

Minutes

OF A MEETING OF THE

Scrutiny Committee

HELD AT 6.00 PM ON TUESDAY 9 FEBRUARY 2016

MEETING ROOM 1, 135 MILTON PARK

Present:

Richard Pullen (Chair)

Steve Connel, Paul Harrison, Jeannette Matelot, Pat Dawe, David Turner, John Walsh, Ian White and Toby Newman (as substitute for Imran Lokhon)

Apologies:

Imran Lokhon tendered apologies.

Officers:

Steve Bishop, Paula Fox, Simon Hewings, Ron Schrieber and Cathie Scotting

Also present:

John Cotton, Lynn Lloyd and Jane Murphy

8 Minutes and actions arising and referral

The committee agreed that the minutes of the meeting on 22 September 2015 were an accurate record of the meeting and the Chair signed them. There were no outstanding matters arising or referrals.

9 Declarations of interest

None.

10 Urgent business and chair's announcements

None.

11 Statements, petitions and questions from the public relating to matters affecting the Scrutiny Committee

None.



Listening Learning Leading

12 Work schedule and dates for all South and Vale scrutiny meetings

The work schedule was noted.

13 Section 106 Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

Cathie Scotting, major applications officer, introduced this item. Also present to answer questions were Paula Fox, development manager (south) and John Cotton, Leader and cabinet member for corporate strategy and strategic policy.

The committee considered the comments received on the consultation draft Section 106 Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), together with recommended changes, prior to its approval by the Cabinet member. It was noted that, subsequent to the circulation of the report, officers were proposing to amend the wording of the public realm/public art section of Table 2 to read "Improvements to the public realm and town centres. Improvements to increase accessibility for disabled".

It was reported that the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) was intended to provide infrastructure to support the development of an area, rather than making an individual planning application acceptable. As such, CIL would not fully replace Section 106 planning obligations, which would continue to be used on individual sites to mitigate the direct impact of a proposed development and would still be the primary mechanism for securing affordable housing. Subject to approval by the Council on 18 February, the CIL charging schedule would be implemented on 1 April 2016.

The committee then discussed the report, asking questions of the cabinet member and officers and the following points were raised:

- 23 representations had been received on the consultation and these were mainly issues of clarification. The Leader reported that a new community engagement strategy would be launched in the near future which would, amongst other things, seek to encourage greater community engagement in such exercises;
- When a planning application was made, the applicant would need to specify who would pay the CIL.
- Currently, core strategy strategic housing sites will be exempt from CIL as significant on-site infrastructure is required. The most efficient way to secure this is via Section 106 agreements. In the future it will be necessary to assess whether new sites will also have significant infrastructure and need to be exempt from CIL;
- Section 278 agreements would not be affected by CIL;
- The Regulation 123 list set out the uses which would be funded by CIL and which by Section 106 agreements; and
- CIL and S106 could only be used to fund infrastructure and maintenance.

Recommendations and Referrals

That the Cabinet member for strategic policy be recommended:

1. To adopt and publish the amended Section 106 Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document, 1 April 2016; and

2. To publish the associated supplementary planning documents (e.g. consultation report and statement, sustainability appraisal, equality impact assessment).

14 Revenue Budget 2016/17 and Capital Programme to 2020/21

Simon Hewings, chief accountant introduced this item. Also present to answer questions were Jane Murphy, Deputy Leader and cabinet member for finance, legal and democratic services and John Cotton, Leader and cabinet member for corporate strategy and strategic policy.

The committee considered the head of finance's report on the revenue budget 2016/17 and the capital programme to 2020/21. The report brought together the relevant information upon which Cabinet had recommended a budget and capital programme to Council on 18 February 2016. Tabled at the meeting was appendix E setting out the prudential indicators for Cabinet's recommendation to Council. All councillors had been invited to a budget briefing in the previous week.

The committee then discussed the report, asking questions of the cabinet members and officers and the following points were raised:

- The anticipated savings from the corporate services project were the best estimates given that the contracts had not yet been signed. However, given that the project had now been approved by all five councils, it was highly likely to proceed. In fact, the financial risks to the council were greater should the contracts be awarded and a contractor subsequently default than if the contracts were not awarded.
- Both the S151 officer and the cabinet were of the opinion that, on current projections, the budget was sustainable. However there was a huge amount of uncertainty about future funding.
- Some underspends were due to greater than anticipated income being received rather than reduced expenditure;
- A joint devolution funding bid for Oxfordshire had been submitted to the Government.

With regard to the revenue growth bid for the post of cabinet policy advisor, the Leader reported how this post would support the council's key aims as set out in the council's corporate plan and enhance service provision.

The committee noted the revenue budget 2016/17 and capital programme to 2020/21 which cabinet had recommended to council.

The meeting closed at 7.00 pm

Chairman

Date