

PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the meeting held on Thursday, 5 November 2015 commencing at 2.00 pm and finishing at 5.04 pm

Present:

Voting Members: Councillor Liz Brighthouse OBE – in the Chair
Councillor Neil Fawcett (Deputy Chairman)
Councillor John Christie
Councillor Sam Coates
Councillor Yvonne Constance OBE
Councillor Janet Godden
Councillor Mark Gray
Councillor Steve Harrod
Councillor Stewart Lilly
Councillor Charles Mathew
Councillor Les Sibley (In place of Councillor Lynda Atkins)

By Invitation: John Bright, ORCC

Officers:

Whole of meeting Claire Phillips, Sue Whitehead (Corporate Services)

Part of meeting

Agenda Item	Officer Attending
5	Mark Kemp, Deputy Director, Commercial; Alexandra Bailey (Business Development, Environment & Economy)
6	DCO Nathan Travis; ACO Simon Furlong
7, 8 & 9	Hannah Farncombe, Deputy Director, Safeguarding; Dan Ruaux, Service Manager- Residential & EOC Services
10	Tan Lea, Strategic Safeguarding Partnerships Manager

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

37/15 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TEMPORARY APPOINTMENTS

(Agenda No. 1)

Apologies were received on behalf of Councillor Atkins (Councillor Sibley substituting)

38/15 MINUTES

(Agenda No. 3)

The Minutes of the meeting held on 24 September were agreed and signed as a correct record.

39/15 SUPPORT TRANSPORT CONSULTATION RESULTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO CABINET

(Agenda No. 5)

The Performance & Scrutiny Committee considered the feedback from the public consultation and the report to Cabinet on 10 November in order for the committee to give their views on the proposals to be considered by Cabinet.

During questioning and discussion the following points were made:

- Further consideration was needed on the dial-a –ride proposals on a number of grounds:
 - Concerns over the level of consultation and engagement with users and in particular whether the focus groups referred to in the report had been held;
 - Questions over whether the impact assessment and mitigation were sufficiently robust with concrete measures in place. Reference was made to the powerful assessment that users were within 400 yards of a bus stop and most could walk. It was noted that this was a self-assessment provided by users and was not provided in relation to this piece of work and therefore it was possible that its use could be challenged.
 - The Aspire pilot was seen as an aspirational alternative rather than a concrete proposal to mitigate the impact. More work was needed to ensure it was extendable to rural areas.
 - Access for the frail elderly to do their own shopping was of value to their overall well-being and could impact on costs to the local authority if they become isolated. Any proposals should actively involve adult social care
- The Committee noted from their own experience talking to users and with regard to comments from ORCC that people may be willing to pay more and asked that this be considered. In particular bus operators should be urged to consider fare increases prior to cutting currently subsidised routes altogether.
- The Committee heard that it was not possible to legally require payment for concessionary passes and asked that Cabinet be urged to pursue this with Government and in the meantime the Committee supported measures to encourage voluntary payments for concessionary passes or individual journeys.
- There was some discussion of the methodology and concern that the complexity of how some services were provided (with one bus doing a number of different routes) could make a service as a whole unviable if part was withdrawn. Some Members felt that there was no possible way to choose which subsidies to remove. The Committee emphasised the need to treat people fairly and that decisions be based on detailed information.
- The Committee considered how services might work in future and noted the opportunities to engage with operators to find new more integrated models of provision. There was some optimism that some services would remain even where the subsidy was lost. There was strong support for future market testing.

The Committee AGREED (by 8 votes for and 1 against (with 1 abstention): that the above views be passed to Cabinet for consideration and Cabinet be RECOMMENDED to support proceeding with reducing bus subsidies by £2.3m rather than £3.7m and to support updating the methodology to include additional criteria for the rurally isolated and deprived areas.

40/15 REVISED STAFFING MODEL AND COMMUNITY RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN (CRMP) DEVELOPMENT
(Agenda No. 6)

DCO Nathan Travis and ACO Simon Furlong presented the report to highlight and define the alternative solutions that are currently being pursued to deliver the required level of savings in the Medium Term Financial Plan.

The Committee AGREED to

- (a) note the changes in relation to the delivery of the £360k savings programmed for 2016/17 and to support the revised arrangements; and
- (b) note and agree the intention regarding the CRMP 2016/17 Action Plan and agree to the production of a new CRMP for 2017-22.

41/15 IMPLEMENTATION OF OXFORDSHIRE'S ACTION PLAN FOLLOWING OFSTED'S INSPECTION OF SERVICES FOR CHILDREN IN NEED OF HELP AND PROTECTION, CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER AND CARE LEAVERS
(Agenda No. 7)

Hannah Farncombe, Deputy Director, Safeguarding and Dan Ruaux, Service Manager- Residential & EOC Services reported on progress against the action plan to respond to the recent OFSTED inspection of Children's Services. She noted that that Oxfordshire County Council was one of only a few Councils judged good in all aspects.

In response to questions from Members Hannah Farncombe referred to recent successful activity to attract more foster careers. This included 2 well attended meetings and a joint campaign with the voluntary organisations. However more foster careers were desperately needed for disabled children. Dan added that with the increasing need for long term care short term care was coming under increasing pressure. Asked about the reference in the report to resources not being available Hannah Farncombe replied that additional new money was required and was not available. There was still an advocacy service run by the Council using independent volunteers. There were discussions of the governance arrangements and it was suggested that a simplified chart would help the Committee to be assured that such arrangements were clear. Hannah Farncombe undertook to provide a protocol to assist.

Dan Ruaux updated the Committee on progress with the outcomes set out at paragraph 4.1. Hannah Farncombe added that the emphasis was on children in need. The work on the Looked after Children was having an effect but it was important to target support earlier so as not to miss an opportunity to provide support. The role of governors was discussed and Hannah outlined recent activity with Schools.

The Performance Scrutiny Committee noted the progress on implementing the action plan.

42/15 MISSING CHILDREN IN OXFORDSHIRE: APRIL TO SEPTEMBER 2015 (Agenda No. 8)

Hannah Farncombe, Deputy Director, Safeguarding and Dan Ruaux, Service Manager- Residential & EOC Services presented a briefing to the Committee on missing children in Oxfordshire and the work being carried out to ensure that the council is providing adequate safeguarding measures.

During questions from Members a number of points were made

- 1) Dan Ruaux explained the ways in which the ages of children coming into the City was determined and commented that in some cases it was not possible to tell and that some missing children were missing electively because they had not been given leave to remain.
- 2) Dan Ruaux detailed the role of the Panels in identifying patterns and trends. There was a significant increase in missing reports from schools as they became more aware of the risks.
- 3) Asked about item 14 Dan Ruaux explained the reasons behind the figures and the action to rectify it.
- 4) Asked what was being done right Dan Ruaux commented that therapeutic interventions and a focus on education and educational provision was effective.
- 5) Questioned about absence from school Hannah Farncombe detailed the work done to identify those children and young people who are absent as a precursor to going missing. Dan Ruaux added that attendance officers attended Panel meetings. There was discussion of vulnerable learners not in education and the Chairman indicated that there was a PI in relation to absence but that consideration may need to be given to further indicators in this area.

The Performance Scrutiny Committee AGREED to note the report.

43/15 INCREASE IN CHILD PROTECTION ACTIVITY: REPORT CARD (Agenda No. 9)

Hannah Farncombe, Deputy Director, Safeguarding and Dan Ruaux, Service Manager- Residential & EOC Services presented a report on the background to the increase in child protection cases. This followed the discussion at Performance

Scrutiny Committee in July when the performance of children’s social care was discussed in detail.

..... During discussion of unallocated children in need Hannah Farncombe indicated that they were actively reviewed. There was a lot of movement and although the situation was worrying none the less the County Council compared well with other good performing authorities. There was discussion on the figures and the context relating to neglect. There was a recognition that domestic violence was a significant factor in neglect. Members expressed concern at the high case loads and asked that the Chairman be alerted to any changes between meetings. The Committee also noted the impact on schools where social workers were unable to respond. There was discussion of the importance of partnership working and a recognition of the complex reasons behind repeat plans. The Chairman asked that in future consideration be given to lining up this report with the safeguarding plan.

The Performance Scrutiny Committee noted the report.

44/15 CSE STOCKTAKE REPORT
(Agenda No. 10)

Tan Lea, Strategic Safeguarding Partnerships Manager provided a verbal update on the key recommendations of the Child Sexual Exploitation stocktake report, with a view to understanding the key issues and implications for the committee and their role in monitoring and scrutinising performance.

The Committee commented on the update and in particular focussed on the role of the local community and how that was to be actioned. Tan Lea stated that the Local safety partnerships were an important part of community engagement and raising local awareness. More work was need on identifying local triggers and the most effective local routes for action. Mechanisms were in place to involve schools but the level of engagement varied. There were regular meetings with head teachers and in an annual auditing exercise there had been a 100% return rate. This was a good indicator of engagement. The Chairman asked that when available the report come to the Committee for consideration and she highlighted the need for a sub set of performance indicators targeting CSE.

..... in the Chair

Date of signing 2015