

PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the meeting held on Thursday, 10 January 2019 commencing at 10.00 am and finishing at 12.28 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 Charles Mathew
Councillor Glynis Phillips
Councillor Les Sibley (In place of Councillor Michael Waine)
Councillor Emily Smith
Councillor Liam Walker

Other Members in Attendance: Councillor John Sanders (for Agenda Item 7)

Officers:

Whole of meeting Lauren Rushen, Sue Whitehead (Resources)

Part of meeting

Agenda Item	Officer Attending
5 & 8	Ben Threadgold, Policy & Performance Service Manager
6	Lorna Baxter, Director of Resources; Bev Hindle, Strategic Director for Communities;
7	Owen Jenkins, Director of Community Operations, Paul Fermer, Assistant Director Community Operations; Katie Read, Senior Policy Officer

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

1/19 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TEMPORARY APPOINTMENTS

(Agenda No. 1)

An apology was submitted by Councillor Michael Waine (Councillor Les Sibley substituting).

2/19 MINUTES

(Agenda No. 3)

The Minutes of the meeting held on 13 December 2018 were approved and signed as a correct record.

3/19 CORPORATE PLAN

(Agenda No. 5)

The Corporate Plan sets out the County Council's overarching strategy. It states our vision for 'thriving communities' in Oxfordshire and describes the council's main priorities.

The Corporate Plan 2018-2021 was agreed by Council in July 2018. A light touch review and update had been done to this document to ensure it accurately reflects Council priorities and areas of focus for 2019/20 and beyond. The Committee had before them a Corporate Plan for 2019-2021.

Members considered the format of the report and whether it was useful at this stage to have a further draft of the whole Plan to Committee. Ben Threadgold, Policy and Performance Service Manager in response to a request undertook to circulate a summary of the changes to the Plan to Committee members.

4/19 SERVICE AND RESOURCE PLANNING 2019/20 - 2028/29

(Agenda No. 6)

The Committee considered draft capital proposals and the draft Treasury Management Strategy to provide comment to the Cabinet before proposals are reviewed on 22 January. Council will meet to agree the budget and MTFP on 12 February 2019.

In relation to proposals for the capital programme members raised the following points:

Capital Budget Proposals:

- The committee requested that officers provide a briefing to provide more detail about the location of housing numbers associated with the Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) bid in the Didcot Garden Town and A40 Smart Corridor area.
- The committee recognised that the exact route of the Oxford-Cambridge Expressway is not yet known but were keen that planning and scenario testing is undertaken as soon as more information is provided by Highways England as

they recognise that this is likely to have a significant impact on future capital budgets.

- The committee were keen to understand the relationship between capital investment and revenue savings using real examples. Members asked for further information about the development of children's crisis care provision as an opportunity for capital investment to drive down revenue expenditure in a service area.
- The committee queried plans to recruit additional staff with appropriate skills to manage the large capital sums being proposed and to ensure a return on investment.
- The committee highlighted that further work would be required to understand the implications of the Carillion liquidation and to ensure that there is appropriate funding in place to manage the legacy of this.

Capital and Investment Strategy:

- The committee were supportive of the organisational change in culture towards considering more 'invest to save' measures and encouraged greater exploration of innovation.
- The committee were keen to see more examples of invest to save work as these emerge and to scrutinise the Investment Strategy as this is developed.
- The committee felt that the biggest examples of investing to save would be found in public health.

Review of Charges:

- The committee queried whether increasing the charges for the Music Service could have a detrimental impact on participation and negate the potential increases in income.
- - The committee were pleased to see a reduction in the cost of season ticket parking at Thornhill and Water Eaton Park and Ride sites.

5/19 HIGHWAYS DEEP DIVE REPORT

(Agenda No. 7)

The condition of roads has a significant impact on levels public satisfaction with the Council and their local area. As a result, the Performance Scrutiny Committee commissioned a deep dive into the factors affecting public perception and experience of highways and the Council's approach to improving this. From July to November a small group of councillors worked with officers to identify opportunities for improving the condition of the road network, tackling congestion, better managing the impact of street works and adapting our approach to maintenance contracts and partnership working on highways. The Committee considered a report that presented the findings and recommendations from the deep dive for the Performance Scrutiny Committee to consider.

Councillor John Sanders who sat on the Deep Dive group was welcomed to the table for this item.

Councillor Jenny Hannaby, who led the Deep Dive presented the findings of the Group and their recommendations.

During discussion the following points were made:

- There was general support for the recommendations with members noting that a great deal of work had been undertaken.
- Member involvement had been a key theme of the work of the Group. Members welcomed the recent initiative to seek input from local councillors on priority repairs for their areas.
- Providing councillors with timely information of road works and incidents in their area would be extremely helpful.
- Members felt it was important that the Committee be assured that their work was being considered and taken forward. It was agreed that the Committee receive a progress report.
- Referring to the resource implications of the recommendations it was highlighted the need to look at charging regimes and penalties for sub-contractors.
- Members highlighted particular problems in their local areas.
- It was suggested that work by utilities be added to the list of notifications to councillors with tighter lines of communication.

Responding to comments officers and Group members commented:

- That although looking primarily at road ways, footpaths and cycleways had been part of the review. In the timescales it had not been necessary to limit the scope of the review and some areas merited a deep dive of their own. In terms of notification of works to councillors then cycleways and footpaths were part of the same process.
- That member involvement in the review of the Highways Asset Management Plan would be considered and it was possible that a Cabinet Advisory Group would be established.
- Officers had found the review valuable and were supportive of the recommendations, but they would need to be costed and would need additional detailed work.

RESOLVED: to:

- (a) support and approve the following **RECOMMENDATIONS** for submission to Cabinet:
1. Ensure there is councillor input into the review of the Highways Asset Management Plan, and that this includes consideration of flexibility for local prioritisation.
 2. Ask Cabinet to ensure there is a smarter process for developing a programme of work to utilise the additional capital investment in highways and that a robust capital governance process is in place to help shape this and improve risk management.

3. Ensure officers consider the impact on public perception when developing a programme of work and improve opportunities for councillors to influence this based on local priorities.
 4. Ask officers to work with SKANSKA to explore a business case for greater levels of supervision that will ensure the quality of work remains high, including a consideration of how in-house resources could be utilised differently.
 5. Ensure that opportunities to utilise staff in flexible ways are explored further with SKANSKA, so that the maximum benefit of having staff on site can be realised.
 6. Encourage officers to explore more innovative maintenance methods and tools.
 7. Ask Cabinet to ensure an effective approach to publicly publishing and communicating the highways programme of work is in place.
 8. Ask officers to develop a more robust process for informing councillors of local road improvements in their division, so that they can advise on works that need to be prioritised and support early communication with residents.
 9. Ask officers to ensure all responses to highways enquiries / reports through Fix My Street include a named officer contact.
 10. Ensure direct points of contact are communicated and established for key stakeholders (e.g. town and parish councils) to ensure that local highway priorities can be followed up and dealt with more efficiently.
 11. Support the Council's ambition to become a Permitting Authority and request a report on the expected impact of this in mid-2019.
 12. Support the development of a comprehensive out of hours traffic management provision to ensure effective management of the impact of major incidents and network failures at these times.
 13. Support the principle of a having greater focus on enforcement.
 14. Ask the Cabinet to instruct officers to explore a case for employing dedicated resource for enforcement across all Highways services/functions.
 15. Ask the Director of Infrastructure Operations to ensure that a structured and robust approach to managing community engagement is in place.
- (b) Ask officers to report back to Performance Scrutiny in 6-9 months on the impact of a refreshed approach to community engagement, including evidence of the effectiveness of the Fix My Street Superusers pilot project.

6/19 SCRUTINY OF PARTNERSHIPS

(Agenda No. 8)

The Committee considered a report setting out the way in which work with key partnerships in Oxfordshire has been presented to Councillors and making proposals for future scrutiny.

During discussion the Committee:

- Supported the general approach but felt that more information was needed on a number of the Partnerships and the Committee’s role in and approach to scrutinising them, particularly with regard to the LEP, Growth Board and the Oxfordshire Environment Partnership.
- Noted the role of the Education Scrutiny Committee in relation to the Oxfordshire Strategic Schools Partnership Board and Oxfordshire Early Years Board.
- Noted that although there were three scrutiny committees the Audit & Governance Committee also carried out a scrutiny function.

RESOLVED: to:

- (a) note the revised approach to scrutiny of partnership arrangements moving forward; and
- (b) agree that further information be supplied on a number of the Partnerships and the Committee’s role in and approach to scrutinising them, particularly with regard to the LEP, Growth Board and the Oxfordshire Environment Partnership.

7/19 COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME
(Agenda No. 9)

The Committee agreed it’s work programme for future meetings based on key priorities and discussion in the meeting.

8/19 VOTE OF THANKS

The Committee noted that Katie Read was about to take maternity leave and placed on record their thanks for her magnificent support of the Committee.

..... in the Chair

Date of signing 2019