

STRATEGY & PARTNERSHIPS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the meeting held on Thursday, 31 May 2012 commencing at 10.00 am and finishing at Time Not Specified

Present:

Voting Members: Councillor Lorraine Lindsay-Gale – in the Chair

Councillor Ray Jelf (Deputy Chairman)
Councillor David Turner
Councillor Marilyn Badcock
Councillor Norman Bolster
Councillor Tim Hallchurch MBE
Councillor Caroline Newton
Councillor Larry Sanders
Councillor David Wilmshurst

Other Members in Attendance:

By Invitation:

Officers:

Whole of meeting	Sue Scane (Assistant Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer) Peter Clark (Head of Law & Governance)
Part of meeting	Alexandra Bailey (Senior Performance and Improvement Manager) for item 6 Jackie Wilderspin (Assistant Director of Public Health) for item 8 Martin Tugwell Deputy Director (Growth and Infrastructure) and Nigel Cuning (Strategy Manager) for item 9

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.

34/12 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TEMPORARY APPOINTMENTS

(Agenda No. 1)

Councillor Liz Brighthouse OBE sent her apologies.

35/12 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST - SEE GUIDANCE NOTE ON THE BACK PAGE

(Agenda No. 2)

None

36/12 MINUTES

(Agenda No. 3)

Councillor David Turner queried minute 23/12 from 15th March and asked what would happen to members of staff while the Pension Fund Committee considers other options. Sue Scane said individual members of staff will remain on the LGPS and not be affected..

Minutes from 15th March were then AGREED

Minutes from 15th May were AGREED

37/12 SPEAKING TO OR PETITIONING THE COMMITTEE

(Agenda No. 4)

None

38/12 FUTURE DIRECTION OF STRATEGY & PARTNERSHIPS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

(Agenda No. 5)

Councillor Lindsay-Gale explained that the Cabinet had asked the committee to consider undertaking a review of the way in which scrutiny currently functions within OCC and examine its influence on decision making. Recommendations could then be presented to Council in March. She welcomed views from the committee. .

As an introduction to the topic Peter Clarke gave a presentation on the governance options available to the County Council..

A discussion took place about the current scrutiny structure, members raised some concerns about the opportunities for back benchers to influence decision making through scrutiny and an apparent reluctance in some committees to really challenge officers.

It was suggested that more first-hand experience of issues through visits would be a useful way to improve the process..

Councillor Wilmhurst and Councillor Sanders highlighted that the Audit Working group uses a model which works well.

Members also reflected on their experiences under the previous Committee Structure which was seen as more inclusive with greater opportunities to influence prior to a decision being taken.

It was AGREED that the committee supported the review and that a working group of 5 councillors would be set up to confirm the scope of the review and agree next steps to report back to the committee at the July meeting. The working group will include 2 Councillors from the opposition, group leaders will be asked to put forward nominations to Cllr Lindsay-Gale 11th June 2012.

39/12 DRAFT SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT

(Agenda No. 6)

Item 6 was taken ahead of item 5.

Alexandra Bailey (Senior Performance and Improvement Manager) asked the committee to comment on the draft Scrutiny Annual report prior to its agreement at full Council.

The committee expressed some concerns that the report appeared to lack outcomes and did not pin point the issues which scrutiny had helped to resolve.

Alexandra Bailey acknowledged the committees frustrations and explained that the report was a reflection of the current position of scrutiny committees and the issues raised were something to address over the coming year rather than in the current report. Councillor Lindsay-Gale stated that the report illustrated the need for a review of scrutiny to be discussed under the next item.

40/12 DIRECTOR'S UPDATE

(Agenda No. 7)

Sue Scane (Assistant Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer) gave her Directors update and also spoke on Huw Jones' (Director of Environment and Economy) behalf.

- Local government finance – a new funding system will be introduced in April 2013; detail is still emerging on the new system and through the Local Government Resource Review. It is likely that in future the council will be able to retain 50% of its business rate and will continue to receive some specific grants and an element of revenue support grant.

It was AGREED that the committee would receive further details on the local government resource review at its October meeting.

Sue also highlighted the on-going implementation of the Localism Act – it was AGREED that this would be discussed at a future meeting.

- Staff Development programme

Sue highlighted that the Staff conference this year will be on 12th June and that a range of development opportunities for senior leaders in the organisation have begun.

E& E issues within the committee's remit:

- Graham Shaw, Interim Deputy Director, is currently reviewing the Customer Service Centre and back office function in OCS.
- The new Property and Facilities contract with Carillion will go live on 1st July and 1st September for Food with Thought and QCS.

41/12 UPDATE ON OXFORDSHIRE HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD INC. DRAFT HEALTH AND WELLBEING STRATEGY
(Agenda No. 8)

Peter Clarke (Head of Law & Governance) & Jackie Wilderspin (Assistant Director of Public Health) gave a presentation on the Oxfordshire Draft Joint Health & Wellbeing Strategy and the current position of the Oxfordshire Health and Wellbeing Board.

The Board will become a formal committee of the Council in April 2013 and will be Chaired by Councillor Hudspeth. The Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy will drive the work of the partners on the Board. Members were asked to comment on the draft strategy..

Councillor Lindsay-Gale asked to see a report from this new committee once a year at the Strategy & Partnership Scrutiny Committee. This was AGREED.

Councillor Turner queried an intention in the strategy to reduce the number of care homes. Peter Clark AGREED to get further information from John Jackson. Councillor Sanders suggested that supporting people to live at home safely should be a specific priority alongside any priority on care homes.

A further query was raised about how ambitious some of the targets within the strategy were for example a 0.6% increase in satisfaction is referred to in one area.

Jackie Wilderspin AGREED to feed the comments back into the consultation process and get responses on the issues raised. She highlighted that Oxfordshire was fairly unique in committing to specific targets as other areas had shied away from this approach.

42/12 ASSET LED LOCALITY REVIEWS
(Agenda No. 9)

Martin Tugwell Deputy Director (Growth and Infrastructure) and Nigel Cuning (Strategy Manager) came to the table to discuss the Asset Led Locality reviews paper. Nigel provided a specific example of the review process in Didcot which has generated results within 6 months of the review being completed. However this varies from review to review as some are more about longer term strategic thinking and facilitating the work of other partners.

Councillor Lindsay-Gale raised that she was disappointed with the lack of detail in the report. She also queried what had been the overall savings achieved through the project. Martin Tugwell explained that it was too early to say as many savings will be generated over the longer term. .

SYP3

Councillor Badcock asked what were the plans to roll out this approach to other parts of the county. Martin Tugwell explained that asset management will be a key part of the council's work in localities and the authority aims to be flexible to opportunities that arise rather than putting a rigid programme in place.

Martin Tugwell stressed the importance of member engagement and the role they can play in highlighting local issues. He also highlighted that as part of the new property and facilities contract Carillion are committed to member engagement and the council is keen to develop this once the contract is live.

It was AGREED that Martin Tugwell would return to the committee in 6 months with an update on progress with asset management.

43/12 FORWARD PLAN
(Agenda No. 10)

The corporate plan has been programmed in for the October meeting. No other issues were highlighted.

44/12 AOB
(Agenda No. 11)

No other business

45/12 CLOSE OF MEETING
(Agenda No. 12)

Meeting closed at 12.30pm

..... in the Chair

Date of signing