

## Cherwell District Council

### Executive

Minutes of a meeting of the Executive held at Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury, OX15 4AA, on 28 May 2012 at 6.30 pm

Present: Councillor Barry Wood, Leader of the Council (Chairman)  
Councillor G A Reynolds, Deputy Leader of the Council (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Ken Atack, Lead Member for Financial Management  
Councillor Norman Bolster, Lead Member for Estates and the Economy  
Councillor John Donaldson, Lead Member for Banbury Brighter Futures  
Councillor Michael Gibbard, Lead Member for Planning  
Councillor Tony Ilott, Lead Member for Public Protection  
Councillor D M Pickford, Lead Member for Housing  
Councillor Nicholas Turner, Lead Member for Performance and Customers

Also Present: Councillor Leslie F Sibley  
Councillor Tim Emptage, Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group

Apologies for absence: Councillor Nigel Morris, Lead Member for Clean and Green  
Councillor Patrick Cartledge, Leader of the Labour Group

Officers: Sue Smith, Chief Executive  
Calvin Bell, Director of Development  
Ian Davies, Director of Community and Environment  
Martin Henry, Director of Resources / Section 151 Officer  
Kevin Lane, Head of Law and Governance / Monitoring Officer  
Adrian Colwell, Head of Strategic Planning and the Economy  
Jo Pitman, Head of Transformation  
Claire Taylor, Corporate Performance Manager  
Tim Mills, Private Sector Housing Manager  
Natasha Clark, Team Leader, Democratic and Elections

#### 1 **Declarations of Interest**

Members declared interests in the following agenda items:

##### **7. Local Plan 2012.**

Councillor Barry Wood, Personal, due to persons known to him having a land interest in land outside but in the vicinity of Eco-Bicester.

Councillor G A Reynolds, Personal, as a County Councillor due to the County Council having a land interest at Gowell's Farm.

Councillor Michael Gibbard, Personal, as a County Councillor due to the County Council having a land interest at Gowell's Farm.

Councillor Nicholas Turner, Prejudicial, as a tenant of Trinity College, at Drayton Lodge Farm, that has had land under discussion and also being leasee of Drayton Leisure Golf Centre that is adjacent to one of the sites in the Local Plan 2012.

Councillor Nicholas Turner, Personal, as a County Councillor due to the County Council having a land interest at Gowell's Farm.

Councillor Norman Bolster, Personal, as a County Councillor due to the County Council having a land interest at Gowell's Farm.

### **11. Eco Bicester: A Garden City of the Future?**

Councillor Barry Wood, Personal, due to persons known to him having a land interest in land outside but in the vicinity of Eco-Bicester.

## **2 Petitions and Requests to Address the Meeting**

There were no petitions or requests to address the meeting.

## **3 Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

## **4 Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 2 April 2012 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

## **5 Bicester Masterplan Update**

The Head of Strategic Planning and the Economy submitted a report which briefed members on the progress with the development of the Bicester Masterplan. The completed Masterplan would set the strategy for shaping the development of Bicester and be used to inform the determination of planning applications.

Gordon Lewis of WYG, the consultants appointed by Cherwell District Council in November 2011 to prepare a Masterplan for Bicester, gave a presentation which updated Executive on progress being made with the development of the Masterplan. Since the endorsement of the Conceptual Plan by Executive in February 2012, WYG had undertaken detailed site assessment and stakeholder engagement around the themes of employment, housing, movement and open space.

Members commended the coordinated approach being taken which took into account the various developments underway in Bicester and put limits on

growth. Members noted the considerable consultation that had been undertaken with stakeholders and commented that the forthcoming public consultation was also extremely important. The Head of Strategic Planning and the Economy confirmed that public consultation would take place in June and July. He further advised Executive that for the Bicester Masterplan to become a supplementary planning document, responses to all consultation submissions and any subsequent changes to the Masterplan would need to be reported.

In considering the Masterplan, it was highlighted that it would be important for all future planning applications relating to health provision to take into account the increasing population. Members commented that it was essential that all infrastructure was properly built in to meet the needs of the town. Members also requested that officers give consideration to the to boundary zone of RAF Bicester to ensure that the setting of listed buildings would not be affected.

Members noted that the Masterplan would be accompanied by an Action Plan which would set out how the Masterplan would be delivered and requested that this be submitted to Executive for consideration in due course.

### **Resolved**

- (1) That a presentation by WYG on progress being made with the development of the Bicester Masterplan be received.
- (2) That authority be delegated to the Head of Strategic Planning and the Economy, in consultation with the Lead Member for Planning, to make any minor changes before publication of the Bicester Masterplan (WYG presentation) for public consultation.
- (3) That officers be requested to submit a report to Executive in due course setting out how the action plan objectives will be addressed and delivered.

### **Reasons**

The Masterplan has been commissioned to examine the town and its future needs over the next 20 years. It aims to provide a clear vision for the future of the town and set a framework for the integration of new developments with the rest of the town, to ensure that opportunities for securing a stronger economy are realised.

### **Options**

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|---------------------|--|
| <b>Option One</b>   | To support the continued development of the Bicester Masterplan.   |
| <b>Option Two</b>   | To support the development of the Bicester Masterplan with amendments.   |
| <b>Option Three</b> | To not support the completion of the Bicester Masterplan and to continue with a piecemeal approach to development that fails to ensure |

integration with the existing town or to ensure that opportunities are realised for the benefit of residents and businesses in Bicester.

## 6 **Local Plan 2012**

The Head of Strategic Planning and the Economy submitted a report which sought consideration of the Proposed Submission draft of the Local Plan 2012. Once adopted the Local Plan 2012 would replace the Local Plan 1996 and would form the basis for determining development applications in the Cherwell District.

In introducing the report, the Lead Member for Planning explained that the adoption of a 'sound' up to date Local Plan was a priority for Cherwell District Council as it would guide the growth of the District over the next 19 years.

The proposed draft Local Plan 2012 had grown out of the Draft Core Strategy (February 2010) but reprioritised policies based on up-to-date assessments of the economic, social and environmental characteristics and prospects of the district having taken the changing environment into consideration, including the economic downturn, the National Planning Policy Framework, the Localism Act 2011 and the South East Plan.

The backbone of the Local Plan 2012 was the Bicester Masterplan and emerging Banbury Masterplan. The Local Plan also included a raft of policies relating to matters such as tourism, biodiversity and green belt. The Plan recognised that delivering houses in the current economic climate would be challenging but that a 5 year land supply (plus 5%) must be provided.

The Lead Member for Planning advised that a period of public consultation would follow Executive consideration of the Proposed Submission Draft Local Plan. Following the conclusion of the consultation, the Plan would be refined and re-presented to Members for formal endorsement for submission to the Secretary of State.

In considering the report, Members acknowledged the need for the Council to have a Local Plan as it was in the interest of the district to ensure that development was not piecemeal and noted that it had to pass the Secretary of State's test of soundness and conformity. Members thanked officers for their work to date in developing the Local Plan and stated their belief that it was sound and conformed.

The Chairman provided a summary of comments he had received from other elected members for consideration by the Lead Member for Planning and officers and iterated a need for the Plan to be clear about the evidence used for rationalising proposals. The Lead Member for Planning assured the meeting that these responses and those others raised during the meeting would be considered with all the responses received during the full public consultation.

In response to Member comments, the Chairman acknowledged that not all Executive Members would support the Local Plan at this present time due to dissatisfaction with the inclusion of particular sites.

### **Resolved**

- (1) That the Local Plan 2012 be approved for public consultation.
- (2) That authority be delegated to the Head of Strategic Planning and the Economy, in consultation with the Lead Member for Planning, to make any minor changes to the document before publication for consultation.

### **Reasons**

Securing the adoption of a 'sound' up to date Local Plan for the District is a priority for Cherwell District Council as it will guide the growth of the District over the next 19 years.

Without this the District faces an imminent challenge of piecemeal development by appeal, in which Cherwell District Council would lose the ability to ensure that development takes place in the most sustainable locations and future community needs are properly planned for and maximum community gain (and mitigation) secured.

### **Options**

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|---------------------|--|
| <b>Option One</b>   | To support the contents of the Local Plan 2012.                |
| <b>Option Two</b>   | To support the contents in the Local Plan 2012 with amendments |
| <b>Option Three</b> | To not support the completion of the Local Plan 2012.          |

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### **Local Development Scheme**

The Head of Strategic Planning and the Economy submitted a report which sought approval of the Local Development Scheme (LDS). The LDS was used to project manage the production of the Local Plan and provided a programme for completion of Local Development Documents.

### **Resolved**

- (1) That the revised Local Development Scheme be approved.
- (2) That authority be delegated to the Head of Strategic Planning and the Economy, in consultation with the Lead Member for Planning, to make any minor changes to the document before publication.

## **Reasons**

The revised LDS sets out important milestones for completing the Council's Local Plan which will set the long-term vision, objectives and policies for securing development and associated infrastructure across Cherwell including the identification of strategic development sites. The approval of the LDS meets statutory requirements.

## **Options**

**Option One** To support the timetable and contents in the LDS and agree that it should be submitted to the Secretary of State and subsequently brought into effect

**Option Two** To support the timetable and contents in the LSD with amendments and agree that it should be submitted to the Secretary of State and subsequently brought into effect

**Option Three** To not support the timetable and contents of the LDS

## **8 Consultation and Engagement Strategy Update 2012-2015**

The Head of Transformation submitted a report which outlined the Council's updated Consultation and Engagement Strategy performance for the period 2012 -2015.

In introducing the report, the Leader explained that the Strategy built on good practice, increased the use of electronic consultation and ensured consultation was cost effective and robust.

## **Resolved**

- (1) To note past achievements in this area as a foundation for the updated strategy and action plan.
- (2) To agree the proposed consultation and engagement strategy and action plan and request that performance is reviewed on a regular basis.

## **Reasons**

The Council has a strong track record with regards to public consultation. It includes collecting information on customer satisfaction, budget and spending priorities as well as many activities to improve customer service and accessibility.

The strategy aims to continue with this approach, to maximise the use of electronic consultation and ensure that local residents and stakeholders

continue to be able to feed their views into the council to help shape services and improve performance.

### **Options**

- Option One**           (1) To note past achievements in this area as a foundation for the updated strategy and action plan.  
(2) To agree the proposed consultation and engagement strategy and action plan and request that performance is reviewed on a regular basis.
- Option Two**           To reject the strategy as it currently stands and request amendments.

## 9           **Participation in a Community Interest Company to Deliver the Green Deal**

The Head of Regeneration and Housing submitted a report which sought approval for the Council to become a shareholder member of a Community Interest Company established to act as a Green Deal Provider.

In introducing the report, the Lead Member for Housing reported that a free insulation scheme had started on 14 May and would run until the end of September. All Cherwell homeowners could obtain cavity wall insulation free and loft insulation will be free for homes with less than 60mm of insulation at the moment. Details on the scheme were available from the Private Sector Housing Team.

### **Resolved**

- (1) That the Council's participation as a founding, shareholder member of the proposed Community Interest Company (CIC), subject to confirmation by the Head of Finance and Procurement and the Head of Law and Governance that the terms of membership and participation are acceptable and place the Council at no financial, legal or reputational risk be authorised.

### **Reasons**

Although there is still some work to be done to establish the proposed CIC and the Green Deal Provider service, the principles are essentially straightforward. Participation should present no significant risk to the Council and the benefits of taking part as a shareholder member appear compelling. As a result, this report recommends that the Executive gives approval in principle for the Council's participation, subject to the Head of Finance and Procurement and the Head of Law and Governance being satisfied that the final terms are acceptable in both legal and financial terms.

If the Council wishes to be a shareholder in the CIC it needs to make that decision at this point so that development of the CIC can continue with the

required level of certainty and so that the necessary arrangements can be finalised in preparation for launch of the service in October.

### **Options**

**Option One**                      To agree the recommendation to participate as a shareholder member of the CIC.

**Option Two**                      To agree the recommendation with variations

**Option Three**                    To reject the recommendation.

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### **Eco Bicester: A Garden City of the Future?**

The Head of Public Protection and Development Management submitted a report which enabled Members to consider the potential to explore garden city designation for Bicester.

### **Resolved**

- (1) That it be agreed that DCLG be contacted to explore the identification of Eco Bicester as a next generation garden city.

### **Reasons**

Through the Bicester Master Plan and Local Plan, Bicester will be identified to grow, accommodate new homes as well as substantial land for employment by 2031. With the very significant levels of growth proposed at Bicester it is important to think not just in terms of new buildings but how the town and its existing population can grow in a holistic way to accommodate the change, retaining the strengths of the existing town and addressing its current weaknesses. The Shared Vision has sought to provide this over arching vision for the town.

The Eco Town standards are helpful in identifying clear requirements for delivering sustainable new developments. However the Eco Town PPS supplement is clear that it also relied on advice that at the time of publication was provided in other planning policy statements which have now been replaced by the NPPF. In seeking opportunities for further funding for the growing town it is helpful to ensure that the local approach is consistent with government's current thinking on new development. This supports consideration of a garden cities approach in which sustainability is central, as remains the case with the NPPF.

In many ways Bicester meets many of the garden city aims. As a market town it has housing, employment and local facilities. Much development of the town has taken place in the second half of the 20th century at relatively low densities with individual gardens and significant areas of open space. Proposals to expand the town similarly seek a sustainable balance between employment, housing and open space. The NPPF provides the opportunity to



consider green belts to provide long term limits for growth in connection with large scale development designed to garden city principles.

Given the governments approach to promoting garden cities and the clear synergies with the Eco Bicester approach, that seeks to transform the town into a sustainable community of the future, it is recommended that additional branding of Eco Bicester as a next generation garden city is explored with DCLG.

### **Options**

**Option One** Explore the requirements for garden cities and explore the opportunities of identifying Eco Bicester as a next generation Garden City

**Option Two** Do not explore Garden City identification

## 11 **Member Champions**

The Head of Law and Governance submitted a report which allowed members to consider proposals to adopt a scheme for the appointment of Member Champions.

In introducing the report, the Leader explained that the Council had essentially had Member Champions in the past and noted the excellent work undertaken by Councillor Paul O'Sullivan as Older Persons Champion and Councillor Dan Sames as Younger Persons Champion. However, the roles and responsibilities had never been formalised and it was appropriate for Terms of Reference to be written down.

### **Resolved**

- (1) That the proposed Terms of Reference, subject to the inclusion of the requirement for annual reporting from Member Champions, Role Description and proposals for new Member Champions be approved.
- (2) That it be noted that the Leader, in consultation with the Deputy Leader and Chief Executive, will appoint Member Champions in due course.

### **Reasons**

The role of Member Champions complements the responsibilities of Lead Members and Committee Chairmen and enables a greater number of Councillors to be involved in the work of the Council.

Member Champions will act as an advocate or spokesperson for a specific area of the Council's business and encourage communication and positive action over the issue they represent.

## **Options**

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|---------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <b>Option One</b>   | Accept the recommendations as drafted |
| <b>Option Two</b>   | Amend the recommendations             |
| <b>Option Three</b> | Reject the recommendations            |

## 12 **Update on Major Programmes**

The Head of Transformation submitted a report which provided an update on progress toward implementing robust governance of major change projects, following the approval by Members in January of resources to support major projects.

### **Resolved**

Subject to South Northamptonshire Cabinet resolving in similar terms:

- (1) That the amended governance structure for the Council's major projects be approved.
- (2) That the following Members be appointed to the Place Programme Board: Councillor Barry Wood (Programme Owner and Bicester Eco Town Project); Councillor Norman Bolster (Bicester Town Centre Project); Councillor John Donaldson (Banbury Brighter Futures); and, Councillor Michael Gibbard (Banbury Developments).
- (3) That the following Members be appointed to the Transformation Programme Board: Councillor Nicholas Turner (ICT Standardisation and Harmonisation) and Councillor Barry Wood (Service Transformation).
- (4) That it be agreed that the Programme Board responsibilities in respect of the Transformation Programme be absorbed into the remit of the Joint Arrangements Steering Group (JASG) and that the JASG terms of reference be varied accordingly.

### **Reasons**

This governance arrangement is intended to implement a common approach and standard based on project management methodology, to ensure that we are able to effectively plan the use of resources against corporate objectives, manage risk and drive improvement.

The establishment of the shared Programme Manager post, combined with a shared common approach to performance management and risk presents an opportunity to bring consistency to project management, which is currently lacking in both Councils.

## **Options**

- Option One** Members have already approved the general approach to maximising the effective use of scarce resource through the organisation of projects into programmes. This report seeks simply to clarify the actual arrangements
- Option Two** Options which do not require the involvement of Members have been discounted.
- Option Three** Options which do not provide transparency of delivery of major projects have been discounted

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## **Joint Corporate Procurement Strategy and Action Plan 2012/13**

The Head of Finance and Procurement submitted a report which brought forward for Members' approval, the joint procurement strategy and action plan for 2012/13 for the council. The primary objective of the procurement strategy was to procure goods, services and works that assist in reducing service budgets in line with severe funding reduction while being fit for the purpose, meeting the needs of local people and service users, and providing value for money over their lifetime.

### **Resolved**

- (1) That the joint corporate procurement strategy and action plan for 2012/13 for the council be approved.

### **Reasons**

The joint corporate procurement strategy has a fundamental role in helping the Council reduce its services budget and protect front line services as it manages the implications of reduced government funding.

The meeting ended at 8.55 pm

Chairman:

Date: