

Cherwell District Council

Executive

Minutes of a meeting of the Executive held at Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury, OX15 4AA, on 6 October 2014 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 Ken Atack, Lead Member for Financial Management
Councillor Norman Bolster, Lead Member for Estates and the Economy

Councillor John Donaldson, Lead Member for Banbury Brighter Futures

Councillor Michael Gibbard, Lead Member for Planning

Councillor Tony Ilott, Lead Member for Clean and Green

Councillor Kieron Mallon, Lead Member for Performance and Customers

Councillor D M Pickford, Lead Member for Housing

Also Present: Councillor Barry Richards (representing Councillor Sean Woodcock, Leader of the Labour Group)
Councillor Lawrie Stratford

Apologies for absence: Councillor Nicholas Turner, Lead Member for Joint Working and Communications

Officers: Sue Smith, Chief Executive
Karen Curtin, Commercial Director (Bicester)
Ian Davies, Director of Community and Environment
Kevin Lane, Head of Law and Governance / Monitoring Officer
Jo Pitman, Head of Transformation
Paul Sutton, Head of Finance and Procurement
Natasha Clark, Team Leader, Democratic and Elections

50 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

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

There were no petitions or requests to address the meeting.

52 **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

53 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 1 September 2014 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

54 **Chairman's Announcements**

The Chairman made the following announcement:

1. Under the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014, members of the public were permitted to film, broadcast and report on the meeting, subject to the efficient running of the meeting not being affected.

55 **Customer Satisfaction Survey Results 2014**

The Head of Transformation submitted a report which updated the Executive on the results of the annual satisfaction survey and identified any areas to be reflected in future business and/or performance plans.

In introducing the report, the Lead Member for Performance and Communications reported that overall satisfaction levels now peaked at its highest recorded level of 77%. This represented a 17% increase since the council began undertaking Customer Satisfaction Surveys in 2006.

Resolved

- (1) That the results of the customer survey, with particular reference to improvement in areas that were identified as priorities as an outcome of the survey undertaken in 2014, be noted.
- (2) That the following priorities and areas of focus for future action be agreed:

Customer Priorities

The 'top 6' key services which are perceived to be a priority by local residents in greater magnitude than other council services.

- 1) Household waste collection
- 2) Household recycling collection and food/ garden waste collection service
- 3) Dealing with anti-social behaviour/ nuisance
- 4) Providing affordable housing
- 5) Street cleaning and tackling environmental crime
- 6) Supporting the creation of jobs in the local area

Suggested Areas for Future Focus

- a) Dealing with Anti-Social Behaviour: The positive increase in satisfaction with the Council's approach to dealing with anti-social behaviour and nuisance recorded last year has been maintained in 2014, with 56% satisfied. This is notably higher than the lowest recorded level of 30% in 2007. However ranked third in the above perceived priorities.
- b) Sports and Leisure facilities: Overall satisfaction with leisure activities provided by Cherwell District Council remains in line with previous years, with 56% satisfied with their provision and 11% dissatisfied. The leisure activities provided by the Council are the lead driver of overall satisfaction and as such, it is important to maintain satisfaction levels in this area. There are also areas of dissatisfaction to be addressed within Leisure Facilities. This year, ratings have remained stable; 68% are satisfied with the leisure facilities provided by the Council overall vs. 69% in 2013.
- c) Continuing to focus on Street Cleansing and dealing with environmental crime' one of the 'top 6' priorities street cleansing is a service that is experienced by all residents and plays an important part in terms of quality of life and enjoyment living within a local area. It is a service upon which the Council is judged and valued by many residents and as such should remain an on-going area of focus.

Reasons

This report presents a summary of the findings from the 2014 customer satisfaction survey. It highlights a general trend of improvement across council services as well as areas where continued focus is required.

The report also highlights customer priorities and these will be used to help inform budget setting, the development of the Council's Business Plan, Performance Pledges and 5 year Strategy.

As well as these high level findings the survey includes a wealth of service specific detail that will be used by service managers to help underpin service planning.

Alternative Options

Option 1: To accept the recommendations as outlined in part one of this report.

Option 2: To reject the recommendations and request additional work or alternative priorities arising from the survey findings.

The Head of Transformation submitted a report which presented the Council's performance for the period 01 April 2014 – 30 June 2014 as measured through the Performance Management Framework.

Resolved

- (1) That the following achievements be noted:

Cherwell: A District of Opportunity

- Northwest Bicester: Delivery of the Masterplan to the agreed timescales is reporting as Green. The next stage in delivering the Masterplan will be the submission and processing of planning applications for the development. It is anticipated that applications will be received for the majority of the site before the end of the year and determined during 2015.
- Graven Hill: deliver the Council's vision for this strategic site is reporting as Green. Huge progress has been made on concluding the S.106 issues and completion of the land transaction expected in early August 2014. The business case for creation of a 'group structure' of Companies Limited by Shares (Holding Company and Development Company) has been approved by the Executive (16th July) with companies incorporated and inaugural meeting of both companies held on the 7 July 2014. Six key work themes have been identified as necessary to deliver the council's vision for Graven Hill: consolidation of land assembly & boundary issues; On-going engagement with Ministry of Defence (MOD); Ecology and ground investigation; Design and planning; Delivery and procurement; Sales, marketing and investment.

Safe, Green and Clean

- Tonnage of waste sent to landfill is reporting as Green. On track and with a number of actions planned during 2014/15 to reduce amount sent to landfill.
- Number of fly tips enforcement actions (compared with same period 2013/14) is reporting as Green*. During the quarter 50 warning letters, 13 Section 71 Notices and 1 formal caution were issued. Warning letters work very well in circumstances when it would not be suitable to take a more formal approach.
- Percentage of nuisance cases responded to within prescribed period of 48 hours is reporting as Green. Case load increased from 183 in Quarter 4 2013/14 to 452 in Quarter 1 but despite the increasing case load response times have been maintained.

Thriving Communities

- Average time taken to process new claims and changes for Housing Benefit in days is reporting as Green*. Changes continue to be processed well within target and this is expected to continue through the year.
- No of households in temporary accommodation is reporting as Green*. The number of households in temporary accommodation remains within the target set. The Housing Team continue their service delivery with an on-going focus on homelessness prevention. This helps to keep the number of those progressing to make a statutory homeless application low, which in turn maintains the current performance for provision of temporary accommodation.
- Maintain a minimum usage level of visits to leisure facilities (Total of visits to District Leisure Centres and WGLC, NOA and Cooper) is

reporting as Green*. Throughputs are up 18,913 on June 2013 with:
- Spiceball Leisure Centre up 1,907, Kidlington & Gosford Leisure Centre up by 5,144 and Bicester Leisure Centre up by 11,862 - the increase is attributed to the play and teach pool figures.

- Processing of major applications with 13 weeks is reporting as Green*. The measures introduced last year continue to show improvements. A figure of nearly 91% has been achieved this quarter and this continues to represent sustained and significant progress compared to historic performance.

Sound Budgets and Customer focussed council

- Maximise income through designing services that can attract a market is reporting as Green. Some market work has been undertaken to ascertain the capacity to trade. Until the new operating model is in effect trading potential is limited.
- Increase our use of social media to communicate with residents and local businesses is reporting as Green. Facebook and Twitter continue to be used extensively at CDC, with residents engaging with the communications team on a daily basis on a variety of subjects. The range of messages that are promoted through social media also continues to grow as departments become more aware of what can be achieved on a limited or no budget.
- Deliver an annual balanced budget setting out the five year financial plan (Medium Term Financial Strategy) is reporting as Green. Currently developing updated Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) with actions to address future anticipated pressures

- (2) That the following performance related matters be identified for review or consideration in future reports:

Cherwell: A District of Opportunity

- Bicester town centre regeneration including the Council Community Building is reporting as Amber. Planning permission obtained for the Community Building. We are currently reviewing costs ahead of awarding construction contract. Completion is aimed for Q4 2015.
- Agree next steps for the development options for Kidlington against agreed timescales and milestones is reporting as Amber. Masterplans follow on from Local Plans. These are currently delayed while the Local Plan issues are resolved.

Safe, Clean and Green

- Number of fly tips recorded (compared with same period 2013/14) is reporting as Red. There is no obvious trend showing so far regarding the number of fly tips. It has however been noted that there has been a small increase in the number of white goods being left out on the verge, for the scrap metal collectors. Investigations cannot always identify the resident that has left them out.
- Percentage of nuisance cases resolved within 8 weeks is reporting as Amber. Of the 452 cases received in Quarter 1, 425 were resolved. Due to the high number of cases resolution, performance has continued to be good although slight slippage is inevitable. A greater level of activity tends to occur in Quarters 1 and 2 as it is

seasonal. There has been an increase in the number of complaints about barking dogs and the figures here include those from Operation Jazz which is now in its third year. This operation, running 2 nights per week, has proved very successful and consequently officers are dealing with more calls.

Thriving Communities

- Processing of minor applications with 8 weeks is reporting as Red. The impact of greater overall application numbers together with a higher proportion of majors has affected the processing of minor applications. The emphasis on majors has resulted in a backlog of registration which has in turn had an impact on overall performance, 55% compared with a target of 65%. Short term measures have been put in place (allocation of additional staff and overtime working) to reduce the registration backlog. In addition the registration team has been relocated and the whole process is being modelled using "PlanSim" software which will allow the impact of changes to the process to be understood before introduction. These changes are expected to see an improvement in performance by the end of the next quarter.
- Percentage of planning appeals allowed against refusal decision (%) is reporting as Red. The performance measure is volatile as it is based on low overall appeal numbers and therefore each decision can impact on the performance measure for appeals. There is no evidence of poor performance, though this continues to be carefully monitored.

Sound Budgets and Customer Focussed Council

- Increase organisational capacity and efficiency and Improve workforce planning and development is reporting as Amber. Action Plan is being developed as part of the HR & OD Strategy work as part of 3 way working. During 2014/15 the focus will be on planning for this with implementation expected in 2015/16.
- Deliver significant reduction in phone contact by implementing additional online services is reporting as Amber. Suspension of the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) and Customer Portal project pending 3 way working reviews will impact on the opportunity to achieve "significant" reductions. However work continues in the interim to use current software provision to implement online services where viable.

Reasons

This report presents the Council's performance against its corporate scorecard for the first quarter of 2014/15. It includes an overview of successes, areas for improvement and emerging issues to be considered.

Alternative Options

Option 1: To note the report

Option 2: To request additional information on items and/or add to the work programme for review and/or refer to Overview and Scrutiny.

57

Quarter 1 2014/15 Financial Performance

The Director of Resources submitted a report which summarised the Council's Revenue and Capital position, treasury management and procurement performance for the first three months of the financial year 2014-15 and projections for the full 2014-15 period.

The report also presented information on treasury management performance and compliance with treasury management policy during 2014-15 as required by the Treasury Management Code of Practice

Resolved

- (1) That the projected revenue and capital position at June 2014 be noted.
- (2) That the quarter 1 (Q1) performance against the 2014-15 investment strategy and the financial returns from the funds be noted.
- (3) That the contents and the progress against the Corporate Procurement Action Plan be noted.

Reasons

The CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management which this Council has adopted requires a regular budget monitoring report. This report illustrates the Council's performance against the 2014-15 Financial Targets for Revenue, Capital and Procurement Monitoring.

Alternative Options

Option 1: As this is a monitoring report, no further options have been considered. However, members may wish to request that officers provide additional information.

58

Budget Strategy 2015 to 2016 and Beyond

The Director of Resources submitted a report which informed the Executive of the service and financial planning process for 2015-16, to approve the 2015-16 budget strategy and to agree the budget guidelines for issue to service managers to enable the production of the 2015-16 budget.

The report also presented the most recent Medium Term Revenue Plan (MTRP), sought consideration of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2015-16 and agreement of the Council's approach to Business Rates pooling for 2015-16.

Resolved

- (1) That the updated Medium Term Revenue Plan for the Council's revenue budget for 2015-16 to 2019-20 be noted.

- (2) That the overall 2015-16 budget strategy and service and financial planning process be endorsed.
- (3) That the proposed budget guidelines and timetable for 2015-16 (annexes to the Minutes as set out in the Minute Book) be agreed.
- (4) That agreement be given to consult on the retention of the current Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS) for 2015-16 and authority be delegated to the Director of Resources, in consultation with the Lead Member for Financial Management, to make the final decision on the scheme.
- (5) That authority be delegated to the Director of Resources, in consultation with the Lead Member for Financial Management, to make the final decision on Business Rates pooling for 2015-16.

Reasons

The Council needs to set guidelines and a timetable for the preparation of draft estimates for 2015-16. These guidelines should support the objectives contained in the Business Plan, Service Plans and the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

Alternative Options

Option 1: To disagree with the recommendations set out above. This is rejected as it will unnecessarily delay the formulation of the detailed budget for 2015-16.

59

Outcome of the Review of Flooding at Hanover Gardens, Bicester

The Commercial Director (Bicester) submitted a report to update on the outcome of the investigation into the root cause of the flooding at Hanover Gardens on 24 December 2013.

Executive thanked both Cherwell District Council and Oxfordshire County Council Officers for their hard work in assisting the residents and management team at Hanover Gardens and, in particular, the efforts to ensure affected residents were rehoused as quickly as possible. Executive also extended their thanks to the companies and hotels that had supported the residents.

Resolved

- (1) That the proactive response provided by Cherwell District Council to assist the residents and management team at Hanover Gardens be noted.
- (2) That the outcome and recommended actions from the Environment Agency Report (annex to the Minutes as set out in the Minute Book) be noted.

- (3) That it be noted the Council has agreed to run an information campaign in October 2014 throughout the District on the importance of preventing debris from entering all rivers in the district.
- (4) That it be noted that a partnership meeting with all interested parties continues to monitor any outstanding actions and the Council has representation through the Head of Housing and Regeneration.

Reasons

The immediate response provided by the Housing Team to the situation at Hanover Gardens on 24 December 2013 and for the period between Christmas and New Year was in line with Council policy and was at the high standard we expect. The team have been formally thanked for all the work that they undertook during the festive period.

As stated in Appendix 1 it is not possible to eliminate the risk of flooding from rivers but the recommendations identified in the report are positive steps that can be taken to reduce the risk of flooding from the River Bure in the future particularly in relation to preventing debris from entering the River Bure which was the root cause of the flood at Hanover Gardens.

The Council as a member of the partnership who worked together to review this issue will ensure that it fulfils its action by the agreed date and ensure that all residents of the District are aware of how important it is to prevent debris from entering the River Bure. An information campaign beginning with a press release concerning this report will run throughout October 2014.

Alternative Options

Option 1: To approve the recommendation

Option 2: To reject the recommendation

60

Hanwell Fields Community Centre Solar Panels

The Director of Community and Environment submitted a report which recommended the installation of solar PV panels on the roof of Hanwell Fields Community Centre, Rotary Way, Banbury and the use of a capital fund to finance the solar PV installation.

Resolved

- (1) That the installation of solar PV panels on the roof of Hanwell Fields Community Centre, Rotary Way, Banbury be approved.
- (2) That the use of capital (ref:50211" Hanwell Fields Community Development Fund") to finance the solar PV installation be approved.
- (3) That the division of resultant income as follows be approved: CDC to retain one third of the feed in tariff income to accumulate a reserve for

maintenance and the eventual replacement of the inverter which has a design life of 10 years (approximately half that of the panels) and to cover increased insurance costs of the building. The remaining two thirds of the feed in tariff income would be passed on to the Community Association.

Reasons

The proposed project will assist the HFCA to remain solvent and continue to provide and facilitate valued community services. For this reason it is legitimate use of a fund intended to promote community development.

At minimal cost to the District Council, this project will serve as a test case for provision of solar panels in CDC's other community centres.

The proposed project will reduce the carbon footprint of this CDC owned facility.

Alternative Options

Option 1: To amend the proposed split of income from the Feed in Tariff
Reason: Less than one third of the income is less likely to cover the council's maintenance costs.

Option 2: To reject the recommendations

61 **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 items 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.

62 **South West Bicester Sports Village**

The Director of Community and Environment submitted an exempt report relating to the South West Bicester Sports Village.

Resolved

- (1) As set out in the exempt minutes.
- (2) As set out in the exempt minutes.
- (3) As set out in the exempt minutes.

- (4) That a further update report on the project following the receipt and evaluation of construction contract tenders be submitted to Executive.

Reasons

As set out in the exempt minutes.

Alternative Options

As set out in the exempt minutes.

63

Woodgreen Leisure Centre

The Director of Community and Environment submitted an exempt report relating to Woodgreen Leisure Centre.

Resolved

- (1) As set out in the exempt decision notice.
- (2) As set out in the exempt decision notice.
- (3) That a further report on the outcome of the tendering process be submitted to Executive.

Reasons

As set out in the exempt minutes.

Alternative Options

As set out in the exempt minutes.

The meeting ended at 7.20 pm

Chairman:

Date: