

## WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee  
held in Committee Room I, Woodgreen, Witney, Oxon  
at 2.00pm on Thursday 29 September 2016

### PRESENT

Councillors: Mr D A Cotterill (Chairman) A H K Postan (Vice-Chairman), R J M Bishop, M Brennan, A S Coles, J C Cooper, P J G Dorward, H B Eaglestone, P Emery, Mrs E H N Fenton, E J Fenton, Miss G R Hill, and Mrs C E Reynolds

Also Present: Mrs M J Crossland and R A Langridge

### 27 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TEMPORARY APPOINTMENTS

The Head of Paid Service reported receipt of the following resignation and temporary appointment:-

Mr J C Cooper for Ms E P R Leffman

### 28 MINUTES

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting held on 21 July 2016 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### 29 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

### 30 PARTICIPATION OF THE PUBLIC

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

### 31 COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2016/2017

The Committee received and considered the report of the Strategic Director which gave an update on progress in relation to its Work Programme for 2016/2017.

#### 31.1 Waste Collection Contract

It was noted that a report on the Management of the waste collection contract appeared later in the agenda.

#### 31.2 Thames Water Flood Prevention and Infrastructure Issues

The Committee noted that Thames Water had advised that the company had planned their winter sewer network flow surveys and would be looking to install these as we move into winter when more suitable conditions for identifying infiltration for example are experienced.

The company would be installing flow monitors on the rising mains from a number of sewage pumping stations. This would allow them to assess the performance of the asset and identify periods of 'clean' water (ground water, fluvial or pluvial) ingress during wet periods and analyse pump run times.

Borehole monitoring locations had been planned out and the company would be looking to sink these following the installation of monitoring equipment.

Historical river level trends would continue to be reviewed and CCTV work was to commence in October and would continue to be undertaken over the winter.

In relation to the flooding questionnaire surveys the Witney (Brize Norton) survey was on-going whilst both the Carterton and Standlake surveys had been completed. Members requested that the results of the surveys be made available to them.

Mr Fenton questioned whether there had been any progress towards connecting the settlement of Black Bourton to mains drainage. Officers undertook to raise this with Thames Water.

The Chairman advised that Members of the Lowlands Area Planning Sub-Committee had expressed concern regarding Thames Water responses to consultations on planning applications and suggested that the Committee might wish to write to the Authority to arrange a meeting between Officers to discuss ways in which arrangements could be improved.

Mrs Crossland indicated that there appeared to be a lack of communication within Thames Water between those working at a local level and those with a more strategic remit as responses received in relation to minor applications often appeared to ignore the cumulative impact of other development in the vicinity. Mrs Crossland considered that it would be helpful to discover more about the company's internal arrangements for responding to planning consultations. Other Members of the Committee echoed these concerns and emphasised the difficulty of resisting applications for development without the support of the statutory consultees.

The Strategic Director agreed that it was important for Members to be confident that those responding to consultations were aware of the bigger picture and to be sure that the Planning Officers were providing sufficient information to elicit a comprehensive response.

It was **AGREED** that representatives of Thames Water be invited to meet with the Committee to explain the way and basis upon which responses to planning consultations were dealt with.

### 31.3 Open Space Grass Cutting

The Head of Environment and Commercial Services advised Members that work on the waste collection and recycling contract had taken priority over this project.

Mr Dorward noted that the Cabinet Work Programme made reference to consideration of a report on approval of funding for grass cutting and questioned if this item was related. The Strategic Director advised that the Cabinet report, which was not now expected to come forward until November, related to ways in which reductions in County Council funding could be addressed. The District Council had always undertaken additional cuts beyond those carried out by the County but there were concerns that a further reduction in frequency could be introduced in future. Whilst the County Council's priority remained highway safety, there was already some concern that this could be compromised.

Mr Coles questioned whether the County Council had reduced its service below two cuts a year. It was confirmed that this standard was being maintained but that there had been suggestions that it could be reduced further.

Mr Langridge indicated that, whilst there was a reluctance for the District Council to take up reductions in County Council services, the welfare of residents remained paramount.

31.4. Low Carbon and Environment Plan

In response to issues raised by Mr Coles at the last meeting, the Strategic Director advised that the Council had a public duty in relation to biodiversity and the Property Team was already looking at ways in which it could promote biodiversity now and in the future in the context of the Council's own premises.

A Biodiversity Officer had been appointed recently and was in the process of preparing a biodiversity action plan.

31.5 Car Parking Strategy

The Head of Environment and Commercial Services advised that the public consultation document was due to be received from the Council's consultant and would be circulated to Members in the middle of October. The two week public consultation period would commence shortly after that and a report would be submitted to the Cabinet in December. Mr Howard sought confirmation that the report would not make reference to the possibility of introducing car parking charges. In response, the Head of Environment and Commercial Services advised that the report would identify current issues and future pressures in light of the emerging Local Plan. In response to a question from Mr Postan, she confirmed that the Strategy would be closely aligned to the Local Plan.

21.4 Environmental Regulations

Mr Coles noted that the decision to monitor the aftermath of Brexit and the dismantling of the Department for Energy and Climate Change had not been added to the Committee Work Programme as agreed. The Strategic Director apologised for this oversight and undertook to remedy the omission.

**RESOLVED:** That, subject to the above amendment, progress with regard to the Committee's Work Programme for 2015/2016 be noted.

32 CABINET WORK PROGRAMME

The report of the Chief Executive giving an opportunity for the Committee to comment on the Work Programme published on 20 September 2016 was received.

**RESOLVED:** That the Cabinet Work Programme published on 20 September 2016 be noted.

33 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

**RESOLVED:** that the Cabinet being of the opinion that it was likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted, that if members of the public were present during the following items of business there would be a disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)), the public be excluded from the meeting.

34 MANAGEMENT OF THE KIER CONTRACT AND TRANSFER OF WASTE AND RECYCLING SERVICES TO UBICO

The Committee received and considered the report of the Head of Environment and Commercial Services containing exempt information regarding the workload and risks associated with managing the final 12 months of the Waste and Recycling Contract with

Kier and implementing significant service change in the transfer of services to Ubico Limited and the change to service design.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the difficulties with the Kier Contract, and associated risks to the Council, be noted;
- (b) That the Cabinet be requested to recommend that the Council approves the additional temporary resources to support the contract management and service transfer over the next 12 months as set out in paragraph 6.9 of the report to be funded from Earmarked Reserves - 2016/17 and within the Waste Services Budget - 2017/18;
- (c) That the Cabinet be requested to recommend that the Council approves the requisite sum within the 2016/17 capital programme for the purchase of the Bartec Software System, to be funded from the Ubico Earmarked Reserve; and
- (d) That the Cabinet be requested to recommend that the Council approves the permanent establishment of a shared Garden Waste Project Officer at an estimated cost of £16,000 plus the on-going revenue costs of the Bartec System £4,600, both to be incorporated into 2017//18 Revenue Budgets as growth items.

35 MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

Mr Fenton made reference to a number of complaints that had arisen with regard to the issue of fixed penalty notices in Bampton and Clanfield.

In response, the Head of Environment and Commercial Services explained that, whilst the District Council enforced parking restrictions, only the County Council had the power to make and revise Traffic Orders. Public Safety remained the Council's primary consideration and it was committed to work with the County Council to address these concerns.

Mr Coles drew attention to difficulties experienced as a result of illegal and indiscriminate parking in Corn Street in Witney.

Mr Langridge advised that concerns such as those expressed would be addressed in the forthcoming Car Parking Strategy and undertook to make efforts to address the current concerns in an appropriate fashion.

The meeting closed at 3.25pm

Chairman