

Cherwell District Council

Shareholder Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Shareholder Committee held as a Virtual meeting, on 21 December 2020 at 1.00 pm

Present:

Councillor Barry Wood (Chairman)
Councillor John Donaldson
Councillor Tony Ilott

Also Present:

Councillor Ian Corkin - Cherwell District Council appointed Non-Executive Director of Graven Hill Development Company and Graven Hill Management Company (for agenda item 7)
Councillor Caryl Billingham - South Northamptonshire Council appointed Non-Executive Director of CSN Resources (for agenda item 8)
Councillor Simon Holland – Cherwell District Council appointed Non-Executive Director of Crown House Banbury Limited (for agenda item 9)
Sue Smith – Chairman, Graven Hill Development Company (for agenda item 7)
Karen Curtin – Managing Director, Graven Hill Development Company (for agenda item 7)
Karen Orrey – Graven Hill Development Company (for agenda item 7)
Adrian Unitt – Graven Hill Development Company (for agenda item 7)

Officers:

Steve Jorden, Corporate Director Commercial Development, Assets & Investment & (Interim) Monitoring Officer/Shareholder Representative
Lorna Baxter, Director of Finance & Section 151 Officer
Michael Furness, Assistant Director Finance
Claire Taylor, Corporate Director Customers and Organisational Development (For agenda item 8)
Belinda Green, Operations Director - CSN Resources (For agenda item 8)
Jonathan MacWilliam, Programme Director, Growth & Commercial (For agenda items 9 and 10)
Emma Faulkner, Democratic and Elections Officer
Natasha Clark, Governance and Elections Manager
Liza Ellis, Executive Assistant, Place, Growth and Commercial

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

23 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 12 August 2020 were confirmed as a correct record, to be signed by the Chairman in due course.

24 **Chairman's Announcements**

There were no chairman's announcements.

25 **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

26 **Exclusion of the Public and Press**

Resolved

That, in accordance with Section 100A (4) of Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business, on the grounds that they could involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 of Schedule 12A of that Act and that in all circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information

27 **Graven Hill - Quarter Two Management Accounts and Key Issues**

The Committee considered an exempt report from the Shareholder Representative that provided an update on Quarter Two Management Accounts and an operational overview.

The Managing Director – Graven Hill Development Company advised the Committee that completions were continuing and some new residents had moved in.

In relation to the situation with Covid and the impact on sales, the Managing Director – Graven Hill Development Company explained that some viewings had been rescheduled or cancelled, due to the introduction of the Tier system which had impacted on some prospective purchasers being able to travel.

In response to questions from the Committee, the Managing Director – Graven Hill confirmed that all developers were experiencing similar issues, due to a combination of the general economic impact relating to Covid, and uncertainty around the conclusion of Brexit.

The Managing Director – Graven Hill advised the Committee that meetings would be taking place shortly with the Local Planning Authority to discuss a Section 106 agreement.

With regards to planning for the next financial year, the Managing Director – Graven Hill explained that a strategy workshop would be held to discuss priorities for 2021/2022, and information would be presented to the Shareholder Committee at the next meeting.

The Committee expressed their gratitude and appreciation to all at Graven Hill for the work undertaken in light of everything that had happened relating to Covid this year.

Resolved

- (1) That the Graven Hill Quarter Two management information and operational overview be noted.
- (2) That the Quarter Three and Four key priorities be noted
- (3) That the update on the s106 challenge be noted
- (4) That the building blocks update and stack 16 update and action plan be noted
- (5) That the draft Finance Resources for 2021/22 be noted
- (6) That the approach to the 2021/22 Business Plan and Budget be approved.

CSN Resources Quarter Two Update

The Committee considered a report from the Shareholder Representative that detailed performance indicators and the finance statement of CSN Resources for Quarter two.

Regarding performance indicators, the Corporate Director – Customers and Organisational Development reported that Benefits indicators were on target, with average time to process claims reporting at 10.26 days against a target of 15 days, and change in circumstances being processed in 4.76 days against a target of 8 days.

In relation to Revenues indicators, the levels of both Council Tax and Business Rates collected were slightly under target, with Council Tax standing at 64.37% against a target of 67.75%, and Business Rates 67.15% against a target of 68%.

The Operations Director – CSN Resources explained to the Committee that a number of support grants had been made available as a result of the Covid pandemic, and were being administered by CSN Resources. The team were

currently handling payments under the 'wet pub' scheme, which was aimed at pubs whose sales were predominantly drinks based, with less than 50% of sales coming from food.

In response to questions from the Committee the Operations Director – CSN Resources confirmed that Covid grant information published on the Council's website was kept under review to ensure it was up-to-date and accurate.

The Committee thanked the Operations Director – CSN Resources and the Corporate Director – Customers and Organisational Development for the update, and expressed their gratitude to all officers at CSN Resources for the work they had undertaken during the pandemic.

Resolved

- (1) That the CSN Resources quarter two updates be noted.

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Crown House Quarter 2 Management Report

The Committee considered a report from the Shareholder Representative which provided the Quarter Two Management Report for Crown House Banbury.

The Senior Programme Manager advised the Committee that the number of viewings and lettings had increased following the ending of the two national lockdowns, and overall figures were at the target levels projected prior to the pandemic.

In response to questions from the Committee the Senior Programme Manager explained that there was a mixture of tenancy terms between 6 and 12 months.

The Committee thanked the officers of Crown House for their work undertaken to date.

Resolved

- (1) That the Crown House Quarter Two Management Information be noted.

30

Governance Review and Business Planning

The Committee considered a report from the Shareholder Representative that detailed the findings of the review of Governance Arrangements in relation to the CDC companies.

The Shareholder Representative advised the Committee that as companies were required by law to operate differently to a local authority, the existing structures had been reviewed by an external solicitors firm, to ensure the

appropriateness of the arrangements currently in place and identify areas that could be improved.

The Shareholder Representative advised the Committee that the review had predominantly found that CDC exhibits good practice in the management of its companies, but there were specific areas that could be reviewed. Once the recommendations from the review had been considered, an implementation plan would be needed for the next stages.

The Chairman explained that as the report had been circulated as a supplement to the agenda, rather than ask the Committee to agree the recommendations at this meeting, Committee Members were asked to consider the findings and provide feedback to the Shareholder Representative by 8 January 2021.

Resolved

- (1) That the Committee consider the findings of the review of the Governance Arrangements and provide any feedback to the Shareholder Representative by 8 January 2021.

The meeting ended at 3.10 pm

Chairman:

Date: