

Committee: Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board
Date: Tuesday 1 March 2011
Time: 6.45 pm
Venue: Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury, OX15 4AA

Membership

Councillor Nicholas Mawer (Chairman)	Councillor David Hughes (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Alyas Ahmed	Councillor Rick Atkinson
Councillor Maurice Billington	Councillor Margaret Cullip
Councillor Tim Emptage	Councillor Neil Prestidge
Councillor Carol Steward	Councillor Patricia Tompson
Councillor Douglas Webb	Councillor Martin Weir

Substitutes

Councillor Nick Cotter	Councillor Mrs Diana Edwards
Councillor Lawrie Stratford	Councillor Douglas Williamson

AGENDA

Overview and Scrutiny Members should not normally be subject to the party whip. Where a member is subject to a party whip they must declare this at the beginning of the meeting and it should be recorded in the minutes.

1. Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitute Members

2. Declarations of Interest

Members are asked to declare any interest and the nature of that interest which they may have in any of the items under consideration at this meeting.

3. **Urgent Business**

The Chairman to advise whether they have agreed to any item of urgent business being admitted to the agenda.

4. **Minutes** (Pages 1 - 6)

To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 11 January 2011.

5. **Engagement of External Consultants By Cherwell District Council**

A member of the Resources & Performance Scrutiny Board suggested the engagement of external consultants by Cherwell District Council as a potential topic for scrutiny. This is an opportunity for members of the Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board to question officers about the topic.

The Community and Corporate Planning Manager and Finance Officers will be present at the meeting.

The Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board will wish to reflect on the evidence and agree the next steps.

6. **Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2010/11** (Pages 7 - 14)

Report of Head of Legal and Democratic Services

Summary

To update the Board on the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2010/11.

Recommendations

The Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board is recommended to:

- (1) Note the current Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board element of the work programme for 2010/11 as set out at Appendix 1.
- (2) Note the agenda items for the 21 June 2011 meeting of the Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board.
- (3) Note the update on the Finance Scrutiny Working Group and Performance Scrutiny Working Group meetings.

Councillors are requested to collect any post from their pigeon hole in the Members Room at the end of the meeting.

Information about this Meeting

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence should be notified to democracy@cherwell-dc.gov.uk or (01295) 221589 prior to the start of the meeting.

Declarations of Interest

Members are asked to declare interests at item 2 on the agenda or if arriving after the start of the meeting, at the start of the relevant agenda item. The definition of personal and prejudicial interests is set out in the constitution. The Democratic Support Officer will have a copy available for inspection at all meetings.

Personal Interest: Members must declare the interest but may stay in the room, debate and vote on the issue.

Prejudicial Interest: Member must withdraw from the meeting room and should inform the Chairman accordingly.

With the exception of the some very specific circumstances, a Member with a personal interest also has a prejudicial interest if it is one which a Member of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts would reasonably regard as so significant that it is likely to prejudice the Member's judgement of the public interest.

Local Government and Finance Act 1992 – Budget Setting, Contracts & Supplementary Estimates

Members are reminded that any member who is two months in arrears with Council Tax must declare the fact and may speak but not vote on any decision which involves budget setting, extending or agreeing contracts or incurring expenditure not provided for in the agreed budget for a given year and could affect calculations on the level of Council Tax.

Evacuation Procedure

When the continuous alarm sounds you must evacuate the building by the nearest available fire exit. Members and visitors should proceed to the car park as directed by Democratic Services staff and await further instructions.

Access to Meetings

If you have any special requirements (such as a large print version of these papers or special access facilities) please contact the officer named below, giving as much notice as possible before the meeting.

Mobile Phones

Please ensure that any device is switched to silent operation or switched off.

Queries Regarding this Agenda

Please contact Natasha Clark, Legal and Democratic Services natasha.clark@cherwell-dc.gov.uk (01295) 221589

Ian Davies
Interim Chief Executive

Published on Monday 21 February 2011

Agenda Item 4

Cherwell District Council

Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board

Minutes of a meeting of the Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board held at Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury, OX15 4AA, on 11 January 2011 at 7.00 pm

Present: Councillor Nicholas Mawer (Chairman)

Councillor Alyas Ahmed
Councillor Rick Atkinson
Councillor Maurice Billington
Councillor Margaret Cullip
Councillor Tim Emptage
Councillor Carol Steward
Councillor Patricia Tompson
Councillor Douglas Webb

Also Present: Councillor Nigel Morris

Apologies for absence: Councillor David Hughes
Councillor Neil Prestidge
Councillor Martin Weir

Officers: Chris Rothwell, Head of Safer Communities, Urban & Rural Services
Karen Curtin, Head of Finance
Paul Almond, Street Scene & Landscape Manager
Natasha Clark, Senior Democratic and Scrutiny Officer

30 **Declarations of Interest**

Members declared interest in the following agenda items:

5. Contract Scrutiny ~ Landscape Maintenance.

Councillor Carol Steward, Personal, as Chairman of the Environment Committee at Bicester Town Council.

6. Update on Budget Scrutiny 2011/12.

Councillor Maurice Billington, Personal, as a member of Kidlington Village Centre Management Board.

31 **Urgent Business**

There was no urgent business.

32 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 30 November 2010 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

33 **Contract Scrutiny ~ Landscape Maintenance**

The Chairman welcomed the Portfolio Holder Safer Communities, Urban and Rural, the Head of Safer Communities, Urban and Rural Services, the Head of Finance and the Street Scene and Landscape Services Manager to the meeting. He advised the Board that this was an opportunity for Members to receive an initial briefing on the council's landscape maintenance contract.

The Portfolio Holder Safer Communities, Urban and Rural and Head of Safer Communities, Urban and Rural Services began by giving an overview of the background to the council's landscape maintenance contract. They explained that following a tender exercise in 2005 the council had entered into a six year contract with Continental Landscapes with an option to extend the contract for a further three years. The Board was advised that the contract was worth £807,044 per annum which expenditure being split between scheduled ground maintenance (£641,774) and arboricultural and landscape variation work (£166,088).

The Street Scene and Landscape Services Manager advised Members that the council has five external clients (Oxfordshire County Council, Kidlington Parish Council, Bicester Town Council, Gosford & Water Eaton Parish Council and Parkwood) which brings in an annual income of around £500k. The council has service level agreements with Bicester Town Council, Kidlington Parish Council and Gosford & Water Eaton Parish Council, an agency agreement with Oxfordshire County Council and a contract with Parkwood.

In terms of performance monitoring, the Board was advised that whilst there had been some operation issues over the last five years, Continental Landscapes had performed to a consistently high standard. As a direct reflection of the contractor's performance, Banbury, Bicester and Kidlington Councils have had success in both the Regional and National Britain in Bloom competitions.

The Street Scene and Landscape Services Manager explained that performance was reported monthly and a mechanism on the contract allowed for financial deductions to be imposed where performance has not been up to the contract standard. The Board was advised of the staff responsible for managing the Landscape Maintenance contract and the methods used to monitor performance, which included site inspections, client feedback and formal monthly contract meetings.

The Head of Safer Communities, Urban and Rural Services explained that as part of a wider value for money exercise of Safer Communities, Urban and Rural Services, and in tandem with the Comprehensive Spending Review, the landscape service had been thoroughly reviewed. A benchmarking exercise was carried out to evaluate whether the contract as still delivering value for money. The review found that the cost of the contract and the service

provided was very competitive compared to neighbouring authorities and whilst rates were already relatively low, it identified opportunities for cost reduction. The Board was advised that £61k of savings had been identified for the 2011/12 budget. In addition, the value for money review had recommended that provision in the contract to extend for a further 3 years be pursued. The Executive considered the value for money review in December 2010 and endorsed the recommendation to pursue the option to extend the contract. The Board was advised of the approach that would be taken in light of the Executive's recommendation to explore the option to extend the contract.

In response to Members' questions, the Street Scene and Landscape Services Manager explained that the performance monitoring did not include specified timeframes for issues to be corrected, rather this was determined on a case-by-case basis.

The Board commended the improvement in the district that had been delivered by Continental Landscape and agreed that moving forward the key objectives were to ensure value for money and good service.

The Board agreed to nominate Cllrs Emptage and Steward to work with officers during the contract review process and requested officers to bring an update to the Board's July meeting on the contract review process and any impact of the service reduction.

Resolved

- (1) That Cllrs Emptage and Steward be nominated to work with Officers during the contract review process.
- (2) That Officers be requested to bring an update on the contract review process and performance in light of the reduction in service.

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Update on Budget Scrutiny 2011/12

The Portfolio Holder Safer Communities, Urban and Rural, the Head of Finance and the Head of Safer Communities, Urban and Rural Services were present to update Members on the status of the 2011/2012 budget process. They paid particular regard to the outcome of the Executive's consideration of the recommendations (attached at appendix 1 to these minutes) submitted by the Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board in November 2010 following their budget scrutiny work in the autumn.

The Head of Finance reported that on 6 December 2010 the Executive had agreed the first draft of the 2011/2012 budget which included the Board's recommendations. The Board was advised that the following areas had subsequently been called in:

- Proposal to increase car parking fees
- Extension of car parking charging hours
- Introduction of parking fees for blue badge charges
- Begin negotiations with regards to Watts Way, Kidlington

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee had considered the call-in on 5 January 2011 and resolved to refer the decisions back to the Executive to reconsider. The Committee had also made five further recommendations for the Executive to consider.

The Executive had considered the referral on 10 January 2011 and resolved to:

1. *Reaffirm the decisions of the Executive on 6 December 2010 in connection with the implementation of car parking proposals, in order to get a balanced budget, and for these to be introduced on or as soon after 4 April 2011 as is practicable.*
2. *Reaffirm the decision of the Executive on 6 December 2010 to begin negotiations with Eames with regard to the covenant for Watt's Way car park, Kidlington.*
3. *Request the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to take forward in its work programme in 2011/12 further investigation of the following strategic parking issues:*
 - *The balance and location of long stay/short stay parking in Banbury, Bicester and Kidlington*
 - *The wider economic impact of Parking Policy on the Districts urban centres*
 - *The cost benefit of alternative management arrangements for car parks, including 'Pay on Exit'.*
4. *Report back to the Executive at the end of 2011 the outcome of its findings from 3 above and any recommendations for change.*

The Board agreed that they would monitor progress on the negotiations with regards to the Watts Way car park in Kidlington and should a business case be developed, it would be submitted to the Board for consideration.

The Head of Finance advised Members that the savings and income generated by the Board's recommendations equated to between £850 and £900k which would be built into the budget and help achieve a balanced budget.

The Board noted that the Executive had considered the second draft of the budget on 10 January 2011 and would consider the third draft in February 2011. The final version of the budget and the final Corporate Plan targets and promises would be presented to Council on 21 February 2011.

In response to Members' questions, the Head of Finance advised the Board that recent legislative proposals had indicated that local authorities would be able to set their own planning fees. The Board agreed that the Finance Scrutiny Working Group should consider planning application charges at its February meeting.

The Board was advised that the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) forecast would be included in the budget book being submitted to Council for consideration on 21 February 2011. The Head of Finance reported that it would be necessary to revisit the MTFS in light of the reduced grant the

council would be receiving from central government. She agreed that she would bring some recommendations on areas the Finance Scrutiny Working Group could choose to monitor in advance of the budget scrutiny 2012/13 process.

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Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2010/11

The Board considered a report of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services which updated Members on the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2010/11.

Partnership Scrutiny – Cherwell Safer Communities Partnership (CSCP)

The Chairman introduced the draft report on the Board's question and answer session with representatives of the Cherwell Safer Communities Partnership. In light of the session Members had commended the work of the partnership for its work on addressing crime and community safety matters in the district. The Board endorsed the report and agreed that it should be submitted to the Portfolio Holder Safer Communities, Urban and Rural. Members also confirmed that the representatives should be invited to a future Board meeting to update Members on the Partnership following the end of the Government's consultation on policing reform and once the budget positions of the partners were clearer.

Disabled Facilities Grants Policy

Councillors Billington, Cullip and Steward, who had worked with officers during the development of the Disabled Facilities Grants Policy, reported that the Policy had been approved by the Executive in December 2010 who had also endorsed the proposal that Registered Providers should be asked to sign-up to a protocol committing themselves to the principles in the Policy and to making a specified financial contribution towards the cost of adaptations for their tenants.

The Board agreed that they should retain the issue on the work programme to monitor the implementation of the policy and to consider any wider issues related to Disabled Facilities Grants that may emerge. Members agreed to invite officers to a summer meeting of the Board to provide this update.

Bodicote Old House Tender Process

Councillors Emptage and Steward reported on their involvement during the Bodicote Old House tender process. Whilst the initial stages of the process had been completed prior to their involvement, they explained that they joined three meetings during the process which included reviewing the shortlisted bids, a clarification meeting with bidders and award of the tender. Cllrs Emptage and Steward commended the officers for the work undertaken during the process that, in their opinion, followed a good purchasing process and consequently gave them confidence in the final decision regarding the award of tender.

Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme

The Board considered the Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board elements of the work programme. Members noted that Cllr Atkinson had suggested the cost and use of external consultants by Cherwell District

Council as a potential topic for scrutiny and agreed that he be requested to bring a scoping document to the Board's June meeting.

Resolved

- (1) That the Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board element of the work programme for 2010/11 be agreed.
- (2) That the report on the partnership scrutiny of the Cherwell Safer Communities Partnership for submission to the Portfolio Holder Community Safety, Street Scene and Rural be agreed.
- (3) That the update on the Disabled Facilities Grants Policy be noted and that officers be requested to provide a further update to a summer meeting of the Board.
- (4) That the update on the Bodicote Old House tender process be noted.

The meeting ended at 9.10 pm

Chairman:

Date:

Resources & Performance Scrutiny Board

Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2010/11

1 March 2011

Report of Head of Legal and Democratic Services

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To update the Board on the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2010/11.

This report is public

Recommendations

The Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board is recommended to:

- (1) Note the current Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board element of the work programme for 2010/11 as set out at Appendix 1.
- (2) Note the agenda items for the 21 June 2011 meeting of the Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board.
- (3) Note the update on the Finance Scrutiny Working Group and Performance Scrutiny Working Group meetings.

Details

1 Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2010/11

- 1.1 Appendix 1 sets out the existing work programme for both the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board.

2 Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board Meeting of 21 June 2011

Partnership Scrutiny: Oxfordshire Rural Community Council (ORCC)

- 2.1 In 2009/10 the Board scrutinised the Council's partnership with Oxfordshire Rural Community Council. All of the Board's recommendations were accepted by the Executive in April 2010. A report updating Members on progress against the recommendations was submitted to the Board's September 2010 meeting. A further update will be submitted to the Board's June 2011 meeting.

Partnership Scrutiny: Cherwell Safer Communities Council (CSCP)

- 2.2 In September 2010 the Board met with representatives of the Cherwell Safer Communities Partnership (CSCP) and received a briefing on the CSCP, including CDC's role in the partnership.
- 2.3 The Board was satisfied with the evidence and submitted a report to the Portfolio Holder Safer Communities, Urban and Rural commending the Cherwell Safer Communities Partnership for its work on addressing crime and community safety matters in the district.
- 2.4 The Board requested that CSCP representatives provide an update on the Partnership following the end of the Government's consultation on policing reform and once budget positions of the partners are clearer. It is proposed that this update be added to the agenda for the Board's meeting in June.

3 Finance Scrutiny Working Group and Performance Scrutiny Working Group ~ Update

Performance Scrutiny Working Group

- 3.1 The Performance Scrutiny Working Group met on 9 February to consider the Performance Management Framework 2010/11 Quarter 2 and 3 reports and an update on the implementation of food waste processing in the district.
- 3.2 Members of the Group will advise the Board of any issues that arose from the meeting that the Board should consider.

Finance Scrutiny Working Group

- 3.3 The Finance Scrutiny Working Group met on 28 February to consider the latest financial indicators, the 2010/10 projected revenue and Capital outturn at 31 December 2010 and the planning fees and charges project brief.
- 3.4 Members of the Group will advise the Board of any issues that arose from the meeting that the Board should consider.

4 Future Meetings Schedule

- 4.1 In light of the shared management arrangements with South Northamptonshire, the meeting schedule for 2011/12 is only confirmed to December 2011. A revised schedule will be submitted to the Executive in due course.

Resources & Performance Scrutiny Board	21 June 2011, 7.00pm 26 July 2011, 7.00pm 6 September 2011, 7.00pm 11 October 2011, 7.00pm 22 November 2011, 7.00pm
Finance Scrutiny Working Group	12 July 2011, 6.30pm 27 September 2011, 6.30pm 29 November 2011, 6.30pm
Performance Scrutiny Working Group	28 June 2011, 6.30pm 20 September 2011, 6.30pm 13 December 2011, 6.30pm
Overview and Scrutiny Committee	8 March 2011, 6.30pm 12 April 2011, 6.30pm 14 June 2011, 6.30pm 19 July 2011, 6.30pm 13 September 2011, 6.30pm 18 October 2011, 6.30pm 15 November 2011, 6.30pm 6 December 2011, 6.30pm

Implications

- Financial:** There are no financial implications arising directly from this report. The report of the individual scrutiny reviews will address any specific financial issues.
Comments checked by Denise Westlake, Service Accountant, 01295 221982
- Legal:** There are no legal implications arising directly from this report. The report of the individual scrutiny reviews will address any specific financial issues.
Comments checked by Paul Manning, Solicitor, 01295 221691
- Risk Management:** If too many items are included on the work programme there is a risk that scrutiny agendas become overloaded. This undermines effective scrutiny because Members are unable to concentrate on the key issues and officer resources are over-

stretched. It may be necessary to hold further meetings during the year if the risk of not achieving the work programme becomes apparent. The report of the individual scrutiny reviews will address any specific risk issues.

Comments checked by Rosemary Watts, Risk Management & Insurance Officer 01295 221566

Wards Affected

Each scrutiny review will identify the wards affected

Corporate Plan Themes

Each scrutiny review will identify the relevant corporate plan themes

Document Information

Appendix No	Title
Appendix 1	Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2010/11
Background Papers	
None	
Report Author	Natasha Clark, Senior Democratic and Scrutiny Officer
Contact Information	01295 221589 natasha.clark@cherwell-dc.gov.uk

Overview & Scrutiny Work Programme 2010/11

Title	Committee	Comments	Meeting			
			Mar	Apr	June	Later
Scheduling – to identify and agree potential topics for scrutiny						
The cost and use of external consultants by Cherwell District Council	R&PSB	A member of the Board suggested this as a potential work topic item. The Board agreed that this could be interesting and will consider whether there are any issues for scrutiny to address.	✓			
Scrutiny – agreed topics for consideration at committee meetings						
Strategic Parking Issues	OSC	Initial briefing meeting to brief on issues and to scope/define the approach to the review			✓	→
Secondary School Education Attainment Levels	OSC	Select committee style Q&A session to consider whether there are any issues for review by CDC in 2010/11.			✓	
Youth Services	OSC	Review of OCC and CDC Youth Services.	✓			
Built Environment Conservation Area Policy	OSC	To note Executive response to review recommendations	✓			
Partnerships: Cherwell Safer Communities	R&PSB	To receive an update on the Partnership following the end of the Government's consultation on policing reform and once budget positions of the partners are clearer			✓	
Contracts review – Landscape Maintenance	R&PSB	2 Members nominated to work with officers regarding the Landscape Maintenance	✓	→	→	→
Concessions Policy	R&PSB	An outcome of the 2011/12 budget scrutiny was the recommendation that a Concessions Policy be developed. 3 Members have been nominated to work with officers to develop the policy.	→	→	→	✓
Planning Fees and Charges	FSWG	To consider changes to charges for planning applications in line with government guidance and CDC policy	✓			

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	Comments	Mar	Apr	June	Later
Task & Finish Groups – agreed topics for review outside committee meetings						
None						
Monitoring – to examine responses to scrutiny reports and to check on progress on implementation of recommendations						
Kidlington Pedestrianisation	OSC	Monitor progress of capital bid				✓
Houses In Multiple Occupancy and Planning Policy	OSC	Monitor legislative position and progress of recommendations to Portfolio Holder and LDF Advisory Panel				✓
Democratic Engagement with young people	OSC	Review progress against recommendations	✓			
Crime & Anti-social behaviour	OSC	Review progress against recommendations	✓			
Partnerships: ORCC	R&PSB	Progress against recommendations accepted by Executive in April reviewed in September. In light of budget position, to review again in spring 2011			✓	
Private Sector Housing Strategy	OSC	Review progress against action plan in spring 2011	✓			
Preparation for 2012 Olympics	OSC	PfH and Strategic Director to provide briefing notes on progress.				
The cost and length of planning appeals	PSWG	The PSWG considered the draft development control VfM report at the July meeting and agreed to monitor performance.	✓			
RAF Bicester	OSC	PfH and Strategic Director to provide briefing notes on progress.				
Residents' Parking Schemes	OSC	PfH and Strategic Director to provide briefing notes on progress.				

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	Comments	Mar	Apr	June	Later
Partnerships: Bicester Vision	R&PSB	Retain on work programme for 2010/11				✓
Past year Budget Scrutiny Recommendations Monitoring	R&PSB	Retain on work programme for 2010/11.				✓
Disabled Facilities Grants	R&PSB	Progress against implementation of policy and any wider implications in light of budget position				✓
Food Waste Processing	PSWG	Review spring 2011	✓			

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