

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 21 February 2017 at 6.45 pm

Present: Councillor Neil Prestidge (Chairman)
Councillor Jolanta Lis (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Chris Heath
Councillor Claire Bell
Councillor Hugo Brown
Councillor Mark Cherry
Councillor Andrew McHugh
Councillor Jason Slaymaker
Councillor Bryn Williams

Also Present: Councillor Barry Wood – Leader of the Council

Apologies for absence: Councillor David Anderson
Councillor Mike Bishop
Councillor Sandra Rhodes

Officers: Scott Barnes, Director of Strategy and Commissioning
Lesley Farrell, Democratic and Elections Officer
Emma Faulkner, Democratic and Elections Officer

35 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

36 Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

37 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 10 January 2017 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

38 Chairman's Announcements

There were no Chairman's announcements.

Quarter Three Performance Update

The Committee considered a report from the Director – Strategy and Commissioning which detailed the Council’s performance during Quarter three of 2016-2017.

With regard to indicator 3.2.2a, average time taken to process new Housing Benefit claims, the Committee asked if there was a penalty clause included in the contract as the process was sub-contracted to Capita. The Director agreed to find out and circulate a response after the meeting.

In connection with indicator 3.4.1, support CPN with financial, clinical and technological changes in health and social care sector, the Committee requested further information on the support being provided.

With regard to indicators 3.5.1 a and b, number of visits/usage of District Leisure Centres and other leisure facilities, the Committee asked if it would be possible to find out information relating to the number of memberships as well as number of individual visits to the sites.

Resolved

- (1) That the exceptions highlighted and the proposed actions be noted
- (2) That no performance related matters be referred to Executive

Lead Member Attendance - Councillor Barry Wood

The Chairman welcomed Councillor Barry Wood, Leader of the Council, to the meeting, to give an overview of the role of Leader as well as a general update regarding current work.

Councillor Wood explained that the role of Leader meant that he had to monitor performance of the Council as a whole, by way of meeting performance targets and pledges and ensuring the Council had sufficient resource to do so. The day-to-day work was the responsibility of officers, with Councillor Wood relaying any overriding messages or concerns on behalf of the Members.

Policy development was another area of work that Councillor Wood was involved in, which required looking ahead and anticipating what might be needed. The Leader explained that one such example was the change in business rate levels coming into effect later this year, which could mean a new policy for small and medium businesses.

As well as day-to-day issues around performance, Councillor Wood explained that he also had overall responsibility for the personnel at the Council. There were currently a high number of agency and temporary workers in departments across the Council, but it was necessary to ensure that posts were filled and work was completed.

With regards to current work, Councillor Wood explained that the downgrading of services at the Horton Hospital and the 'One Oxfordshire' proposals from Oxfordshire County Council were the two main issues the Council were heavily involved in, and would be the focus for the immediate future.

In response to the 'One Oxfordshire' proposals, the Committee thanked Councillor Wood for his proactive response to the campaign, as residents had been asking about the Cherwell stance on the issue.

The Committee thanked Councillor Wood for the overview.

Resolved

- (1) That the overview be noted

41

Work Programme 2016/2017

The Committee considered the work programme for the remainder of the 2016-2017 year.

With regards to the Youth Engagement 2017 review, the Committee approved the draft scoping document.

In connection with the Mobile Signal review, officers updated the Committee on work being undertaken by the British Infrastructure Group (BIG) into the same subject. The 'Mobile coverage: a good call for Britain?' group had been set up in 2016, following a government decision to pursue a £5 billion investment agreement with mobile network operators in 2014.

The Committee felt that it was important for the initial research on the review to continue, in order to assist the work of the BIG. It was suggested that the second bullet in the 'purpose of review' section of the scoping document be amended to read 'To present our findings to Ofcom and Department for Culture, Media and Sport to inform their priorities on tackling identified black spots in the Cherwell area in the context of the £5bn agreement between the Government and the National Mobile Operator's to provide mobile voice coverage to 90% of the British Geographic Area'.

With regard to the Executive work programme, the Committee expressed an interest in the items relating to the Air Quality Action Plan, Car Park Service Improvements, Empty Homes Project, Sports Centres and Playing Pitch Strategy. Officers agreed to speak to relevant officers to find out more information.

Officers reported that, due to the close of nominations for the County Council elections, it would be necessary to change the date of the next meeting. The Committee agreed to change the date to Tuesday 28 March 2017, subject to there not being a clash with other meetings.

Resolved

- (1) That the draft work programme be noted
- (2) That the Youth Engagement 2017 scoping document be approved
- (3) That, subject to the second 'purpose of review' bullet being amended to read 'To present our findings to Ofcom and Department for Culture, Media and Sport to inform their priorities on tackling identified black spots in the Cherwell area in the context of the £5bn agreement between the Government and the National Mobile Operator's to provide mobile voice coverage to 90% of the British Geographic Area', the scoping document be approved
- (4) That the date of the next meeting of the Committee be changed from Tuesday 4 April to Tuesday 28 March 2017

The meeting ended at 8.30 pm

Chairman:

Date: