

WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the
Economic and Social Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Held in the Committee Room 1 at 6.30 pm on **Tuesday, 11 October 2022**

PRESENT

Councillors: Andrew Beaney (Chair), Rizvana Poole (Vice-Chair) to item 31, Joy Aitman, Jill Bull, Jane Doughty, Natalie King, Nick Leverton, Charlie Maynard, Michele Mead, Rosie Pearson, Geoff Saul, Ruth Smith, Harry St John and Alex Wilson

Also present Councillor Aitman (Cabinet member for Stronger, Healthy Communities) and Councillor Saul (Cabinet Member for Housing and Social Welfare).

Officers: Giles Hughes (Chief Executive), John Dearing (Group Manager - Residents Services) Andy Barge (Group Manager – Communities, Leadership and Management Team), Heather McCulloch (Community Well Being Manager), Anne Learmonth (Strategic Support Officer) and Janet Eustace (Democratic Services Manager).

Also present Josh Lenthall, Chief Executive, Active Oxfordshire.

24 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 May 2022 were approved as a true record subject to '£3000.000,' being amended to £300,000 (page 4) and were signed. Cllr Wilson asked that his request regarding the more even spread of CCTV cameras the district be recorded.

The Minutes of the meeting held on 8 September 2022 were approved and were signed by the Chair as a correct record. Councillor Doughty gave her retrospective apologies for the meeting having been caught in traffic.

25 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillors: Ashbourne, Nicholls and Owens. Councillors Mead and Smith substituted for Councillors Nicholls and Collins.

26 Declarations of Interest

The Chair declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 29 as a member of staff at Burford School.

27 Participation of the Public

There was no public participation.

28 Youth Needs Assessment

Heather McCulloch (Community Wellbeing Manager) introduced this item. She explained that 3908 responses had been received and that they provide a snap shot of the views of young people across the district. She highlighted the sections on barriers preventing young people from taking part in activities and the challenges they face.

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In discussion Ms McCulloch explained that all mainstream state schools were invited to participate. Burford School did not have capacity to get involved. Marlborough School allowed only Year 7's to participate. It was decided not to invite special schools to participate as the questionnaire was difficult for young people with more complex additional needs to engage with. In order to enable their participation, two focus groups were organised, one at Abingdon and Witney College for 16-25 year olds and one at Yellow Submarine with 12-18 year olds. The survey had been a paper exercise which had been recommended by Oxford City Council as securing the best response. She said that the response rate had been much higher than anticipated but agreed that other methods might be tried in future. There was discussion around the findings on mental health and how the Council might follow up on concerns that had been raised. Ms McCulloch explained that it was not possible to identify individuals but that the findings of the report could be used to lobby for services to be improved. She undertook to break down the figures shown in the graph at paragraph 9 of the report. The survey demonstrated that parents were the greatest source of support but that they, in turn, needed support.

The Committee discussed the next steps. It was suggested that the survey should be undertaken regularly although it was recognised that resource would be an issue. It was recognised that it was crucial to involve young people and to listen and act upon their views.

The Chair thanked Ms McCulloch and Ms Brossard for an excellent report.

Resolved that the Committee note the report.

29

Active Oxfordshire Presentation

Josh Lenthall, Chief Executive Active Oxfordshire, gave a presentation on the work of the organisation. He talked about the success of two projects being delivered in partnership with the Council: Move Together and YouMove where the number of participants were outstripping expectations.

In discussion, Mr Lenthall said that YouMove had secured funding of a little under £750,000 over two years. Move Together had £362,000 which would cover costs until March 2023. He was hopeful that funding would continue as it had been demonstrated that the project had saved savings in excess of £1 million to the health service.

Referrals come from a number of sources including GPs, social media and self-referrals. Free school meals were used as a means of identifying children most in need of help but other indicators were also taken into account to ensure a flexible response.

Mr Lenthall said that the population in West Oxfordshire was more active than elsewhere in the County and that the Active Oxfordshire projects in the District were punching well above their weight.

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The Chair thanked Mr Lenthall for his presentation and congratulated the organisation on the success of its projects.

Resolved that the Committee note the report.

Councillor Poole left the meeting at 7.30 pm.

30 REEMA North update from Jon Wooden

Mr Wooden was not present at the meeting but had sent a written update which was read out by the Chair.

“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 are hoping for an outcome by October. 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.”

Councillors expressed concerns that so little progress had been made on this project. There were questions around the mix of Service quarters and private housing and the numbers of each. The Chief Executive said that a planning application would have to come forward for consideration but it was not clear when this would happen. It was felt that pressure had to be put on DIO to move forward.

Resolved that Jon Wooden (Deputy Head of Estates DIO) should be required to attend the next meeting.

31 Service Performance Report 2021-2022 Quarter Four

The Chair invited questions on the report.

Phil Martin (Group Manager - Business Services) was to be asked to provide details of those areas of the district without Gigaclear.

Jon Dearing (Group Manager - Residents Services) confirmed that the Council’s performance on handling planning applications was improving and that the backlog on enforcement cases was reducing.

Resolved that the Committee note the report

32 Committee Work Programme

The Chair introduced the report.

Councillor Bull said that she had raised a number of urgent questions regarding the performance of GLL which needed answering before the November meeting. The Chief executive asked that she send these to him so that he could ask officers to investigate. Councillor Bull said that she had already had discussion with officers but that the problems had not been resolved. The Chair suggested setting up a Working Group to take this forward.

Committee **Resolved** that:

- A Working Group comprising Councillors Aitman, Beaney, Bull, Doughty, King and Poole be set up with Terms of Reference to be agreed.
- The Committee work plan be noted.

33 Cabinet Work Programme

The Chair introduced the report

Resolved that the Committee note the report

The Meeting closed at 8.05 pm

CHAIR