

STRATEGY & PARTNERSHIPS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the meeting held on Thursday, 17 March 2011 commencing at 10.00 am and finishing at 12.30

Present:

Voting Members: Councillor Melinda Tilley – in the Chair

Councillor Nick Carter (Deputy Chairman)
Councillor Jean Fooks
Councillor Norman Bolster
Councillor Liz Brighthouse OBE
Councillor Patrick Greene (in place of Councillor Dr Peter Skolar)
Councillor Peter Jones
Councillor A.M. Lovatt
Councillor David Wilmshurst

Other Members in Attendance: Councillor David Robertson, Deputy Leader
Councillor Jim Couchman, Cabinet Member for Finance and Property

Officers:

Whole of meeting Stephen Capaldi, Assistant Chief Executive
Lorna Baxter, Acting Head of Corporate Finance
Claire Phillips, Senior Performance and Review Office

Agenda Item	Officer Attending
7	Sean Collins, Assistant Head of Oxfordshire Customer Services - Financial Services
8,9,10	Claire Moore, Strategic Partnerships Manager

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.

9/11 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TEMPORARY APPOINTMENTS (Agenda No. 1)

Apologies were received from Councillor Dr Peter Skolar (Councillor Patrick Greene substituting) and Councillor Chip Sherwood.

10/11 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST - SEE GUIDANCE NOTE ON THE BACK PAGE (Agenda No. 2)

Cllr Fooks noted that she is a member of the Pension Fund committee.

Cllr Brighthouse noted that she is a member of the Oxfordshire Pension Fund.

11/11 MINUTES

(Agenda No. 3)

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 January 2011 were approved and signed subject to the amendment that Cllr Wilmshurst was present at the meeting

12/11 DIRECTOR'S UPDATE

(Agenda No. 5)

Stephen Capaldi, Assistant Chief Executive (Strategy) updated the committee on arrangements for design and printing publications. Positive progress continues in reducing the amount of printed publications and the associated costs which has been achieved through implementation of a tight approval process.

Stephen Capaldi gave background to the manager assessment process that is ongoing. All senior managers are undergoing a series of assessments and interviews as part of the business strategy commitment to reduce the overall management of the organisation. It was noted that one of the products of the assessments will be that each manager will have a personal development plan. Skills that will be important are those for working in political and partnership environments. A number of services have already or are in the process of restructuring.

Stephen Capaldi gave an overview of the locality review meetings with councillors. All have had initial meetings and will be considering bids to the Big Society Fund. He also noted that discussions are ongoing with the voluntary sector about Big Society.

It was noted that the final payment of Local Area Agreement reward grant funding has just been paid and that the Public Service Board will be discussing how to allocate it.

13/11 FINANCIAL MONITORING OVERVIEW 2010/11

(Agenda No. 6)

The financial monitoring report was noted including the underspending on two large projects in ICT and efforts to increase road maintenance before year end.

The committee requested to have more detail about borrowing and debt reduction in the financial monitoring report at a future meeting.

14/11 OXFORDSHIRE PENSION FUND

(Agenda No. 7)

The committee received a presentation on the Oxfordshire Pension Fund and the role and functions of the Pension Fund Committee.

It was agreed to invite the Chairman of the Pension Fund Committee to the next meeting to discuss the committee’s approach to managing the fund.

15/11 BIG SOCIETY FRAMEWORK
(Agenda No. 8)

Claire Moore gave an introduction to the council’s approach to the Big Society and key areas of focus. It was noted that there is a lot of work ongoing which supports the Big Society.

It was noted that small and medium enterprises play an important role in communities.

The differences between rural and urban communities was emphasised and the lack of town and parish councils in urban areas making it more complex.

16/11 LOCALISM BILL
(Agenda No. 9)

The briefing paper was noted and the current passage of the bill through parliament. The committee expressed interest in exploring elements of the bill further when more details are available. Particular areas of interest noted were around predetermination and neighbourhood planning.

17/11 UPDATE ON STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS
(Agenda No. 10)

The partnership update report was noted and it was AGREED not to include district Local Strategic Partnerships and the stronger communities alliance in future reports as these are not partnerships whose activities are driven by the county council.

It was AGREED to review progress of the Local Enterprise Partnership as it develops.

18/11 FORWARD PLAN
(Agenda No. 11)

Items proposed for future consideration by the committee include borrowing and debt reduction; activity of the Pension Fund committee and the progress of the Local Enterprise Partnership.

..... in the Chair

Date of signing