

OXFORDSHIRE PLACE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the meeting held on Wednesday, 15 June 2022 commencing at 10.00 am and finishing at 12.45 pm

Present:

Councillor Kieron Mallon – in the Chair

Councillors:

Charlie Hicks
Sally Povolotsky
Judy Roberts

Arash Fatemian
Alison Rooke
Susanna Pressel

Neil Fawcett
Ted Fenton

The Council considered the matters, reports and recommendations contained or referred to in the agenda for the meeting and decided as set out below. Except insofar as otherwise specified, the reasons for the decisions are contained in the agenda and reports, copies of which are attached to the signed Minutes.

1/22 ELECTION OF CHAIR FOR THE 2022-23 COUNCIL YEAR

(Agenda Item 1)

The Head of Governance (Committee Services) invited the Committee to elect the Chair and the Deputy Chair for the 2022/23 Council Year.

On a motion from Cllr Arash Fatemian, seconded by Cllr Ted Fenton it was unanimously AGREED that Cllr Kieron Mallon be elected as the Chair for 2022/23 Council Year.

2/22 ELECTION OF DEPUTY CHAIR FOR THE 2022/23 COUNCIL YEAR

(Agenda Item 2)

On a motion from Cllr Sally Povolotsky, seconded by Cllr Alison Rooke it was unanimously AGREED that Cllr Charlie Hicks be elected as the Deputy Chair for 2022/23 Council Year.

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and invited present Councillors and officers to introduce themselves.

3/22 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TEMPORARY APPOINTMENTS

(Agenda Item 3)

The following Committee Members had sent their apologies:

Cllr Dan Levy – substituted by Cllr Alison Rooke
Cllr Jane Murphy – substituted by Cllr Arash Fatemian
Cllr Brad Baines – substituted by Cllr Susanna Pressel

Cllr Yvonne Constance – substituted by Cllr Ted Fenton
Cllr Richard Webber – substituted by Cllr Neil Fawcett

4/22 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS - SEE GUIDANCE NOTE ON THE BACK PAGE

(Agenda Item 4)

There were none.

5/22 MINUTES

(Agenda Item 5)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 6th April 2022 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

In relation to minute 10/22, second recommendation - Members of the Committee requested from the relevant Scrutiny Officer to provide a list of questions asked to, and answers received from the Commissioner and Chief Constable.

Ben Awkal, Interim Scrutiny Officer informed the Committee that a letter to the Police and Crime Commissioner, with issues raised at the last Committee meeting, had been drafted and was ready to be mailed.

6/22 PETITIONS AND PUBLIC ADDRESS

(Agenda Item 6)

There were none.

7/22 DEVELOPING THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY FUNCTION

(Agenda Item 7)

The Chair informed the meeting that there was no report on this matter as Scrutiny Team had been drafting a number of protocols to formalise expectations of different stakeholders in relation to key elements of Scrutiny such as the Scrutiny/Executive relationship, the establishment and practices of working groups, and the call-in procedure.

Ben Awkal added that protocols would be shared with Scrutiny Members before being submitted to Full Council for approval.

It was RESOLVED that Members of the Committee would receive draft protocols from Scrutiny Officer for their comment.

8/22 ACTION AND RECOMMENDATION TRACKER

(Agenda Item 8)

The Chair invited Ben Awkal to take the meeting through Action and Recommendation Tracker purpose.

Ben Awkal explained that the Action and Recommendation Tracker would enable the Committee to monitor progress against agreed actions and recommendations. The Tracker would be updated with the actions and recommendations agreed at each meeting and monitor its implementation.

Members of the Committee suggested a creation of a diagram outlining the process of submitting Scrutiny recommendations to the Cabinet, and what would happen with the Cabinet response back to the Scrutiny.

It was RESOLVED to note the Action and Recommendation Tracker as a monitor of formally agreed actions and recommendation by the Committee.

9/22 DRAFT WORK PROGRAMME AND CABINET FORWARD PLAN

(Agenda Item 9)

The Chair introduced the agenda item by saying that this was quite challenging draft work programme developed by officers. The Chair may wish to convene a meeting with relevant Cabinet Members, the Committee and senior officers to develop it further.

The following points were raised during the debate:

- Members of the Committee agreed with the high workload set in the draft work programme and suggested that planned and disciplined approach would be key for the work planning process.
- Some Members of the Committee felt that Flooding in Oxfordshire, Waste Disposable Strategy and LTCP 5 should be going through Committee working groups in advance of the next meeting of the Committee (November 2022) and in alignment with the Cabinet Forward Plan items.

It was RESOLVED to:

- 1. Note the Committee's draft work programme for the municipal year 2022/23;**
- 2. Note that the work programme is a document that is subject to change and Members can add, subtract and defer items as necessary;**
- 3. Agree to undertake further engagement with portfolio holders and senior officers to continue to develop the draft work programme ahead of the next meeting of the Committee; and**
- 4. Agree to consider the work programme at each meeting of the Committee over the course of the municipal year alongside the Council's Forward Plan.**

10/22 OXFORDSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE COMMUNITY RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN

(Agenda Item 10)

The Chair informed the Committee that Rob McDougal (Chief Fire Officer) had been invited to this meeting to answer any questions from Members. Rob McDougal did not come to this meeting so any questions from the Committee would be forwarded for written response.

Members of the Committee expressed their disappointment that neither the relevant Cabinet Member nor Chief Fire Officer were present at this meeting to answer questions and participate in the debate.

The following points were raised during the debate:

- The Committee asked if the Unions had been communicated, and what was their response, on the retention and recruitment of On Call duty system (page 61 of the report – Our Response, first para).
- The Committee welcomed that the resources would be diverted towards delivering prevention services.
- The Committee, taking into consideration 5 years since the Grenfell Tower fire, asked what the situation regarding planning high rise buildings in Oxfordshire was.
- The Committee also asked what funding had been allocated towards climate emergency action.

It was RESOLVED to accept the CRMP 2022-26 for public release and to send Committee questions to Chief Fire Officer for written answers.

11/22 REPORT OF THE CARBON REDUCTION TARGETS WORKING GROUP

(Agenda Item 11)

The Chair welcomed Cllr Pete Sudbury (Cabinet Member for Climate Change Delivery and Environment) and Sarah Gilbert (Climate Action Team Leader) for this part of the meeting, and invited Cllr Sally Povolotsky to introduce the report.

The following points were raised during the debate:

- The Council's carbon emissions defined in the report were those generated by its buildings and operations, and had excluded the emissions of maintained schools, which were operationally independent of the Council and not included in its net zero by 2030 commitment.
- The ACES programme would provide schools with different levels of support appropriate to their needs and levels of progress towards carbon reduction. Such support would range from workshops for governors and senior leaders to in-depth assessments of energy-saving opportunities for individual schools. Advice and guidance would be available to school staff and resources would be available to engage pupils on climate action

and energy issues. Also, there was a fund to provide boiler insulation to at least ten schools per year.

- The Committee welcomed partnership working with other agencies and groups across the county and agreed to forward the following recommendations to the Cabinet for adoption:
 - The Council continue to work to understand and quantify its emissions, particularly supply chain emissions.
 - The Council continue to provide leadership through its focus on reducing its own carbon emissions, develop a route map to a zero-carbon Oxfordshire and engage other organisations and the public in respect of why they should, and how they can, reduce their emissions, including by sharing the learning generated by the Council's decarbonisation initiatives.
 - The Council continue to educate staff and service providers on the importance of carbon and emissions accountability and seek improvements and feedback to improve, accelerate and engage staff wherever possible.
 - The Council closely monitor the financial saving generated by initiatives which reduce energy use and carbon emissions; and such financial savings be reinvested in further such initiatives.
 - The Council report publicly on its carbon emissions and progress against its carbon targets at least quarterly so that the public can hold decision-makers to account.
 - The carbon emissions of maintained schools and the Council's supply chain be included in the dashboard once reliable data are available.
 - The Council continue to drive reductions in the carbon emissions of maintained schools and academies in Oxfordshire.

It was RESOLVED to:

- 1) Adopt the report of the Carbon Reduction Targets Working Group;**
- 2) Refer the recommendations of the Carbon Reduction Targets Working Group to the Cabinet.**
- 3) Establish a working group, comprised of the same Members as the Carbon Reduction Targets Working Group and others to be agreed via email, to review decarbonisation in Oxfordshire, with terms of reference including funding and prioritisation, schools, a route-map to a zero-carbon county, the council's leadership and engagement with external parties, waste management, and other matters within the Committee's work programme or remit.**

12/22 LOCAL TRANSPORT AND CONNECTIVITY PLAN

(Agenda Item 12)

The Chair invited John Disley (Head of Transport Policy) to introduce the report. John Disley took the Committee through the background information about the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP) Cabinet report.

The Chair invited the Committee to provide any comments on LTCP report and supporting documents prior to their consideration by the Cabinet.

The Committee made the following observations to be forwarded to the Cabinet:

- The LTCP contained insufficient evidence and explanation of the capability of its policies to deliver its commendable vision and headline targets.
- The LTCP did not address the fact that existing local plans in Oxfordshire were collectively likely to increase demand for travel, contrary to the LTCP's aim of reducing travel.
- Local transport plans had previously been only partially implemented. The LTCP contained insufficient analysis of the delivery and impact of previous local transport plans, which were in many ways similar to the LTCP, and lacked a clear methodology by which the LTCP's implementation and impact were to be evaluated.
- There has been a lack of consistency between the content of previous local transport plans and the highways asset management strategy and network management strategy. It was questioned whether those strategies would reflect the LTCP when remade in September 2022, as they should.
- There was an apparent disconnect between the LTCP and reality. For instance, a Committee Member who was the director of a stakeholder organisation referenced as working with the Council in relation to transport, was unaware of that work.
- There was a disconnect between national policy, Oxfordshire County Council policy and between the latter and the policy of lower-tier authorities in Oxfordshire. It was unclear how the LTCP would integrate in wider decision-making in respect of where people live and work.

It was RESOLVED –

- 1. to forward above comments to the Cabinet for their consideration before approval of the report;**
- 2. The Head of Transport Policy to inform the Committee what proportion or number of officers who had worked on LTCP had also worked on LTPs 3 and 4; and**
- 3. The Cabinet Member for Travel and Development Strategy report to the November 2022 meeting of the Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee on the implementation and outcomes of the LTP 4 and lessons learnt and policy links between LTP 4 and LTCP.**

The Chair invited Cllr Charlie Hicks to introduce the report and the recommendations of the Transport Working Group.

The following points were made:

- The Committee welcomed the report and thanked the Transport Working Group led by Cllr Charlie Hicks for the work undertaken.
- The Committee agreed with the recommendations, and rationale for each recommendation, which would be presented to the Cabinet on 21st June 2022.
- Scrutiny Officers informed the Committee that the Cabinet was required to provide a response two months from the date of receiving the recommendations. As there was no meeting of the Cabinet in August, the Committee asked for response to be provided at the next (July) meeting of the Cabinet.

It was RESOLVED to:

- 1) Adopt the report of the Transport Policy Development Working Group;**
- 2) Refer recommendations 1 to 16 and 18 to 28 of the Transport Policy Development Working Group to Cabinet; and**
- 3) Agree with recommendation 17 of the Transport Policy Development Working Group for the Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee to seek briefings on how the freight industry operates and manages safety in relation to other road users.**

14/22 NATIONAL BUS STRATEGY - DRAFT ENHANCED PARTNERSHIP

(Agenda Item 14)

The Chair invited Bill Cotton (Corporate Director for Environment and Place) and John Disley to introduce the report.

Bill Cotton and John Disley took the meeting through the report by saying that the purpose of this report was to set out the proposals for the Oxfordshire Bus Enhanced Partnership (EP), reflecting the Council's indicative Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) funding allocation and the schemes / measures which this was proposed to fund. The draft Partnership document would then be submitted to the Department for Transport (no later than the end of June) and consulted upon, initially with bus operators, with any changes required included in the Final version, due to be submitted later in 2022.

The following points were raised during the debate:

- The Committee welcomed the report and congratulated the officers on the work done so far. Some Members of the Committee felt that there was a need for Bus Commissioner/Champion within the Council.

- Some Members of the Committee felt that frequency of buses and (in rural areas) coverage could be improved. For some other bus routes 3-to-4-mile journey would last over 30 minutes due to buses stopping at every bus stop in rural areas.
- The Committee felt that stronger focus should be on the governance of the new Enhanced Partnership Board by expressing their concern that there were no Council Members or representatives of the minor bus operators or volunteer services on that Board. The Committee wanted to know rationale for selection of the governance model of the Board as presented in Annex 2 of the report.
- The Committee suggested a fully integrated ticketing system, like it existed in other parts of the country. One of the benefits of an integrated ticketing system was all tickets would be visible on a single platform which would contribute to easier and hassle-free journeys. Having an integrated ticketing system used to be primarily for convenience, but now it had become a necessity.
- The Committee questioned powers of the Enhanced Partnership in terms of changing bus routes, and how much that would be still in hands of private operators. The Committee highlighted the benefits of 'dial-a-ride' services – under Bus Back Better, local authorities were encouraged to establish such services.
- The Committee questioned of the balance of obligations between the Council and bus operators under the draft Plan, considering the Council's to be significantly greater than operators'.
- The Committee question if allocated funding would be sufficient for the whole programme, and where would additional funding be acquired from, if needed.
- It was suggested bus rapid transport be considered.
- The Committee asked the Cabinet to ensure that the main Board has equally balanced local authority and bus operator representation, representation from each District and City Council, and smaller bus operators. The Committee was aware that involvement of partner organisations was not limited by formal Board membership, and that would be opportunities for partners to be involved in the EP working groups; however, the Committee felt that consideration should be given to formal partners' attendance at EP Board meetings.

It was RESOLVED that all comments and questions by the Committee be taken on board by officers and the Cabinet.

..... in the Chair

Date of signing