

Cherwell District Council

Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board

Minutes of a meeting of the Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board held at Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury, OX15 4AA, on 5 March 2013 at 6.30 pm

Present: Councillor Douglas Webb (Vice-Chairman, in the Chair)

Councillor Jon O'Neill

Councillor Nigel Randall

Councillor Lawrie Stratford

Councillor Sean Woodcock

Apologies for absence:

Councillor Nicholas Mawer

Councillor Alyas Ahmed

Councillor Maurice Billington

Councillor Patrick Cartledge

Councillor Margaret Cullip

Councillor Neil Prestidge

Councillor Douglas Williamson

Officers:

Ed Potter, Head of Environmental Services

Nicola Jackson, Corporate Finance Manager

Beth Baines, Strategic Finance Accountant

Claire Taylor, Corporate Performance Manager

Louise Tustian, Senior Performance & Improvement Officer

Natasha Clark, Team Leader, Democratic and Elections

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Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

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Urgent Business

There was no urgent business.

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Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 15 January 2013 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

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2012/13 Quarter 3 Finance Report

The Board considered a report of the Head of Finance and Procurement to which was appended the 2012/13 Quarter 3 Finance Report, considered at the 4 March 2013 Executive meeting, which summarised the Council's

Revenue, Capital, Procurement action plan and Treasury performance for the first 9 months of the financial year 2012/13 and projections for the full 2012/13 period.

The Corporate Finance Manager provided an update on the deletion of vacant posts which had been discussed at the previous meeting. The Board was advised that from a finance perspective, budget holders were challenged about vacant posts and equality and the potential impact on service provision was considered prior to deletion of a vacant post which required authorisation by a Director.

In introducing the report, the Strategic Finance Accountant reported that the variances on the revenues and capital projections were within the Council's stated tolerances. The Council had a General Fund Reserve to meet any budgetary surplus or deficit however the current position was positive with all services reporting underspends and higher than budgeted investment received.

Resolved

- (1) That the report be noted.

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Performance Management Framework Third Quarter 2012/13 Report

The Board consider a report of the Corporate Performance Manager to which was appended the Performance Management Framework Third Quarter 2012/13 report, which was considered at the 4 March 2013 Executive meeting. The report covered the Council's performance for the period 1 October to 31 December 2012 as measured through the Performance Management Framework.

In response to Members' questions regarding Banbury Brighter Futures, which had reported amber for two quarters, the Corporate Performance Manager explained that whilst the programme was on track the amber signified on-going changes with theme leads missing data from partners which affected reporting and could represent a risk in the longer term. The Director of Community and Environment was working with Oxfordshire County Council to address the issues. The Board noted that Brighter Futures was on the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) work programme and requested that a further update also be provided to Board members in due course.

In relation to planning performance, the Corporate Performance Manager confirmed that this was one of the few areas local authorities still had a statutory duty to report.

The Board noted that the performance area "Delivering 500 new homes in year" was reporting as red. Members commented that this was an ambitious target and that whilst planning permissions had been granted developers were not building properties. The Board suggested that the figures relating to the approvals granted should be included in the commentary column on the report.

In terms of processing of major applications within 13 weeks (NI 157a) which was still reporting red, the Board suggested that the performance report commentary should reflect the view that Members and officers acknowledged quality rather than quantity and ensuring the right decision was reached was more important than processing within 13 weeks.

The Board noted that the target to increase the household recycling rate to 60% was reporting as amber. The Head of Environmental Services explained that this was largely due to a change in policy from the Environment Agency whereby street sweepings could no longer be composted.

Resolved

- (1) That the Performance Management Framework Third Quarter 2012/13 report be noted.

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Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board Work Programme

The Board considered a report of the Head of Law and Governance which presented the Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board work programme 2012/13 for consideration.

Oxfordshire Waste Partnership (OWP)

The Head of Environmental Services provided an update on the Oxfordshire Waste Partnership financial arrangements advising the Board that the five districts would receive the same payments from the County Council in 2013/14 as in 2012/13 but they would subsequently be a phased reduction of 25% in 2014/15, 2015/16 and 2016/17. The new arrangements would result in less money for collection authorities and cease payments for performance.

The Board thanked the Head of Environmental Services and his team for their support and service provided to Members.

Oxfordshire Rural Community Council (ORCC)

The Board considered an update on progress against the recommendations arising from their scrutiny review of the Council's partnership with ORCC. Members noted that a new Service Level Agreement would be agreed for 2013/14 and that ORCC continued to have a community transport role, partnering Banbury CAB in the development and delivery of Cherwell's volunteer driver schemes and hosting the Oxfordshire Community Transport Advisory Group.

In considering the update, the Board commented that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee should consider the ORCC community transport role when it considers community transport as part of its work programme in due course.

Work Programme Items

Members noted the updates on Contracts Review: Spiceball Sports Centre, Tourist Information Centres, Courtyard and Banbury Museum and agreed that as they were not suitable topics for scrutiny and should therefore be deleted from the work programme. In relation the Banbury Museum, Members

requested that officers provide an update to all Members on the Banbury Museum Trust arrangements at an appropriate time

Resolved

- (1) That the Resources & Performance Scrutiny Board work programme 2012/13 be noted.
- (2) That the update on the Council's partnership with Oxfordshire Waste Partnership be noted.
- (3) That the update on the Council's Partnership with Oxfordshire Rural Community Council (ORCC) be noted.
- (4) That the updates on other work programme items be noted and that Contracts Review: Spiceball Sports Centre, Tourist Information Centres, Courtyard and Banbury Museum be deleted from the work programme.
- (5) That officers be requested to provide an update to all Members on the Banbury Museum Trust arrangements at an appropriate time.

The meeting ended at 8.30 pm

Chairman:

Date: