

STRATEGY & PARTNERSHIPS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the meeting held on Thursday, 29 November 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 Liz Brighthouse OBE
Councillor Tim Hallchurch MBE
Councillor Caroline Newton
Councillor David Wilmshurst

Other Members in Attendance:

By Invitation:

Officers:

Whole of meeting Julia Lim, Scrutiny Officer

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.

70/12 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TEMPORARY APPOINTMENTS

(Agenda No. 1)

Apologies were received from Cllr Larry Sanders

71/12 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST - SEE GUIDANCE NOTE ON THE BACK PAGE

(Agenda No. 2)

No declarations of interest were received

72/12 MINUTES

(Agenda No. 3)

Cllrs asked if an update on the Joint Strategic needs assessment could be provided at the next meeting.

ACTION Julia Lim to add to forward plan.

73/12 SPEAKING TO OR PETITIONING THE COMMITTEE

(Agenda No. 4)

74/12 DIRECTOR'S UPDATE

(Agenda No. 5)

Huw Jones provided a short update on customer services as the rest of the agenda covered many other key areas of activity within the Environment & Economy Directorate. A full update on progress with customer services will be provided in the new year.

Sue Scane, Assistant Chief Executive & Chief Finance Officer, chaired the emergency flooding operation and provided an update on the current position. As of Thursday 29th November the flooding looked to have peaked and levels were receding across the County. 14 road closures were still in place but these were being monitored.

Dealing with the floods has been excellent example of partnership working across the council and a beyond with social services, Oxfordshire Customer Services, the fire service and highways all working closely together along with the Environment Agency. During the flooding the customer service centre was able to extend opening hours to 11pm due to the commitment and flexibility of staff.

Councillors expressed their thanks to the staff involved. Cllr Lindsay-Gale asked about how the new flood defences worked. Sue Scane explained that they were deployed in Osney and Botley and provided an additional 30cm of protection but thankfully were not needed.

75/12 BROADBAND PROCUREMENT

(Agenda No. 6)

Graham Shaw (Deputy Director – Customer services), Lisa Michelson (Broadband Engagement Officer) and Martin Ward (Service Manager- ICT) provided an update on progress with the development of the County's broadband programme. Cllr Carter also joined the meeting.

There are two key strands to the programme:

- Bridging the gap – as planned commercial roll outs will only reach 2/3 of the county
- Decommissioning the Oxfordshire Community Network (OCN) – the council is actively supporting those public building which use the OCN to find alternative providers.

SYP3

The programme is designed to extend superfast broadband across the County and enable other partners to take advantage of the investment made.

A detailed discussion followed the update. Members were interested to know how businesses could build on the provision. Officers explained that by moving technology closer to businesses, through the council programme, it will be easier for them in future to access and demand more from commercial providers.

Cllr Carter explained that there were some small scale communal self-help arrangements developing across the county. Cllr Turner asked is a briefing paper on what pro-active / self-help work by communities to develop their own provision would involve.

ACTION Graham Shaw to produce a briefing on pro-active / community broadband development.

Huw Jones explained that registering demand for superfast broadband is vital to demonstrate to the commercial sector that there is a viable market. He also explained that the council has jumped ahead of the planned phased government procurement plan which means the county is considerably ahead of some other parts of the country.

The committee were alerted to the fact that district councils can add funding to the county fund to increase provision in their area.

It was **AGREED** to bring back a future update on broadband at a suitable point.

76/12 PROPERTY & FACILITIES MANAGEMENT CONTRACT IMPLEMENTATION OVERVIEW

(Agenda No. 7)

Mark Kemp (Deputy Director – Commercial, Environment & Economy) provided an update on the implementation of the contract to date and Mike Salter (Partnership Director Carillion joined the table). Carillion officially took over the property and facilities management contract on 1st July 2012. The contract is managed through a Partnership Board which involves the Director and Cabinet Members.

720 members of staff have been transferred to Carillion. Feedback from schools, on the meals service indicate that none have experienced a drop in service.

Cllr Wilmshurst asked what were the terms and conditions for staff transferring from the county council.

Mike Salter explained that staff were transferred under TUPE on the same terms and conditions and there was no time limit on the transfer and staff stay on county council terms and conditions.

There were some issues with service continuity during the hand over process but these are being dealt with.

Cllr Bolster reported that some schools had experienced long waiting times for quotes from Carillion.

Mike Salter explained that they are aware of this issue and it is being dealt with. Carillion are setting up a new supply chain will be recruiting their own local labour force. As part of Carillion's contract they wanted to increase the amount of Oxfordshire based suppliers. Currently 43% of suppliers are Oxfordshire based and Carillion are working to increase this to 60%

Cllr Lindsay-Gale asked when the Asset Strategy will be ready.

Huw Jones explained that strategies for key leased buildings are already being sought. It is hoped to have a wider strategy available in the New Year.

77/12 OXFORDSHIRE LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP (LEP) UPDATE (Agenda No. 8)

Cllr Hudspeth provided an update of the work the Oxfordshire LEP and was joined by Martin Tugwell.

Cllr Hudspeth began by expressing his thanks and praise for the staff that helped to manage the floods and explained that Cllr Mallon had taken on the property portfolio.

Adrian Shooter is the new Chairman on the LEP and the Board has established a 7 thematic partnership groups on key priorities with a member of the board leading each. The LEP now includes the Leaders of the City Council and South Oxfordshire which helps to promote joint working.

Adrian is now also now a member of the Spatial Planning and Infrastructure Partnership (SPIP), this helps to link the work of the two bodies.

The development of an Oxfordshire wide City Deal is a current key priority.

Councillors asked a range of questions following Cllr Hudspeth's introduction.

- Cllr Turner was concerned that Culham Science Park was not mentioned prominently in LEP documents. Martin Tugwell explained that it is a crucial part of the LEP's thinking particularly on the City Deal.
- Cllr Newton asked if the LEP employed any staff and how it was supported. Martin explained that the secretarial support and guidance to the Chairman is provided by the County Council and the Council is the accountable body for the Growing Places Fund. The Chairman is keen to use the government's core funding for LEPs (£250,000/year until 2015) to purchase dedicated business management support.
- Cllr Lindsay-Gale asked how the relationship with the SPIP was going. Cllr Hudspeth reported that the SPIP was working well and it is expected that by January a prioritised list of infrastructure projects will have been pulled together.

It was AGREED that the committee would receive an update on progress in 6 months and that details of the projects funded by the LEP will be shared with members.

78/12 UPDATE ON GOVERNANCE REVIEW

..... (Agenda No. 9)

Cllr Lindsay-Gale updated on progress of the governance working group. Herself and Cllr Turner had recently visited Hertfordshire and Somerset County Councils to look at their model of governance. They found Hertfordshire's model which uses cabinet advisory panels very interesting. There will be a presentation at the next meeting of the principles of the conclusions that the review is reaching. A final report will go forward to Council in April.

Peter Clark explained that the review is not just about scrutiny but includes wider governance too. Therefore the review of the constitution has been delayed until next year so that all updates can be made at once. Peter will be contacting political group leaders to discuss further.

79/12 FORWARD PLAN

(Agenda No. 10)

No issues were raised.

80/12 CLOSE OF MEETING

(Agenda No. 11)

..... in the Chair

Date of signing