

PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the meeting held on Thursday, 4 January 2018 commencing at 10.00 am and finishing at 12.50 pm

Present:

Voting Members: Councillor Liz Brighthouse OBE – in the Chair
Councillor Jenny Hannaby (Deputy Chairman)
Councillor Nick Carter
Councillor Mike Fox-Davies
Councillor Tony Ilott
Councillor Liz Leffman
Councillor Glynis Phillips
Councillor Emily Smith
Councillor Michael Waine
Councillor Liam Walker
Councillor Nicholas Field-Johnson (In place of Councillor Charles Mathew)

Other Members in Attendance: Councillor Judith Heathcoat (for Agenda Item 6)
Councillor Mark Gray (for Agenda Item 7)

Officers:

Whole of meeting Katie Read, Senior Policy Officer;
Colm Ó Caomhánaigh, Committee Officer

Part of meeting

| Agenda Item | Officer Attending |
|--------------------|--|
| 5, 9 | Ian Dyson, Assistance Chief Finance Officer (Assurance) |
| 9 | Steven Jones, Corporate Performance and Risk Manager |
| 6, 7 | Ben Threadgold, Policy and Performance Service Manager |
| 8 | Jonathan McWilliam, Strategic Director for People; Jackie Wilderspin, Public Health Specialist; Benedict Leigh, Deputy Director for Joint Commissioning; Clare Rowntree, Strategy Manager – Community Co-ordination. |

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.

1/17 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TEMPORARY APPOINTMENTS

(Agenda No. 1)

Apologies were received from Councillor Charles Mathew (substituted by Councillor Nicholas Field-Johnson).

2/17 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST - GUIDANCE NOTE ON BACK PAGE OF THE AGENDA

(Agenda No. 2)

There were no declarations of interest.

3/17 MINUTES

(Agenda No. 3)

The minutes of the meeting on 14 December 2017 were approved and signed as a correct record with the following amendment:

Item 49/17, the first bullet point under the heading "Communities" was changed to read:

"A new team is being established to rationalize estate and create capital comprising 10-12 staff in addition to those brought over from Carillion."

4/17 SERVICE & RESOURCE PLANNING 2018/19 TO 2021/22 - CAPITAL INVESTMENT PLANNING

(Agenda No. 5)

Mr Dyson introduced the report. The change to a 10-year approach had already been approved by the meeting of the Committee on 14 December 2017. This will facilitate more flexibility, better risk management and better utilization of assets.

Officers responded to Members' questions as follows:

- The Council is exploring the idea of running its own children's care homes and other services in-house but there is nothing specific to include in the plans at this stage.
- A business case is being put together to change the approach on highways maintenance to a longer-term approach in order to get ahead of the maintenance curve. If the proposed growth deal with central government goes ahead then the budget will increase significantly.
- The figure of £45m for "Capital Receipts and other contributions" could include disposal of assets or income generated from them in other ways.
- The Council encourages academies to spend more money on maintenance of basic facilities but it is their decision and ultimately it is part of a wider funding issue in education. It was suggested that the Education Scrutiny Committee should invite Headteachers to a meeting to discuss the matter.
- An explanation of the different figures given for Highways Maintenance on Page 11 and in Annex 1 will be circulated later.

It was agreed that the Chairman will give a report to Cabinet on the Committee's comments on Service and Resource Planning from the discussion at the 14 December 2017 meeting and this meeting.

5/17 QUARTER 2 BUSINESS MANAGEMENT REPORT
(Agenda No. 9)

Mr Dyson summarised the report which is generally encouraging, the exceptions being outlined in Paragraph 6.

Members raised issues on the report which Officers addressed as follows:

- The performance indicators in this report are based on the existing corporate plan. When the new corporate plan is approved then indicators will be revised appropriately.
- The less frequent clearing of drains is causing problems. Officers agreed to address this at the March meeting in the report on Transport. It is too specific an item to include in the performance reports but Members can always ask Officers for information.
- It was confirmed that services keep in touch with those coming out of drug treatment for six months which is what is recommended by the national guidance. Experience has shown that most people who stay clean for 6 months will remain so.
- The figure of £17.9 for school reserves was noted as being quite large. It was suggested that the Education Scrutiny Committee should examine this.
- The difficulties with debtor invoice clearance for Social Care clients is largely a resource issue and has been discussed at the Audit & Governance Committee.

It was agreed that Councillor Leffman will lead a “deep dive” focusing on the drop in household waste recycling rates. Officers will provide a list of bullet points on the issues with a view to the findings being reported to the May Committee meeting.

6/17 OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL DRAFT CORPORATE PLAN 2018 - 2021
(Agenda No. 6)

Mr Threadgold introduced the draft document emphasising that it is a working draft which will eventually go to Cabinet and then Full Council for approval. The details of how progress will be measured are being shaped and will be included before the plan is published.

Members made comments on the plan and Mr Threadgold and Councillor Heathcoat responded as follows:

- The plan is deliberately not structured by service area but the actions for delivery will be picked up by service areas in their own plans.
- The work investigating introducing a committee structure is a separate process and does not tie in with the plan.
- When including links in the plan to other documents it is thought to be helpful to have a brief explanation preceding the link.

Members also suggested:

- Plans for bus services should be included.
- It should be clearer that some activities depend on partners such as the NHS or OxLEP for example.
- There needs to be more on increasing diversity in Members elected especially regarding age, gender, disability and ethnicity.

7/17 OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL DRAFT EQUALITY POLICY (Agenda No. 7)

Mr Threadgold introduced the draft policy which is being renewed after four years. This draft has 10 objectives which are more specific than before and includes monitoring. Governance of the policy is under the Cabinet Member for Local Communities. There will be a consultation period over a couple of months and once the objectives are agreed, work will commence on the actions.

Officers responded to points raised by Members as follows:

- Regarding objective 3, the details of improvements to the Council website were not in the report but Mr Threadgold undertook to get more information on that. The Council will continue to be mindful that not everyone can access the internet.
- Objective 9 targets under-25s because the Council has very few staff under that age. Measures to improve gender and age balances in the workforce will be aimed at removing barriers and attracting more applications.
- A full consultation pack is being compiled to ensure a wide range of consultation.

Members also made the following suggestions:

- The policy should aim to ensure diversity through all levels in the workforce and this should be monitored.
- Under objective 4, the use of local clinics should be considered to avoid everyone having to come to Oxford for assessments.
- Community groups should be informed of job vacancies with the Council.
- The Council website should be functional on a mobile phone.
- Dignity at work should be covered in the policy.

Councillor Mark Gray, Cabinet Member for Local Communities, noted that fewer people are now looking for work in Oxfordshire, providing the Council with challenges in recruitment. This policy will have more robust governance with an annual report to Cabinet and can always be reviewed by the scrutiny committee.

8/17 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE HEALTH INEQUALITIES COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS (Agenda No. 8)

Dr McWilliam introduced the report. The establishment of an independent Commission was a welcome move and ensures that the issue of health inequalities is kept alive. The Commission made 60 recommendations for the various organisations in Oxfordshire. This report concentrates on the recommendations for the County Council. An implementation group was set up, led by the Clinical Commissioning Group, and Ms Wilderspin attends this.

Officers responded to issues raised by Members as follows:

- Protocols for school nurses vary from school to school but there is a national specification available which can be shared with Members. Their work generally focuses on health promotion, prevention and safeguarding.
- Regarding increases in incidents of school exclusions, the number for each school may be available but the overall data has not been compiled yet. That can be expedited.
- There were no recommendations from the Commission specifically on young carers.
- The Council works with City and District Councils on the public health aspects of housing through workshops and influencing planning policy – for example, in promoting active travel such as walking and cycling.
- The Commission’s recommendations on housing were directed at other organisations and therefore not included in this paper.
- There is a council officer dealing with families facing difficulties with housing. The Committee will examine the success in keeping children out of care as part of a future discussion.
- The Council has followed up with clients who did not get places with new daytime support services. If anyone is aware of a person who says that they have missed out, they should contact Mr Leigh. The Committee requested a report on this for a future meeting to which Age UK will be invited.
- Personal health budgets are being introduced and may be integrated with care budgets. The Council tries to make the organisational divisions in services invisible to the person who receives support.
- Transport issues are dealt with through various options such as lifts from neighbours, the Comet and services provided by District Councils.

Members agreed that there are increasing issues for young carers and many of their problems can be hidden. It was agreed that the Committee needs a report on issues for young carers. Councillor Carter will lead a “deep dive” on this issue for the Committee and report back in May.

9/17 COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME
(Agenda No. 10)

The following was agreed:

- Adult Social Care will be moved to the July meeting.
- Property and Assets as well as Recycling can be dealt with under performance reporting.
- Young Carers can be taken at the May meeting under children’s issues. Cllrs Nick Carter and Emily Smith will lead on this.

..... in the Chair

Date of signing 2018

