

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Tuesday 2 July 2013

COUNCILLORS PRESENT: Councillors Mills (Chair), Sanders (Vice-Chair), Abbasi, Darke, Lloyd-Shogbesan, Paule, Simmons, Smith, Sinclair and Pressel.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Councillors Lygo (Parks, Sports and Events) Rowley (Leisure Services) and Tanner (Cleaner Greener Oxford)

OFFICERS PRESENT: Pat Jones (Principal Scrutiny Officer), Ian Brooke (Head of Leisure, Parks and Communities), Roger Pitman (Environmental Development), Jo Colwell (Environmental Sustainability Manager), Peter Sloman (Chief Executive), Tim Sadler (Executive Director Community Services) and Sarah Claridge (Trainee Democratic and Electoral Services Officer)

14. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr Van Coulter (substitute Cllr Dee Sinclair), Cllr James Fry (substitute Cllr Susanna Pressel) and Cllr Jim Campbell.

Apologies from Cllr Lygo (Board Member for Parks, Sports and Events) for having to leave before the Youth Ambition Strategy could be discussed.

15. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest

16. WORK PROGRAMME PLANNING

The Principal Scrutiny Officer presented a report which outlined the list of suggestions made for the Committee's work programme for 2013/14. She outlined the operating principles of the Committee's panels and the priority system for choosing issues to investigate. She reminded the Committee that tonight they are asked to choose the issues they want to put on their work programme and will scope the work required at a later date.

The Committee made the following comments on the topics suggested:

Suggestion	Comment
Street Trading and Busking in the City Centre.	Local issue - Not needed
Tracking the experience of a few families affected by Benefit Changes	Form a Panel to look into the benefit tax/ cap and it's affect on the health of families. Lead Cllr Smith

<p>Allocations Policies – Are they “right” in the current circumstances and how can we communicate this better.</p>	<p>Has been reviewed recently.</p> <p>Officers to report to committee.</p>
<p>Decent Homes standards where do we go from here.</p>	<p>Focus on estates and the practicality and public perception of the Decent Homes strategy.</p> <p>Leave until completion of review, 6 months</p> <p>Project for Housing Standing Panel. Lead Cllr Smith</p>
<p>Regeneration for the long term. How do we do this, how do we engage people in ideas and planning, are partnership working well, are budgets sufficient for ambitions.</p>	<p>1. Focus on issues at a local community level happening on the estates. ie community centres and planning.</p> <p>2. Consultation/ engagement Strategy – pre scrutinise October.</p> <p>Project for Housing Standing Panel. Lead Cllr Smith</p>
<p>The method by which the scale of new buildings and extensions is indicated in planning applications, in particular an evaluation of the agreed pilot scheme based on the practice in Swiss Cantons.</p>	<p>Evaluate the Pilot scheme run by City Development re showing the height/scale of proposed developments.</p> <p>Panel Lead Cllr Fry</p>
<p>KRM programme and the achievement of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Looked after children - Boys - Pakistani background children <p>Have there been any knock on effects of the reading programme in</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Borrowing from libraries - Attracting helpers/volunteers into schools 	<p>An education group is already meeting. Project not needed.</p>
<p>To scrutinise the satisfactions KPI on repairs and maintenance to understand why the 97% satisfaction rates does not seem to correlate with what councillors here from their constituents. Possibly get beneath dissatisfaction and why this doesn't come through in “official” results.</p>	<p>Project to be looked at by the Tenants Engagement Panel.</p>

Council Tax exemptions. Are these being applied consistently and managed.	Focus on whether there are significant numbers of non students claiming a student Council tax exemption. Panel Lead Cllr Simmons.
Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs)	Can be reviewed through KPI throughout year. Not needed.
Benefits	Already done – Not needed
Flooding and sewage in Northway	Greater issue of Thames Water and drainage in Oxford How do you influence TW priorities and get onto their Investment Programme? Report from Swindon DC re success with TW to committee? Committee item initially – if panel formed, lead Cllr Darke
Use of social media by the Council	How can Council best use social media to improve communication with residents? Committee item – invite Cllr Brett
How the Council provides services to students	Not needed
Supporting economic growth in the City (Covered Market panel already)	Not needed

The Committee resolved to

1. Create a Housing Standing Panel, lead by Cllr Smith with the remit to review any housing related issues affecting the Council.
2. Create a Finance Standing Panel, lead by Cllr Simmons and made up of Councillors Fry, Mills and Darke with the remit to review:
 - the quarterly budget reports,
 - the medium term financial strategy
 - the budget , and
 - the treasury management strategy and function.

The Finance Standing Panel has the autonomy to make recommendations direct to City Executive Board without the Committee seeing them first.

3. Agree to invite the Board Member for Community Safety to discuss the crime and safety issue for the programme.
4. Decide it wished to review a set of “Service Level” performance indicators for focus. Cllrs Smith, Darke, Simmons and Mills volunteered to construct this list.

17. REPORT BACK ON RECOMMENDATIONS AND FORWARD PLAN

The Committee resolved to consider the Forward Plan and decided to scrutinise the following reports:

1. Grants Programme Commissioning Report
2. Riverside Land- Acquisition
3. Customer Contact Strategy
4. Oxfutures fund – establishment approval
5. Financial Performance and risk – quarter 1 progress

And refer the following reports to the Housing Standing Panel:

1. Long Term Affordable Housing for Homelessness prevention
2. Allocations review and changes to the allocation scheme

18. FUSION LEISURE CONTRACT - PERFORMANCE AGAINST TARGETS 2012/13

The Head of Leisure, Parks and Communities and Councillor Rowley (Board Member for leisure services) presented a report on the performance of the Council's leisure management contract with Fusion Lifestyle 2012/13.

- There has been an increase in the usage of all leisure centres in Oxford over the last 4 years
- Usage has increase in all four target groups with the largest increase being the users from areas of deprivation group.
- Participation amongst people with disabilities has improved by 16,000 visits in the last year an increase from a very low base.
- There is an imbalance of usage across City, with significant under participation in deprived area of the city.
- The cost of the contract has not changed significantly but the subsidiary is increased each year to take into account inflation.

The quarterly Leisure Partnership Board focus has been on expanding the GP health referrals programme and increasing activeness in Year 5 and 6 pupils.

The contract results you should expect to see are:

- Switching subsidy rate across centres - as income generated from well attended centres is transferred to the less used centres
- Full price attendees subsidising the slice card users

The Committee thanked the officers for the report and congratulated them on the improvements made. They made the following:

Push to get people involved in leisure to benefit their health through the GP referral programme, should we be aiming for every GP in the city to be involved in the programme?

Is there scope to extend promotions such as the Taster sessions aimed at young people and the Get healthy, Get into sport programme?

The Committee resolved to note the content of the 2012/13 performance update for the Council's Leisure Management Contract with Fusion Lifestyle.

That the Fusion leisure services performance report for 2013/14 focus on the outreach work only between Fusion and the target groups, and outlines when there are variations in contract cost.

19. YOUTH AMBITION STRATEGY - CONSULTATION OUTCOME

The Head of Leisure, Parks and Communities presented a report on the Youth Ambition Strategy which was consulted on in May 2013. The strategy aims to provide positive activities for young people that will teach them skills that will prepare them for entering the workforce.

The strategy has been developed on the needs of young people after consultation with youth. It is expected that frequent youth consultation will occur to make sure the strategy remains current.

The strategy relies on partnerships with other agencies ie Sport England to be formed to run and fund activities for young people.

The Committee questioned how officers planned to measure the value of performance, as the strategy was missing any base figures to measure from. They outlined the importance for youth to have a safe place to go to spend time with other young people and the success of the Blackbird Leys Friday youth evenings at the community centre, which had

The Committee resolved to send a report to CEB with the following recommendations:

1. To provide now a set of concrete outcome measures focused on the direct effects on the ambitions and pathways of the young people involved in this work.
2. To monitor and revisit regularly the type of activity provided to ensure that it is flexible, contemporary and engaging the right numbers, in the right place, at the right time.
3. To express the need for the provision of safe spaces for young people to express themselves as an overarching priority for all the schemes, actions and outcomes within this Strategy.

20. LOW EMISSION STRATEGY AND AIR QUALITY ACTION PLAN

The Environmental Development Officers and Councillor Tanner (Board Member for Cleaner, Greener Oxford) presented a report on the draft Low Emissions Strategy and Air Quality action plan which are being presented to CEB next week. The strategy/action plan aims to reduce carbon and air quality emissions through the following initiatives:

- Reduce emissions by discourage delivery vans/ lorries in the city centre

- 5% reduction in CO2 target for the Council's vehicle fleet.
- Work with partner agencies ie County Council as Transport Authority to form programmes that will reduce carbon/ emissions.

The strategy is ground-breaking by linking air quality emissions with CO2. The draft strategy is looks at the whole picture - it is a framework not an exact programme. Its aim is to provide possibilities so we know what the priorities are, where there are gaps and which agencies can deliver what programmes.

Cllr Simmons commented that the strategy was very aspiration but there had been no consultation with the Carbon Management Board and that some of the figures (for carbon reduction) didn't add up.

Cllr Tanner responded that due to the timeframe it had not been possible for the Carbon Resource Board to comment on the strategy before it goes to CEB, however he plans for the Carbon Management Board to see it at its next meeting in September. He doesn't want the strategy to delay going to CEB – so that the Carbon Management Board can see it first.

The Committee resolved to send a report to CEB with the recommendation:

To support the setting of the Low Emissions Strategy and ambitions but for the City Executive Board to require early reference of the document to the Carbon Management Board so that gaps on data, resources and financing can be discussed and a robust action plan produced.

21. MINUTES

The Committee resolved to APPROVE the minutes of the meeting held on 4 June 2013 as a true and accurate record.

22. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The Committee noted the next meeting was scheduled for 5 September 2013

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 8.25 pm