

WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

COUNCIL – WEDNESDAY 14 MAY 2014

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES
REPORT OF THE CHAIRMEN OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

(Contacts: Councillors C G Dingwall; P J Handley and J F Mills)

(The report is for information)

1. PURPOSE

To advise the Council of the work undertaken by the three Overview and Scrutiny Committees in the year 2013/2014.

2. RECOMMENDATION

That the report be noted.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1. In accordance with the Constitution of the Council the Overview and Scrutiny Committees are required to report annually to full Council on their workings and make recommendations for future work programmes and amended working methods if appropriate.
- 3.2. The main items considered by each committee are summarised in the appendices to this report. In addition regular reports on committee work programmes, Cabinet work programme and performance indicators were received by each meeting.
- 3.3. All three committees considered the draft budget proposals in November/December 2013 and made recommendations for consideration by Cabinet.

Economic and Social Overview & Scrutiny Committee

- 3.4. The Committee had a very busy work programme for the year and considered many important issues within its wide ranging remit.
- 3.5. As in previous years the committee has been proactive in inviting representatives of other organisations to attend meetings to discuss issues and answer questions. This year representatives from South Central Ambulance Service, Cottsway Housing, Thames Valley Police, Age UK, West Oxfordshire Early Intervention Service and GLL Better have attended.
- 3.6. There have been significant changes in legislation and guidance in a number of areas, particularly in relation to Welfare Reform and changes to the provision of health services and the committee will be monitoring the impact of changes in the future.
- 3.7. The committee has continued to monitor progress in respect of issues at RAF Brize Norton, Community Safety matters and development of the Local Development Framework.
- 3.8. During the year the committee became aware of a particular issue regarding Cottsway Housing Association and a special meeting was held in June 2013. The Chief Executive of the Association attended the meeting to answer questions and outline the systems that had been put in place to address the problems that had arisen.

- 3.9. In July the committee received an update from the Area Commander for Thames Valley Police. Consideration was also given to the draft Community Safety Strategy 2013-2017 and a report relating to the management of the night time economy in the district.
- 3.10. The committee has also focused on the economy of the district and issues affecting businesses. In particular a review group has been established to look at the impact of the Marriotts Walk development and they have received input from a number of sources including a retail expert. The committee is also looking at rural broadband in respect of both residential and business users.
- 3.11. A table showing the items considered at each meeting is attached as [Appendix A](#).

Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee

- 3.12. A major focus of the Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee in the past year has been the impact of flooding and sewerage issues in the district. The committee has met with Thames Water to discuss issues of concern and has continued to lobby to get matters rectified. The flooding experienced in the area during the winter has also been reviewed by the committee.
- 3.13. In respect of the waste contract the Committee have been receiving regular update reports and a performance monitoring report was received at the March 2014 meeting. The Committee has also considered the 'in-house' commercial waste and recycling service and the marketing of this to increase the number of users.
- 3.14. The Committee considered a new Environmental and Low Carbon Plan and recommended approval to the Cabinet. The document replaces the previous Climate Change Policy the document details key actions the Council will undertake and it will be reviewed and performance monitored each year and updated where necessary.
- 3.15. During the year the committee has received presentations in respect of a number of issues. This included a presentation from the Building Research Establishment (BRE) who had been commissioned to undertake the Stock Condition Survey and Health Impact Assessment of properties in West Oxfordshire.
- 3.16. At the January 2014 meeting the committee received an update presentation in respect of the Air Quality Management Areas and Strategy for the district.
- 3.17. Another major report was received at the March 2014 meeting in respect of the future provision of public conveniences in the district.
- 3.18. A Notice of Motion relating to traffic matters in Bladon was referred to the committee by Council and detailed consideration was given to the issues raised. As a result the Council, as recommended by the committee, supported the views of residents and wrote to Oxfordshire County Council seeking highway improvements.
- 3.19. A table showing the main items considered at each meeting is attached as [Appendix B](#).

Finance and Management O&S Committee (FMOS)

- 3.20. It has been another challenging year for the Council as the prevailing economic conditions have become increasingly tight and the outlook ever more uncertain. FMOS has been at the forefront of the fight to cut costs and identify efficiencies wherever possible and give advice on the way forward for the Council.
- 3.21. Members considered a report at the June 2013 in respect of performance of the current property investments held by the council. The committee has also considered

the impact of the New Homes Bonus and Localisation of Business Rates on council finances.

- 3.22. During the year the committee has considered the call-in of a cabinet decisions relating to the Greystones Depot at Chipping Norton and the disposal of land in Woodstock. In addition Notices of Motion were referred by Council in respect of Support for the Local Economy and also The Living Wage and in both cases the committee gave detailed consideration to the matters and made recommendations to Council.
- 3.23. The committee has continued to undertake service efficiency reviews by receiving presentations from Heads of Service and looking in detail at the work undertaken and efficiency measures introduced in those areas of work. During the year information was received relating to the work of the Business Information and Change and Customer Service sections.
- 3.24. Reports were also received in respect of Contract and Procurement arrangements and the new Community Infrastructure Levy including the impact on the delivery of affordable housing.
- 3.25. As in previous years the committee has received regular reports on treasury management activity and performance and also performance indicators relating to the work of the committee. Recommendations were also made to Cabinet on the Budget for 2014/2015 and the annual review of the Medium Term Financial Strategy.
- 3.26. The matters considered at each meeting is summarised at [Appendix C](#).

4. ALTERNATIVES/OPTIONS

None. The report is required by the Constitution of the Council.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None.

6. REASONS

The annual report is required by the Constitution of the Council

(Authors: Councillors C G Dingwall; P J Handley and J F Mills)

Date: 11 April 2014

Background Papers:

None

All three committees received regular reports in respect of their individual work programmes, Cabinet work programme and performance indicators.

Economic and Social O&S Committee

Notable Items from Specific Meetings

Date of Meeting	Items
30 May 2013	The Committee received a presentation from representatives of South Central Ambulance Service in respect of the performance of the trust.
	Established a review group to consider the impact of the Marriotts Walk development.
	Received an update on the introduction of the Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group.
	Considered an update on noise amelioration measures at RAF Brize Norton.
18 June 2013 (Special Meeting)	Representatives of Cottsway Housing attended to discuss developments at the housing association and answer questions in respect of issues that had arisen.
11 July 2013	A presentation was given by the Area Commander of Thames Valley Police in respect of priorities for policing in the area.
	The Committee considered and commented upon the draft Community Safety Strategy 2013-2017
	Received an update on work being undertaken to manage the Night Time Economy of the district.
	Considered an update on action taken in respect of recommendations of the Leisure Contract Review Group.
19 September 2013	Representatives of Age UK attended the meeting and outlined work undertaken by the organisation to support older persons in West Oxfordshire.
21 November 2013	Received a presentation from representatives of the West Oxfordshire Early Intervention Service on the work undertaken with children and families in the area.
	Considered the draft budget for 2014/2015 and made recommendations to Cabinet.
	The Committee received a report updating on the implementation of various strands of the Welfare Reform programme.
23 January 2014	An update in respect of the leisure contract was received. Representatives of GLL Better attended to provide a verbal update and answer questions.
	Considered the annual Local Plan monitoring report and made recommendations to Cabinet.
24 April 2014	Considered a notice of motion in respect of support for local public houses and made recommendations to Council.
	Received an update with regard to the rollout of high speed broadband in the district.

Environment O&S Committee

Notable Items from Specific Meetings

Date of Meeting	Items
6 June 2013	The committee received a report in respect of the Thames Water Investment Programme and flooding issues in the district. Representatives of Thames Water attended the meeting to respond to questions.
18 July 2013	Considered a notice of motion in respect of traffic management issues in Bladon and made recommendations to Council.
	Received and noted the strategy and action plan for commercial services.
	The committee considered a report in respect of aspects of the management of the night time economy within its remit.
26 September 2013	Considered an update report in respect of responses received from Thames Water to questions raised at previous meetings.
	The committee received an update on actions taken in respect of climate change matters
28 November 2013	Consideration was given to a report, together with a presentation from the Building Research Establishment, on the stock condition survey and health impact assessment of housing in the district.
	Considered the draft budget for 2014/2015 and made recommendations to Cabinet.
30 January 2014	The committee considered a report in respect of the abandoned shopping trolley policy and made recommendations to Cabinet. Public participation was also received on this issue.
	A presentation was received updating on the Air Quality Strategy and Management Areas in the district.
	Consideration was given to a report outlining a new Low Carbon and Environmental Plan which was then recommended to Cabinet for approval.
	Members considered possible changes to the performance indicators reported to committee and these were supported.
	The committee received an update in respect of recycling performance across the district.
20 March 2014	Consideration was given to an update report on the response to recent flooding in the district and future action that could be undertaken.
	A report was considered outlining the findings of a review of public conveniences and making recommendations on future provision.
	An update report on the current waste and recycling contract was received.

Finance and Management O&S Committee

Notable Items from Specific Meetings

Date of Meeting	Items
5 June 2013	The committee gave consideration to a detailed review of current property investments and their performance in the previous year.
17 July 2013	Consideration was given to a report outlining the financial implications of the New Homes Bonus and Localisation of Business Rates.
	A report was considered in respect of the 'call in' of a Cabinet decision in respect of the future use of Greystones Depot, Chipping Norton.
	The Committee considered a report with regard to a Notice of Motion relating to support for the local economy and made recommendations to council.
	Members received a report in respect of a Notice of Motion regarding the living wage and made recommendations to council.
2 October 2013	The committee received a presentation from Investec, the Council's external fund managers, in respect of treasury management performance. A report was also considered regarding the performance of funds.
	The Joint Head of Business Information and Change gave a presentation as part of the on-going service efficiency reviews.
	A report on contract and procurement arrangements was received and noted.
4 December 2013	Consideration was given to a report recommending a way forward in respect of the Community Infrastructure Levy.
	Considered the draft budget for 2014/2015 and made recommendations to Cabinet.
	Received and endorsed the annual report in respect of the Medium Term Financial Strategy.
5 February 2014	A report was considered in relation to the 'call in' of a Cabinet decision on the disposal of land at Woodstock.
	The committee gave consideration to a report in respect of the Council's Treasury Management Strategy for 2014/2015.
	The Joint Head of Customer Services gave a presentation as part of the on-going service efficiency reviews.
30 April 2014	Considered a report in respect of Oxfordshire County Council Pension Fund back funding payment for 2014/15
	Received a report advising members of treasury management activity including the performance of internal and external fund managers for 2013/2014.