

STRATEGY & PARTNERSHIPS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the meeting held on Thursday, 27 May 2010 commencing at 10.00 am and finishing at 1.30 pm

Present:

Voting Members: Councillor Melinda Tilley – in the Chair

Councillor Norman Bolster
Councillor Liz Brighthouse OBE
Councillor Nick Carter
Councillor Jean Fooks
Councillor Peter Jones
Councillor A.M. Lovatt
Councillor Peter Skolar
Councillor Melinda Tilley (Deputy Chairman)
Councillor David Wilmshurst

Other Members in Attendance: Councillor Keith R. Mitchell CBE (for Agenda Item 9)
Councillor Jim Couchman (for Agenda Item 12)

Officers:

Whole of meeting G. K. Malcolm (Corporate Core)

Part of meeting

Agenda Item	Officer Attending
7,8,9	S. Capaldi (Corporate Core)
8,13	P. James (Corporate Core)
10	A. Bailey (Corporate Core)
11	J. Clark (Corporate Core)
12	A. Ulusoy-Shipstone & L. Baxter (Corporate Core)

The Scrutiny Committee considered the matters, reports and recommendations contained or referred to in the agenda for the and agreed as set out below. Copies of the agenda and reports are attached to the signed Minutes.

13 ELECTION OF THE CHAIRMAN FOR THE 2010/11 COUNCIL YEAR (Agenda No. 1)

RESOLVED: (on a motion by Councillor Skolar, seconded by Councillor Brighthouse and carried nem. con.) that Councillor Melinda Tilley be elected Chairman for the 2010/11 Council Year.

14 ELECTION OF THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN FOR THE 2010/11 COUNCIL YEAR

(Agenda No. 2)

RESOLVED: (on a motion by Councillor Skolar, seconded by Councillor Bolster and carried nem. con.) that Councillor Nick Carter be elected Deputy Chairman for the 2010/11 Council Year.

15 MINUTES

(Agenda No. 5)

The Minutes of the meeting held on 4 March 2010 (SYP5) were approved and signed.

Minute 8/10 Financial Monitoring Review

point one-Councillor Carter asked what progress had been made. Officers undertook to respond following the conclusion of the meeting.

point 7-the Chairman would consider as part of agenda planning inviting the Head of ICT to the July 2010 meeting.

Minute 10/10 Partnerships

Officers reported that the Annual Report was not yet available.

Ms Bailey undertook to circulate to Committee members the dates of Partnership meetings.

16 DIRECTOR'S UPDATE

(Agenda No. 7)

Mr. Capaldi, Assistant Chief Executive (Strategy) gave an oral update which included the following key issues:

- work on the Council's ICT Corporate Strategy;
- Customer Service Centre development;
- Partnership Review - outcomes would be brought to the Public Service Board and to this Committee;
- Legal Services – the impact of the growth of safeguarding work in Children's Services.

The Committee **AGREED** to note the report.

17 CLOSER TO COMMUNITIES STRATEGY / LOCALITY WORKING

(Agenda No. 8)

Mr. James, Head of Partnership Working introduced the report (SYP8) which summarised the aims of the first area 'summit' at Didcot on 26 March 2010 and feedback from the event. It also set out the proposed timetable for future events. He then responded, with Mr. Capaldi to members' questions and comments on the main points emerging from the Didcot event and shaping the programme of future events.

The importance of early planning of each event and the role of local member/s was recognised.

The Committee **AGREED** to note the briefing and thanked Mr. James and colleagues for their work.

18 SUMMARY OF RECENT ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE COALITION GOVERNMENT

(Agenda No. 9)

Mr. Capaldi, Assistant Chief Executive (Strategy) introduced the report (SYP9). He informed members that much of the information had been overtaken by events including the Government's proposed legislative programme.

Councillor Mitchell, Leader of the Council then gave an oral update on key developments at the national level including the Government's intention to abolish Regional Spatial Strategies, to revoke the South East Plan and to devolve power and greater financial autonomy to local government and community groups. It was too soon to identify the detailed implications of these and other proposals for Oxfordshire. He was keeping in touch with Government Ministers with regard to the Council's role in leading the South East out of recession.

The Committee **AGREED** to note the position and thanked Councillor Mitchell for his update.

19 SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT

(Agenda No. 10)

Ms. Bailey, Corporate Performance & Review Manager introduced the draft Scrutiny Annual Report 2009-2010 (SYP10). She confirmed that the draft was 'work in progress', that the 'Foreword' by the Leader of the Council and Chief Executive would be included and that the 'Introduction' by Councillor Skolar had been received.

The Committee then considered the draft Report. Key comments arising during debate included:

- support for the use of plain English;
- deletion of the type box at the foot of page 7;
- consistency in providing the sources of quotations; and
- updating the data where necessary.

20 COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

(Agenda No. 11)

Mr. Clark, Head of Communications, Marketing & Public Affairs informed members that the Communications Strategy had not been published yet. It would be brought to the Committee's next meeting; Members asked to receive it as early as possible.

In response to questions and comments about the Internal Communications team, he confirmed that the process for the appointment of a Communications Planning Officer was under way. The Team currently consisted of three permanent and two temporary staff.

The Committee **AGREED** to note the position and thanked Mr. Clark for his report.

21 CAPITAL UPDATE

(Agenda No. 12)

The Committee considered a report (SYP12) which informed members about the agreed Capital Programme 2010/11 to 2014/15.

Ms Ulusoy-Shipstone, Capital Programme Manager introduced the report and gave a presentation on the Programme. She drew members' attention in particular to paragraphs 6 and 7 which outlined new additions and amendments to the proposed programme and gave details of deleted / reduced allocations.

Councillor Jim Couchman, Cabinet Member for Finance & Procurement commented that it was likely that the Council's capital budget would need to be re-examined in the light of Government proposals. Members sought information about the position of, for example, a contractually committed Sure Start scheme. The detailed position was not known at the moment. Members asked Councillor Couchman to support where possible the inclusion of such a scheme in the Capital Programme.

The Committee **AGREED** to note the report and presentation and thanked Ms Ulusoy-Shipstone and Councillor Couchman.

22 PARTNERSHIPS

(Agenda No. 13)

Mr James, Head of Partnership Working updated the Committee on the review which was under way of the effectiveness of the new partnership governance arrangements put in place last year. Work was ongoing to rationalise terms of reference, membership and accountability of the joint working arrangements. There could also be possible issues for partnership working arising from the Government's intentions regarding for example economic development, planning, housing and education.

The Committee **AGREED**:

- (a) to support an element of co-ordination in relation to member visits to partnership body meetings; and
- (b) that the scrutiny role should focus on outcomes.

(See also Forward Plan – Future Business - below).

23 FORWARD PLAN

(Agenda No. 14)

Forward Plan

No items from the current Forward Plan were identified for scrutiny.

Future Business

Scrutiny of Partnership Arrangements:

The Chairman undertook to consider as part of the agenda setting process the Committee's scrutiny of partnerships including timing, priorities, focus and process.

Members considered that an informal member briefing and suggested questioning areas would be helpful prior to the relevant scrutiny meeting.

..... in the Chair

Date of signing