

Minutes

of a meeting of the

Scrutiny Committee

held at 7pm on Thursday 24 November 2011

at the Abbey House, Abingdon



Open to the public, including the press

Present:

Members: Councillors Jim Halliday (Chair), Melinda Tilley (Vice-Chairman), Andrew Crawford, Jane Crossley, Tony de Vere, Charlotte Dickson, Jason Fiddaman, Bill Jones, and Fiona Roper

Substitute members: Councillor Kate Precious (in place of Councillor Eric Batts), and Councillor Richard Webber (in place of Councillor Julie Mayhew-Archer)

Non-participating members: Councillors Yvonne Constance and Dudley Hoddinott

Invitees: Helen Bell (Thames Valley Police Authority representative), and Area Commander Rob Povey (Thames Valley Police)

Officers: Steve Culliford, Katharine Doherty, Liz Hayden, Margaret Reed, Anna Robinson, and Sally Truman

Number of members of the public: Nil

Sc.51 Notification of substitutes and apologies for absence

Councillors Eric Batts, Sandy Lovatt, and Julie Mayhew-Archer had all sent their apologies for absence and their substitutes are recorded above.

Sc.52 Minutes

RESOLVED:

- (a) To adopt the minutes of the committee's meeting held on 4 August, 22 September and 27 October 2011 and agree that the chairman signs them, subject to the following amendment:
- In the minutes of 22 September 2011, in minute Sc.40 relating to proposals to monitor the impact of free two hours car parking scheme, amend the fourth paragraph to read 'Some councillors suggested additional data that the council could collate. The council could ask if free parking was the reason people came into the town centre. The officers could compare data from other market towns also, including footfall, car park usage and air quality. The strategic director thanked the committee for its suggestions but

expressed caution about undertaking additional work. He preferred to await the outcome of the first review before undertaking additional work.'

- (b) The minutes of the committee meeting held on 24 August 2011 be brought to the next meeting for adoption.

Sc.53 Declarations of interest

Councillor Bill Jones declared a personal interest in the item on the community safety annual report as he had been appointed by the Leader as the Cabinet's representative on the Community Safety Partnership for 2011/12. Even though the report related to the year 2010/11, Councillor Bill Jones stepped down from his role as committee member as he was unable to scrutinise himself. For this item, he joined the community safety officers at the table.

Councillor Charlotte Dickson declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the item on the community safety annual report as her father, Councillor Bill Jones, had been appointed by the Leader as the Cabinet's representative on the Community Safety Partnership for 2011/12. Councillor Dickson left the room during consideration of this item.

Sc.54 Urgent business and chair's announcements

None

Sc.55 Statements, petitions and questions from the public relating to matters affecting the Scrutiny Committee

No members of the public had asked to make a statement or ask a question at this meeting. However, the committee noted that Councillor Dudley Hoddinott has requested to ask questions on the community safety annual report and the corporate plan review. The chair agreed to take these questions later in the meeting.

Sc.56 Community safety annual report

Councillor Bill Jones declared a personal interest in the item and stepped down from his role as committee member as he was unable to scrutinise himself, as he was the council's appointed representative on the community safety partnership. For this item, he joined the community safety officers at the table.

Councillor Charlotte Dickson declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the item and left the meeting during its consideration.

The committee considered report 46/11 of the head of legal and democratic services , appended to which was the community safety annual report for 2010/11. This report came from the Community Safety Partnership, of which the council was a member. Present at the meeting to answer the committee's questions were two officers of the council and the Thames Valley Police Area Commander, Rob Povey, and the Thames Valley Police Authority representative, Hazel Bell.

The chair invited Councillor Dudley Hoddinott to address the committee. In relation to graffiti on a wall mural near Matthew Arnold School at North Hinksey, he asked if anyone

had inspected the artwork to check for graffiti since it was given an anti-graffiti coating? Councillor Hoddinott also referred to the community safety partnership report and questioned whether the Police had reported a range of crimes in the parishes of North Hinksey and Cumnor? He also asked when the partnership would take action, similar to that taken in the towns, to protect the residents in these parishes, especially the vulnerable groups such as the elderly.

The committee noted that crimes in North Hinksey and Cumnor were included in the Abingdon area reports. The officer reassured the councillor that the partnership's work covered the whole district, including North Hinksey and Cumnor. However, cleaning graffiti was the responsibility of the property owner.

The committee welcomed the good news of the partnership's success during 2010/11. The committee considered the report in detail and noted that:

- Increases in the reporting of domestic abuse was seen as positive, as it showed that more victims were reporting abuse, not that the amount of abuse was increasing
- The officers would provide a map showing the police area boundaries within the district
- Statistics for underage drinking were available for areas across the district and could be supplied to the committee
- The street pastor schemes were part-funded by the council. The partnership was pleased with the success of the street pastors' scheme
- The partnership was adopting a range of road safety measures to reduce speeding. One measure was a trial to add 30 miles per hour stickers to council wheeled waste bins in some villages. No statistics were available on whether the trial had any positive effect on reducing speeding. However, the statistics could be made available in due course
- The regular police neighbourhood updates to councillors listed events by ward. However, the neighbourhood areas did not align with the district council wards. Rob Povey agreed to investigate whether the ward boundaries could be changed to align with the district council's. Hazel Bell suggested that this was being reviewed at Police headquarters.

In answer to a question regarding future funding, the officer reported that the partnership's funding for 2012/13 required confirmation by the County Council in its budget in February 2012. The committee asked that the Cabinet member should be asked to put forward the council's view at the appropriate time that this council sees the County Council's future funding of the community safety partnership as essential. The Cabinet member agreed to do this.

The committee thanked the partnership for its work during the year and congratulated it on its success.

RESOLVED: To note the community safety partnership report for 2010/11.

Sc.57 Corporate plan review

The committee considered report 47/11 of the head of corporate strategy, which reviewed the corporate plan. The report set out proposed strategic objectives and corporate

priorities that would form part of the corporate plan to 2016. This would guide how the council allocated funding and resources.

The committee was asked for its views. To do this the chair asked all members to write their comments against the corporate objectives and measures.

Councillor Dudley Hoddinott had asked to address the committee. The chair invited him to add his questions to the committee's feedback to the draft corporate priorities.

The chair adjourned the meeting to allow the committee to add its comments. Later, the committee reconvened.

The officers agreed to collate the committee's comments and circulate them to committee members to check for accuracy. If the timetable allowed, the officers would bring these comments to the committee's next meeting for approval. The committee's comments would then be submitted to Cabinet for consideration in the corporate plan review.

The committee noted that Cabinet would periodically review the corporate plan and the committee would have an ongoing scrutiny role.

RESOLVED: To request that the committee's comments on the corporate plan review be sent to committee members or brought back to the committee for approval.

Sc.58 Scrutiny work programme

The committee noted that its work programme included an item at the next meeting on the Cabinet's budget consultation. The strategic director agreed to inform the committee of the extent of the budget consultation for 2012/13.

The strategic director also agreed to circulate to committee members an evaluation of the possible scrutiny topics. This would allow the committee to choose which items should be included in its work programme. The work programme would be discussed further at the next committee meeting on 22 December 2011.

Exempt information under section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972

None

The meeting closed at 9pm