

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Tuesday 5 November 2013

COUNCILLORS PRESENT: Councillors Mills (Chair), Sanders (Vice-Chair), Abbasi, Altaf-Khan, Campbell, Coulter, Darke, Fry, Lloyd-Shogbesan, Simmons, Smith and Upton.

OFFICERS PRESENT: Geoff Corps (Cleaner Greener Services Manager), John Copley (Head of Environmental Development), Pat Jones (Principal Scrutiny Officer) and Sarah Claridge (Trainee Democratic and Electoral Services Officer)

42. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

43. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations were made.

44. WORK PROGRAMME AND FORWARD PLAN

Pat Jones, Principal Scrutiny Officer, introduced the current work programme and Forward Plan to the Committee, and provided some background and context.

Cllr Campbell updated the Committee on the timeline for the completion of the Covered Market Panel.

- The Retail Group's report is out for consultation and there is an opportunity for the public to comment on the strategy on the council website. He asked that ward Councillors circulate the line to any constituents so that as many people could comment on the strategy as possible.
- The draft Covered Market Strategy and results of the consultation will likely go to CEB in January 2014. The Panel's final report will be presented to the Scrutiny Committee on 14 January and (if members are willing) will be presented to CEB at its January meeting.
- The Panel will also pre-scrutinise the consultation process in a separate report to be presented in January.

The Committee reviewed the Forward Plan but had no new items they wished to pre-scrutinise.

45. REPORT BACK ON RECOMMENDATIONS

Pat Jones, Principal Scrutiny Officer introduced the report back on recommendations from the Scrutiny Committee to CEB. The performance indicator LP106 on participation in leisure amongst target groups was the only scrutiny recommendation that was refused by CEB. Scrutiny queried why the

Council was maintaining a target that was constantly met, however the Board Member sighted that until more analysis on the overall trend of participation levels could be determined it would be unhelpful to change the target.

The Committee resolved to note the recommendations and their outcome as shown in the report.

46. COUNCILLOR CALLS FOR ACTION OPERATING PROTOCOL

Pat Jones, Principal Scrutiny Officer, introduced the report on Councillors Call to Action operating protocol.

The Committee resolved

1. To amend the referral form to direct councillors to provide more specific information and officers to clarify any current debates, reviews or projects related to the issue.
2. To leave the factual judgement around a CCfA falling within an excluded category with the Monitoring Officer but to place any further validation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Scrutiny Committee.
3. To require the instigating councillor to attend the scrutiny meeting that discusses the CCfA.
4. To add to the list of considerations for the scrutiny committee when considering a valid CCfA:
 - What priority the CCfA investigation should have within the current agreed work programme.

To make it clear that this list is not exhaustive.

5. To require the Chair and Vice Chair to take advice from officers when CCfA raise issues outside of the direct control of this Council.
6. To include the guarantees included in the report in the protocol.

47. PERFORMANCE MONITORING - QUARTER 2

Pat Jones, Principal Scrutiny Officer, introduced the report on Performance Monitoring- Quarter 2 to the Committee, and provided some background and context.

The Committee resolved to note the report and requested more information of the following indicators:

- CH001- sickness: would like a commentary on performance
- BV017a: percentage of black and ethnic minority employees: further commentary on progress
- LP106: increase participation in leisure centres by target groups: further commentary on progress

- B10002a: training places created through Council's investment projects: further commentary on progress

48. RECYCLING - PANEL REPORT

Councillors Fry, Jones and Simmons introduced the pre-scrutiny report on the draft Waste and Recycling Strategy and went through the Panel's recommendations.

Treating Waste as a Commodity

Councillor Jones explained the importance of treating waste as a commodity and the desire of the panel to pre-sort the waste before it goes to landfill. Any materials that are diverted from the waste stream, saves the County Council money in landfill tax, and reduces the City's total waste amount which increases the overall recycling rate. The Cleaner Greener Services Manager would like to see a waste transfer station to pre-sort waste within the city.

Collecting Food Waste from Flats

The Council does not currently own enough vehicles which can collect the larger communal food waste bins to allow for a full roll out of the food waste collection to all flats across the city. Purchasing two specially equipped vehicles and the staffing costs of 6 people (3 per vehicle) would cost over £900,000 over 3 years.

Collecting Garden Waste

The Cleaner Greener Services Manager explained that the city was currently at a tipping point for collecting garden waste. The City has nearly 14,000 garden waste customers and the city needs another vehicle to expand the service.

Food Waste Bid

The Cleaner Greener Services Manager has made a funding bid to roll out food waste collection across the city. The bid is to fund the purchase of 2 new 'fit for purpose' vehicles and staffing costs. The Council will know in December whether it's been considered as part of the budget setting process. The Committee would like to see the Food Waste bid as soon as it's made public.

Commercial Waste collection

The Council does not have any corporate targets for commercial waste and is consequently missing out on opportunities to expand its commercial waste collection in the city.

Penalty Notices

The Panel felt that the Council needed to be more forceful in pursuing people who don't recycle. However there were concerns raised that strict enforcement policies can lead to more people dumping rubbish in other people's bins which can lead to higher contamination rates. The Council should therefore focus on positive programmes to encourage recycling rather than negative enforcement campaigns.

The Cleaner Greener Services Manager outlined that Council can only penalise householders for failing to put their waste out for collection not for failing to recycle.

Reducing Packaging

The Cleaner Greener Services Manager expressed concern about the Panel's packaging recommendation and suggested that the Oxfordshire Joint Waste Partnership was the more appropriate body to recommend this to as they have more scope in their remit to work with businesses to reduce packaging. The Committee agreed.

The Committee resolved:

1. To see the Food Waste bid as soon as it's been made public,
2. That the Finance Panel sees the long list of officer bids for capital and revenue projects proposed for the budget 2014/15, as soon as they are available.

Recommendations to CEB on 13 November

The Committee resolved to make the following recommendations:

Recommendation 1

That the strategy reflects in its vision the view that waste is a resource and a commodity from which the Council can generate income, and that the Council should continually be looking for further opportunities to benefit financially from the waste that the City produces.

Recommendation 2

That CEB investigate and cost opportunities to pre-sort and divert recyclables from the household waste collection before sending it to landfill.

Recommendation 3

That the City Executive Board provide to the Scrutiny Committee more detailed information on the costing and feasibility for the options to recycle food from flats that have been considered alongside the details of the current capital bid.

Recommendation 4

That CEB more actively use the penalties at its disposal to convince residents who do not present waste in the manner required.

Recommendation 5

That CEB investigate, through the Oxfordshire Waste Partnership, local opportunities to reduce excess packaging and reduce the use of plastic bags.

Recommendation 6

That CEB take all opportunities to promote the benefits of food waste separation to commercial customers and investigate opportunities to offer incentives to new business customers.

49. RIVERSIDE LAND - PRE SCRUTINY

John Copley, Head of Environmental Services introduced the report on Riverside Land to the Committee. The report will be decided by CEB in November and was called in to the Scrutiny Committee by Cllr Simmons.

The Head of Environmental Services outlined that the acquisition of the land would allow Council to control the mooring of boats along the strip. Unauthorised moorings have damaged the bank and some boat owners have engaged in antisocial behaviour which has impacted on the residents of Abbey Road. However if Council acquires the land, up to 6 short term/ visitor moorings (not residential mooring which is contrary to Council Policy) would be created.

There is also concern about the weakening of the bank as people mooring, have driven pegs into the ground. However if the Council owned the land, a maintenance programme will be established and rings will be inserted for boaters to use.

Cllr Simmons was concerned about the future on-going management of the strip of land. The Environment Agency is currently piloting a new way of managing mooring which treats moorings similar to car parking with fines for overstaying. This pilot has been very successful and it had been agreed in principle, that if the pilot is made permanent that the scheme will extend to this strip of land (if the title is granted to the Council).

The proposed acquisition and management of the land has local resident support. Julian Levay spoke on behalf of Abbey Road residents and indicated that residents were prepared to assist with routine maintenance, enforcement and even financial support.

Recommendations to CEB on 13 November

The Committee resolved to make the following recommendation:

To support the proposals in the report and ask the City Executive Board to note the offer of residents.

50. OXPENS MASTERPLAN CONSULTATION OUTCOME - PRE-SCRUTINY

The Committee commented on the merits of the proposed Oxpens masterplan going to CEB in November. The plan is a guideline for development and each part will require planning permission before development can begin.

The following comments were made:

- The plan should include more housing and less retail. This site is an opportunity to create 600 homes rather than the proposed 300
- Not convinced about the need for a hotel
- Chance to create a new community, reduce traffic and congestion
- 300 homes and 1000 new jobs is great for the city.

The Board Member for City Development responded that the site is more suitable for student accommodation rather than family homes because of its

proximity to the railway lines. By building more purpose built student accommodation it frees up housing elsewhere in the city for families.

There was a concern that the masterplan identified issues such as transport links, flooding, energy use but did not include a framework to deal with these issues.

The Board Member stated that the council will have an opportunity to see more detail of the development when it determines the planning applications for this scheme.

Recommendations to CEB on 13 November

The Committee resolved to make the following recommendation:

To support the Oxpens Site Master Plan noting the concerns made by some committee members.

51. MINUTES

The Committee resolved to confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 1 October 2013.

52. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The Committee noted the next meeting was scheduled for 3 December 2013.

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 7.45 pm