

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 25 November 2014 at 6.30 pm

Present: Councillor Ann Bonner (Chairman)
Councillor David Hughes (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Claire Bell
Councillor Bryn Williams
Councillor Sean Woodcock

Also Present: Councillor Michael Gibbard, Lead Member for Planning
Councillor Kieron Mallon, Lead Member for Banbury Developments, Performance and Communications

Apologies for absence: Councillor Maurice Billington
Councillor Diana Edwards
Councillor Jon O'Neill
Councillor Lynn Pratt
Councillor Neil Prestidge
Councillor Dan Sames
Councillor Lawrie Stratford

Officers: Adrian Colwell, Head of Strategic Planning and the Economy
Jo Pitman, Head of Transformation
David Allen, Lead Officer, Transport Policy (South Northamptonshire Council)
Natasha Clark, Team Leader, Democratic and Elections
Dave Parry, Democratic and Elections Officer

39 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

40 Urgent Business

There was no urgent business.

41 Minutes

The Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 14 October, 2014 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

42 **Chairman's Announcements**

There were no Chairman's announcements

43 **Quarter 2 Performance Report**

The Chairman welcomed Councillor Mallon, Lead Member for Banbury Developments, Performance and Communications, Councillor Gibbard, Lead Member for Planning, and the Head of Transformation to the meeting.

The Head of Transformation submitted a report and appendix providing a summary of the Quarter 2 performance report, and detailing the areas where the performance of Council services was strong and performing well, along with areas of review, as measured through the Performance Management Framework. The report and appendix provided an opportunity to reflect upon the Council's performance and determine whether there was a need to review performance in any of the services, or to refer any specific points to the Executive for consideration at its December meeting.

The Committee welcomed the overall excellent performance, and requested it be recorded that the efforts made by the staff were appreciated. Of the small number of areas where performance was below target, the Committee noted that fly-tipping remained an area of concern. A number of suggestions were made to help address the issue and, in response, the Lead Member for Banbury Developments, Performance and Communications advised that he would speak to the Lead Member for Clean and Green as to additional measures and, in particular, whether some flexibility could be applied to the three items of bulky waste for £10 service (e.g. to increase the number of items where a resident didn't have access to a vehicle).

Noting next the performance with respect to the processing of minor planning applications, the Committee was advised by the Lead Member for Planning that this area had suffered due to resources being concentrated on major applications, appeals and the Local Plan process. The Head of Strategic Planning and the Environment added that measures were currently being taken to increase capacity to deal with both major and minor applications. However, it was important to have a balance, and take account of the anticipated drop in future major applications, and also ensure existing staff had the skills for the future.

Finally, responding to a question regarding the figures in respect of the number of people claiming Job Seekers Allowance, the Head of Strategic Planning and the Environment undertook to identify the number of people who came off the benefit because they had gone into work, rather than those who had just come off the benefit.

Resolved

- (1) That the highlighted areas in the report be noted.
- (2) That further information be provided in respect of the measures being taken to address the instances of fly-tipping.

44 **Customer Insight Report**

The Chairman welcomed Councillor Mallon, Lead Member for Banbury Developments, Performance and Communications, and the Head of Transformation to the meeting.

The Head of Transformation submitted a report providing an update on customer feedback, including complaints.

Responding to a query, the Head of Transformation undertook to investigate whether repeated complaints were received in respect of recurring problems, and also whether there were any individuals who made repeated complaints.

Resolved

- (1) That the position of customer feedback received by the Council during the first two quarters of 2014/2015 be noted.
- (2) That the Committee continue to receive Customer Insight reports at half yearly intervals.

45 **Workplace Travel Plan 2015**

The Chairman welcomed Councillor Gibbard, Lead Member for Planning, the Head of Strategic Planning and the Economy, and the Lead Officer, Transport Policy (South Northamptonshire Council) to the meeting.

The Head of Strategic Planning and the Economy submitted a report providing an update on progress in completing the joint Workplace Travel Plan 2015, supporting the move by South Northamptonshire Council to The Forum, and recommending the final draft Travel Plan for formal adoption.

Whilst broadly welcoming the report, the Committee expressed concern at the number of journeys made by staff between the two Councils offices and, noting advice from the Head of Strategic Planning and the Economy that measures were in-hand to help reduce the need for officers to travel, suggested that information be submitted to a future meeting regarding any increase in the use of conference calling. Consideration might also be given to providing incentives to those staff who travelled via car-sharing or alternative methods of transport. However, efforts should be concentrated on those alternatives that could work rather than those that were essentially non-starters.

Finally, it was noted that whilst the report related to Cherwell District Council and South Northamptonshire Council it could, in the future, be applied to a possible three Council joint arrangement as the Policy was based on best practice.

Resolved

- (1) That, subject to (3) and (4) below, the work of officers in their on-going efforts to introduce a new joint Workplace Travel Plan for South Northamptonshire Council and Cherwell District Council by January, 2015 be supported.
- (2) That the final draft Travel Plan be recommended to Executive for formal adoption.
- (3) That further information be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee regarding the number of conference calls that take place during 2015.
- (4) That comparison figures in respect of the number of staff travel journeys between Cherwell District Council and South Northamptonshire Council be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee.

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Service Plans 2015/16

The Committee gave consideration to the annual Service Plan process, and agreed that Street Cleansing and Waste Collection Service Plans should be reviewed in detail at an informal meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to be held during February 2015. It was also agreed that all Members be invited to attend.

Resolved

- (1) That a briefing for all Members in respect of the Street Cleansing and Waste Collection Service Plans be arranged for February 2015.

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Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2014/15

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Law and Governance, which presented the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2014/15.

Executive Work Programme

The Committee agreed that there were no additional items in the Executive Work Programme for December 2014 to March, 2015 that they wished to include on their Work Programme in 2014/15.

Committee Work Programme

The Committee gave consideration to its current Work Programme and either noted or agreed the following:

Dial-a-Ride Scheme: Future – It was noted that, due to the Oxfordshire County Council rescheduling consideration of the future funding of Community Transport, this item be rescheduled to the February meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and the special meeting on 11 December, 2014 cancelled.

Youth Engagement – It was noted that Councillors Bell and Williams had held a meeting with the Senior Recreation Development Manager and would be writing-up their findings and liaising with the other members of the Review Panel.

Recycling – Councillor Bell advised that she had met with the Head of Environmental Services and the Team Leader, Environmental Services, and would be sharing her findings with the other members of the Review Panel.

Air Quality – It was noted that this matter had been submitted to the Oxfordshire County Councils Localities Committees during October, 2014 and the issues raised broadly welcomed. The Committee agreed that the topic should now be deleted from the work programme.

New items for inclusion: Noting that the Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel had recently written to the Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee regarding measures taken to identify, combat and prevent cases of Female Genital Mutilation it was agreed that the Council's representative on the Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee (Councillor Rose Stratford) be asked to keep the issue under review, and advise the Overview and Scrutiny Committee if it appeared there were measures the District Council could take to assist in this area.

Joint three way Scrutiny – Following the recent Centre for Public Scrutiny Briefing for CDC, SNC and SDC Scrutiny Councillors, it was agreed that the matter be placed on the work programme for further discussion.

Resolved

- (1) That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2014/15 be noted.
- (2) That no items in the current version of the Executive Work Programme (December, 2014 to March, 2015) be included on the Work Programme 2014/15.
- (3) That the updates on the Youth Engagement and Recycling Reviews be noted.
- (4) That, as the Council's appointed representative to the Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee, Councillor Rose Stratford be requested to raise the issue of Female Genital Mutilation, and advise the Overview and Scrutiny Committee if there is any role for CDC in assisting in combating and preventing female genital mutilation.
- (5) That it be noted that the special meeting of the Committee scheduled for 11 December, 2014 has been cancelled.
- (6) That the item 'Air Quality' be deleted from the Work Programme.

The meeting ended at 8.16 pm

Chairman:

Date:

