

Cherwell District Council

Executive

Minutes of a meeting of the Executive held at Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury, Oxon OX15 4AA, on 3 April 2023 at 6.30 pm

Present:

Councillor Barry Wood (Chairman, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Policy and Strategy)

Councillor Ian Corkin (Vice-Chairman), Deputy Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Economy

Councillor Phil Chapman, Portfolio Holder for Healthy Communities

Councillor Colin Clarke, Portfolio Holder for Planning

Councillor Nicholas Mawer, Portfolio Holder for Housing

Councillor Richard Mould, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services

Councillor Adam Nell, Portfolio Holder for Finance

Councillor Lynn Pratt, Portfolio Holder for Property

Also Present:

Councillor Sandy Dallimore, Chairman Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Also Present Virtually:

Councillor Dorothy Walker

Apologies for absence:

Councillor Eddie Reeves, Portfolio Holder for Safer Communities

Councillor Dan Sames, Portfolio Holder for Clean and Green

Officers:

Ian Boll, Corporate Director Communities

Stephen Hinds, Corporate Director Resources

Shiraz Sheikh, Assistant Director Law, Governance & Democratic Services/Monitoring Officer

Nicola Riley, Assistant Director Wellbeing & Housing

Ed Potter, Assistant Director Environmental Services

Joanne Kaye, Head of Finance and Deputy S151 Officer

Natasha Clark, Governance and Elections Manager

Officers Attending Virtually:

Yvonne Rees, Chief Executive

Mark Mills, Policy Officer

107 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

108 **Petitions and Requests to Address the Meeting**

There were no petitions or requests to address the meeting.

The Chairman welcomed Councillor Dallimore, Chairman of Overview & Scrutiny Committee, and Councillor Walker to the meeting. Councillor Dallimore would be speaking on item 7, Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Action Plans. Councillor Walker would be speaking on item 10, Environment, Social and Governance (ESG) Investment, as she had proposed the motion to the 19 December 2022 Council meeting.

109 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 March 2023 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

110 **Chairman's Announcements**

The Chairman paid tribute to Councillors Clarke, Mould and Corkin who were standing down at the May local elections and this was therefore their last Executive meeting.

Councillor Clarke had been a district councillor for 19 years. The Chairman personally thanked Councillor Clarke for his hard work on the Executive and as Portfolio Holder for Planning.

Councillor Mould had been a district councillors for 8 years. The Chairman personal thanked Councillor Mould for his diligence and hard work in each of the various portfolios he had held.

Councillor Corkin had been a district councillor for 9 years. The Chairman personally thanked Councillor Corkin for his hard work and diligence on the Executive and was particularly grateful for the personal support from Councillor Corkin as Deputy Leader.

Councillors Clarke, Mould and Corkin each responded to the Leader's comments thanking him for his leadership and friendship and wishing Members and officers all the best for the future.

111 **Oxfordshire Net Zero Route Map & Action Plan**

The Climate Action Manager submitted a report to provide an overview of the "Oxfordshire Net Zero Route Map and Action Plan". The report set out the

context for the production of the Route Map and Action Plan, along with detail of the structure and key areas of activity, such as decarbonising buildings and transport across the district.

During recent years, Cherwell District Council had worked collaboratively on the climate change agenda with Oxfordshire County Council and other authorities in Oxfordshire leading to successful outcomes, such as the Park & Charge EV infrastructure in our car parks. This approach had led to investment in the district, whilst minimising the resource impact upon staff, e.g. to deal with procurement, project management etc. The Route Map and Action Plan focussed on the areas of activity which could be enabled through joint working with our local authority partners.

Resolved

- (1) That the proposed Route Map and Action Plan which seeks to deliver the ambitions of the Pathways to a Zero Carbon Oxfordshire (PaZCO) 2021 report be supported.
- (2) That, for the avoidance of doubt, it be agreed that this Council does not support the closure of the level crossing at London, Road, Bicester.

Reasons

This Action Plan and Pathway which aim to achieve a zero carbon Oxfordshire, is a detailed study of the work and actions needed to achieve the county-wide 2050 target. The actions are based on the most 'ambitious' pathway to achieve 2050, with an interim target of reducing our emissions by half by 2030. It has been written with Cherwell in mind, and there are many aspects that we will be responsible for delivering ourselves.

By working jointly with our local authority partners on this Route Map and Action Plan, we place ourselves in the strongest position possible to meet our climate change objectives.

Examples of areas of work where working collaboratively is particularly beneficial include regional retrofitting of homes, conserving and enhancing our natural capital and planning to meet future energy needs.

The entire body of work required to achieve the 2050 target is not contained within this study, although there is a wider programme of work already taking place, of which this study is a part.

The delivery of significant and high impact decarbonisation solutions is dependent on building and sustaining successful and productive co-working relationships across the public, private and third sectors. Oxfordshire is fortunate enough to have strong existing partnerships and collaborations on which to build.

Securing the appropriate funding to execute the priority actions is an integral part of Oxfordshire's net zero journey, with finance acting as either a key

enabler or barrier to success. Whilst a fundamental component, finance is historically difficult to secure. It requires ongoing attention, critically taking forward the enabling action to identify innovative approaches to sit alongside conventional funding sources (including grants from national government and the allocation of local authority budgets).

An innovative approach to delivering the actions will be needed. This includes sourcing and accessing alternative funding opportunities, supporting and bringing inventive technology into the mainstream, and encouraging communities to adopt novel solutions to local problems.

Opposition to the closure of the level crossing at London Road, Bicester is agreed for the avoidance of doubt.

Alternative options

Option 1: Not support the Pathway and Action Plan. This work supports our own ambitions around reducing greenhouse gas emissions and is an important body of evidence that can underpin our own action planning for carbon net zero.

Pursuing Option 1 however, would mean that CDC would not benefit from wider opportunities that are presented from joint working with other local authorities. Climate action is almost always more effective when taken collaboratively leading to joint benefits achieved at a greater scale.

112

Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Action Plans

The Assistant Director – Customer Focus submitted a report which sought agreement of the action plans for delivering the council's equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) commitments for creating inclusive communities, services and an inclusive workforce, which were set out in its Equalities Framework, Including Everyone.

Councillor Dallimore, Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, which had nominated Members to the EDI working group and had reviewed the Inclusive Communities and Inclusive Services draft action plans at their 14 March meeting addressed Executive. Councillor Dallimore commended the work that had been undertaken to date by the working group and officers.

Resolved

- (1) That the draft action plans for Inclusive Communities, Inclusive Services and Inclusive Workplaces be approved.
- (2) That the addition to the Inclusive Communities plan of an action to “use our participation in the Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Charter as a spur to further activities which promote equality, diversity and inclusion locally” be approved.

- (3) That the recommendation from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to amend the Inclusive Communities to include an additional action to *“develop and agree a policy for supporting national events that further our corporate priorities and reflect the diversity of our communities”* and provide further clarification under commitment 1.03 that the review of our support to refugees, asylum seekers and other vulnerable migrants would consider the impact on migrants *“of all nationalities”* be approved.
- (4) That authority be delegated to the Assistant Director for Customer Focus in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services and the Chair of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion working group, to make minor amendments to the agreed action plans and to update on a rolling basis.

Reasons

The council is committed to going above and beyond our statutory responsibilities in creating inclusive communities and services and an inclusive workforce. To do this effectively we need to have the right resources and infrastructure in place to:

- capture the latest EDI data and trends
- use the data available to identify and address any barriers
- ensure EDI implications are identified and considered at the earliest opportunities through our service planning and decision making processes

The Inclusive Communities, Inclusive Services, and Inclusive Workplaces Action Plans provides a structure in which this can be delivered and a basis on which further more specific, substantive work on this topic can be delivered.

Alternative options

Option One: To continue to deliver the original action plan. This option has been rejected as the council is now a standalone authority and therefore the action plan needs to reflect its single council status.

113

Performance Outcomes Framework 2023-2024

The Assistant Director – Customer Focus submitted a report to present the approach for measuring, monitoring, and reporting on the council’s performance and progress towards its priorities and objectives for 2023/24.

Resolved

- (1) That the proposed approach for measuring and monitoring the council’s performance against achieving its desired outcomes for 2023/24 be approved.

Reasons

This report sets out a suggested framework for measuring and monitoring the council's performance and progress towards achieving better outcomes for its communities. This framework will ensure there is a clear pathway to achieving success, hence the recommendation for approval of the proposed framework.

Alternative options

Option One: Not to agree a performance management framework, but without one the council cannot monitor its progress towards its desired outcomes and therefore agree any corrective action that might be necessary to keep them on track. Therefore, the council would risk not delivering its desired outcomes for its communities. This option has therefore been rejected.

114

Integrated Care Board 5-year Strategic Plan Update

The Assistant Director Wellbeing and Housing submitted a report to share the draft 5-year strategy of the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Partnership (ICP).

Resolved

- (1) That the 5 year strategic plan of the Integrated Care Partnership for Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West be endorsed.
- (2) That the opportunity to participate in the development of the Oxfordshire specific plan and the importance of the Health and Wellbeing Board in shaping that for residents' benefit be welcomed.

Reasons

This is a significantly influential strategy that may impact on the development of the Local Plan and Healthy Place Shaping policies as well as the developing Wellbeing Strategy for Cherwell.

Alternative options

Option 1: Not endorse the future strategy of the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Partnership (ICP). Rejected as there is a significant synergy with our own developing plans and past place-based plans that have shaped the direction of travel for our policies over the last 5 years.

115

Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) Investment

The Assistant Director of Finance (S151) submitted a report to provide information to Executive on ESG in the context of Local Government and to allow for consideration of the motion referred by Council 19 December 2022 to the Executive.

Councillor Walker, as proposer of the motion to the Council meeting, addressed Executive. Councillor Walker thanked Executive for the detailed report and requested that updates be provided at appropriate times.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance thanked Councillor Walker for her comments and assured that updates would be provided at appropriate times.

Resolved

- (1) That the Local Government context for the application of ESG principles and how the Council will respond to the motion relating to Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) principles be noted.
- (2) That, in response to proposal 1, "Holding transparent annual audits of all our investments to be measured against ESG principles which will be published alongside the annual accounts", officers be requested to update the Executive on ESG audit requirements following the outcome of the Financial Reporting Council (FRC) and subsequent CIPFA requirements.
- (3) That, in response to proposal 2, "To divest as soon as practicable from any investment that runs contrary to ESG principles and any other standards set by the council, particularly with respect to any funds connected with fossil fuels, unfair labour practices or exploitation of workers", it be agreed to agree to continue to comply with the current Council approved Capital and Investment and Treasury Management Strategies until such time as there is more information available about defining ESG principles within a Capital and Investment or Treasury Management Strategy.
- (4) That in response to proposal 3, "To urge the Oxfordshire Pension Fund to further divest from fossil fuel investments at the earliest opportunity with a firm timetable for complete divestment from such funds by 2030", it be agreed that the Leader initially write to the Pension Fund to understand how the pension fund invests in its assets and then act appropriately based on the information received.

Reasons

The report sets out ESG in the context of Local Government and the proposed actions in response to the motion received by Council and referred to the Executive.

Alternative options

No alternative options have been identified and rejected.

The Assistant Director of Finance (Section 151 Officer) submitted a report to inform the Executive of the urgent decision that was taken by the Corporate Director Resources to accept the outcome for the insurance tender and appoint the insurers for three years, with the option to extend for a further 2 years, so that the necessary insurances would be in place on 1 April 2023.

Resolved

- (1) That the urgent decision taken by the Corporate Director Resources on 13 March 2023 in relation to the award of insurance be noted.

Reasons

In line with the Constitution, this report is informing Executive of the decision which were taken by the Corporate Director Resources to ensure that the Council has insurance in place on 1 April 2023.

Alternative options

Option 1: Not to note the report. This is not recommended as the urgent action has been taken and it is a constitutional requirement for it to be reported to Executive.

117 **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

The meeting ended at 7.10 pm

Chairman:

Date: