

Cherwell District Council

Executive

Minutes of a meeting of the Executive held at Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury, OX15 4AA, on 3 April 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 Housing
Councillor Tony Ilott, Lead Member for Public Protection
Councillor Mike Kerford-Byrnes, Lead Member for Change Management, Joint Working and ICT
Councillor Kieron Mallon, Lead Member for Banbury Futures
Councillor D M Pickford, Lead Member for Housing
Councillor Lynn Pratt, Lead Member for Estates and the Economy

Also Present: Councillor Sean Woodcock, Leader of the Labour Group
Councillor Barry Richards

Officers: Ian Davies, Interim Head of Paid Service
Scott Barnes, Director of Strategy and Commissioning
Karen Curtin, Commercial Director
Kevin Lane, Head of Law and Governance / Monitoring Officer
Paul Sutton, Chief Finance Officer / Section 151 Officer
Claire Taylor, Assistant Director - Commercial and Innovation
Sean Gregory, Environmental Protection Officer, for agenda item 7
Natasha Clark, Interim Democratic and Elections Manager

150

Declarations of Interest

10. Update: Construction Apprenticeships and Skills.

Councillor Barry Wood, Non Statutory Interest, as a Board Member of the Apprenticeship Training Agency (ATA).

Councillor John Donaldson, Non Statutory Interest, as a Board Member of the Apprenticeship Training Agency (ATA).

17. Asset Disposal - Southam Road Cemetery Depot, Banbury.

Councillor Barry Richards, Non Statutory Interest, as a member of Banbury Town Council which had been involved in discussions on the matter.

Councillor Colin Clarke, Non Statutory Interest, as a member of Banbury Town Council which had been involved in discussions on the matter.

Councillor John Donaldson, Non Statutory Interest, as a member of Banbury Town Council which had been involved in discussions on the matter.

Councillor Kieron Mallon, Non Statutory Interest, as a member of Banbury Town Council which had been involved in discussions on the matter.

Councillor Sean Woodcock, Non Statutory Interest, as a member of Banbury Town Council which had been involved in discussions on the matter.

Councillor Tony Illott, Non Statutory Interest, as a member of Banbury Town Council which had been involved in discussions on the matter.

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

There were no petitions or requests to address the meeting.

152 **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

153 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 March 2017 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

154 **Chairman's Announcements**

There were no Chairman's announcements.

155 **Air Quality Action Plan**

The Public Protection Manager submitted a report to approve the Air Quality Action Plan for Banbury, Bicester and Kidlington.

Resolved

- (1) That the Air Quality Action Plan (annex to the Minutes as set out in the Minute Book) be approved.
- (2) That the feedback from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be noted.

Reasons

The production of an Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) is mandatory once an order to declare an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) has been issued. The Council has issued an order for each of the four AQMAs declared.

Alternative options

Option 1: The Council could choose not to adopt an AQAP. However once an AQMA has been declared the Council is required to produce an AQAP and so for this reason this is not an alternative option.

156

Local Development Scheme

The Head of Strategic Planning and the Economy submitted a report to seek approval of an updated Local Development Scheme (LDS) for the production of the Council's planning policy documents.

Resolved

- (1) That the updated Local Development Scheme (LDS) (annex to the Minutes as set out in the Minute Book) be approved.

Reasons

An updated Local Development Scheme (LDS) has been prepared. It provides a programme for the preparation of the Council's key planning policy documents that will be relevant to future planning decisions and, where applicable, the public examination of those documents. The Council has a statutory responsibility to prepare and maintain an LDS. The LDS will be used by officers, the public, partners, developers and other stakeholders to monitor the production of documents to plan for associated consultations. Approval of the LDS is needed to assist project management and ensure that the Council meets its statutory responsibilities for plan-making.

Alternative options

Option 1: Not to approve the LDS

The Council has a statutory responsibility to maintain an LDS. Not to approve the LDS could undermine the confidence of the public and stakeholders about the Council's plan-making programme. The LDS would need to be re-presented to the Executive at a future meeting or to the Lead Member for Planning.

Option 2: To reconsider the content of the LDS

The LDS has been prepared having regard to the Council's statutory responsibilities and current resources. It is considered by officers to be appropriate for the present and foreseeable circumstances.

157

Empty Homes Project Update

The Commercial Director submitted a report to provide Members with an update on the first 12 months work of the Empty Homes Project, based within the Private Sector Housing Team.

Resolved

- (1) That the progress of owner engagement with the project be noted.
- (2) That the proposals for use of enforcement powers to bring empty properties back into use be noted.
- (3) That the added value of addressing vacant properties to the Council be noted.

Reasons

The Empty Homes Project has successfully engaged with owners of the longest term void properties. Whilst it should be noted that these properties will take time to come back into use, owners do now have plans and are positively pursuing their options.

It is hoped that through regular engagement with owners of homes that are just 6 months properties will not become stuck, falling into disrepair and causing concern for neighbours and wider amenity issues.

The estimated income from the first year of the Empty Homes Project is in the region of £75,960 from New Homes Bonus over the 6 year payment period. This is as a result of tackling the longest-term void properties and supporting owners where there has been no activity at the property for a long period.

Alternative options

None

158

Update: Construction Apprenticeships and Skills

The Commercial Director and Head of Strategic Planning and the Economy submitted a report to provide an update on the progress being made to secure construction apprenticeships arising from the planned growth across the District. It is a year since the Executive approved guidance which was intended to operate informally to secure construction apprenticeships and skills through the processing of planning applications by the Council and was therefore timely to review how the initiative has been progressing.

Resolved

- (1) That the report be noted.

Reasons

Increasing the number of new apprenticeships in England is a high profile Government objective. Cherwell District Council supports this aspiration. The amount of new development taking place in the District over the next 20 years or so, coupled with the evidenced shortage of construction skills provides both an incentive and opportunity to secure the provision of new construction related apprenticeships through the land use planning system.

The Cherwell District Council Local Plan Part 1 as well as CDC's Economic Strategy contains strategic aspirations relating to the need to support an increase in skills and training within the District. The Interim Position Statement has usefully provided detail for developers and colleagues in CDC's Development Management on how this overarching strategic aim can be achieved through the land use planning process, prior to having statutory planning policy in place.

The signals from informal discussions with developers to date are that they generally support the approach CDC is promoting, as a helpful initiative designed both to increase the number of local skilled construction operatives available to support the building industry, as well as promoting the construction trades generally as a valuable future career path for young people.

The setting up and operating of The Apprenticeship and Training Company to manage apprenticeships on behalf of developers and their contractors is a key element of delivering the apprenticeships. This is because it will make the whole process easier for developers by managing all the elements that go towards supporting an individual towards the successful completion of an apprenticeship. Given that CDC is the accountable body for the OXLEP grant, as well as its strategic commitment to support skills and training, it is appropriate that there is CDC representation on the Board.

Alternative options

This report is submitted for information only.

Final Business Case: Joint Housing Services

The Commercial Director submitted a report which presented the final business case for a joint working in Housing Services across Cherwell District and South Northamptonshire Councils which was part of the wider transformation programme across the two Councils.

The report recommended the formation of a Joint Private Sector Housing Service and a Joint Housing Service and in doing so sought the Executive's agreement for the non-staffing elements of the business cases. The staffing elements of the business case had been agreed by the Joint Commissioning Committee at their meeting of 30 March 2017

Resolved

- (1) That, having given due consideration, the final business case for Joint Housing Services and the consultation responses in relation to non-staffing matters be noted.
- (2) That it be noted that the business case was considered and approved by the Joint Commissioning Committee with regard to staffing matters at its meeting of 30 March 2017 and that this included consideration of the consultation responses from affected staff and trade union representatives.
- (3) That the proposed final business case to create a Joint Private Sector Housing Service and a Joint Housing Service between Cherwell District Council and South Northamptonshire Council (SNC), subject to similar consideration and approval by SNC Cabinet on 10 April 2017 and following approval of the staffing implications by the Joint Commissioning Committee be approved for implementation.
- (4) That authority be delegated to the Commercial Director in consultation with the Leader of the Council to make any non-significant amendment that may be required to the business case following the decision by SNC Cabinet.
- (5) That it be noted that the savings realised from this proposal will be held in reserve and earmarked for Housing to provide additional resources that may be required to cope with any increased demand resulting from recent legislative changes.

Reasons

The business case sets out the rationale for establishing the Joint Private Sector Housing Team and a Joint Housing Service across CDC and SNC.

Alternative options

The approach in the recommendations is believed to be the best way forward. The proposal is to establish a Joint Private Sector Housing Service and a Joint Housing Service.

160

Improvements to the Council's Car Parking Service

The Director of Operational Delivery submitted a report to consider the approach taken to improve the Council's car parking service and to consider the effect where known of the Council's free parking offers.

Resolved

- (1) That the nature of the proposed new service and the focus on improvements for customers be supported.

- (2) That the outcomes of the review of the 2016/17 free parking promotions be noted.
- (3) That the continued use of free parking promotions for Small Business Saturday in December and Free After three as a means of supporting Bicester and Banbury Town Centre traders be supported.
- (4) That a tariff review be undertaken in 2018 to be informed by the data gathered over the previous 12 months arising from the new car parking service should a decision be taken to award a contract under the exempt agenda item 14.

Reasons

The Council has approached the procurement process in a way which delivers an improved car parking service, the nature of which has been influenced by customer and trader feedback. Therefore, the new service has been procured with the requirement for the Council's ageing equipment to be replaced with modern technology which permits a greater number of payment options and more flexible payment options for customers so that they can pay on exit if they wish or even after they have left the car park for some car parks.

Both the Council's free parking offers in 2016 and 2017 for different reasons have supported the better use of town centres and have therefore been included in the Council's new service requirements over the term of this contract.

Given the position of very limited data regarding car parks' utilisation levels, it is proposed that a review of the tariffs be undertaken in 2018 when the Council will be much better informed by data from the new technology to be installed in 2017. This will also provide the new operator with the opportunity to consider against utilisation levels the current tariff structure and levels and any suggestions for change. This broad timescale would also fit with a potential area of change arising from the emerging Banbury Business Improvement District (BID) proposal.

Alternative options

The procurement and technology proposals are outlined in the report. The only other alternative to this approach is to retain the service in house. This is not proposed as it is expected that the Council will achieve better value from an external operator and it does not have the technical expertise associated with the modern car parking technology.

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, Paragraphs 1, 2, 3 and 4 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.

162 **Final Business Case: Joint Housing Services - Exempt Appendix**

Resolved

- (1) That the exempt appendix be noted.

163 **Improvements to the Council's Car Parking Service - Evaluation of Tenders and Contract Award**

The Director of Operational Delivery submitted an exempt report to consider the outcome of the tender evaluation process and as a consequence of that, an award of contract.

Resolved

- (1) That, having given due consideration, the outcome of the tender evaluation process be noted.
- (2) That a five year management contract to operate the Council's car parks as outlined in exempt annex to the Minutes (as set out in the Minute Book) be approved and the replacement and modernisation of all relevant equipment be included in this contract.
- (3) That it be agreed to fund the majority the new equipment and associated works and the release of up to £500,000 capital expenditure for this purpose be approved.

Reasons

At the conclusion of a thorough competitive dialogue based procurement process, there is a clear recommendation of contract award which can deliver to the Council the customer focussed service improvements it is seeking along with some financial advantage to the Council after one off costs. It does require capital investment but that would be required in any event due to the age and need for replacement of the current equipment.

Alternative options

The Council can choose not to accept the winning tender and to then consider an alternative approach to delivering the service. This is not recommended as the winning tender is a compliant bid and delivers what the Council has been seeking.

ICT Strategy 2017-2020

The Commercial Director submitted a report which presented the joint Cherwell District and South Northamptonshire Councils' IT strategy for the period 2017-2020. The strategy set out the vision and direction for the development of an IT service that would ensure the councils were able to meet their strategic priorities, address customer needs and deliver their transformation objectives.

Resolved

- (1) That, following consideration of the strategy by the Member led IT Transition Board, review and endorsement of the strategy by the Joint Commissioning Committee, the draft strategy (exempt annex to the Minutes as set out in Minute Book) be agreed as the framework and plan for future development of the IT service.
- (2) That the investments required to deliver the strategy (as set out in the exempt annex to the Minutes as set out in the Minute Book, and agreed by the Chief Finance Officer) and the expected return on investment being realised within 2018/19 be noted.
- (3) That the high level forward plan (exempt annex to the Minutes as set out in the Minute Book) which would form the basis of the delivery plan for the period of the strategy be noted.

Reasons

Following review, research, staff and customer engagement an IT strategy has been developed that will deliver for both internal and external customers. The strategy sets out a long term vision for the service and a high level work plan by which to deliver the strategy's objectives. The strategy also sets out investment requirements and an expected return on this investment.

Alternative options

Alternative options: Reject the strategy and continue as is. This is not recommended, as detailed in the strategy, significant investment will be required to maintain the status quo with on-going revenue implications.

Asset Disposal - Southam Road Cemetery Depot, Banbury

The Commercial Director submitted an exempt report relating to an asset disposal, Southam Road Cemetery Depot, Banbury.

Resolved

- (1) That the transfer of the Property to Banbury Town Council, subject to the payment of a commuted sum, on the terms referred in the exempt annex to the Minutes (as set out in the Minute Book) be noted and support confirmed.

Reasons

As set out in the exempt minutes

Alternative options

As set out in the exempt minutes

The meeting ended at 7.45 pm

Chairman:

Date: