SAFER & STRONGER COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the meeting held on Thursday, 10 January 2013 commencing at 4.15 pm and finishing at 5.10 pm

Present:

Voting Members:	Councillor Lawrie Stratford – in the Chair
	Councillor Stewart Lilly (Deputy Chairman) Councillor John Goddard Councillor Anthony Gearing Councillor Patrick Greene Councillor Susanna Pressel Councillor Alan Thompson Councillor Carol Viney
Other Members in Attendance:	Councillor Judith Heathcoat (for whole meeting)
By Invitation:	
Officers:	
Whole of meeting	Sue Scane Lorna Baxter Dave Etheridge Karen Warren Jacquie Bugeja Peter Clark
Part of meeting	

Agenda Item	**Officer Attending**

The Scrutiny Committee considered the matters, reports and recommendations contained or referred to in the agenda for the meeting [, together with a schedule of addenda tabled at the meeting/the following additional documents:] and agreed as set out below.   Copies of the agenda and reports [agenda, reports and schedule/additional documents] are attached to the signed Minutes.

67/12   APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TEMPORARY APPOINTMENTS
(Agenda No. 1)

Apologies from Councillor Bill Service.

68/12 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST - SEE GUIDANCE NOTE
(Agenda No. 2)

There were no declarations of interest.

69/12 SPEAKING TO OR PETITIONING THE COMMITTEE
(Agenda No. 3)

There were no speakers or petitions.

70/12 SERVICE & RESOURCE PLANNING 2013/14 - 2016/17
(Agenda No. 4)

Judith Heathcoat asked members to note that this was the third year of a four year planning cycle and to bear this in mind with their considerations. She also thanked officers for their hard work and professionalism in the continued delivery of the business strategy that is going to plan.

Lorna Baxter gave an overview of the report to the committee. In response to questions for clarification the following points were noted:

- The changes in the planning were mainly due to changes in the way certain grants are treated by central government.

- That some of the grants were not ring fenced and could be used flexibly.

Dave Etheridge gave an overview of proposals relating to Fire and Rescue and Community Safety. In response to questions for clarification the following points were noted:

- The recently announced funding for flood reduction measures are not for emergency response so would fall under the remit of Economy and Environment.

- Whole time fire-fighters can be used as a 'standing asset' to carry out prevention work. Retained staff are only used for emergency work so are not available to work as a 'standing asset'.

- Both whole time and retained fire fighters are trained to the same high level, so that when called upon they can deliver the highest quality service the public expect, recognising the need for 'real-life' scenario training.

Peter Clark gave an overview of proposals relating to Registration Services, Coroners and Cultural Services. In response to questions for clarification the following points were noted:

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- Plans to meet previously agreed savings were on track and that there were no additional savings required

- Members' appreciation for protecting the currently agreed service and resource plans for both library services and Fire and Rescue.

- Oxfordshire buck the national trend and have seen an increase in the number of weddings carried out, focusing on marketing our high quality venues.

- Military repatriations are carried out at no additional cost to the council as a result of grants received.

The committee agreed to support the business strategies, savings proposals and pressures for the relevant service areas taking account of the Service and Community Impact Assessments.

In giving their support, members stated they wished to note the difficulty of working to make decisions without being in full receipt of all information from Central Government, regarding available funding.

The committee recognised that planned savings are being delivered, and although there are challenges ahead Officers are confident that the services are well placed to address them.

.... in the Chair

Date of signing