

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Monday 23 March 2015

COUNCILLORS PRESENT: Councillors Simmons (Chair), Hayes (Vice-Chair), Anwar, Coulter, Darke, Gant, Hollick, Henwood, Lloyd-Shogbesan, Pressel, Smith and Upton.

OFFICERS PRESENT: Ian Brooke (Head of Leisure, Parks and Communities), Andrew Brown (Scrutiny Officer), Lucy Cherry (City Leisure), Mai Jarvis (Environmental Policy Team Leader), Jennifer Thompson (Law and Governance) and Nathan Vear (Interim Head of Environmental Development)

100. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Altaf-Khan (substitute Councillor Gant) and Councillor Fry (substitute Councillor Pressel).

101. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

102. UPDATE FROM STANDING PANELS

Councillor Hollick reported that the Housing Panel would meet on 24 March. Councillor Simmons reported that the Finance Panel meeting on 25 March may be deferred. The Cycling Panel would report on its work under Minute105.

103. OXFORD CYCLE CITY -UPDATE

The Head of Environmental Development and the Environmental Policy Team Leader presented a report on the progress of the Oxford Cycle City project and answered questions.

Councillor John Tanner (Executive Member for Cleaner, Greener Oxford, Climate Change and Transport) also answered questions.

- In paragraph 4 of the report, an additional £67,000 was awarded (not £62,000 as stated).
- The Cycle City plan was very ambitious. Oxfordshire County Council would prefer that new schemes did not start until their new long-term county-wide strategy was agreed. The Council's response to the draft strategy would be submitted shortly. One concern was the lack of a hierarchy of priority travel modes to inform road design.
- The Cycling Panel could have an input into those projects which could be taken forward with the funding available.
- Most grants were available only to the County Council in its capacity as transport authority, although the city council was consulted as appropriate about any bids for these.
- Some S106 and CIL funding from new developments was available for cycling schemes either on or off the site of the development.

- The increase in cycle journeys as the main mode of transport would be measured for city residents.
- Some work on the towpaths had been completed; the County Council had a grant to carry out more work; but upgrading major stretches required their assistance.
- Adult training had been carried out as a small-scale pilot and may be continued if funds allowed.
- It was unclear why there had been no proposals for better provision for cyclists on Woodstock Road.
- Working relations with voluntary sector groups were generally productive.
- It should be possible to progress schemes with clear benefits where these did not conflict with the proposals in the draft transport strategy and could be funded.

Members of the Committee commented that the Cycling Panel should consider the consultant's report on the County Council's draft transport strategy, and the budget and proposed expenditure on cycling improvements.

The Committee recommended that:

- the Cycling Panel urge Oxfordshire County Council to progress the recommendation in the motion on cycle safety adopted at Council on 1 December; and
- the consultants' report on the Oxford Transport Strategy should be circulated to councillors,

and noted that individual responses could be made to this consultation.

104. FUSION LIFESTYLE - ANNUAL SERVICE PLAN 2015/16

The Head of Leisure, Parks and Communities and the Leisure Performance Manager presented a report setting out Fusion Lifestyle's Annual Service Plan for 2015/16 and answered questions from the Committee as follows:

- Visitor numbers overall had increased and this higher baseline should be taken into account when setting new targets for increased usage.
- Visitor numbers to the new pool at Blackbird Leys had exceeded expectations and an unofficial audit had provided glowing feedback on the accessibility of this facility for disabled people.
- Increased footfall creates upward pressure on energy usage, making the energy reduction target harder to achieve.
- The initiatives to encourage participation, particularly from under-represented groups, and including free and low-cost activities were outlined.
- It was realistic to achieve a zero subsidy per user by 2017, and Fusion's contract committed them to delivering this.

Members of the Committee noted the work done on promoting and supporting sports directly and with schools, and suggested that promotion of cricket and summer sports may increase involvement from groups with low participation rates.

The Committee agreed that although significant progress had already been made, there was scope to be more ambitious in targeting increased participation amongst disabled users and people living in the most deprived wards in Oxford.

The Committee discussed how the Council could continue to encourage and enable greater participation amongst target groups. Members noted the positive impact of the crèche at Blackbird Leys on enabling more women to use the leisure facilities. The Committee agreed it would like to see further progress in providing similar family-friendly provision at more leisure facilities.

The Committee asked whether the target to reduce utility consumption by 2% each year against the 2013/14 baseline should be changed to a carbon reduction target, similar to the corporate target of reducing carbon emissions by 5% each year and suggested that a carbon reduction target could be measured on a per user basis, rather than on an overall basis.

The Committee made a number of suggestions to officers:

- National benchmarking data on the participation of target groups would be useful,
- The risk register should include review dates where actions are identified,
- Some targets may need to be re-expressed to provide greater clarity and consistency (one target was cumulative but others were non-cumulative),
- An analysis of where users of the Blackbird Leys pool came from may be useful.

The Committee recommended to the City Executive Board:

1. that a more ambitious performance target be adopted for increasing the participation of users resident in the most deprived wards in the city;
2. that a more ambitious performance target is adopted for increasing the participation of disabled users;
3. that the Council continues to work with Fusion Lifestyle to remove barriers to participation for our target groups, for example by seeking to extend crèche provision to more Council leisure facilities;
4. that the utility consumption performance target is changed to a carbon reduction target, measured on a per user basis. This could be in line with the Council's overall target of reducing carbon emissions by 5% year on year.

105. CYCLING PANEL SCOPE

The Scrutiny Officer submitted a report setting out the scope of the Cycling Review Group's work.

The Committee agreed the scope as set out in the report with the additions of:

- consider the Council's response to the Oxfordshire County Council's draft Transport Strategy;
- evaluate the merits of further investment in adult cycle training;
- evaluate the use and monitoring of S106 and CIL funds to improve cycling provision.

106. WORK PROGRAMME AND FORWARD PLAN

The Scrutiny Officer presented the work programme and the Forward Plan.

The Committee approved a survey of councillors with the inclusion of a summary of the main scrutiny topics for information. The Committee noted that Council would receive an end of year scrutiny report at the September meeting.

The Committee agreed:

1. To scrutinise from the Forward Plan:
 - Item 16: City Centre Public Spaces Protection Order
 - Item 22: Oxpens delivery strategy
 - Item 23: Community Centre leases
 - Item 21: Oxford Station redevelopment when appropriate, and invite Network Rail to attend for this.
2. To refer Item 17: Capital Strategy and Item 18: Corporate Debt Policy to the Finance Panel.
3. To refer Item 20: Covered Market action plan to the Local Economy Group*.
4. To note that Item 24: Safeguarding was on the work programme but had been delayed; and to invite the Executive Director for Community Services, the Policy and Partnership Team Leader, and Chair of the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board to attend when this was considered.

*this will be brought to the full Committee.

107. REPORT BACK ON RECOMMENDATIONS

The Scrutiny Officer presented a report setting out the results of recommendations made by the Committee.

The Committee noted the report and asked for clarification as to whether the recommendation to the Oxfordshire Growth Board had been adopted, with reasons.

108. MINUTES

The Committee resolved to APPROVE the minutes of the meeting held on 2 March 2015 as a true and accurate record.

109. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The Committee noted the dates of future meetings and agreed to change the date of the next meeting to 27 April.

The meeting started at 6.15 pm and ended at 7.40 pm