

Minutes of a meeting of the SCRUTINY COMMITTEE on Thursday 6 September 2018

www.oxford.gov.uk



Committee members:

Councillor Gant (Chair)	Councillor Henwood (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Arshad	Councillor Azad (for Councillor Kennedy)
Councillor Bely-Summers	Councillor Djafari-Marbini
Councillor Donnelly	Councillor Fry
Councillor Lygo	Councillor Simmons

Officers:

Anita Bradley, Monitoring Officer
Andrew Brown, Committee Services Manager
Sarah Harrison, Senior Planner
Mai Jarvis, Environmental Quality Team Manager
Stefan Robinson, Scrutiny Officer
Jennifer Thompson, Committee and Members Services Officer

Also present:

Councillor Tom Hayes, Board Member for Safer, Greener, Environment. Labour and Co-operative party, Board Member for Safer, Greener, Environment
Councillor Alex Hollingsworth, Board Member for Planning and Transport, Board Member for Planning and Transport

Apologies:

Councillor Kennedy sent apologies: Councillor Azad substituted for her.

32. Declarations of interest

None.

33. Chair's Announcements

None.

34. Minutes

The Committee resolved to APPROVE the minutes of the meeting held on 3 July 2018 as a true and accurate record.

35. Work Plan and Forward Plan

The Scrutiny Officer spoke to this item and drew attention to the changes to the work of the main committee and the standing panels since the previous version of the work plan

The Committee noted that in the City Executive Board Forward Plan the report on the Blackbird Leys Development would only request a decision on a preferred contractor, and agreed not to debate it.

The Committee **noted** their work plan, changes since the last version, and the Council's Forward Plan, and made no changes.

36. Joint Statutory Spatial Plan (JSSP)

Councillors Arshad and Djafari-Marbini arrived and joined the debate during this item.

The Committee considered the report on the Oxfordshire Joint Statutory Spatial Plan (JSSP) including the draft Local Development Scheme; the draft Statement of Community Involvement; and the draft Scoping Document.

Councillor Hollingsworth, Board Member for Planning and Transport, and Sarah Harrison, Planning Policy Team Leader explained the JSSP process and answered questions.

The Committee noted:

1. The JSSP created a deliverable vision through an overarching long-term plan for the county, incorporating current and in-preparation Local Plans up to 2030 then a wider strategic view from 2030 to 2050. It also linked into the developing local industrial strategy, economic plans, and wider national infrastructure and growth plans and priorities.
2. The JSSP had to be adopted by March 2021 to meet the agreed targets in the Oxfordshire Growth Deal.
3. Once in place, district councils would refresh their Local Plans in line with the JSSP and without the need to consult with each other as comprehensively. The JSSP would set broad policies and strategies and then each Local Plan would set out how to deliver these in more detail.
4. Councillors and residents could be involved through the different consultation and decision stages as set out in the Statement of Community Involvement.
5. The JSSP and its associated work was managed through the Oxfordshire Growth Board, assisted by a working group of senior councillors from each local authority.
6. Supporting evidence, both statutory and that required to underpin the JSSP, would be scoped, gathered, and published.
7. Staff were seconded or recruited directly to work on the JSSP. Vacated posts were being filled so there should be enough staff to work on the Council's own Local Plan. Planning Services had 4 new permanent planners and 3 or 4 new apprentice planners, and was not expecting a large-scale loss of senior staff to the JSSP project.
8. Consultations on Local Plans attracted different levels of interest: Cherwell had approximately 30,000 responses. A huge number of responses presented its own

challenges. For the JSSP face to face consultations were impractical, and bodies could contribute but may not be approached.

9. Responses were evaluated on the basis of their content not their quantity or by taking a poll.

Councillors commented

- It would be useful to have a list of all supporting and associated information and documents for the JSSP including where it could be found, what stage it had reached, and the date of the next refresh.
- The consultation strategy needed to be coherent and allow engagement: it was good to have a definite timeframe.

The Chair commented that as these documents were to be adopted across the county, there was limited opportunity at this stage for each individual council to change these.

The Committee **noted** the documents and the points from the discussion.

37. Air Quality Annual Status Report

The Committee considered the Annual Air Quality Status Report for 2017.

Councillor Hayes, Board Member for Safer, Greener Environment, and Mai Jarvis, Environmental Quality Team Leader, provided an overview of the report and answered questions.

The Committee noted:

1. A significant improvement in air quality over the last 10 years and in 2017, but that further improvements were necessary as there was no safe level of air pollution.
2. The monitoring of targeted sites where maximum levels of pollutants were most likely to be exceeded. Some sites were monitored continuously and showed long-term trends; others were monitored to evaluate changes in air quality from changes in the built environment or traffic changes.
3. Air quality data was available on a webpage linked to the Council's website showing trends, historical data and recent data.
4. There was an overlap between air pollution from other sources such as diesel engines and nuisances such as noise or smell. Reducing the nuisance caused could be a more appropriate way to deal with these.
5. In Council-owned properties the programme of refurbishment works included upgrading boilers to more efficient and less polluting models and there were annual safety checks.
6. When planned construction or roadworks took place, monitoring either in that area or along diversion routes could be planned and the changes in pollution measured. It usually took about 24 months after a change in the road network to accurately assess long term effects on air quality.
7. The County Council's transport group was working to reduce nuisance and pollution from heavily polluting vehicles in the City, but rerouting vehicles without other measures simply moved the problems.

8. There was no data about air pollution caused by cars seeking either public or controlled parking spaces in controlled parking zone (CPZ) areas. Monitoring could be considered in CPZ areas where there were also public facilities.
9. The proposed Zero Emission Zone would have a positive impact on air quality, as would campaigns to stop vehicles idling. There was however no data on emissions by vehicle type and it would be difficult to measure.
10. The Environmental Sustainability Team were researching how to make best use of beneficial trees to reduce air pollution.
11. Officers were running an anti-idling campaign and making direct approaches about reducing air pollution by turning off idling engines. They were working with schools to discourage buses and cars from idling, and as well as a general campaign were directly approaching tourist coaches in St Giles.

The Committee asked a number of questions:

1. Could air quality improvement measures be included in the Local Plan. For example in policies and if necessary and reasonable conditions such as on travel and construction plans requiring reduced air pollution and measuring and monitoring in large developments?
2. The anti-idling campaign could also target construction vehicles and heavy Goods Vehicles to reduce pollution in residential areas, and look at closing access to and near schools to reduce pollution.
3. Could community centres be used as monitoring stations to increase community awareness and interest in the impact of air pollution?
4. Could the Tourism Management Review Group consider the effects on air quality of the increase in short-stay coaches as part of their review?
5. Could the Housing Panel review the overall impact of the Council's boiler replacement programme on air quality?

The Committee **noted** the report, the answers to questions, members' comments and questions.

The Committee **noted** the improvements in air quality and steps being taken to ensure this continued.

Note: the Oxfordshire AirQuality website is: www.oxfordshire.air-quality.info

38. Quarter 1 Council Performance Report 2018/19

The Committee considered the Quarter 1 Council Performance report setting out performance measures to 30 June 2018 and a supplementary paper setting out performance data for Fusion Lifestyle.

Councillor Fry asked for the reinstatement of the following performance measures included in the Quarter 4 report for 2017/18, or if these were annual targets or an explanation of the reasons for removing these:

- BI002a: The number of training places and jobs created as a result of Council investment and leadership
- FN033: Delivery of the council's cost savings and income targets
- CS001: The % of customers satisfied at their first point of contact
- BI001: The % of Council spend with local business
- LP187: Effective delivery of the capital programme: development milestones achieved
- WR002: Customers supported to remove barriers to employment
- WR003: Customers supported to improve financial capability
- NI 191: The amount of non-recyclable waste produced in the city per household decreases each year
- NI192 Household waste recycled and composted (YTD)
- NI 157a, NI 157b, NI157c: targets for processing planning applications
- PC027: Increase the number of people engaging with the Council's social media accounts

The Committee commented that it was of concern that both performance against target BIT019i (% of contact carried out online) and CS003 (customer calls answered on the Council's main telephone service lines without hanging up) had decreased.

The Committee noted that performance against recycling targets (including NI 191 and NI192 referenced above) was now the responsibility of Oxford Direct Services Company and would be reviewed through the Companies Scrutiny Panel.

Fusion Lifestyle Partnership

The Committee considered the Fusion Lifestyle Partnership Board Presentation and accompanying briefing note concerning visitor numbers and financial performance up until July 2018. This information was provided following the Committee's request to continue monitoring the performance of Fusion Lifestyle on a quarterly basis. The Committee previously made recommendations to the City Executive Board on 13 June 2018 concerning visitor number targets, data monitoring and associated action plans to address the reduction of 340,000 leisure visits between 2016/17 and 2017/18.

The Committee expressed concerns about the reliability of the data it was presented with. In preparing for the meeting, Committee members had cross-referenced the financial performance information with the participation numbers for each leisure centre. In reviewing the data, the Committee was not able to ascertain how in some circumstances, a decrease in participation correlated with an increase in revenue for the same period. The Committee was unable to account for the scale of the increase in participation numbers July and questioned whether the figures were feasible and accurate. The Committee noted that the information provided by Fusion Lifestyle was requested and made available at short notice, which may have been a factor.

The Committee decided to recommend that an independent audit of Fusion Lifestyle's financial and participation accounting should take place to help distil apprehensions about the accuracy of the data.

The Committee recommended to the City Executive Board:

That the Council, through the City Executive Board, commissions an audit of Fusion Lifestyle’s financial and participation data, and the associated data collection methods, to assure itself of the reliability and accuracy of the quarterly performance information.

The Committee resolved to

1. continue to request performance dashboards from Fusion Lifestyle at quarterly intervals, with a relevant council officer present at each of these meetings, to explain and provide the context for the data;
2. reiterate its interest in viewing participation data for specific groups including u17s, older people, and members of the BAME community;
3. request a comprehensive set of data on Fusion Lifestyle’s performance by the next quarterly meeting on 6 December 2018, with an officer present to advise the committee and answer any questions;
4. ask for the reasons for the removal of targets listed above from the quarterly performance report, and for their reinstatement.

39. Report back on recommendations

The Chair presented the report and recommendations, and the Committee noted the recommendations made by the Companies Panel to the Shareholder Group.

40. Dates of future meetings

The Committee noted the dates.

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 7.45 pm

Chair

Date: Monday 8 October 2018