

Cherwell District Council

Executive

Minutes of a meeting of the Executive held at Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury, OX15 4AA, on 3 September 2018 at 5.30 pm

Present: Councillor Barry Wood (Chairman), Leader of the Council
Councillor G A Reynolds (Vice-Chairman), Deputy Leader of the Council and Lead Member for Leisure and Sport

Councillor Colin Clarke, Lead Member for Planning
Councillor Ian Corkin, Lead Member for Customers and Transformation
Councillor John Donaldson, Lead Member for Housing
Councillor Tony Ilott, Lead Member for Financial Management and Governance
Councillor Andrew McHugh, Lead Member for Health and Wellbeing
Councillor Richard Mould, Lead Member for Performance
Councillor D M Pickford, Lead Member for Clean and Green

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

Apologies for absence: Councillor Lynn Pratt, Lead Member for Economy, Regeneration and Property

Officers: Yvonne Rees, Chief Executive
Jane Carr, Executive Director: Wellbeing
Gillian Douglas, Assistant Director: Housing
Louise Tustian, Team Leader, Insight Team
Kelly Watson, Assistant Director: Finance and Procurement
Richard Hawtin, Team Leader Property & Contracts
Natasha Clark, Governance and Elections Manager

30 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

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

There were no petitions or requests to address the meeting.

32 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 2 July 2018 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

33 **Chairman's Announcements**

There were no Chairman's announcements.

34 **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

35 **Adoption of new House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) Standards Policy and new House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) Licensing Policy**

The Assistant Director Housing submitted a report which sought adoption of revised and updated versions of the Council's House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) Standards Policy and its HMO Licensing Policy.

In response to comments by the Leader of the Labour Group regarding the need to enforce the policies, the Lead Member for Housing confirmed that he was confident there was adequate staff and resource in place.

Resolved

- (1) That House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) Standards Policy 2018 (annex to the Minutes as set out in the Minute Book) be adopted in place of the 2012 version with effect from 1 October 2018.
- (2) That the House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) Licensing Policy 2018 be adopted in place of the 2012 version with effect from 1 October 2018.

Reasons

The proposed policies are necessary updates to existing policies which take account of legislative changes. We have also taken the opportunity to update and refresh the policies but those changes are limited and largely evolutionary in nature.

These policies are necessary to ensure effective delivery of the Council's licensing responsibilities and effective enforcement of standards in HMOs.

Alternative options

The first alternative option would be not to adopt the proposed HMO Standards Policy. That course of action would leave the Council at risk of challenge if it sought to apply space standards or waste disposal standards in licences from 1/10/18 and would also mean the Council was disregarding relevant legislation. That course is not recommended

The second alternative option would be not to adopt the proposed HMO Licensing Policy. That would leave the Council continuing to operate with an unnecessarily elderly current policy that could prove insufficiently accurate if challenged and which would also leave future licence fee setting to be made

by means of Lead Member Decision rather than made part of the Council's annual fees and charges setting process. That course is not recommended.

The third option would be not to adopt both the proposed policies. That course would result in all of the implications described in both the first and second options and is not recommended.

36 **Council Tax Reduction Scheme and Council Tax Discounts 2019 - 2020**

The Executive Director Finance and Governance (Interim) submitted a report to provide members with a review of Council Tax discounts and to seek approval to recommend the proposed level of Council Tax discounts for the 2019-2020 financial year to Council.

The report also provided an update on the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2018-2019 and sought approval to recommend a Council Tax Reduction Scheme for the financial year 2019-2020 to Council.

Resolved

- (1) That the contents of the report and any financial implications for the Council be noted.
- (2) That the option of no change to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS) for 2019-2020 (and therefore no consultation is required) and the Council Tax Reduction Scheme Regulations for pensioners in line with uprating announced by DCLG and to uprate the Working Age Regulations in line with those announced by Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) be recommended for the Council.
- (3) That Council be recommended to give delegated authority to the Executive Director Finance and Governance, in consultation with the Lead Member for Financial Management, to make any changes to the CTRS Regulations up to and including 31 January 2019.
- (4) That, having given due consideration, the following proposed level of Council Tax discounts for 2019-2020 be recommended to Council:
 - Retain the discount for second homes at zero.
 - Retain the discount for empty homes (unoccupied and substantially unfurnished) at 25% for 6 months and thereafter at zero.
 - Retain the discount for empty homes undergoing major repair at 25% for 12 months and thereafter at zero.
 - Retain the empty homes premium of an additional 50% for properties that have remained empty for more than 2 years.

Reasons

From April 2013 Council Tax Benefit was abolished and replaced with a local Council Tax Reduction Scheme. The Council is required to agree a scheme based on the reduced level of funding from Government

Members are now required to recommend a Council Tax Reduction Scheme to Council and it is recommended that members put forward option one which is a no change Council Tax Reduction Scheme for the 2019-2020 financial year. This option meets the objective of continuing to support residents whilst ensuring the scheme remains affordable.

Alternative options

Option 1: To not recommend any of the options for a scheme for 2019-2020. This would have financial implications for the Council and those residents affected by Welfare Reform.

Option 2: To decrease the level of support to Working Age claimants. This would have an impact on some of the most vulnerable residents in the district and may significantly impact on collection rates.

37 Monthly Performance, Finance and Risk Monitoring Report - July 2018

The Assistant Director: Performance and Transformation and Assistant Director: Finance and Procurement submitted a report which summarised the Council's Performance, Risk and Finance monitoring position as at the end of each month.

Resolved

- (1) That the monthly Performance, Risk and Finance Monitoring Report be noted.

Reasons

The Council is committed to performance, risk and budget management and reviews progress against its corporate priorities on a monthly basis.

Alternative options

Option 1: This report illustrates the Council's performance against the 2018-19 business plan. As this is a monitoring report, no further options have been considered. However, members may wish to request that officers provide additional information.

The meeting ended at 5.45 pm

Chairman:

Date: