

Public Document Pack



Committee: Executive
Date: Monday 3 July 2017
Time: 6.30 pm
Venue: Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury, OX15 4AA

Membership

Councillor Barry Wood (Chairman)	Councillor G A Reynolds (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Colin Clarke	Councillor John Donaldson
Councillor Tony Ilott	Councillor Mike Kerford-Byrnes
Councillor Kieron Mallon	Councillor Richard Mould
Councillor D M Pickford	Councillor Lynn Pratt

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence

2. Declarations of Interest

Members are asked to declare any interest and the nature of that interest that they may have in any of the items under consideration at this meeting.

3. Petitions and Requests to Address the Meeting

The Chairman to report on any requests to submit petitions or to address the meeting.

4. Urgent Business

The Chairman to advise whether they have agreed to any item of urgent business being admitted to the agenda.

5. **Minutes** (Pages 1 - 22)

To confirm as a correct records the Minutes of the meeting held on 6 June 2017 and the special meeting held on 19 June 2017.

6. **Chairman's Announcements**

To receive communications from the Chairman.

7. **Consultation and Engagement Strategy - Cherwell District Council**
(Pages 23 - 44)

6.35pm

Report of Director – Strategy and Commissioning

Purpose of report

To provide an update on the joint Consultation and Engagement Strategy.

Recommendations

The meeting is recommended to:

- 1.1 Note the changes following the benefits realisation review of the performance & insight team (now Strategic Intelligence & Insight Team ('SIIT')).
- 1.2 Note the changes within the action plan for 2017/18.

8. **New Homes Bonus: Construction Apprenticeships and Skills**
(Pages 45 - 52)

6.45pm

Report of Head of Strategic Planning and the Economy

Purpose of report

To seek £100,000 of New Homes Bonus grant to be made available to *The Apprenticeship & Training Company Ltd.* in order to fund the delivery of a number of construction apprenticeships and skills related objectives primarily during the 2017/2018 financial year. These objectives are being included within CDC's Economic Growth Strategy (2017-2020).

Recommendations

The meeting is recommended:

- 1.1 To approve the grant of £100,000 New Homes Bonus to *The Apprenticeship & Training Company Ltd* (the 'Company'). This will be subject to the satisfactory completion of a funding agreement between the Council and the Company to include a right for the Council to nominate a representative to the Company's Board.

9. Exclusion of the Press and Public

The following report contains exempt information as defined in the following paragraphs of Part 1, Schedule 12A of Local Government Act 1972.

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

Members are reminded that whilst the following item has been marked as exempt, it is for the meeting to decide whether or not to consider it in private or in public. In making the decision, members should balance the interests of individuals or the Council itself in having access to the information. In considering their discretion members should also be mindful of the advice of Council Officers.

No representations have been received from the public requesting that this item be considered in public.

Should Members decide not to make a decision in public, they are recommended to pass the following recommendation:

“That under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the ground that, if the public and press were present, it would be likely that exempt information falling under the provisions of Schedule 12A, Part 1, Paragraph 3 would be disclosed to them, and that in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.”

10. **Woodpiece Road, Arncott, Parking Option** (Pages 53 - 106) **6.50pm**
Exempt report of Interim Chief Executive

(Meeting scheduled to close at 7.00pm)

Information about this Agenda

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence should be notified to natasha.clark@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk or 01295 221589 prior to the start of the meeting.

Declarations of Interest

Members are asked to declare interests at item 2 on the agenda or if arriving after the start of the meeting, at the start of the relevant agenda item.

Local Government and Finance Act 1992 – Budget Setting, Contracts & Supplementary Estimates

Members are reminded that any member who is two months in arrears with Council Tax must declare the fact and may speak but not vote on any decision which involves budget setting, extending or agreeing contracts or incurring expenditure not provided for in the agreed budget for a given year and could affect calculations on the level of Council Tax.

Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012

This agenda constitutes the 5 day notice required by Regulation 5 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 in terms of the intention to consider an item of business in private.

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Please ensure that any device is switched to silent operation or switched off.

Queries Regarding this Agenda

Please contact Natasha Clark, Democratic and Elections
natasha.clark@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk, 01295 221589

Ian Davies
Interim Head of Paid Service

Published on Friday 23 June 2017

Agenda Item 5

Cherwell District Council

Executive

Minutes of a meeting of the Executive held at Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury, OX15 4AA, on 6 June 2017 at 6.30 pm

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

Councillor Colin Clarke, Lead Member for Planning
Councillor John Donaldson, Lead Member for Housing
Councillor Tony Ilott, Lead Member for Financial Management
Councillor Kieron Mallon, Lead Member for Public Protection and Community Services
Councillor D M Pickford, Lead Member for Clean and Green
Councillor Lynn Pratt, Lead Member for Estates and the Economy

Also Present: Councillor Sean Woodcock, Leader of the Labour Group

Apologies for absence: Councillor Richard Mould, Lead Member for Performance Management

Officers: Ian Davies, Interim Chief Executive / Head of Paid Service
Scott Barnes, Director of Strategy and Commissioning
Kevin Lane, Head of Law and Governance / Monitoring Officer
Paul Sutton, Chief Finance Officer / Section 151 Officer
Ed Potter, Head of Environmental Services
Andy Preston, Head of Development Management
Claire Taylor, Assistant Director - Commercial and Innovation
Natasha Clark, Interim Democratic and Elections Manager

1 **Declarations of Interest**

16. Strategic Property Acquisition in Banbury.

Councillor John Donaldson, Declaration, as a Non-Executive Director on Cherwell Community Build and would leave the meeting for the duration of the item.

Ian Davies, Declaration, as a Non-Executive Director on Cherwell Community Build and would leave the meeting for the duration of the item.

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 3 April 2017 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

5 **Chairman's Announcements**

The Chairman advised that he would be changing the order of the agenda and taking agenda item 10, Final Business Case – Joint Development Management, as the first item of business.

6 **Final Business Case - Joint Development Management**

The Head of Development Management submitted a report which presented the final business case for joint working in Development Management across Cherwell District and South Northamptonshire Councils. The report recommended the formation of a Joint Development Management Service and in doing so sought the Executive's agreement for the non-staffing elements of the business cases. The proposal was part of the wider transformation programme across the two Councils.

Resolved

- (1) That, having given due consideration, the final business case and the consultation responses in relation to non-staffing matters be noted.
- (2) That it be noted that the business case would be considered by the Joint Commissioning Committee with regard to staffing matters on 20 June 2017 and that this would include consideration of the consultation responses from affected staff and trade union representatives.
- (3) That the non-staffing aspects of the final business case to create a Joint Development Management Service between CDC and SNC, subject to similar consideration and approval by SNC Cabinet on 12 June 2017 and approval of the staffing implications by the Joint Commissioning Committee, be approved for implementation.
- (4) That authority be delegated to the Head of Development Management in consultation with the Leader of the Council to make any non-significant amendments that may be required to the business case

following the decision by SNC Cabinet and/or the Joint Commissioning Committee.

Reasons

The business case sets out the rationale for establishing the Joint Development Management Service across CDC and SNC.

Alternative options

Status Quo (No Change)

Retaining the status quo is an option; however this would not deliver the benefits set out in this business case or provide the additional resilience and shared expertise that a joint team could provide at a time of planning reform and following Brexit pressure to support additional growth.

Alternative Joint Staffing Structures

A number of alternative joint staffing structures have been considered, however the proposal set out in the business case is believed to be the most appropriate in terms of maximising the benefits of joint working and delivering savings, whilst maintaining performance.

Outsource Service

Outsourcing is a potential option, and it is understood that companies such as Capita do offer an outsourced service for Development Management. However, given that the majority of duties carried out by the Development Management team are statutory responsibilities, it is not considered appropriate to outsource the service, as it could compromise the planning role of each District Council.

7 Annual Equalities Report 2016/2017

The Director – Strategy and Commissioning submitted a report to review the performance of the Equalities Annual Work Programme and to agree the planned work programme following the Achieving Standard under the Equality Framework for Local Government.

Resolved

- (1) That, having given due consideration to the evidence and information, the report be noted.
- (2) That the equalities action plan for 2017/18 be agreed and the areas of good practice upon which it builds and the areas for development that it addresses be noted.
- (3) That the 3 year rolling plan of Equality Impact Assessments be agreed.

Reasons

Cherwell District Council has made significant progress delivering against the equalities agenda in recent years and has continued to maintain this during

2016/2017 whilst continuing to adopt a locally relevant approach to equality performance with meaningful and relevant Corporate Action Plans to support this work.

The updated action plan demonstrates how the Council will continue to deliver its equalities objectives over the coming year. Progress will be reported via the performance management framework on a quarterly basis.

The three year impact assessment rolling plan also provides assurance that the Council is mindful of policy change and seeks to understand and address the impacts of service and policy change where appropriate.

Options

Option 1: To note the report

Option 2: To request additional information on items within this report

8 Performance Report 2016-2017 End of Year

The Director – Strategy and Commissioning submitted a report to provide information relating to Performance for the period 1 January - 31 March 2017. The report also reflected end of year outturns as measured through the performance management framework.

Resolved

- (1) That it be noted that despite a challenging economic environment, and on-going policy and organisational change, Cherwell District Council has met or made satisfactory progress on 77% of all the performance targets outlined in its performance management framework in delivering the Corporate Priorities of the Council.
- (2) That it be noted that the Overview & Scrutiny Committee considered the report at its meeting on 25 May 2017 and referred no matters to the Executive.

Reasons

In this annual report we show that the Council has made strong progress towards delivering its ambitions to improve the services delivered to residents and businesses. It also demonstrates the Council's proactive performance management of issues raised and the inclusive role of Overview and Scrutiny in supporting performance review.

Section 3 of the report provides a summary of the Council's performance against its comprehensive performance framework and corporate scorecard for 2016/17. The detailed performance indicators and commentary against each of these are contained within appendices 1 to 5 including the annual report.

With a 77% delivery rate against the key strategic priorities the report clearly demonstrates that the council is delivering services fit for purpose, and that together we are making a significant and positive difference to the District, our residents, businesses and other key stakeholders.

There can be no other recommendations to make, other than to commend everyone who has contributed to such excellent performance, of which we should all be proud.

Alternative options

Option 1: To request additional information on items and/or add to the work Programme for review and/or refer to Overview and Scrutiny.

9 Banbury Country Park

The Head of Environmental Services submitted a report to consider the creation of a new country park in Banbury.

Resolved

- (1) That the creation of a new open space, Banbury Country Park, be approved.
- (2) That the approach of working with stakeholders to develop an inviting country park which provides a wide range of leisure activities for Cherwell residents and visitors as well as creating a diverse habitat for wildlife be supported.
- (3) That it be noted that the running costs of a new Country Park can be delivered within existing revenue budgets.
- (4) That agreement be given to seek planning approval for change of use.

Reasons

The development of a new country park with strong stakeholder support will provide leisure and healthy life style benefits as well as becoming a visitor attraction.

Sufficient capital resources exist to open the facility. Running costs are expected to be minimal and no additional revenue budget is required.

Alternative options

Option 1: To support the proposed development of a Country Park

Option 2: To reject the proposed development of a Country Park

Option 3: To ask officers to consider other uses for the land acquired

10 **Exclusion of the Press and Public**

Resolved

That under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the ground that, if the public and press were present, it would be likely that exempt information falling under the provisions of Schedule 12A, Part 1, Paragraphs 1, 2, 3 and 4 would be disclosed to them, and that in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

11 **Final Business Case - Joint Development Management - Exempt Appendix**

Resolved

(1) That the exempt appendix be noted.

Reasons

N/A

Alternative options

N/A

12 **Markets**

The Head of Environmental Services submitted an exempt report to update the Executive on changes regarding the District's urban centres markets.

Resolved

- (1) That the insource of Banbury Market and the Banbury Farmers Market be supported.
- (2) That the continuation of arrangements covering Bicester and Kidlington be supported.
- (3) That the proposed trader booking fees be approved.
- (4) That it be agreed to review the performance of the markets under this new operation after 12 months.

Reasons

As set out in exempt minutes

Alternative options

Option 1: To support the recommendations relating to the Markets

Option 2: To reject the recommendations relating to the Markets

Option 3: To ask officers to consider other possible ways forward

13

Whitelands Farm Sports Ground - Notification of an Urgent Decision Taken to Award an Operator Contract and Enter Into a Funding Agreement

The Interim Chief Executive submitted an exempt report to consider the 'emergency' key decision he had taken in respect of the results of the procurement process for a leisure operator to manage the Whitelands Farm Sports Ground, and also the terms of the Funding Agreement with Bicester Town Council, which will enable the Council to undertake commitments as employer of the leisure operator under the management contract.

Resolved

- (1) That the 16 May 2017 'emergency' key decision taken by the Interim Chief Executive to award a contract for the management of the Whitelands Farm Sports Ground under his delegated powers in order to meet tender award deadlines, ensuring full Whitelands Farm Sports Ground facility operation from 1 September 2017 be noted.
- (2) That responsibility be delegated to the Interim Chief Executive, in consultation with the Head of Law and Governance, the Chief Finance Officer, the Lead Member for Financial Management and the Deputy Leader, for negotiating and concluding a Funding Agreement between the Council and Bicester Town Council (BTC) on terms that address the financial implications of the operation of the new facilities including grounds maintenance and lifecycle funding.

Reasons

As set out in the exempt minutes.

The Council has gained approval from BTC at its meeting on 15 May 2017 for both the operator Contract Award and the associated Funding Agreement.

Due to the tender timetable and requirement to ensure the facility will be fully operational for the start of the winter sporting season on 1 September 2017, an 'emergency' key decision was taken by the Interim Chief Executive and this report updates and informs the Executive accordingly.

Alternative options

The option to delay the contract start date was considered, however this would significantly delay the pre-opening equipment fit out requirement preventing the facility being fully operational for the start of the winter sports season on 1

September 2017. With the construction project having been previously problematic and consequently delayed this was not considered a suitable solution.

The Preferred Bidder requires a minimum one month lead in time following contract commencement to ensure safe systems of operation are fully in place which requires a 1 August commencement date, to delay this would prevent the 1 September winter sports season commencement.

14 **Build! Programme Update**

The Commercial Director and Chief Finance Officer submitted a report to update the Executive on the latest status of the Build! Programme.

Resolved

- (1) That the latest programme and financial summary be noted.
- (2) As set out in the exempt minutes..
- (3) That the outputs of the Cherwell Community Build financial viability review be noted.
- (4) As set out in the exempt minutes.
- (5) As set out in the exempt minutes.
- (6) That the urgent actions taken by the Commercial Director regarding the approval of Old Place Yard and Hanwell Fields contracts for the delivery of supported housing units be noted.

Reasons

This report is to provide an update to the Executive on the work being carried out by the Build! team and monitored through the Build! Project Board.

The Build! programme has been running for a number of years and was set up to deliver certain types of housing unit that was identified as a need for the District and to provide a return on capital invested. This programme has to date delivered 156 residential units, provided regeneration opportunities in the two urban centres, promoted self/custom build and provided a revenue and capital return which can be reinvested in delivering other housing need/regeneration projects.

Alternative options

Option 1: Not to support the recommendations within this report would have implications for the delivery of the programme in terms of units and financial return.

15 **Strategic Property Acquisition in Banbury**

The Chief Finance Officer submitted a report to advise Executive on a strategic property acquisition in Banbury.

Resolved

- (1) That the report be noted.
- (2) As set out in the exempt minutes.
- (3) That the commissioning of external services including legal and cost consultants to carry out the next stage of due diligence process for this project be supported.
- (4) That delegated authority be given to the Chief Finance Officer in consultation with the Commercial Director and the Lead Member for Estates and the Economy to agree Heads of Terms for the acquisition as proposed in section 3.9 of the exempt report (exempt annex to the Minutes as set out in the Minute Book) and, subject to full council approving resolution (5) to complete the acquisition.
- (5) As set out in the exempt minutes.

Reasons

As set out in the exempt minutes.

Alternative options

As set out in the exempt minutes.

The meeting ended at 7.15pm

Chairman:

Date:

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By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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Cherwell District Council

Executive

Minutes of a special meeting of the Executive held at Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury, OX15 4AA, on 19 June 2017 at 6.30 pm

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

Councillor Colin Clarke, Lead Member for Planning
Councillor John Donaldson, Lead Member for Housing
Councillor Tony Ilott, Lead Member for Financial Management
Councillor Kieron Mallon, Lead Member for Public Protection and Community Services
Councillor Richard Mould, Lead Member for Performance Management
Councillor D M Pickford, Lead Member for Clean and Green
Councillor Lynn Pratt, Lead Member for Estates and the Economy

Also Present: Councillor Sean Woodcock, Leader of the Labour Group
Councillor Maurice Billington, Ward Member for Kidlington East (for agenda item 4)
Councillor Neil Prestidge, Ward Member for Kidlington East (for agenda item 4)
Councillor Alan MacKenzie-Wintle, Ward Member for Kidlington West (for agenda item 4)
Councillor Nigel Simpson, Ward Member for Kidlington West (for agenda item 4)

Apologies for absence: Councillor Mike Kerford-Byrnes, Lead Member for Change Management, Joint Working and IT

Officers: Scott Barnes, Director of Strategy and Commissioning
Ian Davies, Interim Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service
Kevin Lane, Head of Law and Governance / Monitoring Officer
Paul Sutton, Chief Finance Officer / Section 151 Officer
Natasha Clark, Interim Democratic and Elections Manager

16 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

17 **Chairman's Announcements**

There were no Chairman's announcements.

18 **Partial Review of the Cherwell Local Plan - Oxford's Unmet Housing Needs**

The Head of Strategic Planning and the Economy submitted a report to seek approval of a 'Proposed Submission Document' for the Partial Review of the adopted Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 for the purpose of inviting representations. The Document contained proposals for residential development to assist Oxford City Council in meeting its unmet housing needs and had been prepared to fulfil a commitment set out at paragraph B.95 of the adopted Local Plan.

At the discretion of the Chairman, Councillor Nigel Simpson, ward member for Kidlington West, Councillor Maurice Billington, ward member for Kidlington East and Councillor Alan Mackenzie-Wintle, ward member for Kidlington West, addressed Executive.

Resolved

- (1) That the Proposed Submission Document (annex to the Minutes as set out in the Minute Book) be approved for the purpose of inviting representations.
- (2) That the Head of Strategic Planning and the Economy be authorised to approve the final presentation of the Proposed Submission Document and to make any necessary minor amendments and corrections prior to formal publication.

Reasons

A Proposed Submission Document for the Partial Review of the Local Plan has been prepared in the interest of delivering Cherwell's share of the unmet housing needs of Oxford to 2031. The Proposed Submission Document is presented to Members for approval for the purpose of inviting representations.

The Plan's strategy has been prepared to meet objectives and a vision to specifically meet Oxford's needs in the Cherwell context. It seeks to meet Oxford's specific needs while achieving substantial benefit for Cherwell's communities.

It provides for development that will support the city's economy, universities and its local employment base and ensure that people have convenient, affordable and sustainable travel opportunities to the city's places of work and to its services and facilities. It prioritises the need for development to be well connected to Oxford, to be fully integrated with the County Council's sustainable transport policies, to be distinctive and for a consolidated approach to green infrastructure and for the achievement of net gains in biodiversity.

The Plan provides for 4,400 homes in addition to the existing Cherwell Local Plan requirement of 22,840 homes (2011-2031). It focuses development on a geographic area extending north from Oxford to south Kidlington, along the A44 corridor to Yarnton and Begbroke, and up to Woodstock in West Oxfordshire.

Officers consider the document to be a 'sound' Plan; one that is positively prepared, justified, effective and fully consistent with national policy.

An Equality Impact Assessment Screening concludes that a full Equality Impact Assessment is not required.

Alternative options

Option 1: Not to progress the Proposed Submission Document

The Council has committed to undertaking the Partial Review of the Local Plan in para. B.95 of the adopted Plan. Not progressing the Partial Review would make it likely that Oxford's unmet needs would need to be met within Cherwell through the consideration of applications for planning permission for unplanned development elsewhere in the District. The total housing requirement for Cherwell's share of Oxford's unmet needs would remain untested on a statutory plan-making basis.

Officers consider that this option would not be in the best interests of the district

Option 2: To reconsider the content of the Proposed Submission Document

The Proposed Submission Document has been prepared having regard to statutory requirements, evidence and national planning policy and guidance. If Members do not agree with significant aspects of the Plan, officers would need to consider the planning reasons for any changes and the implications for the extensive evidence base including the Sustainability Appraisal. There would be a lengthy delay to the programme and an increase in risk of a redrafted Partial Review Plan not being found 'sound'.

19 Delivering Growth and Public Sector Reform

The Chairman advised that this item had been withdrawn from the agenda.

20 Urgent Business - Stratfield Brake Sports Ground, Kidlington

The Chairman advised that he had agreed to add one item of urgent business to the agenda relating to Stratfield Brake Sports Ground, Kidlington. The matter had arisen after publication of the agenda and if a decision were not made at this meeting, there would be a delay in addressing the matter which could be detrimental.

As the item was exempt, Members were also recommended to resolve to exclude the press and public on the grounds that if they were present, it was likely that exempt information falling under the provisions of Schedule 12A, Part 1, Paragraph 3 would be disclosed to them and that in all of the

circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

21 **Exclusion of the Public and Press**

Resolved

That under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that if the public and press were present, it would be likely that exempt information falling under the provisions of Schedule 12A, Part 1, Paragraph 3 would be disclosed to them, and that in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

22 **Stratfield Brake Sports Ground, Kidlington**

The Interim Chief Executive submitted an exempt report to consider the award of an operating contract for Stratfield Brake Sports Ground and transitional financial support to Kidlington Parish Council and a number of urgency actions to progress in a timely manner.

This subject was considered by Kidlington Parish Council and Gosford and Water Eaton Parish Council only on 15 June and given the need to consider a contract award for commencement in September, the Leader of the Council has agreed that this report be submitted as a late and urgent item.

Resolved

- (1) That agreement be given to award the contract to tenderer 1 for the operation of Stratfield Brake Sports Ground on behalf of Kidlington Parish and Gosford and Water Eaton Parish Councils.
- (2) That the contract be let subject to the completion of a funding agreement with the local parishes for the costs arising.
- (3) That agreement be given to support in principle Kidlington Parish and Gosford and Water Eaton Parish Councils with transitional funding of up to £100,000 for 2017/18 only.
- (4) That the use of urgent action in consultation with the Council Vice-Chairman be supported in lieu of a recommendation to Council to approve the allocation of the extra budget needed for transitional support.
- (5) That the matter be reported to the July Full Council meeting for information.

Reasons

The operation of Stratfield Brake Sports Ground requires change. The most logical change is to a professionally run contracted operation which provides the opportunity to deliver wider community use. Whilst this will put operational finances on a firmer footing, it will increase the budgeted costs of the operation and result in a change of free use by clubs to them becoming hirers of the facility.

The competitive tender process has been completed and a contract award is necessary to retain the benefit of the process and commence from September 2017.

Transitional funding support will be required to assist the parishes and the sports clubs for the coming season given the financial effect and short period prior to implementation.

Due to the urgency of the matter agreement of the Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny Committee has been provided to include as an urgent item in the Forward Plan in light of this key decision not being part of the previously published Forward Plan and urgent action to approve the unallocated budget in lieu of a report to Council is recommended. This action would be taken in consultation with the Vice-Chairman of the Council as the Council Chairman is a member of both KPC and G&WEPC and therefore has a conflict of interest.

Alternative options

Option 1: Continue as at present. This is not proposed due to the current inadequate building condition, health and safety and operational arrangements

Option 2: Parish Council direct management. This is not proposed due to the limited experience of Kidlington Parish Council and likely additional cost above that of a contracted operation.

The meeting ended at 7.35pm

Chairman:

Date:

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Executive

3 July 2017

<p>Consultation & Engagement Strategy – Cherwell District Council</p>
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Report of Director - Strategy And Commissioning

This report is public

Purpose of report

To provide an update on the joint Consultation and Engagement Strategy.

1.0 Recommendations

The meeting is recommended to:

- 1.1 Note the changes following the benefits realisation review of the performance & insight team (now Strategic Intelligence & Insight Team ('SIIT')).
- 1.2 Note the changes within the action plan for 2017/18.

2.0 Introduction

- 2.1 This report presents the changes to the current consultation and engagement strategy. The current 3-year rolling strategy outlines the principles for consultation and engagement for the council enabling us to continue to improve service delivery by collecting focused and meaningful feedback from residents, communities and customers. This strategy has been reviewed in line with the changes resulting in the creation of the Strategic Intelligence and Insight Team (formally Performance & Insight), whose purpose is to gather and analyse intelligence and insight from customers so the organisation can continually improve to meet corporate and business objectives.
- 2.2 The joint strategy is used as the basis for the annual action plans to guide the specific consultation and engagement events that Cherwell District Council will be undertaking and as such will be owned by the SIIT.
- 2.3 The creation of the SIIT will enable us to take a new approach to strategic direction through consultation and engagement with customers and stakeholders to generate insight and robust evidence and information to review and commission new or improved services. The SIIT will work with the Community Services team to engage face to face with a wide range of stakeholders and customer segments as well as

gaining insight from more significant use of other channels such as online surveys, social media, online data sources and evaluation of events.

3.0 Report Details

3.1 Annual Residents' Satisfaction Survey

The annual residents' satisfaction survey asks residents of each district questions about how satisfied they are with the general delivery of services by each council. Traditionally this has been the sole major source of insight and the results of this review are used in the annual business planning process.

The survey is intended as a high level overview of general satisfaction and traditionally explored one or two service areas such as environmental services in a little more depth. It was felt however that this did not dive deeply enough into these services to get meaningful insight into how we can improve service delivery or what outcomes customers wanted, and that many services were not covered. It was further felt that trying to do this in an all-encompassing survey would turn people off from responding as it would be very long and time-consuming.

Therefore in order to reach out to as many people as possible and get as many responses as possible, which will give us more confidence in our satisfaction rates, current survey questions are limited to high level satisfaction and do not explore what residents and business expect and want to see in specific service delivery areas.

Instead, in order to gain the insight into these services that is required to make service improvement and meet customer outcome expectations, the SIIT will be conducting a series of deep dive consultations into all services, where targeted service users will be asked a more insightful range of questions.

3.2 Service Deep Dives

The 'service specific' deep dives will, as their name suggests, explore in detail all aspects of service delivery to understand what customer expectations are, gauge whether they are meeting those expectations and where we can make improvements or efficiencies. Working closely with the service teams to design appropriate questions and challenge areas for improvement, the responses will be used to review and build comprehensive service delivery plans that improve on customer satisfaction by delivering the outcomes customers want. These service plans will be used in the corporate business planning process to promote corporate priorities and to drive staff objectives.

The deeper dive approach will consist of a variety of consultation methods:

- Surveys through the online corporate consultation software
- Face to face Q&A/feedback sessions
- Focus groups
- Forums
- Evaluation from events/engagement events

The most effective method will be chosen for each service area and will be relevant to the customer segment and the deep dives will be scheduled to be repeated at

least once a year for both internal and external customers to ensure we capture the changing market and the commercialisation drive of the council. Lessons learnt from complaints and results from previous surveys will start to produce an evidence base of improving services' relationships with customers and continuing to strive for service improvement and efficiencies across the council.

3.3 Engagement Events

The SIIT will work closely with the Community Services team which manages the council's external engagement events.

A series of Connecting Community events will be delivered across the district, focused on strategic priorities and key issues raised from consultation such as Health & Wellbeing or Rural Isolation communities. These events will encourage a multi-agency approach inviting key voluntary organisations, groups and stakeholders to bring together a depth and wealth of knowledge, support and guidance for local communities.

The delivery of Connecting Community activities is a new approach for 2017/18. This will be managed throughout the year using key district events as platforms to engage targeted audiences to share information and signpost residents to local services and opportunities. These will include the successful town Play Days, electric blanket testing roadshows, health bus events and job fairs focusing on themes around health and wellbeing, older people and isolated communities and young people & families.

3.4 Knowing our Communities

The "knowing our communities" events will be used as a mechanism to share information with staff. A programme of new topics and themes will be provided linking to our voluntary sector partners, statutory groups and key stakeholders and driven by our equalities action plan to deliver events and talks with relevant themes to have an impact within the authority. Staff attendance can be used as part of personal development plans and a way to encourage staff uptake of events and a source of consultation feedback.

3.5 New Residential Developments

As part of the Connecting Communities programme, new developments across the district are engaged and consulted with to make sure new residents are involved in building a strong community moving forward and are aware of District council services as new customers. Connecting Community packs will be made available during 2017/18 to all new residents to signpost individuals to services and opportunities in the district and locally to them.

3.6 Strategic Intelligence and Insight Team ('SIIT')

The SIIT will be the central point and key data controller for all customer insight, understanding who our customers are and what they want from the council. By having ownership across all teams, it will enable the organisation to take a step back and look at an holistic view of the customer to enable better outcomes.

The SIIT and all services will work closely to share information to develop action/service plans that act on insight to improve service delivery.

Key trends and results from the analysis will be shared regularly with senior officers in order to take a more strategic look at the organisation's direction, review performance of service and corporate business plans and budget priorities with evidence based results from our residents/customers. The SIIT will be sensitive to ensure 'consultation overload' is avoided as part of the timetable and prioritisation of deeper dive into services is reviewed.

4.0 Action Plan

- 4.1 The consultation and engagement strategy for 2017-2020 is attached as appendix 1. It sets out the types and methods of engagement and consultation that will be used which will be proportionate and appropriate to the nature of the subject matter and has a much greater emphasis on partnership working.
- 4.2 The action plan for 2017/2018 is attached as appendix 2 and contains local opportunities to consult and engage with the local community and the district as a whole. It sets out the topics to be covered and the audience for which the event/consultation is targeted.

5.0 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

- 5.1 The council has undertaken regular consultations and engagement events since 2009 and the new strategy will build on this foundation. The strategy is supported by meaningful and relevant action plans to provide the detail for how this work will be carried out.
- 5.2 The 2017-18 action plan demonstrates how the council will continue to deliver consultations and public engagement and thereby support the stated equalities objectives over the coming year. Progress will be reported via the performance management framework on a quarterly basis. The equalities objectives are:
- Fair Access and Customer Satisfaction
 - Tackling Inequality and Deprivation
 - Building Strong and Cohesive Communities
 - Positive Engagement and Understanding
 - Demonstrating Our Commitment to Equality

6.0 Consultation

No specific consultation on this report is required.

7.0 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

- 7.1 The following alternative options have been identified and rejected for the reasons as set out below.

Option 1: To note the report

Option 2: To request additional information on items within this report

8.0 Implications

Financial and Resource Implications

8.1 There are no financial implications

Comments checked by:

Paul Sutton – Chief Finance Officer 03000 030106

Paul.Sutton@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk

Legal Implications

8.2 The Council can be under a mandatory legal duty to consult on certain proposed decisions (such as budget setting) and an implied duty to ensure fair decision taking processes in other areas. When consultation takes place due regard must be had to the responses and, where a different approach is taken to the prevailing view arising from the consultation this needs to be expressly justified. In short, proper and effective consultation adds to the robustness and legality of the Council's decision making. It also enables the Council to comply with the public sector equality duty under the Equality Act 2010.

Comments checked by:

Nigel Bell, Team Leader – Planning and Litigation 01295 221687

nigel.bell@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk

Risk Implications

8.3 All Community Engagement Events require a risk assessment to be conducted and insurance is checked for validity with copies provided to the external venue if required.

Consultation and engagement is managed as part of the services' (Strategic Intelligence & Insight & Community Services) operational risk register and escalated to the corporate risk register as and when necessary.

Comments checked by:

Julie Miles Performance Information Officer 01295 221553

Julie.miles@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk

9.0 Decision Information

Key Decision

Financial Threshold Met: No

Community Impact Threshold Met: No

Wards Affected

All

Links to Corporate Plan and Policy Framework

Corporate Plan and Equality Framework for local Government

Lead Councillor

Councillor Richard Mould, Lead Member for Performance Management.

Document Information

Appendix No	Title
Appendix 1	Consultation & Engagement Strategy 2017-2020
Appendix 2	Consultation & Engagement Action Plan 2017/18
Background Papers	
None	
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Appendix 1

Cherwell District Council

Consultation and Engagement Strategy

2017 - 2020

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1. Aim of Strategy

The Consultation and Engagement Strategy will outline the principles for consultation and engagement for the council, enabling us to continue to improve service delivery by collecting focused and meaningful feedback from residents, communities and customers.

The strategy will provide the council with a consistent, corporate and agreed approach to how we consult and use the results to inform our policies, strategies and service delivery.

This Strategy will be used as the basis for a medium term action plan to guide the specific consultation and engagement activity undertaken by the council during the period 2017 - 2020.

Services will be expected to consider this strategy when undertaking service-specific consultation and engagement exercises and apply the principles when they work with residents, communities and customers.

The Strategic Intelligence and Insight and Community Services teams will deliver this strategy and apply the principles to all generic engagement and consultation exercises (e.g. the council-wide residents' satisfaction survey) as well as providing support and advice for all service-specific consultation and engagement activity that is proposed and carried out.

This strategy will work towards ensuring consultation results are available earlier for the annual business planning process, budget setting process and service planning process. The SII team will work alongside services to strive for increased online response rates through completion of surveys, and running alongside this a timetable of service-specific 'deeper dive' customer satisfaction approach. The resulting effect for the Council will be to have access to a richer pool of customers' satisfaction evidence linking to all areas of the council and being pulled together in one place.

2. Context

The council is keen to enhance performance by ensuring we understand what people want and that people understand what we do. This will be supported through effective communication and engagement with communities. CDC already has strong links with the local community and voluntary sector as well as other public service providers and recognises the importance of ensuring consultation and engagement includes these organisations.

The “Localism” agenda (The Localism Act 2011) set out in national government policy placed new and greater emphasis on the importance of effective community engagement and the role of local people in decision-making and neighbourhood planning. The council is also committed to working with partners where it benefits local communities because ‘joined up’ engagement can help both the public and the council to address local problems that cut across agencies.

The strategy outlines our developing approach and commitment to consultation with residents, communities and customers. It does not replace any statutory or formal consultation processes that we currently undertake, for example in relation to planning, licensing or any appeals processes.

In preparation for the council’s Local Plan, there is a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI), which provides the consultation strategy for the Local Plan. The SCI sets out the framework for planning-related consultations which will ensure there is genuine involvement in plan and decision-making. It also enables the council to demonstrate how they have met statutory requirements. The SCI is a requirement of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended). The SCI needs to comply with statutory requirements and Government policy for plan making and consultation on planning matters.

The council also incorporates the Equality Act into its consultation and engagement work. The Equality Act came into force on 6 April 2010 with many of its provisions coming into effect in October 2010. The intention of the Act is to harmonise the fragmented discrimination legislation but it also introduced new restrictions.

Existing good practice (e.g. ‘Connecting Communities’ events for the public and ‘Knowing our Communities’ information-sharing events for officers and members) will continue to form the basis of our consultation and engagement work, enabling us to replicate successes and learn from any issues that have previously arisen.

3. Applying the strategy

The key objectives of the strategy are:

1. **Have a clear commitment to consultation and community engagement with a coordinated but flexible approach that provides insight into improving business delivery.**
2. **Show how the results of our consultation identify issues, influence outcomes and help improve performance delivery.**

Underpinning the objective are clear aims to:

1. Demonstrate a clear commitment to consultation and community engagement
2. Have a coordinated but flexible approach to consultation that meets the needs of all our services and ensures a consistent approach across the council
3. Work in partnership with others to ensure joined up consultation and engagement
4. Undertake consultation in line with clear standards and good practice
5. Ensure our consultation and engagement is open, accessible and inclusive
6. Demonstrate how the results of our consultation influence outcomes via service delivery

3.1 How we will engage and consult

The council is determined to move away from consultation that speaks about “hard to reach groups” and to ensure our consultative approach is inclusive to all and effective in gathering feedback that can help drive service improvement.

Engagement with local people is vital. Engagement is part of the process of actively involving people in the delivery and development of services. When engaging with residents, all services should:

- a) Ensure they listen and respond to resident, community and customer needs
- b) Follow the principles for effective engagement

The council recognises that the community involvement process has the following distinct principles:

Informing	This involves raising awareness about the subject by providing relevant, balanced, clear and easily understood information. We will also ensure that people are kept up to date.
Consulting	This means asking what people think and inviting comment on service delivery, proposals and approaches.
Participating	This entails a more interactive approach of encouraging people to put forward views, ideas and proposals for discussion using a variety of consultation methods.
Giving Feedback	This is the stage of the process where people can see how their involvement has informed decision making and improvement in service delivery.

3.2 Methods of consultation and engagement

The types and methods of engagement used will be proportionate and appropriate to the nature of the subject matter with a much greater emphasis on partnership working. Potential techniques that could be used include:

Engagement events

The public will be invited to attend open events that will provide the opportunity for relevant services to showcase what they can deliver alongside the services provided by connected agencies (Police, NHS, Education, etc.), the Town/Parish and County Councils and voluntary groups.

After each event an evaluation will be made of how it impacted upon the community and what we can learn to improve our service and overall satisfaction of residents of both councils.

A series of 'Connecting Community' events will be delivered across the district. These will be focused around strategic priorities and headlines that have been identified in consultation or through the annual residents' surveys to include themes of rural isolation and strengthening communities. These events will encourage a multi-agency approach inviting key voluntary organisations, groups and stakeholders to bring together a depth and wealth of knowledge, support and guidance for local communities.

We will deliver a calendar of 'micro Connecting Community' activities throughout the year using key district events as platforms to engage targeted audiences to share information and signpost residents to local services and opportunities. These will be focusing on themes around health and wellbeing, older people and isolated communities and young people & families.

As part of 2017/18 we will develop a Connecting Community pledge that will outline how the Community Services team will respond to residents with inquiries that cannot be answered or signposted on the day of an event but require contacts and information to be sourced and passed on to individuals in the future.

Consultation during, and evaluations of engagement events will be conducted (using a variety of methods including Survey Monkey online, face to face, hard copy surveys). These will happen during and after each event to gauge the impact on the community, make use of the feedback to improve services and shape corporate business plans within the authority.

Links with other Council and District forums

There are existing forums which the Consultation and Engagement Officer attends to ensure the opportunities to engage are taken forward. It will be good practice to ensure that the existing forums review their terms of reference and validity of function. Where opportunities existing to 'piggyback' on connected forums then the possibility will be explored to share resources and link them with Connecting

Communities events.

Village Networks

The Medium Term Action Plan will link in with Community Services and Customer Services to ensure that we develop this opportunity, making use of the health bus and directing this vehicle to rural locations.

Presentations and Attendance at Meetings

Where appropriate (and by arrangement) the council may deliver presentations, hold question and answer sessions or attend meetings of external groups and organisations, in order to consult or engage upon particular issues.

Public Exhibitions and Meetings

Where appropriate, the council may hold exhibitions, with staffed or unstaffed drop-in sessions, to help inform the community, or hold public meetings to allow people to debate particular issues.

Annual Residents' Satisfaction Survey

The annual residents' satisfaction survey asks residents of each district questions about how satisfied they are with the general delivery of services by each council. Traditionally this has been the sole major source of insight and the results of this review are used in the annual business planning process.

The survey is intended as a high level overview of general satisfaction and traditionally explored one or two service areas such as environmental services in a little more depth. It was felt however that this did not dive deeply enough into these services to get meaningful insight into how we can improve service delivery or what outcomes customers wanted, and that many services were not covered. It was further felt that trying to do this in an all-encompassing survey would turn people off from responding as it would be very long and time-consuming.

Therefore in order to reach out to as many people as possible and get as many responses as possible, which will give us more confidence in our satisfaction rates, current survey questions are limited to high level satisfaction and do not explore what residents and business expect and want to see in specific service delivery areas.

Instead, in order to gain the insight into these services that is required to make service improvement and meet customer outcome expectations, the SIIT will be conducting a series of deep dive consultations into all services, where targeted service users will be asked a more insightful range of questions.

Service Deep Dives

The 'service specific' deep dives will, as their name suggests, explore in detail all aspects of service delivery to gauge whether they are meeting customer

expectations, to understand what those expectations are and where we can make improvements or efficiencies. Working closely with the service teams to design appropriate questions and challenge areas for improvement, the responses will be used to review and build comprehensive service delivery plans that improve on customer satisfaction by delivering the outcomes customers want. These service plans will be used in the corporate business planning process to promote corporate priorities and to drive staff objectives.

The deeper dive approach will consist of a variety of consultation methods:

- Surveys through the online corporate consultation software
- Face to face Q&A/feedback sessions
- Focus groups
- Forums
- Evaluation from events/engagement events

The most effective method will be chosen for each service area and will be relevant to the customer segment and the deeper dives will be scheduled to be repeated at least once a year for both internal and external customers to ensure we capture the changing market and the commercialisation drive of the council. Lessons learnt from complaints and results from previous surveys will start to produce an evidence base of improving services' relationships with customers and continuing to strive for service improvement and efficiencies across the council.

Internal Staff Consultations

The council will continue to look internally to consider the views of staff with staff satisfaction surveys conducted across both sites in a two-year rolling programme. The last survey was conducted in early 2016.

The service specific deeper dive consultations will also include internal customer satisfaction/feedback to both improve internal working relationships and signposting for external enquiries. An example of this internal research is the IT Service Desk feedback survey carried out in early 2017 and the benchmarking exercise for the newly-formed Strategic Intelligence & Insight Team.

Targeted Surveys

The corporate online consultation tool for the council is Survey Monkey. This can be used to contact residents either in targeted groups or as a percentage of all on the Land Registry database. The Strategic Intelligence and Insight Team will assist services in setting up online surveys as well as providing guidance on question-setting to ensure these surveys link back to service plans and improved service delivery.

Targeted surveys can also be set up for postal, telephone or face to face information-gathering. The method of delivery for a targeted survey will depend on the requirements of the residents, community or customers being asked and also with whom the service needs to consult and engage.

For example, a targeted survey asking users of a leisure centre for their opinions and improvement decisions could be carried out by specifically targeting people at the leisure centre by giving them a survey/return envelope or link to an online survey as they leave the centre, ensuring we are only getting the views of people who will be able to feedback on the facilities on offer.

The SIIT will work with commissioners and services to understand customer segments and target these appropriately.

New Residential Developments

As part of the Connecting Communities programme, new developments across the district are engaged and consulted with to make sure new residents are involved in building a strong community moving forward and are aware of District council services as new customers. Connecting Community packs will be made available during 2017/18 to all new residents to signpost individuals to services and opportunities in the district and locally to them.

Town/Parish Councils and other existing community forums

Where appropriate, the council may utilise Town/Parish Council meetings as well as other existing community forums or local liaison groups, to raise awareness of new services or to hold consultations regarding access to services. The community Infrastructure lead holds a Parish Clerks Forum annually which promotes council services and addresses local issues which recently have included – The Local Plan, Woman’s Aid, Planning and Dog Fouling etc.

Workshops/Focus Groups

Where appropriate, the council will hold workshops or meetings with key stakeholders to discuss particular issues and key technical matters in depth.

Knowing our communities

The “knowing our communities” events will be used as a mechanism to share information with staff. A programme of new topics and themes will be provided linking to our voluntary sector partners, statutory groups and key stakeholders and will be driven by our equalities action plan to deliver events and talks with relevant themes to have an impact within the authority. Staff attendance can be used as part of personal development plans and a way to encourage staff uptake of events and a source of consultation feedback.

These events have been rolled out to the council in 2016 with the ‘See it - Report it’ programme of safeguarding topics. It is aimed to link ‘knowing our communities’ staff briefings to the appraisal and personal development plans as a way to encourage greater staff uptake of the events and a broader understanding of national issues that might be affecting our customers.

3.4 Communications

Council publications

The council publishes a quarterly newsletter which is delivered to all households across the district. This newsletter will publicise the community engagement events alongside current and forthcoming public consultations.

Email/Letters

The council will email/send letters to those who are on our consultation database who have requested to be consulted or engage within forums. To build on this database, the council has asked respondents to this year's Annual Residents' Satisfaction Survey to submit their contact details if they are willing to be part of a panel for future consultations.

Internet and Social Media

The council will seek to publicise the public community engagements on its website and will raise awareness of consultations and engagement through social media such as Twitter and Facebook.

Local Media

The council will prepare press releases for distribution to local media (including press, online and broadcast outlets) to raise awareness of the consultation and engagement activities and therefore encourage community involvement and feedback.

4. Consultation & Engagement – Annual Action Plans & using the data

4.1 Action Plans

Each year the Action Plan to implement the Consultation Strategy will be refreshed to take into account any new developments and respond to lessons learned from the previous year. The Action Plan aligns activity to the six aims and will also support the council's Corporate Business Plan.

4.2 Using the data collected

All information collected through engagement and consultation activities will be treated appropriately to conform with data protection legislation. The information will be used to help:

- a) Evidence satisfaction with the council's services.
- b) Show progress over time, particularly when gauging improvement in service delivery.
- c) Capture ideas from residents, communities and customers that will help the council with service design and resource allocation.
- d) Identify concerns that need investigation and resolution.

5. Contact details

For information about planned consultation and engagement events please contact the Strategic Intelligence and Insight Team.

Telephone 01295 221786

Website www.cherwell.gov.uk

Address Cherwell District Council, Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury,
Oxfordshire OX15 4AA



**Consultation & Engagement Strategy
2017 – 2020**

**Action Plan
2017 - 2018**

CDC Business Plan 2017 – 2018

Below are the four overarching Priorities and the specific objectives which relate to consultation and engagement

Cherwell: a district of opportunity

- Support parish teams preparing neighbourhood plans for their community
- Improve customer satisfaction with regulatory services

Cherwell: safe, green, clean

- Maintain high customer satisfaction with recycling/waste and street cleansing services

Cherwell: a thriving community

- With partners help improve lives of most vulnerable from Brighter Futures initiative
- Promote good health and wellbeing to residents and workers through the provision of active lifestyle opportunities plus advice on community engagement and healthy eating
- Provide support to the voluntary and community sector

Cherwell: sound budgets and customer focused council

- Communicate effectively with local residents and businesses and increase access to services

Objective 1: Have a clear commitment to consultation and community engagement with a coordinated but flexible approach that provides insight into improving business delivery

Action	Output/Outcome	Service Area Link	When?
Consultation and Engagement Strategy review of three year action plan to be signed off by Executive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the strategy, opportunities, legislation and bring forward revised or a new version of strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Strategic Intelligence & Insight Team ➤ Community Services 	Quarter 4 2017/18
Promote strategy and action plan within Cherwell District Council and partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raise awareness of consultation and engagement strategy and requirements by publishing the results and findings of the consultations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Strategic Intelligence & Insight Team ➤ Community Services 	Quarter 1 2017/18
Develop deeper dive consultation & engagement arrangements and opportunities to support Members and service areas Officers in their roles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote the activities of both Members and Officers throughout the Council. Provide a calendar of events to encourage shared activities from service plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ All service areas 	Quarter 1 & 2 2017/18 – following results of residents' survey
Ensure staff and managers have sufficient tools to undertake effective consultation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure services are evaluated by appropriate survey and targeted participants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Housing Options Team ➤ Economic Development ➤ Community Service (Summer Hubs programme) ➤ Waste Recycling 	Quarter 2 & 3 2017/18
Deliver three knowing your community events within the council.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase officers and members knowledge of particular community issues within the district. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All service areas • Member awareness 	Quarter 1-4 2017/18
Deliver two Connecting Community Events in CDC Deliver eight micro Connecting Community Events in CDC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connecting Community Events involve the services of the council as well of those offered by our partner agencies and voluntary groups. Targeted to meet the needs of the community. and the councils strategic priorities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anti-Social Behaviour Team • Community Services • Housing • Economic Growth • Public Protection • Benefits Advice 	Quarter 1-4 2017/18

<p>Deliver four Connecting Community Events – New developments on Kingsmere estate and Longford Park</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Micro Connecting Community events will use district events as platforms to engage targeted audiences and hard to reach groups. • Connecting Community events – New developments will engage with new residents on large scale developments to showcase and sign post new communities to council services and local opportunities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outside agencies/volunteers • Stakeholders 	
<p>Deliver annual corporate consultation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual surveys - budget/investment/savings priorities (budget consultation). • Annual Residents' Satisfaction Survey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Finance ➤ Strategic Intelligence& Insight Team 	<p>Quarter 1 2017/18</p>
<p>Maintain local partnership networks to help ensure that consultation and engagement activities are well planned publicised and do not lead to consultation fatigue.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate with other county wide consultations when appropriate by OCC or other partner agencies. • Ensure information about planned consultations and engagement events is available to CDC partners, Parish Council's and local voluntary groups • Attend network meetings with local forums including voluntary groups and NHS services and Thames Valley Police (IAG) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Strategic Intelligence& Insight Team ➤ Community Services 	<p>Quarter 1-4 2017/18</p>

Objective 2: Show how the results of our consultation identify issues, influence outcomes and help improve performance delivery

Action	Output/Outcome	Service Area Link	When?
Collect all consultation/feedback from all services into SIIT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide all SMT/JMT/Members/services a one stop service of consultation for the council. Deeper dive & annual survey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ All service areas ➤ Strategic Intelligence & Insight Team 	Quarter 1-4 2017/18
Use the results of the Annual Satisfaction Survey to inform council and activity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Results provided as part of Business Planning to shape objectives and delivery • Results to be presented to SMT/JMT/Members & services; identify actions to take as a result of the survey • Link results to Deeper dive results from internal and external customers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Strategic Intelligence & Insight ➤ All service areas 	Quarter 1&2 2017/18
Ensure services use consultation and engagement evidence as part of service planning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure customer feedback and evidence from consultation and engagement work informs service plans and bids for service development or growth. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Strategic Intelligence & Insight Team ➤ All service areas 	Quarter 1-4 2017/18 Prioritisation timetable will be established following residents survey results
Ensure there are effective arrangements in place for feeding back the results of consultation to those who have taken part	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure consultation findings will be feedback to those who took part in the consultation activity and those affected. • Publish actions taken as a result of consultation on the council's web pages. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Strategic Intelligence & Insight Team ➤ Communications ➤ All services 	Quarter 1-4 2017/18

	Work with the services and teams to develop an on-going feedback mechanism for their customers to enable collecting customer comments, compliments and complaints.		
Undertake the corporate consultation programme to inform service and financial planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake customer satisfaction as part of an annual programme. Highlight how results are informing the budget and council priorities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ All services ➤ Finance 	Quarter 1 2018/19
Work with Economic Development to ensure local businesses and Job Clubs attendees are included with consultation and engagement processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure feedback opportunities for local businesses and Job Club attendees. • Work with team to ensure presence at community events to promote both the Job Club and Job Match services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Economic Development 	Quarter 1-4 2017/18
Provide support and assistance to Strategic Planning and Economy including Banbury and Bicester Masterplans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Link in with Planning Policy – Statement of Community Involvement to ensure opportunities to promote Planning policies during consultation and engagement events. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Planning 	Quarter 1-4 2017/18
Ensure effective consultation and engagement with residents on housing policies, plans and strategies, including housing strategies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure Housing services presence at the community engagement events. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Housing ➤ Sanctuary Housing 	Quarter 1-4 2017/18

Cherwell District Council

Executive

3 July 2017

<p>New Homes Bonus: Construction Apprenticeships and Skills</p>
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Report of Head of Strategic Planning and the Economy

This report is public

Purpose of report

To seek £100,000 of New Homes Bonus grant to be made available to *The Apprenticeship & Training Company Ltd.* in order to fund the delivery of a number of construction apprenticeships and skills related objectives primarily during the 2017/2018 financial year. These objectives are being included within CDC's Economic Growth Strategy (2017-2020).

1.0 Recommendations

The meeting is recommended:

- 1.1 To approve the grant of £100,000 New Homes Bonus to *The Apprenticeship & Training Company Ltd* (the 'Company'). This will be subject to the satisfactory completion of a funding agreement between the Council and the Company to include a right for the Council to nominate a representative to the Company's Board.

2.1 Background

- 2.1 Over the past 2-3 years, the Bicester Delivery Team has been working with partners to progress a scheme which will allow a sustained programme of construction apprenticeships to be delivered, taking advantage of the scale of growth that is planned for the District. The scheme's initial focus was to bring forward apprenticeships through the construction of NW Bicester, however this has necessarily broadened over time.

The scheme has two main components:

- i) Securing a target number of apprenticeships

A planning policy approach has been devised to secure construction apprenticeships through S106 agreements attached to outline planning applications over a certain size. The approach and application thresholds are

contained in CDC's Developer Contributions SPD (Consultation Draft 2016) and it is also intended that a policy aimed at securing apprenticeships more generally will be included in the Local Plan Part II.

ii) Setting up an Apprenticeship Training Agency (ATA)

A key element in the successful delivery of the programme has involved the setting up of a local ATA. In essence the Council's role has been to find a way to secure construction apprenticeships through development and then provide developers with a straightforward means of delivery. The ATA will smooth the process for developers as it will generally employ apprentices rather than the developer needing to. It will provide the necessary insurances and health and safety training as well as accessing suitable local candidates, liaise with local training providers to secure the appropriate college training and support, and with developers to agree the nature of the apprenticeship and on-site placement timescale.

2.2 It has always been the intention to develop a model and to implement it in the Cherwell District initially, and in time to roll out to the South Northants District. Ultimately the intention is that this approach could be used Oxfordshire wide and beyond. Discussions are currently underway with South Northamptonshire Council and Oxfordshire County Council Economic Development officers in this regard.

2.3 The scheme was the subject of a successful bid for grant funding from OxLEP in December 2014. Cherwell District Council received £50,000 specifically to set up the ATA and to cover its early operation/set up costs by a third party. A report went before the Executive in April 2015 which outlined the scheme. The Executive noted the report and approved the Council taking on the role of the accountable body as recipient of the grant. The Company was then incorporated on 12 October 2015 as an entirely independent company with the primary objective of delivering the scheme. In April 2016 the Executive approved informal planning policy guidance to secure the approach (since incorporated in the Council's Developer Contributions SPD, Consultation Draft 2016), and also delegated to the Leader the appointment of a Cherwell District Council representative on the Company's Board. In April 2017 the Executive noted an update report on the initiative.

3.0 The Company

3.1 As described above, the Company was incorporated on 12 October 2015 as a company limited by guarantee, operating on a not-for-profit basis. It has been approved by the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) to deliver the apprenticeship and training service, via its 'Recognition' process. The SFA closely regulates and monitors who can deliver this service. A Company Director is in place to manage the company. The Company is neither operated nor owned by the Council but is an entirely arms-length and independent company, albeit that the Council secured a right to nominate one non-executive director to the Company's Board as a condition of passing on the grant funding received from OxLEP.

3.2 The Company started trading in April 2017 and is focussing on gaining contracts to manage apprenticeships for developers and contractors. To protect its position as accountable body for the OxLEP grant, the Council has appointed Cllr John Donaldson as its representative to sit on the Board. Cllr Barry Wood also sits on the

Board in a private capacity and has been formally approved to do so by CDC through a Lead Member decision. The other Board members between them have PR / Communications, Recruitment Agency / ATA backgrounds and is expected that a representative from a local firm of solicitors will also join shortly.

- 3.3 The Company has taken up office premises in Banbury and the official appointment of non-executive directors and company insurances are ready for submission to Companies House. The Council's Legal Team and Assistant Director – Transformational Governance have had on-going involvement to ensure due diligence, in respect of the transfer of the OxLEP grant fund monies to the Company and also as regards the status of the Council nominee to the Board.
- 3.4 At the moment the Company has 3 contracts in the early stages of negotiation to provide services to major building contractors and developers and another contract which it has recently secured.

4.0 Funding Position

- 4.1 The OxLEP funding will be exhausted in the next month or so, and has been spent to the satisfaction of OxLEP, who have been monitoring progress on a quarterly basis.
- 4.2 In order to continue to trading effectively, the Company needs another tranche of pump-priming in order to cover a combination of one-off start-up costs, normal yearly costs and salaries. The first year's costs are always particularly onerous for a start-up as financial outlay is incurred without the necessary income to support it and the Company is no different in this respect.
- 4.3 Every effort has been made by the Company to find the most cost effective approach - e.g. the office accommodation yearly rental includes business rates, all services and office furniture. Detailed information on anticipated costs for the year 2017/18 has been presented to the Head of Strategic Planning and the Economy and the Senior Economic Growth Officer for scrutiny. The total sum of New Homes Bonus being requested by the Company as grant funding is £100,000 to support the first year trading of the Company.

5.0 Key Deliverables within the financial year 2017/2018

- 5.1 Should members approve the grant funding, the Council's legal officers will draw up a funding agreement which will enable the Company to:
- Secure contract(s) for construction apprenticeships within the Council's District with the Company desiring to create at least ten new positions;
 - Attend school careers & industry events offered to secondary schools in the Council's District;
 - Arrange a construction-themed 'Community Day' to be held in Bicester to promote construction apprenticeships and careers to pupils, parents and the general public with the Company aiming to time these events to coincide with other public events in the town (such as the "Bicester Big Lunch" etc);

- Explore opportunities for the employment of local armed services veterans as construction apprentices;
- Produce a locally-focussed, free 'Apprenticeship Toolkit' for construction firms including information on Apprenticeship Levy, funding, grants etc;
- Implement a careers survey to ascertain what young people know about construction career options, and based on the survey results provide information / correct misconceptions, gauge interest and promote opportunities etc.;
- Pilot a primary schools engagement programme hoping to engage with 3 schools in the Council's District; and
- Recruit a team of 'Industry Ambassadors' from the Council's District to be positive role models for the construction industry.

A condition of the grant funding will be to oblige the Company to look for opportunities when conducting the above activities to publicise the Council's sponsorship of the scheme.

5.2 Grant Principles

The Company intends that, in delivering the above activities, it will achieve the following:

- Raised awareness of the importance of the construction industry to the local economy among schools, students and parents;
- Improved stakeholder and community relations;
- Improved understanding of the knowledge and interest of young people, and the impact of the Company's activities through longitudinal survey;
- Establishment of a recognised and responsive service to help developers and contractors maximise training and apprenticeship opportunities; and
- Maximised community benefit from large scale development in respect of employment and skills investment.

5.3 In addition to the ambitions set out above, the Council's aim in providing the seed funding is to enable the Company to become established to deliver long term benefit to the Council's district, both in respect of its residents and employers through delivering local apprenticeships and skills.

5.4 The funding agreement will secure the drawdown of the funding in tranches subject to regular monitoring meetings with the Council's officers where good progress towards achieving the aims above will need to be demonstrated in order for the Council to release the next tranche of funding. The funding agreement will also contain various clauses to minimise other risks to the Council, including confirming that the Council shall retain nomination rights to appoint a representative to the Company's Board during the term of the funding agreement.

6.0 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

6.1 Increasing the number of new apprenticeships in England is a high profile Government objective. The Council supports this aspiration. The amount of new development taking place in the Council's district over the next 20 years or so, coupled with the evidenced shortage of construction skills provides both an

incentive and opportunity to secure the provision of new construction related apprenticeships.

- 6.2 The Cherwell District Council Local Plan Part 1 as well as the Council's Economic Strategy contain strategic aspirations relating to the need to support an increase in skills and training within the Council's district. It is intended that the activities set out in section 5 of this report will be reflected within CDC's Economic Growth Strategy (2017-2020).
- 6.3 The signals from informal discussions with developers to date are that they generally support the approach CDC is promoting, as a helpful initiative designed both to increase the number of local skilled construction operatives available to support the building industry, as well as promoting the construction trades generally as a valuable future career path for young people.
- 6.4 The setting up and operating of *The Apprenticeship and Training Company Ltd* to manage apprenticeships on behalf of developers and their contractors is a key element of delivering the apprenticeships and skills this area needs. However in order to be able to trade confidently over the first year of operation, the Company needs some financial support. It is in the Council's interest to provide such financial support given the long term outcomes that will arise from the Company's activities which will benefit the local economy and thus accord with the Council's economic objectives.

7.0 Consultation

- 7.1 Internal discussions on the principle and detail of the New Homes Bonus grant to the Company have been had with the Head of Strategic Planning and the Economy, Cherwell and South Northants and the Senior Economic Growth Officer, CDC.
- 7.2 On-going discussions have been had with Solicitor, Cherwell and South Northants Shared Legal Service, Assistant Director – Transformational Governance, in relation to the content of funding agreements between the Council and the Company, with the purpose of ensuring due diligence will be carried out and any associated risks to CDC identified and mitigated.

8.0 Implications

Financial and Resource Implications

- 8.1 The main issue to cover here is whether there are any State Aid implications arising from the grant funding of £100,000 to the Company.
- 8.2 The provision of funding in this manner has the potential to technically constitute State Aid. It is therefore essential to consider whether the arrangement would sit outside the State Aid rules or whether there are any relevant exemptions which can be applied to the grant funding to ensure that the arrangement is State Aid compliant.

- 8.3 Given the previous investment in the Company, and the long term strategic objectives of ensuring that the Company is a success, the further funding provision of £100,000 will be outside the State Aid rules under the Market Economy Investor Principle (MEIP). This rule essentially provides that activity which would otherwise constitute unlawful State Aid will not be considered to be State Aid if the activity is that which any other commercially prudent investor would take to protect earlier investments. Given the level of funding already provided and the economic benefits which will accrue to the Council by protecting and promoting the local construction industry (thereby securing additional New Homes Bonus funding and additional revenue from continued new housing developments by way of Council Tax) the Council can consider that it would be acting as any other prudent commercial investor would in this circumstance in seeking to ensure the timely revenue returns. The Council will therefore look to rely on the MEIP rule and provide the funding outside of the State Aid rules.
- 8.4 However, in the event that it is considered that the MEIP rule does not apply in this regard, the Council can fall back on the *de minimis rule* which provides an exemption from State Aid in the event that the funding can be considered to be *de minimis*. The *de minimis* State Aid limit on financial support to a private enterprise is currently €200,000 over a 3 year period. This is £176,000 at current exchange rate values. The grant of £100,000 of New Homes Bonus being sought, together with the £50,000 OxLEP funding previously granted falls well within the above limit. This therefore provides a further assurance that this grant funding agreement will not offend the State Aid rules.
- 8.5 The other main issue is one of resourcing the monitoring of the Company's expenditure and project oversight. Both of these activities can be resourced through existing staff within the Council's Economic Development and Bicester Delivery Teams.
- 8.6 There is sufficient unallocated New Homes Bonus to accommodate this grant.

Comments checked by:

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Legal Implications

- 8.7 The State Aid implications which arise from this arrangement are dealt with in detail in paragraphs 8.3 and 8.4 above and are therefore not expanded here.
- 8.8 The other main legal implication arising from this report is the need for a funding agreement to be prepared to govern the provision of the grant funding monies from the Council to the Company. Given the nature of grant funding, it is not possible to place strict obligations on the recipient of such funding (in this case the Company), rather the Council is only able to set general objectives and parameters around the manner in which the grant funding is used. In this case the aims and objectives that the Company intends to use the funding for as detailed in paragraph 5 of this report above are such that the funding arrangement will constitute a grant funding. In the event that the Council wished to set more strict requirements on the Company then it would be necessary to do so via a services arrangement which would be within the scope of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and would therefore require a procurement process to be followed. Given that the Council is able to place

sufficient conditions on the grant funding, such as the nomination rights described in paragraph 5.4 above, to effectively monitor the Company's use of the grant funding, it is considered that grant funding is the most appropriate means of meeting the Council's strategic objectives.

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9.0 Decision Information

Key Decision

Financial Threshold Met: Yes

Community Impact Threshold Met: No

Wards Affected

All

Links to Corporate Plan and Policy Framework

This report directly links to the following corporate priority and objective set out in the Cherwell District Council Business Plan 2017-2018:

Cherwell: A District of Opportunity

Lead Councillor

Councillor Pratt

Document Information

Appendix	
None	
Background Papers	
None	
Reference Sources	
Apprenticeships Policy, England 2015 House of Commons Library Draft Developer Contributions SPD (November 2016) The Apprenticeship & Training Company Ltd. website: www.apprenticeshiptrainingcompany.org.uk	
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