



Council Minute Book

Monday 17 October 2022

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Cherwell District Council

Executive

Minutes of a meeting of the Executive held at Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury, Oxon OX15 4AA, on 5 September 2022 at 6.30 pm

Present:

Councillor Barry Wood (Chairman), Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Policy and Strategy

Councillor Phil Chapman, Portfolio Holder for Healthy Communities
Councillor Colin Clarke, Portfolio Holder for Planning
Councillor Nicholas Mawer, Portfolio Holder for Housing
Councillor Richard Mould, Portfolio Holder for Performance
Councillor Adam Nell, Portfolio Holder for Finance
Councillor Lynn Pratt, Portfolio Holder for Property
Councillor Eddie Reeves, Portfolio Holder for Safer Communities
Councillor Dan Sames, Portfolio Holder for Cleaner and Greener Communities

Also Present:

Councillor John Broad
Councillor Sean Woodcock (virtual)

Apologies for absence:

Councillor Ian Corkin, Deputy Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder of Regeneration and Economy

Officers:

Yvonne Rees, Chief Executive
Nathan Elvery, Chief Operating Officer Interim
Ian Boll, Corporate Director Communities
Stephen Hinds, Corporate Director Resources
Michael Furness, Assistant Director Finance & S151 Officer
Shahin Ismail, Assistant Director Law, Governance, Democratic Services & Procurement & Monitoring Officer Interim
Ed Potter, Assistant Director Environmental Services
Celia Prado-Teeling, Assistant Director Customer Focus Interim (Virtual)
Simon Hope, Interim Head of Communications and Marketing
Natasha Clark, Governance and Elections Manager

25

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

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

There were no petitions.

The Chairman advised the meeting that he had agreed to Councillor Woodcock addressing the meeting on agenda item 6, Monthly Performance, Risk and Finance Monitoring Report July 2022, and Councillor Broad addressing the meeting on item 7, Climate Change – Carbon Management Plans.

27 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 4 July 2022 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

28 **Chairman's Announcements**

There were no Chairman's announcements.

29 **Monthly Performance, Risk and Finance Monitoring Report July 2022**

The Assistant Director of Finance and Interim Assistant Director – Customer Focus submitted a report which summarised the Council's Performance, Risk and Finance monitoring positions as at the end of July 2022.

In introducing the report the Portfolio Holder for Performance highlighted the clarification that had been included on the published report and agenda front sheet for the meeting regarding the Performance, Risk and Finance Executive Report presented on Monday 6 July – section 5.4. Cherwell District Council always fully considers the needs of all clients when offering placements. The council does not 'impose' offers out of area, but in some cases, it may be in the best interests of the client.

It was further explained that the council takes this responsibility very seriously and to date this year had only made 6 such placements and all by agreement. Examples would be to move for safety reasons or to be closer family to provide additional support needs and that these are all right and proper reasons. The ability to house residents out of District is set in legislation - Part 7 of the 1996 Housing Act, affording the power to all housing authorities to discharge a responsibility out of area if it is suitable and reasonable to do so. If within 24 months, the client decides they want to return to CDC they maintain a local connection, the council would welcome them back to the Cherwell District.

Reassurance was given that Cherwell District Council always follows due process and critically puts the needs of the client at the centre of the support and advice given.

The phrasing of the previous report was not helpful and if it caused confusion or concern, for which the council unreservedly apologised.

The Portfolio Holder for Performance subsequently introduced the performance aspects of the report and the Portfolio Holder for Finance introduced the finance aspects of the report.

Councillor Woodcock addressed Executive and referred to the clarification given by the Portfolio Holder for Performance and sought clarity regarding who the apology was from.

In response to Councillor Woodcock's address the Chairman explained that the apology was a corporate apology through him as Leader on behalf of the council and the Executive.

The Portfolio Holder for Housing confirmed that a full explanation had been given to Councillor Woodcock after he had first raised the matter.

Resolved

- (1) That the monthly Performance, Risk and Finance Monitoring Report July 2022 be noted.
- (2) That the following proposed changes in the use of reserves and detailed in the Annex to the Minutes (as set out in the Minute Book) be approved:

Directorate	Type	Description	Amount £m
Resources	Earmarked	Projects reserve	0.146
Resources	Earmarked	Elections Reserve	0.038
Resources	Earmarked	Commercial Risk Reserve	(2.573)
		Total Earmarked Reserves	(2.389)

- (3) That the reduction in the Castle Quay capital scheme of £3.370m be approved.
- (4) That the budget virement between Executive Matters and the Property Budget of £0.927m be approved.

Reasons

This report provides an update on progress made during July 2022, to deliver the Council's priorities through reporting on Performance, Leadership Risk Register and providing an update on the Financial Position. 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 2022-23 Business Plan. Regarding the monitoring aspects of the report, no further

options have been considered. However, members may wish to request that officers provide additional information. Regarding the recommendation to approve changes in use of reserves, members could choose not to reject the change of use, however, the request is in accordance with the councils Reserves Policy and within existing budgets. If members chose not to agree to the changes in transfers to reserves, then this would mean resource would need to be found for these projects separately in future years.

30

Climate Change - Carbon Management Plans

The Assistant Director Environmental Services submitted a report which set out the Carbon Management Plans for the period of 2022-2025 to guide the Council towards its net zero target.

Councillor Broad addressed Executive acknowledging and commending the work that had been done the council's estate to date. His understanding however, when the council declared a Climate Change Emergency in 2019 was that the intention was to bring the district to net zero by 2030 and the report only referred to the council's actions. Councillor Broad commented that achieving net zero across the district was closely linked to planning developments in the Local Plan review and in the future. He had hoped the Local Plan review would address these issues however the Member advisory sub-group, of which he was a member, had not been engaged in the review process to date and it now seemed too late which was disappointing as he was keen to be involved.

In response to Councillor Broad's address, the Chairman explained that with regards climate change, the council had no direct control over district wide emissions and could only change the way it did things for its own climate management and 2030 net zero commitment. The council did however have a duty and responsibility to be a facilitator encouraging stakeholders, businesses and residents to move forward district wide carbon management. With regards the climate change agenda within the Cherwell Local Plan, this could be built on and there would be a role for engagement with Members at different stages in the process.

The Portfolio Holder for Cleaner and Greener Communities added that whilst the council could not commit the district to carbon zero, as the Chairman had highlighted it had a facilitating role and was already leading by example.

In relation to the Local Plan Advisory Sub-Group, the Portfolio Holder for Planning confirmed that the sub-group would meet well in advance of Executive considering the Cherwell Local Plan for consultation at its 7 November meeting.

Resolved

- (1) That the significant progress in the Council moving towards net zero by 2030 be noted.

- (2) That the proposed carbon management plans (Annex to the Minutes as set out in the Minute Book) in making further steps to reach net zero by 2030 be supported and approved.

Reasons

The Carbon Management Plans set out plans for this year and future years to reduce the overall emissions of the Council in its journey to reach net zero by 2030.

Alternative options

Option 1: To adopt the proposed carbon management plans.

Option 2: To reject the proposed carbon management plans and ask officers to reconsider the overall management plans

31

Car Parking Agency Agreement

The Assistant Director Environmental Services submitted a report to seek approval to move into an Agency Agreement with Oxfordshire County Council to cover enforcement of the Council's off street car parks.

Resolved

- (1) That the entering into an agency agreement for five years with an option to extend for up to a further five years with Oxfordshire County Council regarding car parking and an option to cease the agreement with twelve months' notice on either side be approved.
- (2) That authority be delegated to the Corporate Director Communities in conjunction with the Monitoring Officer to agree the details of the agency agreement.

Reasons

The current car parking contract has been extended until the end of November 2022. From 1 December 2022 new arrangements must be put in place.

Having considered the options, entering into an agency agreement with the County Council will deliver a very good service with a significant reduction in service delivery cost.

Alternative options

Option 1: To adopt the recommendations.

Option 2: To reject the recommendations and ask officers to reconsider the overall project

32 **Notification of Urgent Action - Letting of Unit at Castle Quay**

The Interim Assistant Director – Corporate Property submitted a report to advise the Executive of an urgent Executive decision which was taken on the 12 July 2022 by the Chief Executive regarding the letting of Unit 4 Castle Quay, Waterfront Banbury.

Resolved

- (1) That the urgent action by the Chief Executive in relation to the letting of a unit at Castle Quay be noted.

Reasons

There is a Constitutional requirement for urgent action to be notified to the body that would ordinarily have taken the decision.

Alternative options

Option 1: As the decision has been taken there no alternative options.

33 **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

34 **Summary of Debt Write Offs - public cover report and Appendix C**

The Chairman advised that the papers for the item had originally been published as exempt items, however the cover report and Appendix C had subsequently been published as public documents. Appendices A and B remained exempt and it would be necessary to exclude the press and public should there be any questions on the exempt appendices.

The Assistant Director of Finance submitted a report which provided Members with a summary of the accounts proposed for write-off and sought approval for the write-offs in line with the Council's financial procedure rules.

Resolved

- (1) That, having given due consideration, the proposed bad debt write offs summarised in the exempt Annexes A1 to A14 to the Minutes (as set out in the Minute Book), which contain debts recommended for write-off relating to Housing Benefit Overpayments where the value exceeds £5,000 be approved.
- (2) That, having given due consideration, the proposed bad debt write offs summarised in exempt Annexes B1 to B10 to the Minutes (as set out in

the Minute Book), which contain other sundry debts recommended for write-off where the values exceeds £5,000 be approved.

- (3) That the proposed write off of debts for each service area where the value is less than £5000.00 but all recovery methods have been exhausted, which have been reviewed by the S151 Officer and are available to be reviewed on request, be approved.
- (4) That the Corporate Debt Policy (Annex to the Minutes as set out in the Minute Book) be approved.

Reasons

The Council's financial procedure rules require that recommended write offs with an outstanding balance of £5,000 and above for Council Tax, Overpayment of Housing Benefit or Sundry Debtors, and £10,000 and above for Non- Domestic Rates must be approved by the Executive.

Adopting the Corporate Debt Policy makes is clear that wherever possible the Council should collect income prior to providing a service. The Policy also updates the process and flow charts for collecting debt at each stage of recovery.

Alternative options

Option 1: To not write off the debt. This old and irrecoverable debt places additional administration on the team as periodically, it is required to be reviewed and pursued. By writing off the debt, more time will be able to be focussed on reviewing debt that is more likely to be recoverable.

35 Exclusion of the Press and Public

There being no questions on exempt appendices, it was not necessary to exclude the press and public.

36 Summary of Debt Write offs - Exempt Appendices A and B

Resolutions as set out at Minute 34

37 Notification of Urgent Action - Letting of Unit at Castle Quay - Exempt Appendix

Resolved

- (1) That the exempt appendix be noted.

The meeting ended at 7.40 pm

Chairman:

Date:

Council

Record of Portfolio Holder Decisions for the period 9 July to 6 October 2022

Area of Responsibility	Decision Subject Matter
Portfolio Holder for Finance	Council Tax Energy Discretionary Fund
Portfolio Holder for Finance	Council Tax Empty Homes Premium
Portfolio Holder for Finance	Non Domestic rates Covid Additional Relief Fund Policy

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Cherwell District Council

Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee held at Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury, Oxon OX15 4AA, on 27 July 2022 at 6.30 pm

Present:

Councillor Donna Ford (Chairman)
Councillor Hugo Brown (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Patrick Clarke
Councillor Andrew Crichton
Councillor Ian Middleton
Councillor Sean Woodcock

Substitute Members:

Councillor Phil Chapman (In place of Councillor Barry Wood)

Also Present:

Councillor Adam Nell, Portfolio Holder for Finance
Alison Kennet, Ernst & Young, External Auditors

Apologies for absence:

Councillor Chris Pruden
Councillor Barry Wood

Officers:

Shahin Ismail, Assistant Director Law, Governance, Democratic Services & Procurement & Monitoring Officer Interim
Sarah Cox, Chief Internal Auditor
Joanne Kaye, Strategic Finance Business Partner
Celia Prado-Teeling, Assistant Director Customer Focus Interim
Ian Boll, Corporate Director Communities
Robert Jolley, Assistant Director Growth & Economy
Sharon Hickson, Democratic and Elections Officer

14 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

15 Petitions and Requests to Address the Meeting

There were no petitions or requests to address the meeting.

16 **Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 25 May 2022 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

17 **Chairman's Announcements**

There were no chairman's announcements.

18 **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

19 **End of year 2021- 2022 Performance, Risk and Finance Monitoring Report**

The Assistant Director of Finance & S151 Officer and Interim Assistant Director Customer Focus submitted a report which summarised the Council's Performance, Risk and Finance monitoring positions at the end of the Financial Year 2021-2022.

Resolved

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

20 **Regulatory Compliance Report**

The Interim Monitoring Officer submitted a report which updated the Committee on regulatory compliance.

In introducing the report, the Interim Monitoring Officer explained that a number of these functions; Freedom of Information requests, Environmental Information Regulations, Subject Access Requests, were currently in a transition period back in house having been run by Oxfordshire County Council under a shared service function arrangement. Future reports would provide more information for these areas.

Resolved

(1) That the Regulatory Compliance report be noted.

21 **Update on Counter Fraud Annual Plan 2021/22 and presenting the Counter Fraud Annual Plan 2022/23**

The Assistant Director of Finance & S151 Officer submitted a report which summarised the activity against the Annual Plan for the Counter Fraud service

at Cherwell District Council for 2021/22 and presented the Counter-Fraud plan for the year 2022/23

Resolved

- (1) That the summary of activity against the Annual Counter Fraud Plan for 2021/22 be noted
- (2) That the Counter Fraud Plan for 2022/23 be noted.
- (3) That the Investigation Report be noted.

22

Internal Audit Charter

The Assistant Director of Finance & S151 Officer submitted a report which presented the Internal Audit Charter and Internal Audit Quality Assurance programme for 2022/23.

Resolved

- (1) That after due consideration the Internal Audit Charter be approved
- (2) That the Quality Assurance and Improvement Programme be noted

23

Treasury Management Report - Q4 (March 2022)

The Assistant Director of Finance & S151 Officer submitted a report which provided information on treasury management performance and compliance with treasury management policy for 2021-22 as required by the Treasury Management Code of Practice.

The Strategic Finance Business Partner advised the Committee that as interest rates were rising, the borrowing strategy had been adjusted in line with the change of circumstance and in consultation with Portfolio Holder, Treasury advisors and the Leader. Short term borrowing would be replaced by long term borrowing which would range from 5 – 10years.

Resolved

- (1) That the contents of the Q4 (March 2022) Treasury Management Report be noted

24

Support to Subsidiaries

The Assistant Director of Finance & S151 Officer submitted a report that informed the Committee of the overall level of support provided to the Council's subsidiaries and how this was considered as part of the external audit.

Resolved

- (1) That the report be noted.

25 **Work Programme**

The Strategic Finance Business Partner advised the committee that the following items would not be submitted to the September meeting: Report of those in charge of Governance 2021/22; External Audit – Annual Audit Opinion 2021/22; and, Final Statement of Accounts and Letter of Representation 2021/22. The work programme would be updated to reflect the revised meeting at which these items would be considered.

The Committee agreed that a Counter Fraud & Whistleblowing training session be arranged to follow the AARC meeting on 28 September and that the training should be open to all Members.

Resolved

- (1) That the work programme be noted.

26 **Exclusion of 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 grounds that, if the public and press were present, it would be likely that exempt information falling under the provisions of Schedule 12A, Part I, Paragraph 3 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.

27 **Support to Subsidiaries - Exempt Appendix**

Resolved

- (1) That the exempt appendix be noted.

The meeting ended at 7.30 pm

Chairman:

Date:

Cherwell District Council

Budget Planning Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Budget Planning Committee held at Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury, Oxon OX15 4AA, on 26 July 2022 at 6.30 pm

Present:

Councillor Patrick Clarke (Chairman)
Councillor Douglas Webb (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Hugo Brown
Councillor Phil Chapman
Councillor John Donaldson
Councillor Donna Ford
Councillor David Hingley
Councillor Matt Hodgson
Councillor Chris Pruden
Councillor Sean Woodcock

Also Present:

Councillor Adam Nell, Portfolio Holder - Finance

Apologies for absence:

Councillor Angus Patrick
Councillor Fraser Webster

Officers:

Stephen Hinds, Corporate Director Resources
Joanne Kaye, Strategic Finance Business Partner
Leanne Lock, Strategic Business Partner - Business Support and Reporting
Jacey Scott, Revenues and Benefits Manager
Sandra Ganpot, Benefits and Performance Manager
Emma Faulkner, Democratic and Elections Officer

3 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

4 Minutes

The Minutes of the meetings of the Committee held on 8 March and 18 May 2022 were confirmed as correct records and were signed by the Chairman.

5 **Chairman's Announcements**

There were no Chairman's announcements.

6 **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

7 **Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2023 - 24**

The Committee considered a report from the Assistant Director of Finance that detailed the existing Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS) and outlined options regarding the scheme for the 2023/24 financial year.

The Revenues and Benefits Manager explained that since the existing income banded scheme was introduced in April 2020, annual Council Tax collection rates had increased and 98% of Council Tax had been collected during the 2021/2022 financial year.

A banded scheme also helped reduce the amount of letters being sent to residents, as previously every change in income for a resident had a knock-on effect to their council tax bill and benefits. Print and postage costs for the first quarter of 2022 were 27% lower than the first quarter in 2019, when the previous scheme was in place.

The Revenues and Benefits Manager explained that the existing scheme was understood by customers and provided more effective personal budgeting, which was extremely important in the current financial climate.

In response to questions from the Committee regarding a possible increase in workload related to the current financial climate, the Revenues and Benefits Manager advised that a help page had been set up on the council's website to signpost various support schemes and advisory authorities that residents may find useful.

It was proposed by Councillor Donna Ford and seconded by Councillor Douglas Webb that Executive be recommended to retain the current Council Tax Reduction scheme for 2023/24.

Resolved

- (1) That the report and financial implications for the Council be noted.
- (2) That Executive be recommended to retain the current Council Tax Reduction scheme for 2023/24.

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

The Committee considered a report from the Assistant Director of Finance that summarised the council's revenue and capital outturn position for 2021/22.

The Strategic Business Partner – Business Support and Reporting explained that Budget Planning Committee focussed on the financial aspects of the monitoring. Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee looked at risk elements, and Overview and Scrutiny looked at performance.

The Strategic Business Partner – Business Support and Reporting explained that the council had monitored the budget closely during the 2021/22 financial year, acting in a financially responsible way. The outturn position showed an overall underspend of £430,000, which had been achieved against the financial difficulties of the ongoing covid pandemic.

The Capital budget had ended the year with a £25m underspend, however £15m of this was re-profiled into future years, as a result of scheduling changes to projects.

In response to the following questions from the Committee, the Strategic Business Partner – Business Support and Reporting advised that further information would be sought from relevant officers and circulated after the meeting:

- Details regarding the surplus amount identified in the 'year end position' table.
- The calculations behind the capital spend 2021/22 variance figure of £0.133 in Customers, Organisational Development & Resources total.
- Clarity regarding the Garden Town roundabout capital funding (reference 40206), and the involvement of CDC rather than OCC as highways authority.

In response to a question regarding aged debt, the Strategic Business Partner – Business Support and Reporting explained that a review into the debts was ongoing, and a report would be submitted to Executive later in the year.

Resolved

- (1) That the report be noted.

9 **Review of Committee Work Plan**

The Committee considered the indicative work programme for 2022/23.

The Strategic Business Partner – Business Support and Reporting advised the Committee that due to changes in government it was now unlikely that the Settlement Consultation would be available for consideration in September.

The Assistant Director of Finance was monitoring the item and would keep the Chairman updated.

In response to comments from the Committee regarding the full performance monitoring report and the need for Budget Planning Committee to focus on financial elements, the Chairman agreed to feedback the comments to relevant officers so that discussions could take place regarding a possible change of approach.

Resolved

- (1) That the Committee work plan be noted.

The meeting ended at 6.53 pm

Chairman:

Date:

Cherwell District Council

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held at Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury, Oxon OX15 4AA, on 28 July 2022 at 6.30 pm

Present:

Councillor Sandy Dallimore (Chairman)
Councillor Douglas Webb (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Mike Bishop
Councillor John Broad
Councillor David Hingley
Councillor Matt Hodgson
Councillor Ian Middleton
Councillor Perran Moon
Councillor Dr Chukwudi Okeke
Councillor Bryn Williams

Also Present:

Councillor Dan Sames
Councillor Barry Wood, Leader of the Council
Councillor Sean Woodcock, Leader of the Labour Group (Virtual)

Apologies for absence:

Councillor Maurice Billington
Councillor Ian Harwood

Officers:

Yvonne Rees, Chief Executive
Nathan Elvery, Chief Operating Officer Interim
Ian Boll, Corporate Director Communities
Ed Potter, Assistant Director Environmental Services
Shahin Ismail, Assistant Director Law, Governance, Democratic Services & Procurement & Monitoring Officer Interim
Emma Faulkner, Democratic and Elections Officer
Natasha Clark, Governance and Elections Manager

9 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

10 **Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 1 June 2022 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

11 **Chairman's Announcements**

The Chairman made two announcements:

1. A change in Committee membership had been made since the last meeting, with Councillor Bryn Williams replacing Councillor John Donaldson. The Chairman welcomed Councillor Williams and thanked Councillor Donaldson for his time with the Committee.

12 **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

13 **Attendance of the Leader of the Council**

The Chairman welcomed Councillor Barry Wood, Leader of the Council, to the meeting to give an overview of the current work of the Executive.

The Leader explained to the Committee the current priorities of the Executive, and the day-to-day concerns for him as Leader. The financial stability of the council remained a high priority, with the uncertainty around the continuation of the New Homes Bonus and the proposed changes to Business Rates retention.

The conclusion of the decoupling from Oxfordshire County Council was a current priority. The Leader explained that he was keen to ensure residents saw no difference in service delivery during the decoupling period.

Climate change was a further key priority running through all council work, including the emerging local plan.

The Leader also explained short term issues that were currently being addressed. Following the Health and Care Act receiving Royal Assent earlier in the year, Integrated Care Systems (ICS) were being introduced across the country. The creation of an ICS allowed health and care organisations to join together to provide all relevant support and care to patients, and formalised the 'one system' approach that had been adopted during the covid pandemic. Cherwell district formed part of the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West ICS area, also known as 'BOB'.

In response to questions from the Committee the Chief Executive agreed to circulate more details about the BOB ICS as part of the next weekly update to Members.

Regarding the Executive Forward Plan of upcoming work, the Leader advised that Climate Change was due to be considered in September, the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 in October, and discussions were also needed regarding a replacement depot at Bicester.

In response to questions regarding increasing energy costs and an increased number of residents entering fuel poverty, the Chief Executive assured the Committee that a system wide response was being worked on and an update on the work being undertaken would be brought to the September 2022 meeting of the Committee.

Regarding progress on the implementation of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Framework, the Leader explained that the work linked in with all areas of the organisation, and all reports submitted to the Executive included equalities implications. The Chairman advised the Committee that an EDI update was included on the 'items to be allocated' section of the indicative Committee work programme.

The Committee thanked the Leader for his update.

Resolved

- (1) That the overview of current Executive work be noted.
- (2) That an item on the activity Cherwell District Council is undertaking to support residents with the cost of living crisis be added to the work programme for the September meeting of the committee.
- (3) That information on the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care System ('BOB') be circulated to all members via the Chief Executive's weekly update.

14

Climate Change

The Chairman welcomed Councillor Dan Sames, Portfolio Holder for Cleaner and Greener Communities to the meeting to give a presentation on the council's work regarding climate change.

Councillor Sames explained that the council had commissioned Bioregional to review the council's activities against the 'One Planet Living' framework. One Planet Living meant living within the resources of one planet rather than the resources of three, as was currently the case in Europe.

The review of the district's activities looked at internal and external activities and their impact on residents and businesses. The review detailed ten principles to form the basis of One Planet Living, and Councillor Sames explained that the aim was to embed the principles across the district to increase sustainability.

In response to questions from the Committee, Councillor Sames explained that Executive were seeking endorsement of the One Planet Living approach as the start of an ongoing process. Bioregional would continue to work with the council, and Overview and Scrutiny Committee would be involved as work progressed.

The Committee endorsed the One Planet Living approach, but expressed concerns regarding the amount of progress made in relation to the climate emergency declared in 2019, and the pledge to be net carbon neutral by 2030. Committee also requested future agenda items that would allow meaningful scrutiny to take place.

In response to the concerns, Councillor Sames explained the carbon management baseline had decreased 51% by 2020/2021, compared to the 2008/2009 position. The baseline was predicted to reduce a further 25% by the end of 2022, due to the impact of the public sector decarbonisation scheme. Work was also underway to electrify the waste services fleet of vehicles.

Councillor Sames agreed to submit an update on the carbon management action plan to the September 2022 meeting of the Committee, as well as scheduling further climate change updates as required.

Resolved

- (1) That the presentation be noted.
- (2) That Executive be advised that Overview and Scrutiny Committee endorse and support the 'One Planet Living' approach.
- (3) That the Carbon Management Plan be submitted to the September meeting of the committee.
- (4) That further updates on Climate Change work be submitted to the committee as work progresses.

15 **Strategic Partnership with Oxfordshire County Council - Decoupling**

The Chairman welcomed Nathan Elvery, interim Chief Operating Officer, who gave an update on decoupling of the strategic partnership with Oxfordshire County Council (OCC).

The Chief Operating Officer explained that following the decision to end the strategic partnership in February 2022, a programme and timetable was established to support the partnership formally ending on August 31 2022. The decoupling process was split into four transitional phases, starting with the management team and moving on to each of the 23 service areas included within the existing partnership arrangements.

Options for the services moving forward were all evaluated against the same five criteria, and the Joint Shared Services and Personnel Committee considered each proposal over the period April to June.

The presentation provided to the Committee gave details of the approved recommendations for each service area, the financial and human resource implications, any transitional arrangements in place and any additional information by way of background information for the Committee.

In response to questions from the Committee the Chief Operating Officer explained that no redundancies had been made.

When the strategic partnership had been established an employing authority had been identified for each post. During the decoupling process it was assumed that employees would remain with their employing authority, but both Council's had agreed a flexible approach so that if the majority of work for a post was with the other council, the employee was able to transfer accordingly with the joint approval of both Council's.

The Chief Operating Officer explained that due to the interim arrangements in place it was not yet known if posts would be full time or full time equivalents, but that information would be provided to Members when it was available.

Regarding costs of the decoupling and interim arrangements, the Chief Operating Officer advised the Committee that the total figure wouldn't be known until the process had been completed. Details of the current and projected financial baseline were included in the presentation and would be updated with final figures once they were known.

Resolved

(1) That having given due consideration, the presentation be noted.

16

Working Groups 2022-23 - approval of scoping documents

The Committee considered two updated scoping documents, for the Parish Engagement and Member Education and Training working groups.

Both working groups had been established during the 2021-2022 Municipal year, and produced end of year reports that had been considered by the Committee in March 2022.

The Parish Engagement working group had identified a number of areas for further review to enhance the relationship between the district council and the parishes. These included a survey of parishes to gather their views on interactions with the district, and investigating IT interactions.

The Member Education and Training working group had made several recommendations in the end of year report, including the production of a number of guidance documents and role profiles to assist members.

The Democratic and Elections Officer explained that the request for delegated authority to the Assistant Director Law, Governance and Democratic Services (interim) was to allow the scoping documents to be updated with membership details, once all members had been appointed.

Resolved

- (1) That the Parish Engagement scoping document be approved.
- (2) That the Member Education and Training scoping document be approved.
- (3) That authority be delegated to the Assistant Director Law, Governance and Democratic Services (interim), in consultation with the working group chairmen, to make minor amendments to the scoping documents.

17 **Work Programme 2022/23**

The Committee considered the indicative work programme for 2022-23.

The Democratic and Elections Officer advised the Committee that since the work programme had been published, the Playing Pitch Strategy had been brought forward and would now be considered at the October meeting.

As discussed earlier in the meeting, items relating to the Carbon Management plan and cost of living would be submitted to the September 2022 meeting of the Committee.

Resolved

- (1) That subject to the inclusion of the following items for the 6 September meeting; Carbon Management Plan and cost of living response; and the Playing Pitch Strategy being moved from November to October, the indicative work programme be noted.
- (2) That the update on items previously considered be noted.

The meeting ended at 8.46 pm

Chairman:

Date:

Cherwell District Council

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held at Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury, Oxon OX15 4AA, on 6 September 2022 at 6.30 pm

Present:

Councillor Sandy Dallimore (Chairman)
Councillor Douglas Webb (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Mike Bishop
Councillor John Broad
Councillor David Hingley
Councillor Matt Hodgson
Councillor Perran Moon
Councillor Dr Chukwudi Okeke
Councillor Bryn Williams

Substitute Members:

Councillor Dorothy Walker (In place of Councillor Ian Middleton)

Also Present:

Councillor Barry Wood, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Policy and Strategy (virtual)
Councillor Phil Chapman, Portfolio Holder for Healthier Communities
Councillor Dan Sames, Portfolio Holder for Cleaner and Greener Communities

Apologies for absence:

Councillor Maurice Billington
Councillor Ian Harwood
Councillor Ian Middleton

Officers:

Ian Boll, Corporate Director Communities
Stephen Hinds, Corporate Director Resources
Michael Furness, Assistant Director Finance & S151 Officer
Ed Potter, Assistant Director Environmental Services
Nicola Riley, Assistant Director Wellbeing & Housing
Jacey Scott, Revenues and Benefits Manager
Richard Webb, Assistant Director, Regulatory Services
Community Services (Virtual)
Jon Wild, Community Development Manager (Virtual)
Carolyn Arnold, Housing Technical Officer (Virtual)
Jim Guest, Environmental Protection Officer (Virtual)

Emma Faulkner, Democratic and Elections Officer
Natasha Clark, Governance and Elections Manager

18 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest

19 **Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 28 July 2022 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

20 **Chairman's Announcements**

The Chairman made one announcement

1. Democratic and Elections officer Lesley Farrell would be retiring from the council this month. On behalf of the committee the Chairman thanked Lesley for her tireless work and support and wished her a happy retirement. On a personal note the Chairman stated that Lesley had been a great help, particularly in his first year and that she would be greatly missed.

21 **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

22 **Climate Change update and Carbon Management Action Plans**

The Chairman introduced Councillor Dan Sames, Portfolio Holder for Cleaner and Greener Communities, the Corporate Director of Communities and the Assistant Director Environmental Services to provide an update on the climate change work, carbon management plans and draft terms of reference for the climate action working group.

The Assistant Director Environmental Services had submitted a report which set out the Carbon Management Plans for the period 2022-2025 to guide the Council towards its net zero target. Draft terms of reference for the Climate Activity Scrutiny Working Group had been published as a supplement to the agenda.

In introducing the report, the Assistant Director Environmental Services explained that there were four main sources of carbon emissions across the council: corporate buildings, leisure centres, vehicle fleet and staff travel. Staff travel contributed less than 2% of the total emissions, with the largest

contributor being leisure centres. From 2008-09 financial year to 2020-21 financial year, Council emissions had reduced by 51%.

The council had received £6m funding from the public sector decarbonisation scheme, which had been used for the installation of air source heat pumps, a solar array at Woodgreen Leisure Centre that was used to heat the swimming pool and photovoltaic arrays had been installed at Bicester Leisure centre. Emissions at council owned leisure centres had subsequently reduced.

Smaller elements had also been implemented, such as LED lighting and a battery storage facility at Thorpe Lane depot that meant energy generated by solar panels could be stored for later use.

The project had been delivered on time at a cost of £5.2 million, therefore under budget.

In response to Members' questions, the Assistant Director of Environmental Services explained that a reduction of emissions across the vehicle fleet would be difficult to achieve rapidly. Whilst 10% of the fleet had already been converted to electric vehicles, the larger refuse vehicles were the biggest emission contributor at 35 to 40 tonnes per vehicle. However, the majority had Euro 6 engines which meant the existing fleet was clean by diesel standards. The cost for electric refuse vehicles was currently approximately £250,000, a significant increase on a diesel equivalent, and most were currently speed limited to 40mph and therefore not suitable to drive on the motorway which was necessary to reach the waste facilities at Ardley

In addition to cost, the charging infrastructure currently in place at Thorpe Lane Depot would mean that the larger batteries on the refuse vehicles would take two days to fully charge. The Assistant Director Environmental Services explained that the electricity supply at the depot would be improved in the coming months.

Regarding public use charging points, the Assistant Director Environmental Services advised the Committee that a number of charging points were being installed in council owned car parks, that would be available for the public to use to charge their vehicles. Car parks close to terraced houses and flats had been targeted for an initial installation, and further charging points would be installed over the coming months.

In response to questions from the Committee regarding estimated projections about when the council's net zero target would be achieved, the Assistant Director – Environmental Services explained that an initial emissions trajectory graph had been included in the report, covering the period to 2025. Once the recruitment process had been completed for the Climate Action Manager, additional projections could be compiled which would enable the committee to have a better gauge of the progress towards the net zero target.

In response to questions from the Committee and the involvement of Planning Officers in the Climate Change working group, the Corporate Director Communities advised that officer level working groups on both the local plan

and climate change reported to him, and he would ensure the two worked in conjunction with the Overview & Scrutiny working group as climate work interlinked with all areas of the Council.

With regards the draft Climate Change Working Group terms of reference, the Democratic and Elections Officer advised that Councillor Middleton had also expressed an interest in sitting on the Working Group. The Chairman advised that he would circulate the terms of reference to councillors seeking further Working Group members and ensuring all political parties were represented.

Resolved

- (1) That the establishment of a Climate Change Working Group be approved.
- (2) That authority be delegated to the Assistant Director Law, Governance and Democratic Services (Interim), in consultation with the Working Group Chairman and Overview and Scrutiny Committee Chairman, to finalise the scoping document.
- (3) That the significant progress in the Council moving towards net zero by 2030 be noted.
- (4) That the proposed carbon management plans in making further steps to reach net zero by 2023 be noted.

23

Air Quality Update

The Chairman welcomed the Assistant Director Regulatory Services and Environmental Protection and the Environmental Protection Officer to present an update on Air Quality across the district.

The Assistant Director Regulatory Services and Environmental Protection had submitted a report which provided an update on the air quality monitoring carried out across the district in 2021 and the air quality data obtained, the current district Air Quality Action Plan, and other air quality related matters. Air quality monitoring data showed significant air quality improvements over the last 5-year period in the air quality management areas of the district. The Council's Business Plan included a specific commitment to "Work with partners to improve air quality" within the Supporting Environmental Sustainability priority.

In response to questions from the Committee regarding Hennef Way in Banbury having a red status for Nitrogen Dioxide monitoring, the Environmental Protection Officer explained that the road was close to junction 9 of the M40 and was also a main route into Oxfordshire. A high number of HGVs used the road alongside private vehicles, and this contributed to the higher levels.

With regard to post-covid monitoring levels, the Environmental Protection Officer explained that figures hadn't increased much during 2021 when lockdowns ended, and people started travelling more.

The Committee emphasised the need for planning policy to be an essential factor in improving air quality moving forward. The Committee also highlighted that the accumulation of planning developments had had a significant impact on the level of emissions in the community. In response officers explained that there were requirements in planning policy documents regarding air quality, and these were reflected in the air quality management plans. When planning applications were submitted for areas close to or impacting on an existing air quality monitoring area, an air quality impact assessment was requested.

The Environmental Protection Officer added that consideration of the cumulative impact of new developments would be an area of discussion for the Climate Action Working Group.

Resolved

- (1) That the work undertaken by the Council, and its partners in relation to air quality in the district and the 2021/22 air quality monitoring area be noted.

24

Cost of Living update

The Chairman welcomed the Chief Executive, Corporate Director Resources and Assistant Director Wellbeing and Housing to the meeting to present a comprehensive update on work taking place across the council to support residents with the cost-of-living crisis.

The Corporate Director Resources explained that the presentation covered three key areas; finance, housing and food poverty, and each area would be introduced by relevant officers.

The Assistant Director Finance updated the Committee on various government backed financial schemes, including the Council Tax Energy Rebate, Housing Benefit and Council Tax support. In addition to national government schemes, the council also administered discretionary local schemes, such as the Household Support fund.

In response to questions from the Committee regarding the deadlines for the various schemes, the Chief Executive advised that the District Councils Network, of which Cherwell District Council was a member, was in discussion with central government regarding extensions, ring-fencing arrangements, and eligibility criteria.

The Assistant Director Wellbeing and Housing introduced the Community Development Manager, who gave an overview of the Brighter Futures Partnership. The Programme had operated for 11 years and focussed on the

17 most deprived areas of Banbury, as identified via Office for National Statistic (ONS) figures.

The Community Development Manager advised the Committee that the Programme had secured funding from the “contained outbreak management fund” and was running additional programmes to support residents alongside the long-standing cookery skills programme and Growing Spaces project.

The Environmental Health Officer for Housing explained the variety of housing initiatives and warm spaces programme being developed as part of the cost-of-living support.

The Environmental Health Officer explained that the council worked with the organisation ‘Better Housing Better Health’, which was a programme aimed at improving housing conditions for residents with long term health conditions.

The council also administered CHEEP grants to assist with energy efficiency of housing, and tenancy support packages for residents at risk of homelessness.

Following the recent announcements regarding the increase in the energy cap, the council was working with local partners to create a warm spaces network. The network would involve publicising community venues that would be open and welcome local residents to spend some time in a warm place and take part in various activities.

The Assistant Director Wellbeing and Housing explained that a raft of work was underway in relation to food poverty. Whilst the work had been referred to as food poverty to reflect the motion that had been approved at the 18 July 2022 Council meeting, but could also be described as food insecurity.

A map of community food provision had been established during the Covid pandemic, as more residents had needed to access food banks or community larders as a result of furlough or reduced working hours during the pandemic.

At their 6 June 2022 meeting, the Executive had endorsed and committed to the new Oxfordshire Food Strategy with this council joining with partners in its adoption and delivery. To support this work, it was proposed to establish a Food Poverty scrutiny Working Group to work with officers on the Cherwell specific strategy and action plan. Draft terms of reference for the working group had been published as a supplement to the main agenda pack.

The Chairman thanked officers for the comprehensive presentation and the Committee noted the work already underway. The Committee highlighted the need for better ways of communicating important helpful messages to the people in the community that were most in need of the support and initiatives detailed in the presentation. Officers assured the Committee that information was available digitally and on paper for those not digitally connected.

With regards Warm Space Networks, in response to comments from the Committee about the possibility of using council sites to provide warmth and

respite for residents during the coming winter months, the Assistant Director Wellbeing and Housing explained that the council estate was being considered, and as with all venues being approached about the network, a balance was needed in terms of the distance residents would need to travel to access a warm space building. The Portfolio Holder for Healthier Communities added that consideration also needed to be given to the package of support at warm spaces and it was important to ensure individuals attending retained their dignity.

In response to Members' comments regarding including energy within the remit of the Working Group, the Corporate Director Resources explained that the biggest impact the council could make was in relation to food insecurity and for this reason the Working Group was recommended to focus on this aspect. In the course of discussion, the Committee agreed that the working group should be referred to as the Food Insecurity Working Group rather than Food Poverty Working Group.

Resolved

- (1) That the establishment of a Food Insecurity Working Group be approved.
- (2) That authority be delegated to the Assistant Director Law, Governance and Democratic Services (Interim), in consultation with the Working Group Chairman and Overview and Scrutiny Committee Chairman, to finalise the scoping document.

25

Work Programme 2022/2023

The Democratic and Elections officer provided a brief update to the committee on the indicative work programme for 2022/2023.

Resolved

- (1) That the update on the 2023/23 work programme be noted and the work programme agreed.
- (2) That, having given due consideration, the update on items previously considered be noted.

The meeting ended at 8.20 pm

Chairman:

Date:

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