

Cherwell District Council

Executive

Minutes of a meeting of the Executive held at Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury, OX15 4AA, on 6 February 2017 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 Colin Clarke, Lead Member for Planning
Councillor John Donaldson, Lead Member for Banbury Brighter Futures
Councillor Tony Ilott, Lead Member for Public Protection
Councillor Mike Kerford-Byrnes, Lead Member for Change Management, Joint Working and IT
Councillor Kieron Mallon, Lead Member for Banbury Futures
Councillor D M Pickford, Lead Member for Clean and Green
Councillor Lynn Pratt, Lead Member for Estates and the Economy

Also Present: Councillor Sean Woodcock, Leader of the Labour Group
Councillor Nicholas Mawer, Chairman, Budget Planning Committee

Officers: Sue Smith, Chief Executive
Scott Barnes, Director of Strategy and Commissioning
Ian Davies, Director of Operational Delivery
Kevin Lane, Head of Law and Governance / Monitoring Officer
Paul Sutton, Chief Finance Officer / Section 151 Officer
Chris Stratford, Head of Regeneration and Housing
Natasha Clark, Interim Democratic and Elections Manager

117 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

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

There were no petitions or requests to address the meeting.

119 **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

120 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 January 2017 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

121 **Chairman's Announcements**

There were no Chairman's announcements.

122 **Discretionary Rate Relief Policy**

The Chief Finance Officer submitted a report to seek approval of the Discretionary Rate Relief Policy effective from 1 April 2017 and agree for the final determination of the policy guidelines to be delegated to the Chief Finance Officer, in consultation with the Lead Member for Financial Management, due to pending legislative changes in respect of Rural Rate Relief announced in the Autumn Statement 2016 and confirmed by the Local Government Finance Bill.

Resolved

- (1) That the report and the recommendation of the Budget Planning Committee at its meeting on 17 January 2017 to approve the Discretionary Rate Relief Policy be noted.
- (2) That the proposed draft Discretionary Rate Relief Policy (annex to the Minutes as set out in the Minute Book) be approved for adoption subject to resolution (3) below.
- (3) That it be agreed that the final content of the policy guidelines will be subject to confirmation by the Chief Finance Officer in consultation with the Lead Member for Financial Management.

Reasons

The Discretionary Rate Relief Policy is required to be amended to reflect the changing priorities of the Council and assess the impact of the Localism Act 2011 which introduced the power to implement a local discount scheme together with the fundamental changes to business rates that came into effect from 1 April 2013.

Alternative options

Option 1: Members could choose not to agree the proposed policy, but it would mean that we wouldn't be able to continue to support local businesses, charities and voluntary organisations and would also reduce our financial flexibility in the future.

123

Corporate Fraud Prosecution and Sanction Policy

The Chief Finance Officer submitted a report to provide members with the updated Joint Sanctions and Prosecution Policy and to seek approval to the reviewed policy.

Resolved

- (1) That the updated Joint Corporate Fraud Prosecution and Sanction Policy (annex to the Minutes as set out in the Minute Book) be approved.

Reasons

There is a Joint Sanctions and Prosecution Policy in place for both Cherwell District Council (CDC) and South Northamptonshire Council (SNC). The policy ensures that both councils have guidelines in place to assist the decision making process when considering what further action is appropriate following an investigation. The policy has been reviewed and updated and is presented to Executive for approval.

Alternative options

Option 1: Not to approve the policy. This is not recommended as the Joint Sanctions and Prosecutions Policy ensures that both councils have guidelines in place to assist the decision making process when considering what further action is appropriate.

124

Draft Budget, Corporate Business Plan and Cycle of Growth 2017/18

The Chief Finance Officer submitted a report which presented the draft budget, Corporate Business Plan and Cycle of Growth 2017/18.

The Council is required to produce a balanced budget for 2017/18 as the basis for calculating its level of Council Tax. It has to base that budget on its plans for service delivery during the year, recognising any changes in service demand that may arise in future years.

The proposed budget and business plan for 2017/18, including the new cycle of growth strategies, are presented as an integrated report to demonstrate that the Council adopts a strategic approach to managing all of its resources, ensuring that the delivery of the Council's priorities for the district directs the allocation of financial resources.

Resolved

- (1) That, having given due consideration, the draft budget in the context of the Council's service objectives and strategic priorities be approved.
- (2) That Full Council be recommended to approve the balanced budget.
- (3) That Full Council be recommended to agree a Council tax freeze.

- (4) That Full Council be recommended to approve the proposed 2017/18 capital programme (annex to the Minutes as set out in the Minute Book).
- (5) That the impact of the proposed budget on reserves be noted and Full Council be recommended to approve the reserves 2017/18 (annex to the Minutes as set out in the Minute Book).
- (6) That the use of £3.053m of reserves to fund the initial one-off payment to the pension fund, in order to achieve the saving of £382,000 be approved.
- (7) That the latest Medium Term Revenue Plan (MTRP) for 2016/17 to 2021/22 be noted and it be further noted that this will be the basis of the work of the Budget Planning Committee for the following year.
- (8) That no further changes be made and Full Council be recommended to approve the updated draft revenue budget (annex to the Minutes as set out in the Minute Book) at the meeting on 20 February 2017
- (9) That authority be delegated to the Chief Finance Officer, in consultation with the Lead Member for Financial Management, to amend the contributions to or from general fund balances to allow the Council Tax to remain at the level recommended to Full Council following the announcement of the final settlement figures and any changes to relating to Business Rates.
- (10) That Full Council be recommended to approve the 2017/18 business plan and performance pledges (annexes to the Minutes as set out in the Minute Book) and authority be delegated to the Director – Strategy and Commissioning, in consultation with the Leader of the Council to make any minor amendments to the plan as required before consideration by Full Council.
- (11) That Full Council be recommended to approve the joint cycle of growth strategies of Operational Excellence, Commercial Development and Innovation, and Commissioning (annexes to the Minutes as set out in the Minute Book) and that authority be delegated to the Director of Operational Delivery, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to make any minor amendments to the strategies and corporate values as required.
- (12) That the 2017/18 Business Plan, Budget and Cycle of Growth Equality Impact Assessments be noted.

Reasons

This report presents a final analysis of the Council's draft revenue and capital budget and business plan for 2017/18. They will be presented together to Full Council on the 20 February to support the setting of the Council Tax.

It is a legal requirement to set a balanced budget and the recommendations as set out and directed by the corporate business plan represent what is believed to be the best way of achieving this.

Alternative options

Members could decide not to agree the recommendations or to present alternative budget proposals but that would run counter to the detailed budget setting process that has taken place as part of the formulation of this budget.

125 Notification of Urgent Action: Additional funding for Coach House Mews and Lincoln Close- Build!

The Commercial Director submitted a report to report the urgent action taken by the Commercial Director in consultation with the Leader which related to the approval of a new contract sum of £2,686,299 to include £78,000 for additional fees associated with the London Housing Consortium (LHC) levy to be applied to Coach House Mews, Bicester and Lincoln Close, Banbury.

Resolved

- (1) That the urgent action taken by the Commercial Director in consultation with the Leader of the Council, which related to the approval of a new contract sum of £2,686,299 to include £78,000 for additional fees associated with the London Housing Consortium (LHC) levy to be applied to both the Coach House Mews, Bicester and Lincoln Close, Banbury housing developments be noted.

Reasons

This report confirms the urgent action taken by the Commercial Director in consultation with the Leader of the Council to approve the new contract sum for the schemes identified within this report totalling £2,686m.

Alternative options

None as this is an information report for Executive to note.

126 Proposed Changes to the Local Health and Social Care Sector

The Director of Operational Delivery submitted a report to inform the Executive of proposed changes to the health and social care sector, the actions of the Council to date and to consider further Council activity.

Resolved

- (1) That the proposals for change and the actions taken by the Council to date be noted.

- (2) That, having given due consideration to the specialist advice to the Councils, the emerging Council response to the stage 1 consultation be endorsed.
- (3) That agreement be given to hold an all member briefing at the end of March 2017 regarding the Council's intended response to the stage 1 consultation proposals.

Reasons

There are fundamental changes proposed for the local health and social care sector, some of which are the subject of a formal consultation process running until 9 April 2017. Of very local and heightened concern are the changes proposed for the HGH where several acute services are to be transferred to Oxford hospitals, more care at home and in the community and increased planned care at the HGH.

Such acute service changes are similar in nature to those proposed in 2007, and which were rejected by the Secretary of State. The Council is therefore taking steps to provide a robust response to these recent proposals, as it did in 2008.

As the stage 1 consultation process runs to 9 April 2017 and the nature of a proposed Council response is only just emerging at this early point in the process, it is intended to hold an all Member briefing toward the end of March 2017 to consider further the Council's response before it is submitted.

Alternative options

The option available to the Council is not to respond to the consultation process and let matters take their course. This is not proposed as the Horton General Hospital is regarded as a critical piece of the District's infrastructure, the distance and journey challenges to the John Radcliffe Hospital in Oxford are too great for many of the District residents and it is clear that a significant majority of local people do not support all the proposed changes.

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 item 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 5 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.

Proposed Changes to the Local Health and Social Care Sector - Exempt Appendix

Executive considered the exempt appendix to the report of the Director of Operational Delivery on proposed changes to the local Health and Social Care Sector.

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) As set out in the exempt minutes.

Reasons

The Council has sought specialist advice and is developing its response to the formal consultation process and other action using this advice.

Alternative options

As set out in the exempt minutes.

The meeting ended at 7.30 pm

Chairman:

Date: