

Cherwell District Council

Executive

Minutes of a meeting of the Executive held at Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury, Oxon OX15 4AA, on 6 September 2021 at 6.30 pm

Present:

Councillor Barry Wood (Chairman), Leader of the Council
Councillor Ian Corkin (Vice-Chairman), Deputy Leader of the Council and Lead Member for Customer and Transformation
Councillor Phil Chapman, Lead Member for Leisure and Sport
Councillor Colin Clarke, Lead Member for Planning
Councillor Tony Ilott, Lead Member for Finance 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
Councillor Lucinda Wing, Lead Member for Housing

Also Present:

Councillor Sean Woodcock, Leader of the Labour Group

Officers:

Yvonne Rees, Chief Executive
Steve Jordan, Corporate Director Commercial Development, Assets & Investment
Claire Taylor, Corporate Director Customers and Organisational Development
Lorna Baxter, Director of Finance & Section 151 Officer
Anita Bradley, Director Law and Governance & Monitoring Officer
Vicki Jessop, Interim Assistant Director Housing and Social Care Commissioning
Louise Tustian, Head of Insight and Corporate Programmes
David Peckford, Assistant Director: Planning and Development
Andrew Maxted, Planning Policy, Conservation and Design Manager
Eleanor Gingell, Planning Policy Team Leader
Natasha Clark, Governance and Elections Manager

38 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

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

There were no petitions or requests to address the meeting.

40 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 July 2021 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

41 **Chairman's Announcements**

There were no Chairman's announcements.

42 **Local Development Scheme**

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

On behalf of Executive, the Chairman commended and thanked the Planning policy team for their hard work on the Scheme.

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 LDS has been prepared. It provides a programme for the preparation of the Council's key planning policy documents to guide future planning decisions. The Council has a statutory responsibility to prepare and maintain an LDS. The LDS will be used by officers, the public, partners and developers and other stakeholders to monitor the production of documents and 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 up-to-date LDS. If the Council did not prepare its own LDS the Secretary of State could impose one. Aside from legal duty, 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.

Planning for Cherwell: Cherwell Local Plan Review - Options Consultation Paper

The Assistant Director – Planning and Development submitted a report to seek approval of an options consultation paper for the Cherwell Local Plan Review.

At the discretion of the Chairman, Councillor Woodcock, Leader of the Labour Group addressed Executive. In response to Councillor Woodcock's comments regarding the affordable housing figures, the Lead Member for Planning explained that the covid pandemic had had an impact and the council was reliant on developers to deliver affordable housing. It was an area that would be looked at and all options considered to provide affordable housing and deliver as much as was viably possible. The Assistant Director – Planning and Development confirmed that the figures in the Paper would be reviewed to ensure they were accurate before being published for consultation.

In the course of discussion, Executive highlighted the importance of the consultation engaging with as many stakeholders and residents as possible. The Lead Member for Planning explained that much of the consultation would be virtual with additional contact with parishes as their involvement was critical. He would discuss the feasibility of facilitated virtual events with the Assistant Director – Planning and Development. The Lead Member for Planning confirmed that all responses were detailed and recorded.

On behalf of Executive, the Chairman thanked the Assistant Director – Planning and Development and Planning Policy team for their hard work on Cherwell Local Plan review to date.

Resolved

- (1) That the Options Paper be approved for the purpose of public consultation.
- (2) That the Assistant Director - Planning and Development be authorised to make any necessary minor and/or presentational changes to the options paper prior to the consultation and to determine the format of publication.

Reasons

The Cherwell Local Plan Options Paper has been prepared to help continue dialogue with communities and other stakeholders in the interest of early engagement in the plan preparation process. The paper is the second stage in the preparation of the Local Plan. The Executive's approval of the Options Paper is sought to proceed to public consultation.

Alternative options

Option 1: Not to approve the Options Paper until the Oxfordshire Plan process is further advanced

A delay would affect the overall Local Plan programme and put the objective of adoption in 2023 at significantly higher risk.

Option 2: To reconsider the content of the Options Paper

The Options paper has been produced having regard to national policy and guidance, existing Local Plans, the emerging Oxfordshire Plan 2050 and other plans, programmes and policies. It is considered by officers to be an appropriate consultation document balancing technical information with discussion.

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Joint Performance, Risk and Finance Report

The Director of Finance and Head of Insight and Corporate Programmes submitted a report which summarises the Council's Performance, Risk and Finance monitoring positions as at the end of July 2021.

Resolved

- (1) That the monthly Performance, Risk and Finance Monitoring Report and the quarterly Climate and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion action plans be noted.
- (2) That the use of reserves detailed in the Annex to the Minutes (as set out in the Minute Book) be approved.
- (3) That Council be recommended to approve use of reserves to include £1.240m Disabled Facilities Grant received and increase the associated scheme in the capital programme as detailed in the Annex to the Minutes (as set out in the Minute Book).

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 during July 2021, 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 2021-22 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.

45 **Notification of Urgent Action - Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy (ARAP) for Afghan Locally Employed Staff (LES)**

The Chief Executive submitted a report to update the Executive on an urgent decision made by Chief Executive in relation to the short-term leasing of homes from the Ministry of Defence to assist the Council's response to the government's request for support in relation to the Afghan resettlement programme.

Resolved

- (1) That the action taken by the Chief Executive under urgent powers to:
- i) Enter into 12-month full repairing leases for 10 homes from the Ministry of Defence: and
 - ii) Delegate responsibility for agreeing the terms of those leases to the Corporate Director, Commercial Development, Assets and Investment.

Such action being taken in support of the programme for acquisition of accommodation to facilitate housing need in relation to the Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy (ARAP) for Afghan Locally Employed Staff (ALES), be endorsed.

Reasons

To provide a positive response to the emerging Afghanistan crisis and central Government's call for help by securing suitable family accommodation for affected families within the Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy (ARAP) for Afghan Locally Employed Staff (ALES).

There is a need to act quickly and get leases in place so that families can begin to settle and receive the necessary wrap around support due to the rapidly changing situation in Afghanistan and to ensure suitable accommodation is provided and affected families are settled as quickly as possible.

Alternative options

Option 1: To withdraw from the scheme - the Council could decide not to participate in the scheme and decide not to proceed with acquisition of properties.

Option 1 has been rejected due to the urgent need, by the end of September 2021 to provide emergency housing and support to Afghans who have worked for the UK in Afghanistan, and who have been relocated to the UK for safety following the withdrawal of NATO (including UK) forces from Afghanistan.

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Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

The meeting ended at 7.30 pm

Chairman:

Date: