

Cherwell District Council

Executive

Minutes of a meeting of the Executive held at Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury, OX15 4AA, on 2 December 2019 at 6.30 pm

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

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 Lynn Pratt, Lead Member for Economy, Regeneration and Property
Councillor Dan Sames, Lead Member for Clean and Green

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

Officers: Yvonne Rees, Chief Executive
Nick Graham, Director of Law and Governance / Monitoring Officer
Graeme Kane, Chief Operating Officer
Adele Taylor, Corporate Director: Finance (Interim) & Section 151 Officer
Claire Taylor, Corporate Director Customers and Organisational Development
Hedd Vaughan Evans, Assistant Director Performance and Transformation
Richard Webb, Assistant Director: Regulatory Services and Community Safety
Belinda Green, Operations Director - CSN Resources
Louise Tustian, Acting Performance and Communications Manager
Natasha Clark, Governance and Elections Manager

61 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

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

There were no petitions or requests to address the meeting.

63 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 4 November 2019 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

64 **Chairman's Announcements**

There were no Chairman's announcements.

65 **Delegation of Energy-efficiency Enforcement Powers from Oxfordshire County Council to Cherwell District Council**

The Chief Operating Officer submitted a report to seek approval to enforce legislation applicable to Domestic Private Rented Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs) and Commercial Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES).

Resolved

- (1) That the delegation of powers to enable Cherwell District Council to carry out enforcement of Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) provisions under *The Energy Performance of Buildings (England and Wales) Regulations 2012* be accepted.
- (2) That the delegation of powers to enable Cherwell District Council to carry out the enforcement of the Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES) in commercial property under *The Energy Efficiency (Private Rented Property) (England and Wales) Regulations 2015* be accepted.
- (3) That the Chief Operating Officer, acting in consultation with the Director Law and Governance and the Corporate Director Finance, be authorised to enter into all necessary and appropriate contracts and agreements to implement the delivery of the enforcement work on behalf of Oxfordshire County Council (OCC).
- (4) That authority be delegated to the Chief Operating Officer to perform the enforcement duties of Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) set out in any such agreements referred to above.

Reasons

Accepting the delegation from OCC of the enforcement powers proposed in this report will allow the two councils to develop shared working arrangements that will improve enforcement of the legislation relating to Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs) and Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards

(MEES) and add to our ability to improve conditions in privately rented dwellings and commercial buildings.

The Council will not be obliged to take on any particular enforcement responsibilities as a result of accepting the delegations but will be able to make use of those provisions it deems pertinent in light of its other responsibilities and resources as circumstances and opportunities arise. Any such activities will be subject to the contracts and agreements entered into to implement the delivery of the enforcement work of behalf of Oxfordshire County Council.

Alternative options

Option 1: Adopt none of the powers; – that would prevent the Council from sharing enforcement with OCC to improve either domestic rented or commercial rented premises and would forego the opportunity to enhance the Council's ability to enforce MEES provisions in private rented dwellings.

Option 2: Adopt only those powers relating to domestic premises; - that would prevent shared enforcement in relation to commercial rented premises but still facilitate the Council's enforcement of MEES in private rented dwellings.

Option 3: Adopt only those powers relating to commercial premises; - that course would exclude any enhancement of the Council's current enforcement powers in relation to residential premises.

66

Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2020/21

The Corporate Director Finance (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 2020-2021 financial year to Council.

The report also provided an update on the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2019-2020 and sought approval to recommend a Council Tax Reduction Scheme for the financial year 2020-2021 to Council.

Resolved

- (1) That the contents of the report and any financial implications for the Council be noted.
- (2) That Full Council be recommended to approve the option of a Council Tax Reduction income banded scheme for the financial year 2020-2021 and to amend the Council Tax Regulations for pensioners in line with uprating announced by MHCLG and to amend the Working Age Regulations in line with the new income banded scheme and the uprating announced by MHCLG.
- (3) That Full Council be recommended to grant delegated authority to the Executive Director Finance (Interim) to make the required changes to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme Regulations up to and including 31

January 2020 in consultation with the Lead Member for Financial Management.

- (4) That having given due consideration, the following proposed level of Council Tax discounts and premiums for 2020-2021 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 100% 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 Reductions Scheme for the financial year 2020-2021 to Council.

Alternative options

Option 1: To not recommend any of the options for a scheme for 2020-2021. 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.

67 Monthly Performance, Risk and Finance Monitoring Report - October 2019

The Executive Director: Finance (Interim) and Assistant Director: Performance and Transformation 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.

This report provides an update on progress made so far in 2019-20 to deliver the Council's priorities through reporting on Performance, the Leadership Risk Register and providing an update on the financial position.

Alternative options

Option 1: This report illustrates the Council's performance against the 2019-20 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.

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Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

The meeting ended at 6.45 pm

Chairman:

Date: