

## **Cherwell District Council**

### **Executive**

Minutes of a meeting of the Executive held at Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury, Oxon OX15 4AA, on 8 April 2024 at 6.30 pm

#### Present:

Councillor Barry Wood (Chairman), Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Policy and Strategy  
Councillor Adam Nell (Vice-Chairman), Deputy Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Finance  
Councillor Phil Chapman, Portfolio Holder for Healthy and Safe Communities  
Councillor Sandy Dallimore, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services  
Councillor Donna Ford, Portfolio Holder for Regeneration  
Councillor Nicholas Mawer, Portfolio Holder for Housing  
Councillor Andrew McHugh, Portfolio Holder for Cleaner and Greener Communities  
Councillor Edward Fraser Reeves, Portfolio Holder for Property  
Councillor Dan Sames, Portfolio Holder for Planning and Development

#### Apologies for absence:

Councillor Nigel Simpson, Portfolio Holder for Sport and Leisure

#### Officers:

Ian Boll, Corporate Director Communities  
Michael Furness, Assistant Director Finance & S151 Officer  
Shiraz Sheikh, Assistant Director Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer  
David Peckford, Assistant Director Planning & Development  
Nicola Riley, Assistant Director Wellbeing & Housing  
Mona Walsh, Assistant Director - Property  
Shona Ware, Assistant Director Customer Focus  
Christina Cherry, Planning Policy, Conservation & Design Manager  
Natasha Clark, Governance and Elections Manager

#### Officers Attending Virtually:

Simon Barlow, Principal Planner - Infrastructure Lead (Interim)

### **Declarations of Interest**

#### **11. Whitelands Farm Sports Centre - Grant of Lease and Transfer of Commuted Funds.**

Councillor Donna Ford, Other Registerable Interest, as a member of Bicester Town Council.

Councillor Nicholas Mawer, Other Registerable Interest, as a member of Bicester Town Council.

**13. Whitelands Farm Sports Centre - Grant of Lease and Transfer of Commuted Funds - Exempt Appendix.**

Councillor Donna Ford, Other Registerable Interest, as a member of Bicester Town Council.

Councillor Nicholas Mawer, Other Registerable Interest, as a member of Bicester Town Council.

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

There were no petitions.

The Chairman advised that Councillor Reynolds had requested to address the meeting on agenda item 7, Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

120 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 4 March 2024 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

121 **Chairman's Announcements**

Noting this was the last Executive meeting of the 2023/2024 municipal year, the Chairman thanked Members and officers for their work over the past twelve months.

As the Council's representative on the Future Oxfordshire Partnership, the Chairman gave an update on the meeting that was held on 20 March. Items included the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal Update for Quarter 3, Advisory Group updates and the Local Enterprise Functions transition arrangements, which would have no change for residents.

It was the last Future Oxfordshire Partnership meeting of the 2023/2024 municipal year. The next meeting was on 25 June with the Future Oxfordshire Partnership Scrutiny Panel meeting on 18 June.

122 **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

## **Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)**

The Assistant Director Planning and Development submitted a report to present, for consideration and approval, a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Draft Charging Schedule, and Draft Instalments Policy for consultation purposes.

Councillor Reynolds addressed Executive commenting that CIL had been awaited for a long time but did not seem to be as beneficial to villages as the District Council, particularly as it was paid in two lots.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Reynolds for his comments.

### **Resolved**

- (1) That public consultation on the draft CIL Charging Schedule, Draft Instalments Policy, and supporting documents be approved.
- (2) That authority be delegated to the Assistant Director - Planning and Development, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Development, to make any minor amendments and corrections to the draft document he considers necessary prior to formal publication.
- (3) That authority be delegated to the Assistant Director – Planning and Development, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Development, to finalise and publish supporting documents.

### **Reasons**

A CIL Draft Charging Schedule and Instalments Policy is presented for approval to proceed to formal consultation. This is a required step ahead of the introduction of the Levy within the district.

### **Alternative options**

#### Option 1: Not consulting on the proposed Charging Schedule and supporting documents.

The introduction of CIL is within the Council's LDS. Consultation is a legal requirement in the process.

#### Option 2: Amending the proposed documents.

The documents proposed for consultation were prepared having regard to national policy guidance, informal engagement with key stakeholders and updated development evidence. Consultation will provide a further opportunity for stakeholders and members of the public to address matters formally and inform the preparation of both documents.

## **Discretionary Housing Payments Policy 2024-2025**

The Assistant Director Finance & Section 151 Officer submitted a report to inform Executive of the reviewed policy for Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) and proposed updates.

### **Resolved**

- (1) That, having given due consideration the reviewed policy for Discretionary Housing Payments be noted.
- (2) That the policy for Discretionary Housing Payments be approved.

### **Reasons**

Discretionary Housing Payments are vital for residents in the current economic climate and help to support our most vulnerable residents with housing costs. It is recommended that the policy is endorsed by Executive to continue delivering support to these customers.

### **Alternative options**

#### Option 1: Returning the funds to Department for Works and Pensions and Oxfordshire County Council

This has been rejected as this would not be in line with Cherwell's objectives of responding to the cost-of-living crisis and working to prevent homelessness.

125

### **Performance Outcomes Framework 2024-2025**

The Assistant Director Customer Focus submitted a report to share the proposed approach for measuring, monitoring, and reporting on the council's performance towards its priorities and objectives for 2024/25 and to capture any recommended changes for Executive consideration.

### **Resolved**

- (1) That the proposed approach for managing the council's performance for 2024/25, specifically the 36 performance indicators and their respective targets, 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. The framework will ensure there is a clear pathway to achieving success, and the committee's views are important for ensuring its effectiveness.

### **Alternative options**

#### Option 1: Not to agree a performance management framework

Without a performance framework 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.

126

### **Equalities, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Action Plans - Inclusive Communities, Services and Workplaces**

The Assistant Director – Customer Focus submitted a report to seek approval of the action plans for delivering the council's equality, diversity, and inclusion commitments for creating inclusive communities, services, and workplaces, which are set out in its Equalities Framework, Including Everyone.

#### **Resolved**

- (1) That the Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) action plans for Inclusive Communities, Services and Workplaces be approved.
- (2) 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 EDI working group, to make minor amendments to the agreed Inclusive Communities and Services Action Plans

#### **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 provide a structure in which this can be delivered and a basis on which work to deliver these commitments can be undertaken.

#### **Alternative options**

##### Option 1: Not to agree the action plans

This will not ensure the council delivers on its EDI commitments.

127

### **Whitelands Farm Sports Centre - Grant of Lease and Transfer of Commuted Funds**

The Assistant Director Property submitted a report which sought consideration of a proposal for the future operation and long-term management of

Whitelands Farm Sports Centre and grant of a long leasehold interest of Whitelands Farm Sports Centre to Bicester Town Council.

In considering the report, Bicester Executive members commented that the proposal was welcomed by the vast majority of residents in Bicester. In response to Members' questions, the Assistant Director Wellbeing and Housing Services explained she had been in contact with Bicester Town Council clerk who was comfortable with the transfer arrangements.

### **Resolved**

- (1) That authority be delegated to the Assistant Director Property to enter into a 90-year lease of Whitelands Farm Sports Centre at a peppercorn rent to Bicester Town Council subject to completion of the legal formalities and advertising requirements described below.
- (2) That the transfer of a commuted sum of £30,000 to Bicester Town Council upon completion of the lease be approved.

### **Reasons**

Bicester Town Council (BTC) currently lease other property from the Council used for sports and pitch provision. The addition of Whitelands Farm Sports Centre to their portfolio would enable them to offer a wider and more holistic sports provision to local teams and residents.

The Council acquires land from developers, usually through Section 106 agreements, to ensure there is an adequate supply of sports pitch provision available for the growing population of Cherwell. These acquisitions place long-term financial burdens on the Council to maintain and operate the sites, long after the commuted sum is spent. The grant of a long lease to BTC who will have full operational and management responsibility removes the ongoing financial burden to the Council.

Members have agreed to review policies associated with acquiring sports pitches and their onward ownership and maintenance. Consultation with Town and Parish Councils, where development is likely will determine the willingness of third tier authorities to take on responsibility for community amenities, as negotiations continue with developers. Towns and larger villages are showing some appetite for an approach which ensures operation is at the closest level to residents. Grant of a long lease to BTC aligns with this approach.

A yearly tenancy was granted to BTC in March 2022 to operate the facility while terms for a longer lease were agreed. BTC have broadened sports and social provision during this time for the benefit of local residents.

### **Alternative options**

Option 1: To revert to an operator model.

This option has been rejected as it fails to provide BTC with control over how their resources are deployed in the delivery of the service at the site. Furthermore, this option does not provide the Council with any certainty over the longer-term viability, management and maintenance of the facility.

Option 2: Work with a local sports club to operate and maintain the facility.

This option has been rejected as it would negatively impact on those teams from other sports who currently use the site and would probably take the site out of public ownership contravening the Section 106 agreement.

128 **Exclusion of the Press and Public**

There being no questions on the exempt appendix it was not necessary to exclude the press and public.

129 **Whitelands Farm Sports Centre - Grant of Lease and Transfer of Commuted Funds - Exempt Appendix**

**Resolved**

(1) That the exempt appendix be noted.

(Reasons and Alternative options as set out under Minute 127)

The meeting ended at 6.50 pm

Chairman:

Date: