

## **SAFER & STRONGER COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**MINUTES** of the meeting held on Monday, 7 November 2011 commencing at 10.00 am and finishing at 1.00 pm

**Present:**

**Voting Members:** Councillor Lawrie Stratford – in the Chair  
Councillor Stewart Lilly (Deputy Chairman)  
Councillor John Goddard  
Councillor Anthony Gearing  
Councillor Susanna Pressel  
Councillor John Sanders  
Councillor Bill Service  
Councillor Alan Thompson  
Councillor Carol Viney  
Councillor Peter Jones (In place of Councillor Alyas Ahmed)

**Other Members in Attendance:** Councillor Judith Heathcoat  
Councillor David Robertson (for agenda item 6)

**Officers:**

Whole of meeting Dave Etheridge

Part of meeting

<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Officer Attending</b>
5	Carys Alty, Simon Kearey
6	Mike Bardsley, Vicky Field
7	Richard Webb, Martin Woodley
8	Nigel Wilson
9	Mat Carlile

*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.*

### **156/11 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TEMPORARY APPOINTMENTS** (Agenda No. 1)

Councillor Alyas Ahmed had sent apologies, and Councillor Peter Jones substituted.

## **157/11 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST - SEE GUIDANCE NOTE ON THE BACK PAGE**

(Agenda No. 2)

There were no declarations of interest.

## **158/11 MINUTES**

(Agenda No. 3)

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 5 September 2011 were **approved and signed with one amendment**: the amendment of 'Draft Heritage Strategy' to 'Draft Museums Strategy' (item 151/11).

Matters arising:

- Item 144/11: updates on power outage actions and Cogges Museum appointments to be circulated to committee members
- Item 144/11: Councillor Heathcoat informed the committee that the tender providing the Gypsy & Traveller Service for Chelsea had not been successful
- Item 147/11 (p.5): Councillor Pressel asked for an update about the death certificate reforms; Councillor Heathcoat replied that a number of questions had been raised about the proposals and an appointment was unlikely in the near future – an update will be made when there is news
- Item 147/11 (p.5): Councillor Heathcoat noted that the family room for the Coroner's Service at County Hall was now furnished and in use
- Item 151/11: Councillor Pressel asked for an update about archives; the chairman requested this be raised under agenda item 10 Forward Plan

## **159/11 SPEAKING TO OR PETITIONING THE COMMITTEE**

(Agenda No. 4)

There were no speakers or petitions.

## **160/11 DIRECTOR'S UPDATE**

(Agenda No. 5)

The Director's update was presented by the Chief Fire Officer & Head of Strategy and Transformation, on behalf of the Director for Social & Community Services, giving verbal updates on key issues affecting their directorates.

Councillor Heathcoat reported that the Fire & Rescue Service had received the Spirit of Fire Award for Brigade of the Year 2011. She thanked the Chief Fire Officer, senior management and all staff for a great achievement. The chairman added his congratulations to everyone for a fantastic service on behalf of the committee, which he asked to be fed back to staff. The Chief Fire Officer noted the Award was a tribute to the team and to elected members who helped by attending open days and supporting fundraising.

The verbal update by the Chief Fire Officer was followed by questions from the Committee members, primarily around the decision by Buckinghamshire to pursue

talks with Cambridgeshire rather than Oxfordshire and Berkshire for a joint control centre and the arrangements for an elected Police and Crime Commissioner and Police Crime Panels with representation from local authorities across force areas.

**AGREED** that both matters will be brought back to the committee in due course, with Councillor Mallon to be invited as chairman of the Oxfordshire Safer Communities Partnership and member of the Thames Valley Police Authority.

The Head of Strategy and Transformation gave a brief update on behalf of the Director for Social & Community Services. Members of the committee were concerned primarily with the libraries consultation which will be the single item on the committee's next agenda. Councillor Heathcoat assured the committee that papers for that meeting including equality impact assessments would be circulated as soon as possible, at the latest on 2 December.

**AGREED** that Simon Kearey will circulate the Museum Strategy in due course and respond to a request by the chairman for information about the proportion of large print books.

## **161/11 UPDATE FROM HEAD OF ADULT LEARNING**

(Agenda No. 6)

Mike Bardsley Acting Head of Adult Learning and Vicky Field, Operations Manager (HR) attended to present an annual update on Adult Learning, which had moved from Social & Community Services to Oxfordshire Customer Service within the Environment and Economy Directorate. Councillor Robertson attended as new portfolio holder for the service.

Committee members raised a number of questions, focusing on staff reductions (30% of staff in that cohort of administrators in local centres but 12.5 fte out of 115 fte for the whole service) and the need to address different skills shortages across the county, from basic numeracy and literacy skills to high tech engineering. Councillor Robertson explained that the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) would be working with the Skills Board, on which all local authorities are now represented, to link business needs with skills training.

Councillor Pressel expressed a concern about the proposal to externalise the service as other authorities had failed in attempts to do so. Vicky Field noted that any such change would be subject to detailed work and would be made safely, with plans going back to CCMT for consideration.

**AGREED** that Mike Bardsley will circulate information about numbers of learners and success rates, covering in-house and external providers; the committee wished to see a clear report come to relevant scrutiny in future, acknowledging the complexity of arrangements for the service.

**162/11 TRADING STANDARDS REPORT ON DOORSTEP CRIME**

(Agenda No. 7)

Richard Webb, Acting Head of Trading Standards, presented the key findings of the Doorstep Crime Team Annual Report 2010-2011. Councillor Pressel congratulated Martin Woodley on his MBE. She was reassured by Richard Webb that the Police were contributing to the success of the service in a number of important ways. The committee discussed the concern about how victims could be encouraged to come forward and that information should be targeted also at neighbours and relatives of vulnerable people.

It was **AGREED** that it would be useful for members to have a brief article they could pass on to local newsletters for publication or mention at Neighbourhood Action Groups. Richard Webb will provide a draft for members, including the phone number for the service.

**163/11 OXFORDSHIRE FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE RESPONSE STANDARDS PERFORMANCE 2010/11**

(Agenda No. 8)

Nigel Wilson, Area Manager and Operations and Resilience Manager Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Service, presented the Fire & Rescue – Response Standards Performance Report 2010/11. Replying to members' questions, he explained that this report did not include response rates by the service in neighbouring counties or by neighbouring services in Oxfordshire. He will circulate information about particular traffic hotspots that could affect response rates, such as Bicester Village at weekends.

**164/11 FIRE & RESCUE'S INTEGRATED RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR 2012-2013**

(Agenda No. 9)

Mat Carlile, Area Manager and Business & Improvement Manager Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service, presented the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) Oxfordshire Fire And Rescue Authority - Action Plan 2012-13. Following consultation starting on 14 November, the plan will go back to Cabinet and scrutiny if required in February 2012.

The Chief Fire Officer reassured the committee that the service's forward planning was taking into account housing and employment developments across the county. He confirmed that comments made by scrutiny would be considered as part of the consultation, but welcomed further comments.

Councillor Pressel highlighted a focus on the most vulnerable and road safety as important; she queried issues around child pedestrian casualties, 'boy racers' and enforcement by the Police, as well as arson in particular. The Chief Fire Officer noted work and achievements in these areas to date. **AGREED** that he will send an electronic update concerning child pedestrian casualties and arson reduction; it was noted that the Road Safety Strategy which was discussed at the last scrutiny meeting was currently out for consultation.

Councillor Sanders expressed concerns regarding school road safety and questioned whether zig-zag markings that could be enforced should be compulsory. Councillor Heathcoat noted that everyone was aware of these issues, which required the co-operation of schools, and suggested ensuring local Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) undertook spot checks. The chairman mentioned work the school where he served as governor had undertaken, with children in high visibility vests 'ticketing' parents who parked where they should not.

**165/11 FORWARD PLAN**

(Agenda No. 10)

A draft Work Plan for the committee was circulated. The chairman brought to the committee's attention that potential items for discussions included annual reports and statutory updates. He was looking to see if agendas could be themed by grouping related items together, inviting the relevant portfolio holder for a focused discussion.

**AGREED** that members should contact the committee officer with suggestions for future items. Items mentioned at the meeting included Adult Learning and issues around community cohesion and equalities. The chairman explained that he had asked for the remit of the committee to be clarified and whether some work streams such as Adult Learning might be covered more appropriately by a different committee.

**166/11 CLOSE OF MEETING**

(Agenda No. 11)

**Close of meeting 1pm**

**Date of next meetings**

December 12 – Single agenda item: Libraries consultation  
December 15 – Budget proposals

..... in the Chair

Date of signing .....