

Cherwell District Council

Executive

Minutes of a meeting of the Executive held at Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury, OX15 4AA, on 2 April 2012 at 6.30 pm

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

Councillor Ken Atack, Lead Member for Financial Management
Councillor Norman Bolster, Lead Member for Estates
Councillor John Donaldson, Lead Member for Banbury Brighter Futures
Councillor Michael Gibbard, Lead Member for Planning
Councillor James Macnamara, Lead Member for the Environment
Councillor Nigel Morris, Lead Member for Change
Councillor D M Pickford, Lead Member for Housing
Councillor Nicholas Turner, Lead Member for Customer Services

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

Officers: Sue Smith, Chief Executive
Calvin Bell, Director of Development
Martin Henry, Director of Resources / Section 151 Officer
Kevin Lane, Head of Law and Governance / Monitoring Officer
Adrian Colwell, Head of Strategic Planning and the Economy
Karen Curtin, Head of Finance and Procurement
Linda Rand, Design and Conservation Team Leader (for agenda item 6)
Martyn Swann, Strategic Housing Manager (for agenda item 7)
Helen Town, Strategic Housing Officer (for agenda item 7)
Natasha Clark, Team Leader, Democratic and Elections

102 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

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

There were no petitions or requests to address the meeting.

104 **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

105 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 March 2012 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

106 **Draft Conservation and Urban Design Strategy for Cherwell**

The Head of Strategic Planning and the Economy submitted a report which sought the approval of the Draft Conservation and Urban Design Strategy for Cherwell for public consultation purposes.

In introducing the report, the Lead Member for Planning advised Members that an addendum to the report had been circulated as since publication of the Executive agenda the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) had been published, which replaced existing Planning Policy Guidance and Statements. Additionally, the Budget Statement had removed the provision of zero rating for VAT purposes of new works to listed building from 1 October 2012.

The Lead Member for Planning explained that if approved for consultation purposes, the Draft Conservation and Urban Design Strategy would be updated to reflect the changes arising from the NPPF and the budget statement.

Member agreed that the Draft Conservation and Urban Design Strategy was important for the district as it supported the protection of local heritage and the promotion of local design.

The Lead Member for Planning reported that Linda Rand, Senior Conservation Officer, would be retiring at the end of the week. The Executive thanked Linda for her hard work for the authority expressing their appreciation for her services to planning and wished her all the best for her retirement.

Resolved

- (1) That the content of the Draft Conservation and Urban Design Strategy be considered.
- (2) That the Draft Conservation and Urban Design Strategy be approved for public consultation purposes and that authority be delegated to the Head of Strategic Planning and the Economy, in consultation with the Lead Member for Planning, to make any minor amendments to the Strategy prior to consultation.

Reasons

This draft strategy sets out the Council's remit in the areas of conservation and urban design, illustrates what has been achieved and what we will strive to achieve in the future. The document covers a three year period from April 2012 to March 2015.

Options

- Option One** To accept the recommendation
- Option Two** To not consult on the draft strategy and miss the opportunity to establish and then set clear priorities for the way the Council approaches conservation and urban design matters for the next three years.

107

Cherwell Housing Strategy 2012-17

The Head of Regeneration and Housing submitted a report which presented Cherwell's 2012 - 2017 Housing Strategy to the Executive for approval.

In introducing the report, the Lead Member for Housing explained that the Strategy covered six Strategic Housing Priorities. It superseded and incorporated any existing or former strategies and carried over any outstanding actions.

Members commended Officers for the strategy making particular reference to the innovative approach to housing strategies and policies which had aided in securing significant inward investment and agreed that work should continue in this way. The Executive requested that officers arrange a briefing for all Members on the refreshed allocations policy and benefits reforms.

Resolved

- (1) That the proposed Cherwell Housing Strategy for 2012 – 2017 be approved.
- (2) That authority be delegated to the Head of Regeneration and Housing, in consultation with the Lead Member for Housing to produce an annual delivery plan for each year of the strategy that will prioritise actions in line with resources and opportunities.

Reasons

Cherwell's proposed Housing Strategy is ambitious. It clearly sets out the need to understand the business case for all new areas of development. In producing a business case we can look at rationale, resources, risk and outcomes to assess if this is a prudent way forward. An example of this is the emerging Build! ® self build housing programme. A business case was made, which identified the level of investment and the likely return. This is a good example of how innovation can provide leverage to secure significant inward investment. To date the HCA has committed (subject to contract) £2.45 million pounds towards the Build! ® programme for new build and refurbishment of empty homes.

As well as being a statutory requirement, the proposed Cherwell Housing Strategy is a tool to communicate our priorities to partners in the public,

private and voluntary sector. We have taken into consideration feedback from a range of partners through one-to-one meetings and groups and tried to capture all the key challenges and opportunities ahead. Whilst no strategy can be 'all things to all people' we believe that the holistic approach to housing provides a balanced set of actions which if implemented will enable the District to be investment ready and for local people to be 'housing ready' ~ financially resilient and able to secure and manage a home.

Options

- Option One** To accept all the recommendations in this report and:
- (1) To approve Cherwell's 2012 – 2017 Housing Strategy
 - (2) To delegate authority to the Head of Regeneration and Housing, in consultation with the Lead Member for Housing to produce an annual delivery plan that prioritises actions in line with resources and opportunities.
- Option Two** To approve the proposed housing strategy, but not the recommendation for an annual action plan. The benefit of an annual action plan is that it allows the Council to maintain its flexibility and responsiveness during changing economic times.
- Option Three** To not accept any of the recommendations in this report. The implication of not accepting the proposed is the Council's strategic direction for housing including its role in supporting wider Council priorities is delayed.

108

Police and Crime Commissioner Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel

The Head of Community Services submitted a report which reported on progress to date on the implementation of the Police Crime Commissioner (PCC) and the Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel (PCP) and to seek approval to establish a Joint Committee.

Resolved

- (1) That the establishment of a Joint Committee and delegate to it signing-off the arrangements for the Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel be approved.
- (2) That Councillor Reynolds be appointed as the Cherwell District Council representative on the Joint Committee.

Reasons

This decision is the next step in implementing the decision of the Executive of 5 March 2012 in establishing the Thames Valley Police Crime Panel

Options

- Option One** To agree the appointment of a Joint Committee and the Council's representation on it.
- Option Two** Not to agree the above, with the resultant consequence that arrangements may be imposed on the Thames Valley Police area by Secretary of State.

109 **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 it could involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of that Act.

110 **Finance and Procurement Business Case**

The Head of Finance and Procurement submitted an exempt report which sought support for the business case to implement some shared finance functions across Cherwell District Council (CDC) and South Northamptonshire Council (SNC).

Resolved

That, subject to approval of the staffing implications by Personnel Committee and similar approval by the respective SNC decision making bodies:

- (1) The consultation comments and responses contained in the log be noted.
- (2) The business case to implement some shared finance and procurement functions across Cherwell District Council and South Northamptonshire Council be endorsed.
- (3) Subject to South Northamptonshire Council resolving in similar terms, authority be delegated to the Head of Finance and Procurement to take all necessary steps to implement the team in compliance with the Organisational Change Policy and in consultation with the HR Managers at both Councils.
- (4) That authority be delegated to the Head of Finance and Procurement, in consultation with the Lead Member for Financial Management, to fund the implementation costs from earmarked reserves.

Reasons

The Option recommended is seen as the proposal that would bring the most benefit to both Councils, would impact on JMT in a timely manner, deliver the required savings and allow a further review once the full impact of the Local Government Resource Review (LGRR), Welfare reform and Localism is known. This would also allow for the shared IT service to be implemented with the full benefits of more streamlined technology being considered in a further review of the finance and procurement function when there is greater certainty.

There are clear benefits to be gained from shared Finance and Procurement functions by both organisations in terms of increased resilience, consistent policies and procedures, best practice across the two authorities, efficiency and effectiveness.

Options

The options are set out in detail in the business case. The approach in the recommendations is believed to be the best way forward

The meeting ended at 7.15 pm

Chairman:

Date: