

WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the Economic and Social Overview & Scrutiny Committee
held via video conferencing at 6.30pm on Thursday 21 January 2021

PRESENT

Councillors: Andrew Beaney (Chairman), Laetisia Carter (Vice-Chairman), Joy Aitman, Luci Ashbourne, Jill Bull, Julian Cooper, Jane Doughty, Harry Eaglestone, Hilary Fenton, Ted Fenton, Andy Graham, Nick Leverton and Carl Rylett.

Also in attendance: Councillor Duncan Enright, Marilyn Davies, Jeff Haine, Toby Morris and Geoff Saul.

Officers in Attendance: Giles Hughes (Chief Executive); Heather McCulloch (Healthy Communities Manager); Kim Hudson (Senior Policy Officer) and Amy Bridgewater-Carnall (Senior Strategic Support Officer).

27. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 19 November 2020 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

28. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TEMPORARY APPOINTMENTS

Councillor Ted Fenton substituted for Councillor Jake Acock.

29. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Beaney declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 7, Developer Contributions SPD Document, as he worked for an academy.

30. PARTICIPATION OF THE PUBLIC

There were no submissions from members of the public in accordance with the Council's Rules of Procedure.

31. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no Chairman's Announcements.

32. CONSULTATION ON THE DRAFT DEVELOPER CONTRIBUTIONS
SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT

The Committee considered the draft Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document which had been published for public consultation late in 2020, having been considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 21 October.

The Developer Contributions SPD, attached as an appendix to the report, provided detailed guidance to developers, infrastructure providers and local communities on the likely infrastructure requirements placed on developments in West Oxfordshire.

The SPD had been available for public consultation for six weeks from 9 November to 21 December 2020 and could be accessed via the Council's website. Comments could also be submitted using the Council's consultation portal or by emailing the Planning Policy team.

Following collation of the consultation responses, a revised SPD would be prepared and submitted to Cabinet to agree a further, final period of consultation prior to adoption.

The Senior Policy Officer introduced the report and answered questions from Members. The areas discussed by the Committee included:

- The proposed rates for residential developments and suggestion to add 'per square metre' into the table, for ease of understanding;
- Burial Ground space and the need for additional space at areas other than Eynsham as detailed at 13.40;
- The importance of play spaces being accessible for all abilities;
- CIL receipts and the proportion to Town and Parish Councils;
- Education and whether the County Council were using historic or futuristic data;
- Community facilities and the recent example by Milton Keynes where a dwelling had been provided by the developer to establish a community hub.

Having read the report and made suggestions and comments to the officers present, the Committee noted the report.

RESOLVED: that the comments made by Members be noted.

33. DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

The Committee had been due to receive a presentation from the Strategic Lead for Domestic Abuse at the County Council. However, due to ill health, she was unable to attend. Therefore, the committee agreed to defer her presentation to the next meeting.

In her absence, the Committee received an update from the Healthy Communities Manager. She advised that the team was due to attend a contract meeting with ODAS (Domestic Abuse Service Provider for the County, next Monday where an update would be received and any questions that Members had could be put forward for a response at that time. Mrs McCulloch also encouraged Members with queries to contact her at any time.

Mrs McCulloch provided information on liaison with community groups and how some were involved with the Oxfordshire Strategic Management Group, including St Mary's Church as well as sub groups for Rural Domestic violence. Following reference to a paper written by Mrs McCulloch for the Oxfordshire Strategic Board based on a report by the Rural Services Network relating to rural services, it was agreed to share this with members. It was noted that in rural areas, people often took longer to report domestic abuse along with other key factors relating to rurality.

Members noted that the pandemic had had a significant impact on the nature of domestic violence and the Committee was assured that officers continued to work and liaise with the police and voluntary groups across the District.

Councillor Graham flagged the importance of inclusivity for the LGBTQ community and requested that this be highlighted at future meetings.

Members noted the discussion.

34. INVESTMENT IN IMPROVED RAIL CONNECTIVITY IN OXFORDSHIRE

Arising from its request at its previous meeting, the Committee considered the above matter in the context of the report prepared for the meeting of the Oxfordshire Growth Board on 24 November 2020.

Members were provided with a link to the supplementary paper from the Growth Board and were encourage by Councillor Cooper to take full account of it.

He reminded the Committee of the importance of keeping pressure on the Transport Minister to ensure he was aware of the importance of the line running through the area.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

35. COUNCIL PRIORITIES AND SERVICE PERFORMANCE REPORT 2020/2021
QUARTER TWO

The Committee considered the previously circulated report of the Chief Executive, which provided details of the Council's progress towards achieving its aims and priorities set out in the Council Plan 2020-2024, and service performance during Quarter Two.

Comments and queries on Annexes A and B were as follows:

- Page 10 referred to the withdrawal of funding by GLL for the 'Inclusion Officer' – Mr Hughes acknowledged the impact of Covid and agreed to check the details moving forwards;
- Page 23 indicated a spike in the time taken to process new Housing Benefit Claims – officers agreed to investigate the reasons;
- Page 30 – Planning Applications Determined and the percentage of applications agreed within agreed timescales;
- Sports England Assessment – Members felt it would be useful to see the response;
- Satisfaction rates relating to the website appeared to be low;
- Gym Memberships and the understanding that no targets had been set for 2020-21.

Having received the report and discussed the details with officers, the Committee noted the report.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

36. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee received and considered the report of the Head of Democratic Services, which updated it on progress on the 2020/21 work programme.

Members noted the desire to move the Domestic Violence presentation to the April meeting and were encouraged to put forward any questions they would like answering to Democratic Services prior to the meeting. These would then be passed to Sarah Carter prior to her attendance.

Councillor Cooper raised the issue of housing at RAF Brize Norton and queried why there appeared to be a blockage moving the market forwards. In response, the Chief Executive explained that work had been carried out on the business model but progress had been hindered by Covid. He agreed to arrange for a briefing at the next meeting.

Councillor Ashbourne noted that the CCTV item considered at the previous meeting and Council had resulted in agreement that an update would be forthcoming. It was agreed to add this to the work programme for a future date.

RESOLVED: That the work programme be updated accordingly.

37. CABINET WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee received and considered the report of the Head of Democratic Services, which gave members the opportunity to comment on the Cabinet Work Programme published on 15 December 2020.

RESOLVED: That the contents of the Cabinet Work Programme published on 15 December 2020 be noted.

38. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

Councillor Rylett raised a query regarding EU citizens and requested an update from officers.

Councillor Graham queried the right of EU citizens to vote in the upcoming elections in light of the UK leaving the EU. The Monitoring Officer advised that EU citizens would continue to have a right to register to vote and to stand as

candidates if they wished. With regards to public awareness, anyone entitled to vote would receive a poll card advising them of this.

The meeting closed at 7.46 pm

Chairman