

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 14 January 2014 at 6.30 pm

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

Councillor Alyas Ahmed
Councillor Lynn Pratt
Councillor Lawrie Stratford
Councillor Douglas Williamson
Councillor Sean Woodcock

Also Present: Councillor Tony Ilott, Lead Member for Public Protection
Councillor Nicholas Turner, Lead Member for Performance and Customers

Apologies for absence: Councillor Melanie Magee
Councillor Alastair Milne Home
Councillor Jon O'Neill
Councillor Nigel Randall
Councillor Rose Stratford

Officers: Jackie Fitzsimons, Interim Public Protection and Environmental Health Manager
Louise Tustian, Senior Performance & Improvement Officer
Natasha Clark, Team Leader, Democratic and Elections
Sean Gregory, Environmental Protection Officer
Dave Parry, Democratic and Elections Officer

44 **Declarations of Interest**

Members declared interests in the following agenda items:

7. Air Quality.

Councillor Alyas Ahmed, Non Statutory Interest, as a taxi operator.

8. Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme.

Councillor Lynn Pratt, Non Statutory Interest, in relation to the Landscape Maintenance Contract update, as Chairman of the Environment Committee at Bicester Town Council.

Councillor Sean Woodcock, Non Statutory Interest, in relation to the Housing Service Plan update, as an employee of one of the council's registered providers.

45 **Urgent Business**

There was no urgent business.

46 **Minutes**

The Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 10 December, 2013 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

47 **Chairman's Announcements**

There were no Chairman's announcements.

48 **Five Year Business Strategy**

The Chairman welcomed Councillor Nicholas Turner, Lead Member for Customers and Performance, and the Senior Performance and Improvement Officer to the meeting.

The Lead Member for Customers and Performance presented the report of the Head of Transformation reviewing the draft five year Business Strategy and emerging priorities for the annual business plan.

The Committee welcomed the report and presentation but commented that individual service plans were the critical documents for review and, accordingly, these should be made available for Member consideration at the earliest opportunity.

The Committee considered possible additional key objectives and milestones, and potential topics for scrutiny review for inclusion on their work programme.

Additional or amended objectives were identified in respect of b4 ('Reduce our carbon footprint and protect the natural environment'); c2 ('Work with Partners to support financial inclusion and help local people into paid employment'), and c6 ('Provide support to the voluntary and community sector'). Members also agreed that some reference should be included regarding promoting tourism within the district.

a5 ('Develop the role of the Cherwell Investment Partnership, to provide a hub for inward investment') and d5 ('Commission and introduce a new asset management strategy') were identified as potential topics for scrutiny review and added to the Committee's work programme.

The Chairman thanked the Lead Member for Customers and Performance and the Senior Performance and Improvement Officer for their attendance and presentation.

Resolved

- (1) That the strategic priorities be noted.
- (2) That Executive be asked to consider the following additional objectives:
 - Regarding b4 ('Reduce our carbon footprint and protect the natural environment') – add key objective 'Work with partners to reduce carbon emissions across the district.'
 - Regarding c2 ('Work with Partners to support financial inclusion and help local people into paid employment') – amend Brighter Futures bullet point to include for spreading the lessons learnt across the district as a whole.
 - Regarding c6 ('Provide support to the voluntary and community sector') – include some reference to promoting opportunities for young people.
 - Make some reference to promoting tourism within the district.
- (3) That, with respect to key objective and milestone (a5) 'Develop the role of the Cherwell Investment Partnership, to provide a hub for inward investment', the item be placed on the Committees work programme for an officer briefing.
- (4) That, with respect to key objective and milestone (d5) 'Commission and introduce a new asset management strategy', the item be placed on the Committees work programme as a potential topic for a scrutiny review.
- (5) That details of all Service Plans, together with budget information and details of how targets were to be achieved be advised to all members as soon as possible.

Air Quality

The Chairman welcomed Councillor Tony Illott, Lead Member for Public Protection, the Interim Public Protection and Environmental Health Manager, and the Environmental Protection Officer to the meeting.

The Environmental Protection Officer presented the briefing note of the Interim Public Protection and Environmental Health Manager, which provided a general update on local air quality management and detailed the current position in respect of Hennef Way, Banbury, which was a declared Air Quality Management Area (AQMA).

The Committee raised concerns that whilst responsibility for monitoring and drawing-up an action plan lay with the Council, most potential remedial actions were the responsibility of other organisations. Particular concern was expressed regarding the apparent absence of penalties should recommended remedial actions fail to be progressed. Accordingly, Members requested

further information in respect of the Hennef Way AQMA Steering Group, and it was suggested that the issue be raised with Oxfordshire County Council and possibly brought to the attention of the appropriate Parliamentary Select Committee.

The Chairman thanked the Lead Member for Public Protection, the Interim Public Protection and Environmental Health Manager, and the Environmental Protection Officer for their presentation and attendance.

Resolved

- (1) That the Environmental Protection Officer be requested to provide Committee members with details of the Hennef Way Air Quality Management Area Steering Group, together with information on measures the Council would consider appropriate if the current additional monitoring showed action was needed.
- (2) That the Democratic and Elections Officer, in consultation with the Chairman, be requested to send letters on behalf of the Committee to Oxfordshire County Council's Banbury County Localities Committee and Bicester County Localities Committee and the Deputy Leader requesting consideration be given to the issue of air quality.
- (3) That this item be retained on the work programme.

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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 February to May, 2014 that they wished to include on their Work Programme in 2013/14.

Housing Service Plan

Members noted that arrangements were in-hand for an informal meeting of the Committee to be held on 12 February to review the Housing Service Plan, and identified a number of areas for particular consideration, including Homelessness; the empty homes policy; Affordable Housing; self-build; the Build Project; the Council's policy regarding the disposal of property by Registered Social Landlords (RSL's) in order to raise funds and build new properties; the impact of new legislation (Spare room subsidy); the Council's relationship with RSL's (how many properties did they have in the various parts of the district?); actions of private landlords and the subsequent impact on housing need.

Contract Scrutiny: Landscape Maintenance Contract

Councillor Lawrie Stratford provided an update on the work he and Councillors Woodcock and Williamson had been undertaking in relation to the landscape maintenance contract scrutiny. Options were being considered with

a view to achieving savings and allowing the Council to exercise greater control.

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 (February 2014 to May 2014) be included on the Work Programme for 2013/14.
- (3) That, with regard to the informal meeting being held on 12 February to review the Housing service plan, officers be requested to provide information on the following areas: Homelessness; the empty homes policy; Affordable Housing; self-build; the Build Project; the Council's policy regarding the disposal of property by Registered Social Landlords (RSL's) in order to raise funds and build new properties; the impact of new legislation (Spare room subsidy); the Council's relationship with RSL's (how many properties did they have in the various parts of the district?); actions of private landlords and the subsequent impact on housing need.
- (4) That the update in respect of the Landscape Maintenance contract be noted.

The meeting ended at 7.59 pm

Chairman:

Date: