified item regarding Air Quality be scheduled for consideration at the October meeting of the Committee.

Planning and Building Control Enforcement

It was agreed that, at the October meeting, the Committee receive a briefing on the operation of the Council's Enforcement service.

Agenda for 11 September, 2012

Banbury Brighter Futures

Noting that there would be a briefing on this item at the next meeting, the Committee agreed that the Lead Member for Housing Services (Councillor

Pickford) be invited to attend, and the briefing should include figures for the current number of NEET's (young people not in Employment, Education or Training).

RAF Bicester

It was agreed that the Committee should receive some briefing material prior to consideration of this item at the next meeting.

National Benefit Changes

It was agreed that all members of the Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board be invited to attend the next meeting for consideration of this item and that a representative from the Housing Team also be invited to attend.

Mission Statement

The Chairman asked the Committee to note and endorse the following Mission Statement for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

'In the face of budgetary pressures, the role of the Scrutiny Committees is even more important in ensuring the needs of our service users are at the forefront of policy. Instead of being in the main retrospective, we are now moving towards considering key policy proposals as part of the decision making process. Scrutiny must now have a central role in assessing whether the Authority is meeting targets set out in the Core Business Strategy and ensuring savings are delivered in the most effective way.'

Resolved

- (1) That there were no items in the current version of the Forward Plan (August to November, 2012) to include on the Work Programme for 2012/13.
- (2) That it be noted that the October meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee will now be held on Tuesday, 9 October, 2012.
- (3) That the following Mission statement for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be noted and endorsed:-

'In the face of budgetary pressures, the role of the Scrutiny Committees is even more important in ensuring the needs of our service users are at the forefront of policy. Instead of being in the main retrospective, we are now moving towards considering key policy proposals as part of the decision making process. Scrutiny must now have a central role in assessing whether the Authority is meeting targets set out in the Core Business Strategy and ensuring savings are delivered in the most effective way.'

The meeting ended at 7.55 pm

Chairman:

Date: