

Cherwell District Council

Executive

Minutes of a meeting of the Executive held as a virtual meeting, on 7 December 2020 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
Stephen Chandler, Corporate Director Adults & Housing Services
Steve Jorden, Corporate Director Commercial Development, Assets & Investment & (Interim) Monitoring Officer
Jason Russell, Director Community Operations
Claire Taylor, Corporate Director Customers and Organisational Development
Jane Portman, Corporate Director (Interim)
Lorna Baxter, Director of Finance & Section 151 Officer
Ed Potter, Assistant Director: Environmental Services
Belinda Green, Operations Director - CSN Resources
Sukdave Ghuman, Head of Legal Services
Louise Tustian, Head of Insight and Corporate Programmes
Celia Prado-Teeling, Performance Team Leader
Samantha Taylor, Principal Planning Officer
Natasha Clark, Governance and Elections Manager

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

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

There were no petitions or requests to address the meeting.

71 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 2 November 2020 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

72 **Chairman's Announcements**

There were no Chairman's announcements.

73 **Monthly Performance, Risk and Finance Monitoring Report**

The Director of Finance, and Head of Insight and Corporate Programmes submitted a report which summarised the Council's Performance, Risk and Finance monitoring position as at the end of October 2020.

Resolved

- (1) That the monthly performance, finance and risk 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 2020-2021 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.

74 **Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2021-2022**

The Executive Director Finance submitted a report to provide Members with a review of Council Tax discounts and to seek approval to recommend to Council the proposed levels of Council Tax discounts for the financial year 2021-2022.

The report also provided an update on the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2020-2021 and sought approval to recommend to Council a Council Tax Reduction Scheme for the financial year 2021-2022.

Resolved

- (1) That the contents of the report and any financial implications for the Council be noted.
- (2) That Full Council be recommended to agree the option of a no-change Council Tax Reduction income banded scheme for working age customers for 2021-2022, to amend the Working Age Regulations in line with annual uprating and to amend the Council Tax Regulations for pensioners in line with uprating announced by Minister for Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG).
- (3) That, having given due consideration, Full Council be recommended to agree the following levels of Tax discounts and premiums for 2021-2022:
 - 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 each year.

Alternative options

Option 1: To not recommend any of the options for a scheme for 2021-2022. This would have financial implications for the Council and those residents affected by Welfare Reform.

Civil Parking Enforcement

The Assistant Director Environmental Services submitted a report to support a proposed application to the Department for Transport (DfT) for the introduction of a Special Enforcement Area (SEA) and bus lane enforcement powers across this district, South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse to provide Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) managed by Oxfordshire County Council.

In response to a comment regarding the need to ensure local Ward Members were consulted as part of the process, the Leader Member for Clean and Green, Councillor Sames, confirmed that this had already been requested.

Resolved

- (1) That the application to the Department for Transport (DfT) for civil parking enforcement be supported.
- (2) That the approval by the Oxfordshire County Council Cabinet to go forward with an application be noted.

Reasons

The plan for an application to be made for the introduction of CPE has been done with our partners Vale of White Horse, South Oxfordshire & the County Council. Agreement with officers at all four councils have been made to proceed to our respective Executive/Cabinet to approve an application being made to DfT. The County Council have approved the approach with our other partners due to consider this matter on 3 & 4 December respectively.

If an application is successful CPE could be implemented from late 2021.

The new arrangements offer several benefits for this Council. More resources, up to 3 FTEs will be engaged in on street parking enforcement this is an increase from the current 1 FTE provided by PCSOs. Increase enforcement will address many of the issues related to car & other vehicles parking in prohibited locations in the three urban centres and should lead to a greater churn in those spaces which are time limited.

Alternative options

Option 1: To support the application to the DfT

Option 2: To reject the application to the DfT & continue with the current arrangements

(Councillor Reynolds requested that his vote against the recommendations be recorded in the Minutes)

(Draft) Strategic Vision for Oxfordshire

The Assistant Director – Growth and Economy submitted a report which introduced a first draft of a Strategic Vision for Oxfordshire. It explained the purpose of this unique approach, the scope and content of the Vision and the timeline for the current engagement and finalising the Vision which the Oxfordshire Growth Board is undertaking.

The Assistant Director – Growth and Economy advised Executive of the comments of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, who had considered the report at their 1 December 2020 meeting. The Committee had supported the overall approach and vision and made the following comments: the vision statement should be more succinct and accessible; an action plan and

milestones would need to be drafted in order to monitor progress of the vision; for regular reviews/refresh of the vision due to the long timescale; and, to ensure the vision is embedded in future relevant future plans and strategies.

Resolved

- (1) That, having given due consideration, the (Draft) Strategic Vision for Oxfordshire be supported and endorsed.
- (2) That the views expressed at Overview and Scrutiny Committee be noted.
- (3) That responsibility be delegated to the Assistant Director – Growth and Economy to develop a response to the Strategic Vision engagement exercise, in consultation with the Leader, reflecting the views expressed at the Executive and Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings

Reasons

The development of a Strategic Vision for Oxfordshire, which encompasses the shared ambitions of local councils and key organisations, provides a unique opportunity to bring together a clear and unambiguous statement about what it is we want to achieve in Oxfordshire. This bold and striving approach is being developed as part of a wider engagement process with Growth Board partners, councillors and residents. The recommendation is for the Executive to provide feedback on the draft Strategic Vision, and delegate responsibility to agree the final wording of a response to Assistant Director for Growth and Economy in consultation with the Leader before 3 January 2021.

Alternative options

Option 1: Do nothing

This was rejected as the Draft Strategic Vision is a unique opportunity to respond to the emerging strategic direction of the District and the Council is actively engaged in the Strategic Vision preparation. By not responding to the offer to comment on the Draft Strategic Vision, it could limit the impact of the partnership approach.

Infrastructure Funding Statement 2019/20

The Assistant Director Planning and Development submitted a report to seek approval of the Council's first Infrastructure Funding Statement 2019/20 for publication and for an accompanying data submission to the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government.

On behalf of Executive, the Chairman thanked the Principal Planning Officer for her hard work in putting together all of the information. The Chairman commented that it was good discipline to have to complete and submit such a Statement and explained that this would now need to be completed annually.

In response to Members' questions, the Lead member for Planning, Councillor Clarke, explained that the requirement to produce an Infrastructure Funding Statement applied to planning authorities, so district and county councils rather than town and parish councils. The Lead Member for Planning confirmed that the Infrastructure Funding Statement would be published on the council's website and parishes notified. It was however important to note that the Statement was a snapshot and the figures moved on a frequent basis.

Resolved

- (1) That the Infrastructure Funding Statement 2019/20 (annex to the Minutes as set out in the Minute Book) be approved for publication by 31 December 2020, subject to any final changes considered to be necessary by the Assistant Director – Planning and Development in consultation with the Lead Member for Planning.
- (2) That the Assistant Director – Planning and Development be authorised to publish and submit the associated Infrastructure Funding Statement data as required by the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government.

Reasons

The publication of an Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS) is a new statutory requirement that will increase the transparency and accessibility of information about s.106 developer contributions required for the grant of planning permission. The proposed IFS encapsulates the data that officers propose to publish and submit for 2019/20 to MHCLG to meet that requirement. The information is considered to be the most robust available at this time. Officers will prepare a statement annually and continue to develop monitoring systems on an on-going basis.

Alternative options

Option 1: Not to bring forward an Infrastructure Funding Statement
This is not a lawful option as it would mean that the Council would be in breach of its statutory duty

Option 2: Seek review of the key statistics and proposed Infrastructure Funding Statement.
Officers consider that this is not required as the information is the most robust available at this time.

Corporate Director Place and Growth, Paul Feehily

The Chairman reported that this was the Corporate Director Place and Growth, Monitoring Officer, Paul Feehily's last Executive meeting as he

would be leaving Cherwell District Council and Oxfordshire County Council after working for the CDC for extended periods over the past three years.

On behalf of Members, the Chairman thanked the Corporate Director Place and Growth for his service to the council and wished him all the best for the future.

79 **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

The meeting ended at 7.25pm

Chairman:

Date: