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WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the
Climate & Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee
Held in Committee Room 1 at 2.00 pm on **Monday, 3 July 2023**

PRESENT

Councillors: Martin McBride (Chair), Adrian Walsh (Vice-Chair), Andy Goodwin, Natalie King, Alaa Al-Yousuf, Hugo Ashton, Phil Godfrey, Rosie Pearson, Ruth Smith, Tim Sumner, Mark Walker, Alistair Wray and Michael Brooker.

Officers: Bill Oddy (Assistant Director - Commercial Development), Andy Barge (Assistant Director - Strategic Support), Chris Hargraves (Planning Policy Manager), Laurence King (Shared Lead Flood Risk Management Officer), Phil Martin (Assistant Director - Business Support), Michelle Ouzman (Strategic Support Officer), Anne Learmonth (Strategic Support Officer), Astrid Harvey (Strategic Policy and Partnerships Officer) and Barry Clack (Communications Officer).

Other Councillors in attendance: Lidia Arciszewska and Andrew Prosser

1 Election of the Chair

Bill Oddy, the Assistant Director for Commercial Development opened the meeting, welcoming Members and Offices to the Climate and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting.

The Assistant Director referred Members to the first item on the Agenda, Election of the Chair, and asked the Committee for nominations to the positions of Chair of the Climate and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the municipal year 2023/24.

Councillor Alaa Al-Yousuf proposed that Councillor Martin McBride be appointed to the position of Chair of Climate and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the municipal year 2023/2024. This was seconded by Councillor Adrian Walsh, was put to a vote. The vote was carried.

The Committee **Resolved** to:

- I. Appoint Councillor Martin McBride to the position of Chair of the Climate and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the municipal year 2023/2024.

2 Election of the Vice-Chair

Councillor Martin McBride proposed that Councillor Adrian Walsh be appointed to the position of Vice-Chair of Climate and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the municipal year 2023/2024. This was seconded by Councillor Natalie King, was put to a vote and was carried.

The Committee **Resolved** to:

- I. Appoint Councillor Adrian Walsh to the position of Vice-Chair of the Climate and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the municipal year 2023/2024.

3 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Colin Dingwall and Andrew Coles, Councillor Michael Brooker substituted for Councillor Andrew Coles.

Councillor David Cooper was absent.

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4 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

5 **Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 March 2023 were approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

6 **Participation of the Public**

There were no participation of the public.

7 **Response from recommendations to Executive**

The Chair brought Members' attention to the Executive responses to the two recommendations that the Committee referred to the Executive, from 23 March 2023 meeting.

The Assistant Director for Commercial Development explained to the Committee the background to the recommendations, which arose from Council motions, and the responses as there were newly appointed Councillors in attendance.

The Committee **Resolved** to:

- I. Note the Executive responses.

8 **Flood Management Update**

Laurence King, the Shared Lead Flood Risk Management Officer, and Phil Martin, the Assistant Director for Business Services, informed the Committee that since the last meeting, the following progress had been made on the Monitoring Gauges:

- Monitoring Gauges - WODC will be working closely with Witney Flood Mitigation Group (WFMG), to try and get the gauges installed before the flood season begins in September/October;
- Live data will be collated from the Monitoring Gauges;
- Oxford County Council (OCC) as the lead local flood authority had offered to fund the Monitoring Gauges;
- WFMG proposal was for the installation of ten Monitoring Gauges, three of these will be backup Gauges.

The Assistant Director stated that Witney Town Council weren't one of the key stakeholders, and the Shared Lead Flood Risk Management Officer confirmed that meetings have occurred and they were aware. Although the Town Council were not obliged to have an emergency plan they were keen on assisting communities to have flood plans. Councillor Smith confirmed that Witney Gardens had a Community Flood Plan, and asked for OCC and WODC to assist in identifying the land owners when ditches or gullies need clearing.

The Assistant Director informed the Committee that the Pilot Flood Warden scheme was up and running, and OCC were actively recruiting Flood Wardens.

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The Shared Lead Flood Risk Management Officer confirmed that since the last time the Committee met, the Flood Management Agreement between OCC and WODC has been signed. There had also been regular meetings with Thames Water over the past 6 months, with the most recent one being on the 12th June. At the meetings Cllrs and Officers discuss capacity and failings at treatment works, how calculations had been put together, concerns re sewage treatment works, and future investment programmes. Smart metering installations were slow in our area and Thames Water had adopted a phased approach to rolling them out across the region. Thames Water, when asked about the recent media reports, had also issued reassurance in the short term, for business as usual.

The Chair thanked the Officers in attendance for the positive progress that had been made.

The Committee **Resolved** to:

1. Note the Flood Management Update.

9

Overview of new Grant Scheme

Andy Barge, the Assistant Director for Communities, introduced the new Grant Scheme, presenting the new approach to grant funding, which was better aligned to the outcomes intended from Council Plan and aimed to foster greater community engagement and involvement.

The new grant scheme introduces a new approach to revenue grant funding from 2024/25 aligned to four lots and supported by three year service level agreements.

Four lots being:

1. Improving our natural environment and the access to it, so that we enable physical and mental wellbeing and cohesive, connected communities;
2. Taking action towards the climate and ecological emergencies, so that we reduce carbon footprints and encourage nature recovery;
3. Increasing community resilience and amplifying the voice of the seldom heard, so that we take action on issues most important to our residents and their needs, such as access to food, supporting young people and cultural provision;
4. Providing residents with high quality, independent housing advice, welfare and debt advice services, so that they are empowered to tackle their problems and we support those who are unable to deal with difficult circumstances on their own.

Civic crowdfunding will be introduced as an alternative to community facilities grants and the Council will make up to £120,000 per annum available to pledge against proposed projects.

The Council has appointed Spacehive as its civic crowdfunding platform provider on a three year contract.

Delegated authority will be given to the Chief Executive, in conjunction with the Leader and Executive Members for Stronger Healthy Communities, Planning and Sustainable Development, Environment, and Climate Change to agree the type of projects to be supported and the pledge criteria for crowdfunding.

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The final change noted as an outcome of the review was the creation of a part-time Community Funding Officer post, to ensure the success of the new schemes and to secure external funding to support service delivery, where possible. Members were also assured the total budget directed at the various grant funding schemes has been maintained at the same level,

Members discussed with the Assistant Director the following topics:

- Verification checks on behalf of the Council;
- Hive commission;
- Culture provision;
- Guidance on applications;
- Case Study;
- Stakeholder map.

The Chair thanked the Assistant Director for the overview.

The Committee **Resolved** to:

- I. Note the new Grant Scheme.

10

Overview of Local Plan

Chris Hargraves, the Planning Policy Manager, introduced the review of the Local Plan, and explained to the Committee that they were currently at the initial plan preparation stage. The Local Plan would follow four stages:

- **Plan preparation** – informal engagement on the scope of the plan, different options and alternatives explored to identify a preferred approach.
- **Publication** – the formal stage when the Council produces what it considers to be a 'sound' plan.
- **Submission** – when the Council submits its plan for examination.
- **Adoption** – subject to the outcome of the examination, the Council formally adopts the plan.

The Planning Policy Manager summarised the consultation undertaken to date and explained that a range of supporting technical evidence was in the process of being commissioned. He explained that a further focused consultation was planned for the summer, feedback from which would then be used to inform a set of preferred policy approaches later in the year.

The Committee then discussed the following items:

- Chipping Norton development;
- Historic England input;

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- Hanborough development;
- Digital and face to face events;
- Broader plan v detailed plan;
- S106 and CIL (community infrastructure levy).

The Planning Policy Manager summarised the current timeline for taking the Local Plan forward:

- Consultation on preferred policy options/approaches winter 2023
- Publication of draft Local Plan summer 2024
- Submission for examination autumn 2024
- Adoption mid 2025

The Chair thanked the Planning Policy Manager for the overview.

The Committee **Resolved** to:

1. Note the overview of the Local Plan from the Planning Policy Manager.

II Service Performance Report 2022-23 Quarter Four

The Chair introduced the Quarter 4 Service Performance Report.

The Assistant Director for Commercial Development directed the Committee's focus on 3.4 Waste and Environment, which reflects changing habits since COVID has been slow. 3.5 Service Dashboard, reflects fixed penalties for fly tipping for quarter 4 had increased, therefore a further analysis should be done to try and find out what could have caused the increase.

Committee reflected on the performance report and discussed the following items:

- Missed bins actual percentage;
- Missed bins collections thereafter;
- UBICO contract extension and its current KPI's (Key Performance Indicators);
- In cab technology;
- Contamination of waste data record of 18 – 20%;
- Replacement bins data;
- Fly Tipping data.

The Committee **Resolved** to:

1. Invite the Fly Tipping Officer to the next Committee meeting for performance data analysis;
2. Note the Quarter 4 Service Performance Report.

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12 Committee Work Programme

The Chair reviewed the Committee Work Programme with the Assistant Director for Commercial Development and Members present.

The Committee **Resolved** to:

1. Invite the Climate Change Manager to the Committee meeting on 8 November to provide a briefing on the Climate Change Strategy and Carbon Action Plan;
2. Remove items 2 and 4 from future work programme and put back once government legislation is introduced;
3. Invite the Service Leader, Philip Measures, to the 7 February Committee meeting for an annual briefing on Air Quality;
4. Add Climate Change Strategy and Carbon Action Plan to Committee Work Programme;
5. Note the Committee Work Programme Report.

13 Executive Work Programme

The Chair reviewed the Executive Work Programme with the Assistant Director for Commercial Development and Members present.

The Committee **Resolved** to:

1. Ask the Executive if the following items could be delayed until after 8 November:
 - Carbon Action Plan;
 - Climate change Strategy.
2. Note the Executive Work Programme Report.

The Meeting closed at 3.58 pm

CHAIR