

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 13 October 2015 at 6.30 pm

Present: Councillor Lynn Pratt (Vice-Chairman, in the Chair)

Councillor Claire Bell
Councillor Timothy Hallchurch MBE
Councillor Chris Heath
Councillor Matt Johnstone
Councillor Alastair Milne Home
Councillor James Porter
Councillor Neil Prestidge
Councillor Sandra Rhodes
Councillor Bryn Williams

Also Present: Councillor Tony Ilott, Lead Member for Public Protection, for agenda item 6

Apologies for absence: Councillor David Hughes
Councillor Lawrie Stratford

Officers: Chris Stratford, Head of Regeneration and Housing, for agenda item 7
Nicola Riley, Shared Interim Community Partnerships and Recreation Manager, for agenda item 6
Marianne North, Housing Needs Manager, for agenda item 7
Gary Owens, Strategic Housing Officer, for agenda item 7
Natasha Clark, Team Leader, Democratic and Elections
Emma Faulkner, Democratic and Elections Officer

24 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

25 **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

26 **Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 1 September 2015 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

27 **Chairman's Announcements**

There were no Chairman's announcements.

28 **Safeguarding**

The Lead Member for Public Protection and the Shared Interim Community Partnerships and Recreation Manager presented the report of the Director of Community and Environment which explained the context of Safeguarding, the wide range of elements it covered and the important role the Council had in protecting residents.

In introducing the report, the Lead Member for Public Protection explained that an internal review was about to be concluded at both South Northamptonshire Council (SNC) and Cherwell District Council (CDC), which had been commissioned to identify any areas for improvement in order to manage safeguarding responsibilities at both Councils. The suggestion of officers was that the response to the internal review report be submitted to Overview and Scrutiny, in order to ensure that the Committee had an opportunity to be more involved.

The Shared Interim Community Partnerships and Recreation Manager added that due to the nature of their work, the Housing team were a key department in terms of safeguarding, and the two teams worked together to where necessary to ensure work wasn't being duplicated.

The Committee agreed that safeguarding was an issue which needed to be taken seriously and an important issue that Overview and Scrutiny should be involved in. It was agreed that the draft action plan report, due to be drafted in response to the internal review report, should be submitted to the Committee in January 2016.

Resolved

- (1) That the report be noted
- (2) That a draft action plan report be submitted to the Committee in January 2016

29 **To review and consider any disconnect between Planning Policy and the Allocation of Rural Affordable Housing**

The Head of Regeneration and Housing submitted a report which addressed any possible disconnect between planning policy and the allocation of rural affordable housing. The issue had been referred to the Committee by the Executive when they had considered and approved the Allocations Scheme at their June 2015 meeting.

The Head of Regeneration and Housing explained that due to the length of time between housing need being identified and development being planned

and built, there was a perceived disconnect in the system, however that was something which could be improved by changes in the planning process.

The Housing Needs Manager explained that the team had been working closely with Parish Councils following a recent change to the Allocations Policy, which had introduced a 'reserve' list. The new list meant that people who were not eligible for the statutory housing list still had the ability to apply for housing in certain areas, once the statutory list had been exhausted. The first draft of the rural housing pack had just been completed, and the Housing Needs Manager circulated copies to the Committee.

Resolved

- (1) That the report be noted.
- (2) That the changes to Cherwell's Allocations Scheme adopted following the decision of Cherwell Executive on 1 June 2015 be noted.

30

Work Programme 2015/16

The Committee considered a report of the Head of Law and Governance which detailed the Overview and Scrutiny work programme for the coming year.

With regard to the trip to Westminster on 4 November, Democratic and Elections officers reminded Members that a response was needed as soon as possible in order to confirm transport arrangements.

In connection with the appointment of a member of the Committee to the Graven Hill Partnering Board, it was proposed that authority be delegated to the Head of Law and Governance to make the appointment, following consultation with the Chairman.

In response to questions raised by the Committee, officers advised that the role of the Graven Hill Partnering Board was to monitor progress against the business plan and in turn submit updates to the Executive on project progress and to escalate areas that require Council approval.

Resolved

- (1) That the work programme be noted
- (2) That items relating to the review of the local plan process and Wind turbines and their locations, and the application of the fracturing mining technique be rescheduled for February 2016
- (3) That authority be delegated to the Head of Law and Governance, following consultation with the Chairman of the Committee, to appoint a representative to the Graven Hill Partnering Board

The meeting ended at 7.35 pm

Chairman:

Date: