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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 7 April 2009 at 6.30 pm

Present: Councillor John Donaldson (Chairman)

Councillor Daniel Sames
Councillor Ken Atack
Councillor Alastair Milne Home
Councillor Tony Ilott
Councillor Leslie F Sibley
Councillor Chris Smithson
Councillor Trevor Stevens
Councillor Lawrie Stratford

Substitute Members: Councillor Rose Stratford (In place of Councillor Nicholas Mawer)

Also Present: Councillor Colin Clarke

Apologies for absence: Councillor Rick Atkinson
Councillor Nicholas Mawer

Officers: Philip Clarke, Head of Planning & Affordable Housing
Bob Duxbury, Development Control Team Leader
Gillian Greaves, Head of Housing Services
James Doble, Democratic, Scrutiny and Elections Manager
Natasha Clark, Trainee Democratic and Scrutiny Officer
Catherine Phythian, Senior Democratic and Scrutiny Officer

47 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

48 **Urgent Business**

There was no urgent business.

49 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 March 2009 were agreed as a correct record and were signed by the Chairman.

50 **Rural Affordable Housing and Exception Sites**

The Committee considered the draft report and recommendations on Rural Affordable Housing and Exceptions Sites. They agreed that the draft report was an accurate account of their findings and conclusions. The Chairman and members of

the Committee thanked the officers for their contribution to the scrutiny review and their support in preparing the report.

Resolved

- 1) That the report and recommendations on Rural Affordable Housing and Exceptions Sites be agreed; and
- 2) That the report and recommendations on Rural Affordable Housing and Exceptions Sites be referred to the Executive.

51

Overview and Scrutiny Draft Work Programme 2009/10

The Committee considered the report on the draft overview and scrutiny work programme for 2009/10 and made a number of observations.

Bicester Vision Partnership

The Committee noted the formal responses from the Leader of the Council and the Chairman of Bicester Vision Partnership and welcomed their acceptance of the recommendation relating to improved communications. Some members expressed residual concerns about the potential conflict of interest for the Chief Executive serving as Vice-Chairman of the Bicester Vision Partnership. On balance the Committee concurred with the Leader of the Council's view the situation was manageable and that the benefits outweighed the risks.

Annual work programme canvas

The Committee endorsed the proposals for the annual work programme canvas. They also suggested that the Chairman should approach the local Chambers of Commerce in Banbury and Bicester and a similar organisation at Kidlington for their suggestions for possible work topics.

Draft work programme 2009/10

The Committee noted that this was now a combined work programme for both the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Resources & Performance Scrutiny Board. The Committee noted that the scrutiny reviews into markets and rural affordable housing and exception sites were now complete and that the reviews into Concessionary Fares and Anti-social Behaviour were due to finish in the summer.

In response to a question regarding scrutiny resources the Democratic, Elections and Scrutiny Manager advised that there was now the equivalent of 2.25 officers within the Legal and Democratic team available to support scrutiny work, although this resource varied according to the time of year.

The Committee agreed to retain the following items on the work programme for monitoring:

- Markets in Cherwell
- Bicester Vision Partnership – the Resources & Performance Scrutiny Board would be responsible for monitoring this item.
- Emergency Planning
- Fees and Charges – the Resources & Performance Scrutiny Board would be responsible for monitoring this item.
- Food waste recycling – review progress in September 2010.
- Residents parking (Bicester and Banbury) – the Portfolio Holder would be invited to brief the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at their meeting in June 2009.

The Committee agreed to delete the following items from the work programme:

- CCTV
- Disabled Facilities Grant – the Performance Scrutiny Working Group will monitor on an exception basis.
- Sports Centre Modernisation – the Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee have asked the Finance Scrutiny Working Group to review in July 2009. Committee members to receive a copy of the April progress report to the Executive.
- Woodgreen Leisure Centre - Committee members to receive a copy of the April progress report to the Executive.
- Planning Service Improvement Plan - the Performance Scrutiny Working Group will monitor on an exception basis.
- Customer Service Centre and CDC website.
- Procurement Improvement Plan – members of the Committee to receive a briefing note on the Small Business Friendly Concordat.

The Committee then considered the potential topics for scrutiny. They noted the invitation for scrutiny to participate in the preparation of the Council's private sector housing strategy and agreed that this would be a valuable opportunity for scrutiny to get involved in policy development work. They agreed to convene a formal Task and Finish Group and instructed the Democratic, Scrutiny and Elections Manager to invite nominations on a 5:1:1 non-proportional representation basis. This topic would be included on the work programme.

The Committee agreed to include the following items on the draft work programme as potential topics for scrutiny:

- Built Environment Conversation
- Registered Social Landlord Management Standards
- Transport infrastructure: Bicester area

The Committee would discuss these items in more detail at the June meeting when the results of the annual work programme canvas would be available.

Resolved

- 1) That the letters received in response to the recommendations regarding the Bicester Vision Partnership be noted;
- 2) That the proposals for the annual scrutiny work programme canvas be agreed and that the Democratic, Scrutiny and Elections Manager, be delegated in consultation with the Chairman, to initiate the work;
- 3) That the draft overview and scrutiny work programme for 2009/10, be agreed subject to the amendments detailed above, and as set out at Appendix 1 to these minutes; and
- 4) That the Private Sector Housing Strategy should be the subject of a formal Task and Finish Group review commencing in April 2009 and that the Democratic, Scrutiny and Elections Manager be delegated to invite nominations to that Task and Finish Group on a 5:1:1 non-proportional representation basis.

Verbal update from Overview and Scrutiny Members

The Chairman reminded the Committee that when the Executive Liaison Member arrangements were introduced in the autumn of 2008 it was for a six-month trial period. He informed the Committee that he would be writing to all overview and scrutiny members and to members of the Executive seeking their views on the value

Overview and Scrutiny Committee - 7 April 2009

and benefit of the arrangements. He would discuss the responses with the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive and they would bring forward proposals for the future of the scheme to the June meetings of the Executive and Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Cllr Milne Home briefed the Committee on the contents of his recent meeting with the Portfolio Holder, Planning and Housing and the Strategic Director, Planning, Housing and Economy. Amongst the topics discussed were the road junction at the Sainsburys store and the Hurrans garden centre site in Banbury.

The meeting ended at 8.00 pm

Chairman:

Date:

Overview & Scrutiny Work Programme 2009/10 - Appendix 1

Title	Committee/T&FG	Comments	Meeting				
			June	July	Sept	Oct	Later
Scheduling – to identify and agree potential topics for scrutiny							
Built Environment Conservation	OSC	Work programme item for 9 June Topic identified by Councillors. Need to develop briefing & scoping document.	✓				
RSL Management Standards	OSC (Cllr Sames / Cllr Smithson)	Work programme item for 9 June Topic identified by Councillors. Need to develop briefing & scoping document.	✓				
Transport infrastructure ~ Bicester area	OSC (Cllr Milne Home / Cllr Mawer)	Work programme item for 9 June Topic identified by Councillors. Need to develop briefing & scoping document.	✓				
Scrutiny – agreed topics for consideration at committee meetings							
Sustainable Communities Strategy	OSC	Agenda item for 14 July Claire Taylor to present		✓			
Partnerships	R&PSB	Agenda item for 23 June To agree schedule for partnership scrutiny.	✓	→			
2010/2011 Budget	R&PSB	Agenda item for 23 June To agree approach/topic for budget scrutiny.	✓	→			
Task & Finish Groups – agreed topics for review outside committee meetings							
Private Sector Housing Strategy	Cllr Smithson Cllr Rae Cllr Tompson	Policy development work on the private sector housing strategy.					✓

Title	Committee/T&FG	Comments	June	July	Sept	Oct	Later
Crime & Anti-social behaviour	Cllr Irvine Cllr Billington Cllr Tompson Cllr Sibley	Cllr Ahmed Cllr Cullip Cllr Smithson			✓		
Concessionary Fares	Cllr Atack Cllr Milne Home Cllr L Stratford	Cllr Clarke Cllr Rae Cllr Sibley	✓				
Monitoring – to examine responses to scrutiny reports and to check on progress on implementation of recommendations							
Affordable Housing & Rural Exception Sites	OSC	Report to Executive in May 2009 and outcomes to Parish Liaison in June 2009		✓			
Markets in Cherwell	OSC	Review September 2009			✓		
Bicester Vision Partnership	R&PSB	Review in July 2009 and early 2010		✓			✓
Emergency Planning	OSC	Agenda item for 9 June meeting Review item to assess progress	✓				
Fees and Charges	R&PSB	Agenda item for 23 July meeting Review of progress against recommendations and in advance of next budget round		✓			
Executive Liaison Members	OSC	Agenda item for 9 June meeting 6 month review of arrangements.	✓				
Food Waste Processing	R&PSB/PSWG	Review autumn 2010 6 months after final stage of roll-out programme.					✓
Sports Centre Modernisation	FSWG	Refurbished centres due to open summer 2009; new Spiceball due to open winter 2009. FSWG to review at July 2009 meeting.		✓			

OSC: Overview & Scrutiny Committee
T&FG: Task & Finish Group

R&PSB: Resources & Performance Board

FSWG: Finance Scrutiny Working Group
PSWG: Performance Scrutiny Working Group

Title	Committee/T&FG	Comments	June	July	Sept	Oct	Later
Residents' Parking Schemes	OSC	Agenda item for 9 June	✓				