

Cherwell District Council

Executive

Minutes of a meeting of the Executive held as a virtual meeting, on 1 March 2021 at 6.30 pm

Present:

Councillor Barry Wood (Chairman), Leader of the Council
Councillor George 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 Lynn Pratt, Lead Member for Economy, Regeneration and Housing
Councillor Dan Sames, Lead Member for Clean and Green

Also Present:

Councillor Sean Woodcock, Leader of the Labour Group
Councillor Ian Middleton

Officers:

Yvonne Rees, Chief Executive
Steve Jorden, Corporate Director Commercial Development, Assets & Investment
Lorna Baxter, Director of Finance & Section 151 Officer
Anita Bradley, Director Law and Governance & Monitoring Officer
Gillian Douglas, Assistant Director: Social Care Commissioning and Housing
Chris Hipkiss, Investment Consultant
Louise Tustian, Head of Insight and Corporate Programmes
Natasha Clark, Governance and Elections Manager

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Declarations of Interest

13. Notification of Urgent Action.

Councillor Dan Sames, Non Statutory Interest, as a CDC appointed non-Executive Director on Graven Hill Management Company and Graven Hill Development Company and would leave the meeting for the duration of the item.

Councillor Ian Corkin, Non Statutory Interest, as a CDC appointed non-Executive Director on Graven Hill Management Company and Graven Hill Development Company and would leave the meeting for the duration of the item.

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

There were no petitions.

The Chairman advised the meeting that he had agreed to Councillor Middleton addressing the meeting at exempt item 12, Lease for Waterside Development.

103 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 1 February 2021 were agreed as a correct record, to be signed by the Chairman in due course.

104 **Chairman's Announcements**

There were no Chairman's announcements.

105 **Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2021-2026**

The Assistant Director, Housing and Social Care Commissioning submitted a report to set out the key points from the consultation on the draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2021-2026 and the main changes to the strategy and action plan made in response to the feedback received. In addition, the report requested Executive approval of the amended strategy and action plan.

In response to comments from the Leader of the Labour Group, Councillor Woodcock, regarding the need for additional social rent housing, the Lead Member for Housing confirmed that increasing social housing was a priority.

Resolved

- (1) That the changes to the draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2021-2026 and Action Plan following public consultation be noted.
- (2) That the amended Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2021-2026 and Action Plan (annexes to the Minutes as set out in the Minute Book) be approved in order to ensure that the Council meets statutory requirements and complies with good practice.

- (3) That authority be delegated to the Assistant Director, Housing and Social Care Commissioning in consultation with the Lead Member, to make any minor editorial amendments to the strategy as needed and to undertake a review and update of the Action Plan on an annual basis.

Reasons

To ensure the Council can meet its statutory duties, it is recommended that the amended strategy and action plan be approved by the Executive at its meeting on 1 March 2021 with delegated authority to the Assistant Director, Housing and Social Care Commissioning in consultation with the Lead Member, to make any minor editorial amendments to the strategy as needed and to undertake a review and update of the Action Plan on an annual basis. The Strategy and Action Plan will subsequently be published as the final version on the Council's website with a hard copy being made available to anyone on request.

Implementation of the Strategy and Action Plan will be monitored by the Housing Strategy team, and the first review and update of the action plan will be undertaken in March 2022 to ensure that it remains effective and responsive to the changing circumstances and needs of customers and stakeholders. The Equality and Climate Impact Assessment will also be reviewed and updated in line with the aims of the Council's 'Including Everyone: Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion Framework' to ensure continued delivery of inclusive services.

Alternative options

Option 1: Not having a strategy at all - This would result in the Council not meeting its statutory obligations under the Homelessness Act 2002, therefore this option is rejected.

Option 2: A single countywide strategy and no local strategy - A draft countywide Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy has been published for consultation and provides an overarching vision for Oxfordshire, however there is no statutory requirement for it. CDC Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2021-2026 already aligns with, and will contribute towards achieving, the overarching aim and objectives set out in the countywide strategy and vision. Each local authority area has different geographic, economic, social and political structures which require a more granular strategy aimed at meeting specific local needs. A countywide strategy alone will not provide this local detail and would also result in the Council not meeting its statutory obligations. On this basis, this option is rejected.

Disabled Adaptations Policy

The Assistant Director, Housing and Social Care Commissioning submitted a report to consider and approve the Disabled Adaptations Policy.

Resolved

- (1) That the Disabled Adaptations Policy (annex to the Minutes as set out in the Minute Book) be approved as the replacement for the current Disabled Facilities Policy.

Reasons

Although the current *Disabled Facilities Grant Policy* remains compliant, has served the Council well, and much of it has 'stood the test of time', a new policy is required to reflect the changes that have taken place since it was introduced, including changes in the Council's operating environment, budget growth, the increased use of discretionary grants and the need to simplify decision making processes to facilitate service delivery. The proposed *Disabled Adaptations Policy* will ensure that the Council's Grants Team can continue to deliver the current high level of services to disabled residents in a clear and consistent manner.

Alternative options

Option 1: Not introduce a new policy and continue with the existing *Disabled Facilities Policy*. This option was rejected because of the need to reflect the extended use of discretionary grants to complement provision of adaptations and to update process and decision making.

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Nominations Agreement for Housing Allocations

The Assistant Director Housing and Social Care Commissioning submitted a report to set out the purpose and content of a new Nominations Agreement that determines how Cherwell District Council ('CDC') works with registered providers ('RP') to nominate households from the housing register to social housing for rent.

Resolved

- (1) That the revised Nominations Agreement 2021 (annex to the Minutes as set out in the Minute Book) be approved and it be noted that it will replace the 2017 Nominations Agreement.
- (2) That authority be delegated to the Assistant Director Housing and Social Care Commissioning, in consultation with the Lead Member for Housing, to agree and enter in to any future amendments to the Nominations Agreement that are deemed to be necessary and do not constitute a major policy change.

Reasons

The Nominations Agreement is an important document which sets out the terms and procedures that both CDC and the Registered Providers owning or managing rented accommodation in the district will work to when making or

receiving nominations of eligible households to take up occupancy of a vacant home.

The revised Nominations Agreement brings the document up to date and enables charging to be introduced from 1 April 2021. The associated delegation ensures that officers are able to respond quickly to operational demands.

Alternative options

Option 1: To not revise the Agreement. This is rejected on the grounds that we would not be able to introduce charging which is a necessary step in terms of the budget reductions that need to be made.

108 **Monthly Performance, Finance and Risk 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 January 2021.

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.

109 **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

110 **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, 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.

111 **Lease for Waterside Development**

The Corporate Director Commercial Development, Assets and Investment submitted an exempt report in relation to a lease for the Waterside Development.

At the discretion of the Chairman, Councillor Middleton addressed Executive. The Chairman undertook to provide a detailed response in writing to the points raised by Councillor Middleton.

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

As set out in the exempt minutes

Alternative options

As set out in the exempt minutes

112 **Notification of Urgent Action**

The Corporate Director – Commercial Development, Assets and Investment submitted an exempt report to inform Executive of an exempt decision taken under urgency powers by the Corporate Director – Commercial Development, Asset and Investment.

Resolved

- (1) That the decision taken under urgency powers by the Corporate Director – Commercial Development, Asset and Investment in consultation with the Leader of the Council, as set out in the exempt minutes be noted.

Reasons

In line with the Constitution this report is informing the Executive of a decision that was taken under urgency powers as detailed in the exempt minutes.

Alternative options

Option 1: Not to note the report. This is not recommended as the urgent action has been taken and it is a constitutional requirement for it to be reported to the Executive

The meeting ended at 7.37 pm

Chairman:

Date: