

WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Record of Decisions of the meeting of the
Economic and Social Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Held Council Chamber at 6.30 pm on **Thursday, 17 June 2021**

PRESENT

Councillors: Councillor Andrew Beaney (Chairman), Councillor Andy Graham (Vice-Chair), Councillor Jill Bull, Councillor Owen Collins, Councillor Maxine Crossland, Councillor Mark Johnson, Councillor Nick Leverton, Councillor Lysette Nicholls, Councillor Mathew Parkinson, Councillor Elizabeth Poskitt, Councillor Andrew Prosser and Councillor Alex Wilson.

Officers: Giles Hughes (Chief Executive) and Heather McCulloch (Shared Healthy Communities Manager), Adrienne Frazer and Michelle Ouzman (Strategic Support Officers).

I Minutes of Previous Meeting

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 8 April 2021 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, with the following amendments and updates:

Minute Number 43 – Vulnerable Person Resettlement Scheme: Councillor Collins provided an update from Councillor Ashbourne confirming that there were six families, in receipt of grant funding, that had been helped by the scheme.

Minute Number 44 – Affordable Housing Consultation: The Chairman noted that questions had been asked about travelling communities and park home sites being included in the supplementary planning document.

Minute Number 46 – Service Performance Report Quarter Three: With regards to Planning complaints, it was noted that the Planning Department was under pressure. The Chairman proposed to speak to the Chairman of Development Control Committee with regard to this issue.

The Chief Executive noted that he had requested an update on Planning from the Group Manager – Resident Services which would be considered in the July meeting.

Item 60 – Members Questions: Councillor Cooper noted that he had asked a question about Woodstock outdoor swimming pools re-opening times.

2 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillor Jake Acock.

3 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest received.

4 Participation of the Public

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

5 Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman advised that the papers for the consultation on Oxfordshire's Local Plan, Regulation 18 (Part 2), would be published on 2 July 2021 by the Oxfordshire Growth Board. The consultation would be discussed at the 8 July 2021 committee and Members were asked to note that the papers for this item would be late.

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6 Start Time of Meetings

The Chairman provided a brief overview of previous start times of the meeting. Councillor Leverton proposed that Economic and Social Overview and Scrutiny Committee meet at 6.30 pm for the year 2021/22. The Chairman seconded the proposal.

RESOLVED: That the committee's start time be noted.

7 Presentation from Domestic Abuse Strategic Lead, OCC

The Committee received and considered the presentation of the Shared Healthy Communities Manager, which provided Members with the opportunity to ask questions about the Domestic Abuse service in the District and the County.

During discussions, Members asked for clarification on the statistical data, the terminology being used and the joined up nature of services around Oxfordshire.

West Oxfordshire District Council's contribution of £10,000 for a further two years of funding for the Oxfordshire Domestic Abuse Service was noted.

Members also asked about the assistance provided for people with learning disabilities, especially in rural communities, and about provision and support for male survivors of domestic abuse and fathers of young children who were experiencing difficulties. The Shared Healthy Communities Manager informed the meeting that the Place of Safety resource was available to this client group.

Officers outlined the options and services that aimed to change behaviour and Councillor Graham offered to raise this at County Council level, particularly in relation to the work carried out in the education service.

Members also discussed the services available to the BAME community. The Shared Healthy Communities Manager informed the Committee about a project based in Oxford City which focussed on the BAME community.

The Chairman thanked the Shared Healthy Communities Manager for her comprehensive presentation.

8 Committee Work Programme

The Committee received and considered the report which gave members the opportunity to comment on the recent review of the Work Programme for 2021/2022.

Following discussions, it was noted that:

Supplementary Planning Documents would be considered by Development Control Committee in future;

The consideration of the Council's work around Domestic Abuse could be moved to the 'other reports' section of the work programme;

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The report on the upgrade to West Oxfordshire's public space CCTV provision had been moved to the September Cabinet meeting. An equitable distribution of CCTV across the district was seen as desirable and the value of high quality provision to the police was noted. It was felt that the CCTV management being run from Oxford City would not provide the best service to the District;

Following a query raised by Councillor Graham, a report was requested for the July meeting on the Council's preparation for the arrival of refugees from Afghanistan. It was anticipated that some of the refugees would arrive at RAF Brize Norton and Members felt that further information was required about the District Council's role in assisting their resettlement;

Concerns were also raised about a need to increase the provision of NHS Dental services in West Oxfordshire, particularly in Carterton. Officers agreed to investigate the matter.

RESOLVED: That the amendments to, and contents of, the Committee Work Programme be noted.

9

Notice Of Motion - Re-use of IT Equipment

The committee considered the motion referred by Council on 28 April 2021, for the Council and other public bodies in West Oxfordshire to re-use IT equipment that would previously have been disposed of.

The content of the motion, was as follows:

"This Council notes that The Covid-19 lockdowns have shown how vital technology is to keeping people connected, in particular the vulnerable in society, many of whom have been confined to their homes and unable to see loved ones, and that according to Age UK 51% of digitally excluded people are over the age of 65, while refugees and the homeless also face worrying levels of digital exclusion.

This Council calls for:

- 1. The Council, public bodies in West Oxfordshire, and local businesses to reform their procurement policies by donating IT locally to those in need rather than scrapping it, using schemes such as the Laptops for Homeless and Vulnerable Initiative;*
- 2. A local re-use and recycling centre to enable SocialBox.Biz and its charity partners to collect and distribute old technology to those in need in West Oxfordshire; and*
- 3. Direct council suppliers to support the SocialBox.Biz initiative and, together with the Council, to proactively take part in sponsoring and promoting the SocialBox.Biz message to local businesses, through traditional media and social media channels. "*

Committee Members expressed broad support for the motion and Councillor Bull noted that the issue could be as much about connectivity as access to appropriate IT hardware. Councillor Graham noted that is the motion was also concerned with reducing waste and therefore linked in to the climate change agenda. Members proposed a variety of potential recipients for the project, should it go ahead, such as: U3A, local schools and charities working with developing countries.

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RESOLVED: That a detailed proposal be produced by officers to be presented to Council for consideration.

10 Preparation for presentation from GLL

The Committee considered the issues it would like to discuss with GLL at the July meeting. Councillor Graham requested that an overview of the business model adaptations and business recovery models following the pandemic be provided. In addition, he hoped to see information on business planning for the next two to three years.

Councillor Leverton requested clarification on where the responsibility lay for the poor quality of football pitches in Carterton.

Finally, the Chairman asked that any additional questions be forwarded to himself or Democratic Services by Friday 25 June 2021.

11 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 18 May 2021.

It was noted that:

Item 1 - approval of upgrade to West Oxfordshire's public space CCTV provision and monitoring arrangements was part of the committee's work programme.

Items 6 and 8 - options for the future use of the Witney Town Centre Shop and options for the future of 33A High Street, Burford (Visitor Information Centre) - the Chairman offered to discuss with the Chairman of Finance and Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee which would be the most appropriate scrutiny committee to consider these two items.

RESOLVED: That the contents of the Cabinet Work Programme be noted.

12 Members Questions

There were no questions from Members.

The Meeting closed at 7.32 pm

CHAIRMAN