

WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the
Economic and Social Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Held in the Council Chamber at 6.00 pm on **Thursday, 26 May 2022**

PRESENT

Councillors: Andrew Beaney (Chair), Rizvana Poole (Vice-Chair), Luci Ashbourne, Jill Bull, Nathalie Chapple, Owen Collins, Jane Doughty, Nick Leverton, Charlie Maynard, Lysette Nicholls, Rosie Pearson, Harry St John and Alex Wilson.

Officers: Giles Hughes (Chief Executive), Bill Oddy (Group Manager - Commercial Development), Caroline Clissold (Housing Manager, Planning and Housing), Tom See (Homeseeker Plus Lead, Revenues & Housing Support), Andy Barge (Group Manager – Communities, Leadership and Management Team), Anne Learmonth (Strategic Support Officer) and Michelle Ouzman (Strategic Support Officer).

10 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 February 2022 were approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

11 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence received.

12 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest received.

13 Participation of the Public

There were no participation of the public.

14 Chair's Announcements

The Chair welcomed everyone to the committee and asked for all members and officers present, to introduce themselves.

Following introductions the Chair announced that future meetings would start at 6:30pm, he asked members if they were in agreement,

Resolved all members agreed that future meetings would begin at 6:30pm.

15 Housing Update from Caroline Clissold

Caroline Clissold the Housing Manager, Planning and Housing, introduced herself and Tom See the Homeseeker Plus Lead, Revenues & Housing Support,

Caroline Clissold brought a slide presentation for members of the committee, a copy of which would be circulated to the committee members following the meeting.

Caroline Clissold introduced the presentation on Housing and Homelessness, the main topics of the briefing were:

- Challenges for Housing
- Business as usual – post pandemic
- Homeseeker Plus data – 2021-22
- Homelessness presentation data 2021-22

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- Emergency accommodation and hostel update
- Housing First update
- Adult Homelessness Pathway recommissioning 2022 – update
- Upcoming affordability housing developments
- Our focus for 2022-23

Councillor St John asked how many people were wanting to downsize within silver and gold properties. Caroline Clissold confirmed none in the silver category, and not a significant number in the gold category.

Councillor Leverton enquired about staffing levels as they were the same before the pandemic was this enough, Caroline Clissold confirmed that yes staffing levels were the same but they had no resilience. The team had spent the last two year being reactive, moving forward they were being proactive, resolving issues before reaching homeless.

Councillors discussed the success of the Aspire Hostel. Caroline Clissold, confirmed during the pandemic they were proud that the COVID measures implemented resulted in a zero outbreak. They hoped to move people on within 56 days or until they have found a suitable placement, currently housing a total of 45 people. Those staying at Aspire had support offices assistance to help with moving forward. They also had use of Cottsway flats, and at the moment they only had 5 people in the local Travelodge, which they only ever used as a stopgap. Housing associations were pledging about 50 properties to Aspire programme, including social housing bungalows. They were working with around 100 sponsors for Ukraine family settlements, awaiting for them all to go through the security checks, they would work with the families , especially on breakdowns at placements, assisting in moving on to another household sponsor. Empty properties in the region had been around 600, this figure had now dropped as a result of working with owners and landlords. The Aspire programme had been successful and other regions were duplicating the initiative the council here had implemented.

Councillor Doughty wanted it noted that members thanked the team, the progress was incredible and asked for this thanks to be shared with the team who had worked extremely hard to achieve the positive results spoken about at the meeting.

Tom See confirmed a detailed report would be issued soon that contained full figures and percentages of placements and properties, which can be shared with the members of the committee.

16 REEMA North update from Jon Wooden

Jon Wooden was not present at the meeting but sent a written update, this was read out by Michelle Ouzman, the Strategic Support Officer for the meeting:

“The MOD housing project on the REEMA North site has moved forward through our scrutiny and approvals process, and we are now in the final approvals stage and hoping for an outcome in late June/early July. We can assure you that behind the scenes a huge amount of effort continues to go into obtaining authority to proceed with this initiative, and we remain as keen as ever to work closely with West Oxfordshire District Council to move the project forward to the benefit of both organisations. In parallel we continue to develop and refine our strategy for the site. To this end we have produced preliminary layouts for the planned 182 Service family homes (and for the remaining land that is planned to become available for private housing) and we have been reviewing previous planning submissions to inform us ahead of working up an application to a full submission.”

The Chair thought the update was a positive one.

Giles Hughes the Chief Executive stated it would be useful if the committee could receive regular updates, it was agreed to request an update for each future committee meetings.

Councillors commented on the development and councillor Mead was able to add going forward the MOD wanted to offer HM Service personnel help to buy scheme.

17 CCTV Update from Andy Barge

Andy Barge the Group Manager – Communities, Leadership and Management Team introduced himself to the members and gave a verbal update on the progress on the upgrading the public open space CCTV cameras covering areas of Carterton and Witney, plus the associated monitoring control room arrangements.

Mr Barge introduced the update by giving a brief background:

- Currently 61 cameras - 57 in Witney and 4 in Carterton. First installed in 2002. Upgraded 2009.
- Monitoring currently at Witney police station, with staff employed by TVP and a Service Level Agreement with the Council
- Also monitoring control rooms in Oxford City, Banbury and Abingdon

Mr Barge explained there was a long standing desire for a shared Oxfordshire hub control room. The main benefits being economies of scale from having one control room instead of four, more 'real time' monitoring, less lone working, capital investment from Thames Valley Police (TVP) and resilience from fail over to other TVP hubs with the same monitoring equipment.

The disadvantages of a shared monitoring hub are potential loss of local knowledge and a small loss of local employment, depending where the hub is located.

There is £300,000 capital budget for investment in CCTV, subject to business case.

Recently commissioned a camera optimisation piece of work. Technology has moved on so much, questions like have we got the right cameras in the right places needs to be considered, which is supported by crime density mapping and seeing if the scheme can be extended to cover Chipping Norton.

Progress has been hampered for a number of reasons:

- Design and implementation of a TVP shared hub in Buckinghamshire ahead of Oxfordshire;
- Where in Oxfordshire a shared hub could be located, with each of the existing control rooms having a degree of uncertainty over longevity, or not being suitable to host a hub;
- Hub before new cameras – compatibility of cameras and full functionality e.g. AI
- Which Districts wanted to be part of a shared hub, with some having made more recent investment in new equipment. Does the business case stack up for them?
- Cherwell's first draft budget option to stop its funding for CCTV

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Mr Barge concluded in early April, Thames Valley Police and Crime Commissioner tabled a report to the Police and Crime Panel outlining a new vision for CCTV and bringing fresh impetus to the shared hub.

Vision recognises that CCTV exists primarily for the benefit of policing and the wider interests of community safety. Therefore it is right that policing shoulders the lion share of the responsibility for providing the capability.

The long term vision is for CCTV across Thames Valley to be provided by Thames Valley Police. The Force would own the equipment/contracts, be responsible for maintenance and employ staff to monitor the service. This “single owner” model will help to consolidate technology, drive savings through economies of scale, improve integration with police systems and provide increased resilience.

Under this model district and town councils (and commercial beneficiaries such as shopping centres) will continue to make a financial contribution using an agreed funding formula and as part of the partnership agreement local authorities would allow TVP to use appropriate street furniture for the placement of equipment

TVP has employed a CCTV Operations Manager to drive this forward and the working group next meets later in June to consider a draft outline business case for

Plan B partner with another district or plan C standalone provision.

The Chair asked would the next steps be within this year. Mr Barge confirmed that the outline business case was hoped to be completed by autumn, so that a decision could be made.

Councillor Bull stated that for years Carterton had only 4 camera's but they were paying just as much as Witney that had far more cameras in place.

Mr Barge confirmed moving forward there would be more transparent funding, proportioned in the right operating module.

Councillor St John enquired about the £300,000, was it still intact, Mr Barge confirmed the capital programme budget remained at £3000.000, and if Thames Valley Police take control of the control rooms, the Council should see economies of scale against revenue savings, which will benefit the Council.

Councillor Nicholls asked which partnerships were likely if plan B, Mr Barge confirmed potentially Oxford City or Cherwell as they had invested recently in their own CCTV programme.

Councillor Maynard and Wilson were interested in the number of Cameras that the Council had and where they were. Mr Barge was able to confirm in Witney there were 23 in the town centre, 26 at Marriott's Walk and 8 in Wallgate.

Councillor Poole asked about crime rates in relation to camera locations. Mr Barge would circulate to the committee members the crime density map after the meeting.

Councillor Pearson enquired if there were camera statistic available in relation to crimes in the area. Mr Barge said the Police statistics were on number of incidents not CCTV camera or even body cameras that Police wore.

The Chair thanked MR Barge for the update and looked forward to the programme moving forward.

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18 Committee Work Programme

The Chair informed the committee members that he would be revising the committee work programme and asked that members think of what they would like to be included on the programme moving forward and to inform him by 6 June 2022 via email. Therefore is was

Resolved that the committee work programme would be next reviewed at the next Economic and Social Overview and Scrutiny committee meeting.

19 Cabinet Work Programme

The Chair explained that the agenda for the committee had been produced before the annual council meeting and therefore the Council's Cabinet had now changed, therefore he suggested that the committee review the Cabinet Work programme at the next Economic and social Overview and Scrutiny meeting.

Resolved that the committee agreed to review at the next committee meeting.

20 Members Questions

Councillor St John asked if GLL had come back with the mystery shopper results.

Councillor Doughty confirmed that the mystery shopper initiative was in progress, plus the cleanliness checks.

The Meeting closed at 7.45 pm

CHAIR