

Minutes of a meeting of the Scrutiny Committee on Monday 6 March 2023

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Committee members present:

Councillor Snowton (Chair)	Councillor Diggins (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Altaf-Khan	Councillor Arshad
Councillor Corais	Councillor Coyne
Councillor Jarvis	Councillor Mundy
Councillor Pegg	Councillor Rowley
Councillor Hunt	

Officers present for all or part of the meeting:

Mish Tullar, Head of Corporate Strategy
Anna Winship, Management Accountancy Manager
Richard Doney, Scrutiny Officer
Lucy Brown, Committee and Member Services Officer

Cabinet Members also present:

Cllr Susan Brown, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Inclusive Economy and Partnerships
Cllr Louise Upton, Cabinet Member for Health and Transport
Cllr Ed Turner, Cabinet Member for Finance and Asset Management

Apologies:

No apologies were received

87. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest made.

88. Chair's Announcements

None.

89. Minutes

The Committee resolved to APPROVE the minutes of the meeting held on 1 February 2023 as a true and accurate record.

90. Work Plan and Forward Plan

Cllrs Jarvis and Hunt arrived at the meeting

The Committee **noted** the Forward Plan. The Chair advised that due to the lack of items for the next Cabinet meeting, a decision would be taken to cancel the next Scrutiny Committee meeting of 4 April 2023 nearer the time.

91. Annual Update of the Council's Business Plan

Cllr Corais arrived at the meeting.

Cllr Susan Brown, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Inclusive Economy and Partnerships, presented the report which requested Cabinet approval of Oxford City Council's Annual Business Plan priorities for 2023/24. She highlighted that that Annual Business Plan was based on the four Council Strategy 2020-2024 priorities; Enable an Inclusive Economy; Deliver More, Affordable Housing; Support Thriving Communities and Pursue a Zero Carbon Oxford, and an additional priority 5: Ensure Council service delivery is fit for the future for the Business Plan 2023-2024.

Mish Tullar, Head of Corporate Strategy provided the Committee with further information regarding the process taken for developing future year's business plans for the Council.

Cllr Brown and Mish Tullar answered questions as follows:

- Service integration with Locality Managers in each of the four city quadrants remains a work in progress due to issues with recruitment and retention.
- The EDI strategy covers the Council's companies, however the workforce for OX Place is relatively smaller and linked with the Council.
- Retrofitting Champions are currently being recruited and meetings were held with Ambassadors to promote this recruitment.
- Until further guidance is received from Central Government on updates to the waste and recycling regime, an update for the existing Recycling and Waste Strategy has been put on hold.
- Whilst it is not the Council's approach to demolish Council buildings and it would always prefer to retrofit, Standingford House on Cave Street had moved beyond economic sustainable repair.
- Officers of the Council work directly with Community Centres to ensure they are actively promoting and delivering community projects.
- A meeting with Thames Water has now been organised which will include an invitation for Q&A for all Members.
- More detailed progress measures could be included within the plan and higher level KPIs would be included in the next iteration of the Corporate Strategy.
- A number of trees had been planted over the last year as part of the Urban Forest Strategy, however Council land is limited for tree planting and encouragement had been sought from private landowners.

The Committee resolved to make the following recommendations on the report for Cabinet:

1. That the Council, in future four year Corporate Business Plans, includes higher-level key performance indicators to enable Members to track strategic ambitions more easily.

2. That the Council reports on, and monitors progress of, the implementation and outworking of the Urban Forest Strategy.
3. That the Council makes explicit reference in the report to working with Thames Water in seeking to improve the situation with water in the City.

92. Integrated Care Strategy Update

Cllr Louise Upton, Cabinet Member for Health and Transport, presented the report which presented information on the production of a new Integrated Care Strategy by the Integrated Care Board for Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West. She highlighted the five key principles set out in the report and emphasised Preventing Ill Health and Tackling Health Inequalities as key priorities for the Council.

Mish Tullar, Head of Corporate Strategy, advised that the document had been produced by the Integrated Care Board (ICB) of which the Council had actively engaged in with its development.

Cllr Upton and Mish Tullar, responded to the Committee's questions as follows:

- The ICB replaced the Commissioning Clinical Group, and funding from that followed.
- There are multiple agencies working in partnership within the ICB, a Place Director for each County provides for localised representation. Dan Leveson is the Oxfordshire Place Director, a senior NHS officer.
- Effective governance is achieved via rotational representation on the Partnership Board which also links to the Health and Wellbeing Board.
- Concerns around vaping are recognised, including the use of marketing towards younger people, and will be fed into the ICB Strategy delivery action plan.
- Community Champions have been actively targeting issues with vaccine hesitancy.
- Community Champions and Community Groups, such as Healthwatch, support groups at particular risk of ill health, also taking into account environmental factors.

The Committee resolved to make the following recommendations on the report to the Cabinet:

1. That the Council sets out in summary how the Integrated Care Board is funded and what budget is available to it.
2. That the Council uses its influence via the Integrated Care Board to ensure that the risks and dangers of vaping, particularly amongst the young, are emphasised in the action plan arising from the strategy.
3. That the Council uses its influence via the Integrated Care Board to ensure that the need to combat vaccine hesitancy and widespread misinformation is articulated in the action plan arising from the strategy.
4. That the Council uses its influence via the Integrated Care Board to ensure that, when the masterplan is drawn up to monitor the implementation of the strategy, specific attention is paid to the relevant needs of particular demographic groups (including but not limited to the LGBT communities and those from some minority ethnic communities) and the impact of certain strategies and factors on those groups particularly.
5. That the Council using its influence via the Integrated Care Board to broaden the strategy's existing work on air quality to also consider indoor air quality and indoor sources of pollutants.

93. Integrated Performance Report for Q3 2022/23

Cllr Ed Turner, Cabinet Member for Finance and Asset Management, introduced the report which updated Cabinet on Finance, Risk and Corporate Performance matters as at 31 December 2022. He highlighted that the negative variations on the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account, the latter mainly due to building costs inflation.

Cllr Turner and Anna Winship, Management Accountancy Manager, answered queries from the Committee.

During discussions, the Committee noted the following:

- Performance reports have been positive despite recognised difficulties in staff recruitment and retention.
- Budget reductions were agreed for rough sleeping strategies, due to an increase in partners and grants, rather than a reduction in service.
- Utility costs pressures are kept updated, and a level of reserve retained to avoid exposure, especially in light of the Council's leisure centres that were not part of the Government grant scheme.

The Committee resolved to make the following recommendation on the report for Cabinet:

1. That the Council sets out in more detail which areas of work were proposed to be suspended in paragraph 10 of the report and enumerates the financial impact of this as well as the expected length of suspension.

94. Reports for approval

The Housing and Homelessness Panel had moved their meeting from 2 March 2023 to 13 March 2023.

The Climate and Environment Panel would meet on 9 March 2023.

It was noted that if either Panel made recommendations to Cabinet, these would be submitted without Committee approval, but reported on at the next meeting of the Committee.

95. Report back on recommendations and from Scrutiny Panel meetings

The Budget Review Group recommendations had been agreed by Cabinet, albeit one only in part which related to charges at Florence Park medical centre and Cabinet had advised they would be committed to discussing alternatives with health authorities.

The recommendation on the Disciplinary Policy was incorporated for the Full Council meeting of 16 February 2023, and submitted to Cabinet for completeness.

96. Dates of future meetings

The dates of future meetings were noted.

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 8.20 pm

Chair

Date: Tuesday 4 April 2023

When decisions take effect:

Cabinet: after the call-in and review period has expired

Planning Committees: after the call-in and review period has expired and the formal decision notice is issued

All other committees: immediately.

Details are in the Council's Constitution.