

Minutes

of a meeting of the

Scrutiny Committee

held at 7.00pm on Thursday 23 May 2013

at the Council Chamber, The Abbey House, Abingdon



Open to the public, including the press

Present:

Members: Councillor Jim Halliday (Chairman), Tony de Vere, Debby Hallett, Mohinder Kainth, Sandy Lovatt, Julie Mayhew-Archer, Fiona Roper and Alison Thomson

Officers: Kate Arnold, Steve Culliford, Graham Hawkins, Clare Kingston, Ian Matten, Anna Robinson, and Chris Tyson

Number of members of the public: Nil

Sc.1 Notification of substitutes and apologies for absence

Councillors Eric Batts, Charlotte Dickson (Vice-Chairman), and Richard Webber all sent their apologies for absence. Councillors Janet Shelley and Val Shaw attended as substitutes for Councillors Eric Batts and Richard Webber respectively.

Sc.2 Minutes

RESOLVED: to adopt the minutes of the committee meeting held on 21 March 2013 as a correct record and agree that the chairman signs them.

Sc.3 Declarations of interest

None

Sc.4 Urgent business and chairman's announcements

The chairman reported on the outcome of the joint Cabinet meeting between the Vale of White Horse and South Oxfordshire district councils that took place on 11 April to consider the principle of a joint leisure management contract. He was pleased to report that he had been able to speak at the meeting and that the Cabinets had accepted his suggestion that Scrutiny Committee should be able to consider and comment on the key performance indicators before the councils let the new contract. He also reported that the minutes of the project board meetings would be available to Scrutiny Committee members and the project board member, Councillor Jason Fiddaman, could update councillors on progress at future committee meetings.

Sc.5 Statements, petitions and questions from the public relating to matters affecting the Scrutiny Committee

None

Sc.6 Action List

The committee noted the action list tabled at the meeting showing progress against the actions arising from previous committee meetings. The chairman asked that this was updated following this meeting.

Sc.7 Leisure Facilities Strategy

The committee considered the report of the head of economy, leisure and property that proposed a new leisure facilities strategy. The Cabinet member for this service reported that by reviewing the leisure facilities across the district and looking at future requirements arising from population growth up to 2029, the council could plan future facilities to meet residents' leisure needs. The council would also seek financial contributions through section 106 planning agreements and later, the community infrastructure levy, to support these facilities. In addition, there would be work to assess village needs for facilities not directly provided by the council. Since the publication of the report, this work had been renamed the 'leisure and sports facilities study'. The Cabinet member believed this work would be developed and reviewed over time.

The committee welcomed the opportunity to comment on the report, believing that the study would make a positive contribution to leisure and sports provision across the district and would provide a strong evidence base for the local plan. The committee made the following suggestions:

- The study must provide evidence of deficiencies of leisure facilities, not just in the towns. This evidence must lever in funding from housing developers. The officers pointed out that the council sought funding from developments of over fifty houses in accordance with planning policies
- The study should not just concentrate on sports facilities. With an aging population, the study should look at facilities for walking and enjoying the countryside, and indoor facilities such as short mat bowls
- The strategy should make use of village or community halls and school halls
- The council should provide support for club facilities through grants
- At every opportunity, the council should seek grants from other funding bodies to help provide and sustain facilities
- The study should assess the needs of future residents of new housing developments
- Estimates of the cost of new facilities should include land purchase or rental costs
- Planned facility construction dates should be included in any public document
- In paragraph 12 of the officer's covering report, the introductory text and the table headings should match (deficiencies in leisure provision that could lead to new leisure facilities)
- With many schools converting to academy status, the council must continue to monitor joint use agreements for some of its leisure facilities. The officers reported that there had been no changes to the joint use agreements but the council was in on-going dialogue with the county council over this

- As there were only 34 responses to the consultation, should the council carry out further consultation to determine need? The officers reported that they were willing to receive suggestions at any time
- The action plan from the leisure participation strategy should inform the leisure and sports study. The officers confirmed that where there had been overlaps between the two consultations, this has been the case
- The council must take into account the parking demand for new and existing leisure facilities and plan for these. The committee considered the parking at the existing leisure centres was insufficient
- There should be a clear definition of acronyms used

In answer to questions from committee members, the officers agreed to circulate the council's website links to:

1. the 2008 supplementary planning document on future provision for open space, sport and recreation, and
2. the full document that provided more detail behind the officer's report

The chairman agreed to circulate a copy of information provided by the Cabinet member for leisure that detailed the difference between the two leisure consultations carried out in November/December 2012, namely the leisure participation strategy and the leisure facilities strategy (now the leisure and sports facilities study).

The committee noted that Cabinet would consider a report on the leisure and sports facilities study on 7 June. The chairman asked committee members to feed in any suggestions for local facilities to the officers before the Cabinet meeting.

RESOLVED: to

- (a) advise Cabinet of the committee's comments on the leisure facilities strategy (now the leisure and sports facilities study) as set out in the bullet points above;
- (b) request the committee chairman to circulate a copy of information provided by the Cabinet member for leisure that details the difference between the two leisure consultations carried out in November/December 2012, namely the leisure participation strategy and the leisure facilities strategy (now the leisure and sports facilities study);
- (c) ask committee members to feed in any suggestions for local facilities to the officers before the Cabinet considers this matter at its meeting on 7 June; and
- (d) add this item to the scrutiny work programme for a further review after the local plan is approved.

Sc.8 Scrutiny work programme

The committee reviewed its work programme.

As the community infrastructure levy would not come into effect until the local plan had been adopted, the committee agreed to defer this. However, the committee asked for a July update on progress with section 106 agreements.

Councillors asked for updates on progress with filling shops in the Abbey Shopping Centre in Abingdon and news on Wantage Civic Hall. The officers agreed to seek this information and include it in the councillors' information sheet. The committee could then decide at its next meeting whether to call these items forward for a future scrutiny debate. The chairman also asked for an update in the councillors' information sheet on the planning service restructure once the consultation was complete.

The committee noted that the only agenda item for its next meeting related to the review of the two hours free parking scheme. The chairman agreed to discuss with the vice-chairman whether to defer this item to a future meeting.

RESOLVED: to update the Scrutiny work programme in line with the changes above.

Sc.9 Dates of meetings

RESOLVED: to note the dates of the forthcoming Scrutiny Committee meetings as follows:

- 27 June 2013
- 25 July
- 22 August

Sc.10 Exclusion of the public, including the press

RESOLVED: to move that in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public, including the press, be excluded from the remainder of the meeting to prevent the disclosure to them of exempt information, as defined in Section 100(l) and Part 1 of Schedule 12A, as amended, to the Act when the following items are considered:

Waste contract extension

(Category 3 - Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information.)

Tilsley Park

(Category 3)

Sc.11 Waste contract extension

The committee reviewed an exempt report to Cabinet on a proposal to extend the existing waste management contract. The committee supported the proposal but suggested some improvements.

Sc.12 Tilsley Park

The committee reviewed an exempt report to Cabinet on the future management of Tilsley Park. The committee raised questions and made suggestions to Cabinet.