

PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the meeting held on Thursday, 4 July 2019 commencing at 10.00 am and finishing at 1.00 pm

Present:

Voting Members: Councillor Liz Brighthouse OBE – in the Chair

Councillor Jenny Hannaby (Deputy Chairman)
Councillor Nick Carter
Councillor Mike Fox-Davies
Councillor Liz Leffman
Councillor Charles Mathew
Councillor Glynis Phillips
Councillor Judy Roberts
Councillor Michael Waine
Councillor Liam Walker

Other Members in Attendance: Councillor Lawrie Stratford, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health (for Agenda Item 11)
Councillor Lorraine Lindsay-Gale, Cabinet Member for Education and Cultural Services (for Agenda Item 13)

Officers:

Whole of meeting Lorna Baxter, Director of Finance; Lauren Rushen, Policy Officer; Colm Ó Caomhánaigh, Committee Officer

Part of meeting

Agenda Item	Officer Attending
7	Ben Threadgold, Policy and Performance Service Manager; Steven Jones, Corporate Performance and Risk Manager
7, 13	Chris Hilliard, Consultant Deputy Director for Education; Jane Howarth, Head of SEND
8, 9, 10	Simon Furlong, Interim Strategic Director Communities and Chief Fire Officer
8	Andrew Fairweather, Asset and Investment Team Manager
9, 10 13	Angela Smallwood, Performance Improvement Manager Allyson Milward, Head of Access to Learning

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 and agreed as set out below. Copies of the agenda, reports and additional documents] are attached to the signed Minutes.

30/19 ELECTION OF THE CHAIRMAN FOR THE 2019/20 COUNCIL YEAR

(Agenda No. 1)

Councillor Nick Carter moved and Councillor Glynis Phillips seconded that Councillor Liz Brighouse be elected Chairman of the Committee for the 2019/20 Council Year.

RESOLVED: (nem con) that Councillor Liz Brighouse be elected Chairman of the Committee for the 2019/20 Council Year.

31/19 ELECTION OF THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN FOR THE 2019/20 COUNCIL YEAR

(Agenda No. 2)

Councillor Liz Leffman moved and Councillor Glynis Phillips seconded that Councillor Jenny Hannaby be elected Deputy Chairman of the Committee for the 2019/20 Council Year.

RESOLVED: (nem con) that Councillor Jenny Hannaby be elected Deputy Chairman of the Committee for the 2019/20 Council Year.

32/19 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TEMPORARY APPOINTMENTS

(Agenda No. 3)

Apologies were received from Councillor Tony Ilott.

Apologies were also received from Councillor Steve Harrod, Cabinet Member for Children and Family Services, Yvonne Rees, Chief Executive and Lucy Butler, Director for Children's Services.

33/19 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST - GUIDANCE NOTE ON BACK PAGE OF THE AGENDA

(Agenda No. 4)

There were no declarations of interest.

34/19 MINUTES

(Agenda No. 5)

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 May 2019 were approved and signed as a correct record.

35/19 BUSINESS MONITORING REPORT

(Agenda No. 7)

Ben Threadgold introduced the report which was the first monthly report seen by this Committee. It outlined the situation at the end of May, focussing on Performance, Risk, HR and Finance. The Committee is seeing the report before Cabinet receives it.

Officers responded to Members' questions as follows:

- The overspend on SEND Home to School Transport was £3.4m last year and continues into this year (Paragraph 20, Page 9 of the Addenda). It is due to increased demand and complexity.
- Work on air quality is still at a formative stage. The move is towards very low or zero-emissions bus fleets. Officers are confident of staying on target.
- Officers will seek more information on the amber rating for the number of new homes (Page 12). There was a change in how the rating was assessed, rather than a reduction in the number of new homes being delivered.
- The Schools Improvement and Safeguarding teams responded immediately to the 'inadequate' ratings received by three primary schools. Officers will look at the quality of audits from schools.
- Chris Hilliard agreed to take on board the suggestion of guidance for school trustees. He said that the Council will support schools whether maintained or academies.
- There has been a countrywide rise in the number of EHCP requests. The new code of practice makes it hard to refuse. Also, the system is now covering ages 0 to 25. The team is being restructured which is designed to put more officers 'on the ground'. Consultation ends next week and it is hoped to implement it in August.
- The debt under Adult Social Care is being reduced through active management. It is now close to target.
- Overpayments, such as that made to Scope, occur only occasionally, often when the Council has not been informed of the death of a client.

RESOLVED: to note the report.

36/19 DRAFT INVESTMENT STRATEGY (Agenda No. 8)

Simon Furlong introduced the report. The strategy covers existing investments but also unlocks potential for wider investments. It will enable more effective use of property. A new property strategy is being developed.

Lorna Baxter corrected paragraph 2 of the report (Page 7 of the Agenda) in that this draft does not replace the current Capital and Investment Strategy but becomes part of it, if adopted by Full Council.

Officers responded to issues raised by Members as follows:

- The strategy will allow us to invest outside of Treasury Management. For example, to invest in assets that would include a social return.
- The strategy refers to the climate emergency issue on Page 9 of the Agenda where it mentions prioritising opportunities that are carbon neutral, use/generate green energy or reduce travel or waste. Members asked for the emphasis of the wording here to be strengthened.
- This draft is starting with the building blocks and more detail – such as local authority trading companies – will be developed later. Officers noted the comment that the strategy was very property-oriented.

- With regard to the procedures set out for governance of Category C investments, officers agreed to look at the existing procedures for emergency decisions.
- A number of investment items referred to in the strategy build on existing activities around our land and property assets. For example, a number of land development deals are in progress, some of them based on the old 'small holdings estate' that was deliberately retained in the 1990s. As stated in the Strategy, once these have met their current commitment to Capital Programme future proceeds can be directed into the investment portfolio. Potential projects around our property assets are expected to come through in the coming months if the strategy is approved.

Members asked how local Members would be consulted on an individual decision on a piece of land in their division. The Chairman noted that more involvement of Members was something that also came up in the Peer Review. She undertook to take this point to Cabinet.

37/19 COMMUNITY SAFETY SERVICES ANNUAL REPORT (Agenda No. 9)

Simon Furlong summarised the annual report. In particular he highlighted the increased workload related to unauthorised encampments and an increasing number of wildfires.

Officers responded to comments from Members as follows:

- The Service continues to work with property owners to reduce the number of false alarms. The cost of these is particularly high in rural areas.
- The dip in the number of co-responding calls has been due to a review of ambulance response protocols as well as ongoing national negotiations over broadening the role, with unions advising their members to reduce co-responding.
- In dealing with unauthorised encampments, the first priority is safety. There are only two officers to cover all the encampments. Access can be a problem even with permanent sites.
- It was agreed to find a more representative photograph for the Gypsy and Traveller Service section of the report and to remove the reference to the nationality of a group of Traveller families.

RESOLVED: to approve publication of this Annual Report 2018/19 with the changes agreed at this meeting.

38/19 HER MAJESTY'S INSPECTORATE OF CONSTABULARY AND FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES REPORT ON OXFORDSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE 2019 (Agenda No. 10)

Simon Furlong introduced the report. This was the first inspection of its type for the Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service. OFRS was the first County Council service to receive a rating of at least 'Good' across all areas.

Simon Furlong responded to Members' questions as follows:

- The service's education programme promotes the fire service as a good career available to all emphasising that it is not just about fire-fighting.
- The 'requires improvement' rating on 'Understanding the risk of fire and other emergencies' is related to aging computers and some paperwork not up to date. These computers are being replaced with tablets.
- The 'requires improvement' rating on 'Managing performance and developing leaders' results from what the inspectorate thought was insufficient appraisal of on-call staff. The OFRS concern is that too high a proportion of time for on-call staff would be spent on appraisals.
- The Inspectorate has proposed to have one more full round of appraisals followed by themed inspections. This depends on commissioning by the Home Office.
- The most senior female in OFRS is an Area Manager. It is hoped that this will encourage women in the operational side to go for promotion. At the recent women's cycle race the female members of the service were given more prominence.

The Chairman noted that this was Simon Furlong's last time before the Committee as Chief Fire Officer. She thanked him on behalf of the Committee for all his work in that position.

39/19 YOUNG CARERS DEEP DIVE - NEXT STEPS

(Agenda No. 11)

The report was introduced by Councillor Nick Carter, Chairman of the working group. He stated that the recommendations had not changed since the first report went to Cabinet. They were all still valid.

Since the first report was published Healthwatch have completed an investigation into support for young carers in Oxford city which highlighted similar issues.

Members questioned whether the Committee should send the same recommendations to Cabinet again and discussed other ways in which the objectives could be pursued.

Councillor Michael Waine agreed to ask the Education Scrutiny Committee to take recommendations (e) to (h) onto their agenda.

Councillor Lawrie Stratford, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health, agreed to raise the issue of identifying young carers with school nurses as well as the drug and alcohol services.

Councillor Carter drew attention to the fact that Be Free Young Carers can only provide a service to young carers in the South and Vale districts which is why he believes that Cabinet should explore ways of helping them to expand.

The Chairman also proposed that the Committee should discuss resources for the Family Solutions Service before that is finalised.

It was agreed that the Committee would review progress against the recommendations at a future meeting.

40/19 EXEMPT ITEM
(Agenda No. 12)

41/19 SEND HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT CABINET ADVISORY GROUP
(Agenda No. 13)

The Chairman noted that the Annexes to the report were exempt but that she did not expect any discussion on them so that the meeting could continue in public.

Councillor Lorraine Lindsay-Gale, Cabinet Member for Education and Cultural Services, introduced the report from the Cabinet Advisory Group. She stated that the Group had identified other ways of making the required saving of £300,000 without any change to the Home to School Transport Policy.

Councillor Lindsay-Gale thanked the special schools that had been very supportive and helpful in achieving the savings

Allyson Milward added that the provision of transport for after-school activities – which was really respite care – had not been part of the policy and had not been very transparent. The new proposal is to set up a separate budget for that with parents /carers invited to apply for a bursary in the following academic year on an annual basis - such applications to be assessed and allocated against a cash limited sum.

The Chairman thanked the members of the Cabinet Advisory Group for their work on this issue which had not only achieved savings but had provided a better service for the children.

42/19 COMMITTEE'S WORK PROGRAMME
(Agenda No. 14)

It was agreed that the Adult and Children Safeguarding reports, on the Work Programme for the November meeting, needed to be brought forward to the September meeting. The Committee had also been asked to look at a Serious Case Review. It agreed to extend the 5 September Committee meeting to finish at 2.30 or 3pm due to the length of the agenda.

Members expressed concern that the final report of the Peer Review had still not been received. It was agreed that the Committee needed to scrutinise the Action Plan from the review.

It was agreed that the air quality issue could be taken with the Transport Plan at the November meeting. It was also suggested that the items on Investment Strategy and Income Generation could be taken together.

..... in the Chair

Date of signing 20