

## WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee  
held in Committee Room 1, Woodgreen, Witney, Oxon  
at 2.00pm on Thursday 16 July 2015

### PRESENT

Councillors: P Emery (Vice-Chairman in the Chair), M A Barrett, R J M Bishop,  
A S Coles; P J G Dorward; H B Eaglestone; E J Fenton and Miss G R Hill

Also Present: D S T Enright and A D Harvey

#### 14 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TEMPORARY APPOINTMENTS

Apologies for absence were received from Mr M Brennan, Mr D A Cotterill,  
Mr H J Howard, Ms E P R Leffman and Mr A H K Postan.

#### 15 MINUTES

**RESOLVED:** That, the minutes of the meetings of the Committee held on 4 June 2015 be  
approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

#### 16 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest from Members or Officers in matters to be  
considered at the meeting.

#### 17 PARTICIPATION OF THE PUBLIC

No submissions were received from the public in accordance with the Council's Rules of  
Procedure.

#### 18 COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2015/2016

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Environment and Commercial  
Services providing an update on progress with the committee work programme for  
2015/2016.

##### Waste Contract

The Head of Environment and Commercial Services advised that a member workshop was  
being planned for September in respect of the new contract. It was explained that it would  
be an opportunity for feedback from councillors and from there more detailed options  
would be developed for consideration by the council. The arrangements for the workshop  
would be agreed in the coming weeks and all members invited to attend.

Mr Enright asked if comparative data with other authorities would be available. The Head  
of Environment and Commercial Services advised that information from other authorities,  
in particular the best performing councils, would form part of the workshop. In response  
to Mr Coles it was confirmed that the figures would also include neighbouring authorities  
and the 2020 Vision partners.

Mr Harvey suggested that it was important that a thorough review was undertaken as whilst the current collection system was successful it had not met the original target in respect of recycling rates. It was further indicated that recycling targets, which were set Europe wide, would be even more challenging after 2020.

### Flood Prevention

The committee noted that Thames Water had arranged a meeting with interested parties at Brize Norton on 22 July and another meeting at Carterton was being organised.

Mr Eaglestone highlighted the importance of the Environment Agency continuing to clear watercourses to reduce flood risk.

### Thames Water – Infrastructure Issues

Mr Enright asked if further pressure could be put on Thames Water to try and resolve the issues in the district and whether there were any provisions within the Localism Act that could assist. The Head of Environment and Commercial Services advised that there was not really anything within the legislation that could help but the council could continue to lobby for further action.

Mr Harvey suggested that the degree of co-operation with Thames Water and the Environment Agency had improved significantly since 2007. Mr Harvey thanked officers for their work in negotiating with the responsible authorities to obtain improvements.

### Open Space Grass Cutting

Mr Emery highlighted that Eynsham Parish Council had been working with the district council and were pleased with progress to date. The Head of Environment and Commercial Services advised that the mapping exercise with Eynsham Parish Council and Chipping Norton Town Council had been completed and feedback was awaited. A meeting was also being arranged with Witney Town Council to explore opportunities for collaborative working.

(Mr Dorward joined the meeting at this juncture)

Mr Enright expressed support for working with local councils and highlighted problems of multiple authorities/contractors having maintenance responsibilities for open space in the same area. Mr Enright suggested that there were also planning issues with open space in new developments.

The Head of Environment and Commercial Services acknowledged that there was often disparity in the quality and frequency of grass cutting when different bodies were responsible and different contractors undertook the works. The aim of the mapping process was to identify who had responsibility in each area and hopefully develop a more holistic approach.

Mr Harvey concurred that the quality of maintenance could vary widely in the same area and it was important that, if possible, contracts were more consistent and the mapping process provided a good basis for this.

## Recycling Bring Sites

The Head of Environment and Commercial Services reported that monitoring of sites was continuing. The committee was advised that CCTV was to be installed at the Carterton site as a trial and it would be publicised and signs placed on site advising people that cameras were being used. The Head of Environment and Commercial Services outlined that the use of cameras was expensive but would hopefully lead to a reduction in fly tipping and the associated costs of clearing sites.

The Head of Environment and Commercial Services reported that stickers were now being placed on fly tips to show that the particular incident was being investigated. In addition new signage was to be installed at bring sites in the coming weeks.

The committee noted that Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) was to undertake a consultation in respect of the future provision of recycling centres in the district. The Head of Environment and Commercial Services advised that further details would be obtained and a report would be brought to members to enable feedback to the consultation. Mr Harvey suggested that, having already lost Dean Pit, it was important that the council sought to protect provision at Dix Pit.

Mr Dorward highlighted specific problems with the site at Sainsburys in Witney and in response the process for reporting problems to the council was clarified. Mr Eaglestone referred to the site at Edington Square, Witney that had been subject to vandalism and fly tipping and asked if it would be preferable to remove the facility. The Head of Environment and Commercial Services acknowledged the concern and confirmed that the situation was being reviewed. It was emphasised that the council would not want to reduce provision but there may be options to relocate.

Mr Coles suggested that it would be beneficial to members if they were kept advised of the outcome of investigations in to fly tipping. Mr Coles asked if the council had been given notice by OCC about the potential closure of recycling sites. The Head of Environment and Commercial Services advised that it had been mentioned at officer meetings but no detail had been given. Mr Coles expressed concern that closures would have implications for the district council in that it would be expected to provide new facilities. Mr Harvey concurred and indicated that OCC was looking at making savings and non-statutory services would be most at risk.

Mr Fenton referred to overspill of material at the bring sites and questioned whether there was enough capacity or the collection frequency was not correct. The Head of Environment and Commercial Services advised that tonnages were recorded and discussions were on going with Kier about the frequency of emptying containers. It was noted that any changes could have financial implications.

**RESOLVED:** That progress with the Committee Work Programme for 2015/2016 be noted.

## 19 CABINET WORK PROGRAMME

Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Executive giving the committee the opportunity to comment on the Cabinet Work Programme published on 23 June 2015.

The Strategic Director clarified that Cabinet would only be considering a draft of the Council Plan for consultation purposes at the September meeting. The final decision on the plan would be taken by Council.

**RESOLVED:** That the Cabinet Work Programme be noted.

## 20 CAR PARKING STRATEGY

The Head of Environment and Commercial Services gave the background to the strategy and outlined the revised project plan. It was explained that the initial tender response had been significantly above the budget and therefore a revised approach was needed. As a result as much work as possible would be undertaken in-house with specialists being employed for some aspects. The Head of Environment and Commercial Services then detailed the work to be undertaken and advised that options for funding the strategy were being assessed.

Mr Dorward asked how the consultation process would be undertaken. The Head of Environment and Commercial Services reported that a communications plan would be produced and there would be promotion of the consultation through press articles, social media as well as with members and local councils. Mr Coles suggested that the Traffic Advisory Committees in the district should also be consulted.

Mr Enright referred to planning matters and a suggestion that on-street parking could be used for traffic calming. The Head of Environment and Commercial Services reminded the committee that on-street provision was the responsibility of OCC but this did not preclude issues coming through as part of the consultation.

**RESOLVED:** That progress with the Car Parking Strategy be noted.

## 21 MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

### Witney Woodland Volunteers

Mr Coles highlighted the excellent work being undertaken by Witney Woodland Volunteers who cleared undergrowth and maintained some of the open spaces in the town. Mr Coles suggested that it would be beneficial to receive an update on their work at a future meeting as it may provide a template for other areas.

Mr Emery and Mr Harvey expressed support for the idea and it was further suggested that representatives of other similar organisations in the district could also attend and provide details of their work.

### Ardley Energy Recovery Facility (ERF)

Mr Harvey advised that a visit for members to the Ardley ERF was being arranged and councillors would be advised of arrangements in due course.

The meeting closed at 2.55pm

Chairman