

Cherwell District Council

Executive

Minutes of a meeting of the Executive held in at Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury, OX15 4AA, on 6 December 2010 at 6.30 pm

Present: Councillor Barry Wood (Chairman)

Councillor G A Reynolds
Councillor Ken Attack
Councillor Norman Bolster
Councillor Colin Clarke
Councillor Michael Gibbard
Councillor James Macnamara
Councillor Nigel Morris
Councillor D M Pickford
Councillor Nicholas Turner

Also present: Councillor Nicholas Mawer

Officers: Mary Harpley, Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service
Ian Davies, Strategic Director - Environment and Community
John Hoad, Strategic Director - Planning, Housing and Economy
Liz Howlett, Head of Legal & Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer
Karen Curtin, Head of Finance
Tony Brummell, Head of Building Control & Engineering Services
Gillian Greaves, Head of Housing Services
Paul Marston-Weston, Head of Recreation & Health
Chris Rothwell, Head of Safer Communities, Urban & Rural Services
Claire Taylor, Corporate Strategy and Performance Manager
Andy Bowe, Implementation Officer
James Doble, Democratic, Scrutiny and Elections Manager

78 **Declarations of Interest**

Members declared interests in the following agenda items:

6. Eco Bicester One Shared Vision.

Councillor Barry Wood, Personal, as persons known to him have a land interest in the area of, but outside the ecotown.

Councillor G A Reynolds, Personal, as a County Councillor due to the County Council holding a land interest at Gowells Farm.

Councillor Michael Gibbard, Personal, as a County Councillor due to the County Council holding a land interest at Gowells Farm.

Councillor Nicholas Turner, Personal, as a County Councillor due to the County Council holding a land interest at Gowells Farm.

Councillor Norman Bolster, Personal, as a County Councillor due to the County Council holding a land interest at Gowells Farm.

16. Budget 2011/12 Draft 1.

Councillor James Macnamara, Personal, as a Magistrate.

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

The Chairman confirmed he had agreed to a request to address the meeting from Ben Jackson, Bicester Chamber of Commerce in respect of agenda item 17, Pre Order Consultation – Car Parking Proposals.

80 **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

81 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 1 November 2010 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

82 **Pre Order Consultation - Car Parking Proposals**

The Head of Safer Communities, Urban and Rural Services submitted a report to advise Members on the feedback from the Pre Order consultation on car parking proposals and to enable them to decide on final proposals.

Ben Jackson, on behalf of Bicester Chamber of Commerce, addressed the meeting in opposition to the proposals due to what he perceived would be an adverse impact on Bicester.

Resolved

- (1) That the feedback from the pre Order consultation be noted.
- (2) That officers be authorised to begin formal Order Making on the final proposals set out in the annex to these minutes (as set out in the minute book) for implementation on, or as soon after, 1 March as is possible, with the amendments that evening parking be at a flat rate of 80p for Banbury and 70p for Bicester and that there should be no parking charges on religious bank holidays and New Years Day.

Reasons

A range of car parking proposals have been considered as part of service development for 2011/12, and through the budget preparation process. These were advertised informally in October with key agencies and consultees in accordance with the Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996.

Options

Option One Consider the feedback from pre-Order consultation to assist in determining final car park proposals.

Option Two Disregard the feedback.

83

Eco Bicester One Shared Vision

The Strategic Director Planning, Housing and Economy submitted a report which outlined the Revised Eco Bicester One Shared Vision as approved by the Strategic Delivery Board meeting on 8 November 2010, reported the consultation feedback and sought approval for the revised document to be approved for development control purposes for planning proposals in Eco Bicester.

Resolved

- (1) That the report be noted.
- (2) That the proposed changes following the consultation on the Draft document be noted.
- (3) That the Revised One Shared Vision document (annex to the minutes as set out in the minute book) be approved as informal planning guidance for development control purposes.

Reasons

One of the aims of the SDB was to develop a clear vision for Bicester for the next 30 years. The preparation of a shared vision was agreed by the SDB at its first meeting in April 2010. It clearly defines the aims and objectives of the SDB in delivering the eco development at North West Bicester and integrating it with the long term aspirations for the existing town. It is designed to be a clear and concise summary of the key issues affecting the town as it continues to grow. The purpose of the shared vision is summarised as follows:

- To provide a shared vision for the whole of Bicester supported by partners
- To guide the local delivery of the eco-town of national, if not international, significance with the private sector
- To articulate key infrastructure needs to support the eco town
- To inform engagement between the local authority partners, Government departments and agencies on where they can help deliver the project

Options

- Option One** To note the contents of the report and agree the recommendations to approve the vision as informal planning guidance for development control purposes
- Option Two** To amend the recommendations and make further amendments to the vision
- Option Three** To reject the recommendations

84

Local Transport Plan

The Head of Planning Policy and Economic Development submitted a report which presented information to the Executive with a view to the council making a formal response to the public consultation on the Draft Local Transport Plan (LTP).

Resolved

- (1) That the County Council be commended on the general format of the LTP which addresses concerns raised by this Council previously that the LTP should be organised in a way which focuses on proposals for particular settlements and creates a stronger spatial link with Local Development Frameworks.
- (2) That in general, subject to the detailed recommendations made in the report, the policies and area strategies in the LTP be supported.
- (3) That the various detailed recommendations set out in paragraphs 1.16, 1.27, 1.43, 1.52 and 1.58 (with the exception of the reference to major new road links in Banbury) as set out in the annex to the minutes as set out in the minute book be submitted as the Council's formal response to the Local Transport Plan. in particular the Council's comments on:-
 - approach taken by the LTP towards the HS2 proposals in policy PT6
 - the ways in which the vision for eco-Bicester can best be supported through the LTP
 - the proposed Water Eaton Parkway station, and how (a) this can best be implemented in a manner that makes it accessible to local communities in Kidlington and Gosford, and (b) future congestion concerns can best be mitigated.

With the amendments that:

- the strategy for the rural areas should acknowledge the importance of providing footpath links both within and between villages to public transport and employment areas.
- The references in the LTP to major new road links (South East and South West Relief Roads) in Banbury should not be deleted.

Reasons

Oxfordshire County Council is currently preparing its third Local Transport Plan (LTP) for Oxfordshire. The LTP sets out a vision, objectives and outcomes for transport in the whole of the county. It also includes a programme of investment in new transport schemes and maintenance of the existing network.

Options

Option One To endorse the recommendations in the report as the Council's formal response to the Draft Local Transport Plan

Option Two To add or amend the proposed response as the Council's formal response to the Draft Local Transport Plan

Option Three Not to respond to the consultation.

85 **Disabled Facilities Grant Policy**

The Head of Housing Services submitted a report which sought approval for a new policy setting out the Council's approach to the assessment of eligibility for Disabled Facilities Grants, those adaptations which it is appropriate to fund and how it will manage a waiting list if demand exceeds the available budget.

Resolved

- (1) That the Disabled Facilities Grant Policy (annex to the minutes as set out in the minute book) be approved.
- (2) That the proposal that Registered Providers (RPs) (formerly called RSLs or Housing Associations) should be asked to sign-up to a protocol committing themselves to the principles in the Policy and to making a specified financial contribution towards the cost of adaptations for their tenants be endorsed.

86 **Final business case for a shared management team between Cherwell District Council and South Northamptonshire Council**

The Portfolio Holder for Resources and Communications, Leader of the Council and Chief Executive submitted a report to consider the final business case for a shared management team between Cherwell District Council and South Northamptonshire Council.

Resolved

- (1) That Council be recommended at its meeting on 8 December 2010 to approve the business case and the eighteen specific recommendations

included in it, (annex to the minutes as set out in the minute book) for putting in place a shared management team between Cherwell District Council and South Northamptonshire Council by the end of September 2011.

- (2) That Council be recommended to endorse the view of the Executive that, once a shared senior management team is in place, the Council can aspire to continued excellent performance.
- (3) That, it be confirmed following consultation with the Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny Committee, that it is in the Council's interest for this decision to be taken urgently and the right to call-in is waived to enable a binding decision to be taken by Council on 8 December 2010.

Reasons

The Joint Working Group recommends that Cherwell District Council and South Northamptonshire Council put a shared management team in place by the end of September 2011. It is proposed that the Executive accept this recommendation and recommend this in turn to full Council who will take the final decision on whether to go ahead on 8 December 2010.

Options

Option One

Not to recommend the business case to full Council. However, the financial benefits are clear and the risks of delivery are manageable. If this case was not to be recommended to full Council the £3.430m saving generated directly by the business case would have to be found from making cuts to the council's own management team, from out-/in-sourcing a range of corporate services and almost certainly from cuts to other services, in light of the greater difficulty and time required in securing these alternative savings. Future savings of the type identified in the business case would also be foregone.

87

Cherwell/South Northamptonshire Building Control Shared Service Proposals

The Head of Building Control and Engineering Services submitted a report to consider whether it was appropriate and beneficial to Cherwell District Council and South Northamptonshire Council to merge their Building Control services into a jointly managed operation.

Resolved

- (1) That subject to the endorsement of the Cabinet of South Northamptonshire Council, who are concurrently considering this report, to agree in principle to implementing joint management

arrangements for the Building Control services of Cherwell District Council and South Northamptonshire Council.

- (2) That the Head of Building Control and Engineering Services, and Head of People and Improvement be instructed to carry out the recruitment of the joint Building Control Manager and Team Leaders for each of the Councils as set out in the report and its appendices (annex to the minutes as set out in the minute book).

Reasons

The key reasons for proposing this venture are that it will give both Cherwell and South Northamptonshire Building Control Services a more assured future and over a relatively short period of time the revenue costs borne by both Authorities to fund the non fee element of building control work will decrease.

Options

- Option One** Adopt the shared service approach contained and recommended in this report.
- Option Two** Not to form a shared service but for each Building Control service to continue to operate entirely separately. The risk of this do-nothing approach is that each service would continue to struggle in the face of increasing private sector competition, losing flexibility and resilience, and perhaps unable to recruit replacement staff effectively. This would hasten a decline to each service becoming one of last resort and without the ability to contribute effectively to other relevant services of both Councils. Cherwell would probably have to seek shared service elsewhere where it might have to become the third or fourth partner in an already formed and established alliance,
- Option Three** To agree to a joint venture in principle but to delay bringing it about. There is a strong prognosis that if conditions change for the two services they will worsen. The reasoning behind a shared service would be less compelling and the net benefits may be lost if a decision to proceed is delayed.

88 Update report and request for approval of funding for Dashwood Road Primary School

The Head of Housing Services submitted a report to update Members on progress on the Dashwood Road Primary School site following a report submitted on the 24 May 2010. Significant progress had been made to deliver this scheme and a smaller amount of funding from the capital reserves for affordable housing was now required.

Resolved

- (1) That the progress made with partnership working at Dashwood Road Primary School, Banbury be noted and funding for the scheme from the capital reserves for affordable housing of £200,000 be approved.

Reasons

Following the report to Executive in May 2010 regarding the Dashwood Road Primary School, staff from the council, Oxfordshire County Council, Paradigm Housing Group and the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) have met to agree how this scheme can be funded. Since the report the scheme has been granted planning permission. The scheme comprises of 18 units of housing to be let at social rents (current HCA target rent levels). These meetings have led to the parties agreeing a reduction in the land price for the scheme of £200,000 plus a reduction in the S106 commuted sums costs of around £100,000. CDC has agreed that five of the units can be let as supported housing for people with a learning disability. These people will be assessed as in need of housing via the District's Housing Register. This is a group that needs specialist provision and there is currently insufficient provision in the District.

Options

- | | |
|-------------------|---|
| Option One | To fund the Dashwood Road Primary School site from the CDC capital reserves |
| Option Two | Not to fund the Dashwood Road Primary School site from the CDC capital reserves |

89 **Corporate Improvement Plan Fear of Crime and Anti Social Behaviour**

The Head of Safer Communities, Urban and Rural Services submitted a report to advise the Executive of the outcomes of the Corporate Improvement Plan Project: Fear of Crime and Anti Social Behaviour and to consider the proposed future priorities and actions for the service arising from the Project.

Resolved

- (1) That the findings and conclusions from the Corporate Improvement Plan Project: Fear of Crime and Anti Social Behaviour be noted.
- (2) That the future priorities and draft action plan which should form the basis of the 2011/12 Service Plan (annex to the minutes as set out in the minute book) be agreed.

Reasons

Anti social behaviour (ASB) is a blight on the lives of individuals who are directly affected; on the perceptions of communities for whom it signals

neglect in their neighbourhoods; and on the reputation of the agencies who are often thought to be unconcerned or ineffectual.

Options

Option One Approve the Key Priorities, Aims and Objectives set out in this report

Option Two Amend the Key Priorities, Aims and Objectives.

90

Value for Money Review Corporate and Democratic Core

The Chief Executive submitted a report to consider the findings of the Value for Money (VFM) Review Corporate and Democratic Core report and the recommendations arising from the report.

Resolved

- (1) That the overall conclusions of the review be endorsed.
- (2) That it be agreed improvements in value for money be sought in Democratic Services and Elections and approve the following recommendations to achieve savings of £124,803;
 1. Merge the Democratic Services and Elections teams to provide greater resilience and achieve further efficiencies
 2. Achieve the schedule of savings (annex 9 to the minutes as set out in the minute book)
- (3) To agree that improvements in value for money be sought in Corporate Strategy, Performance and Partnerships and approve the following recommendations to achieve savings of £68,270;
 1. Delete the post of Performance Officer and restructure the team to accommodate the loss of this post, reallocating roles and responsibilities to reflect revised local priorities and changes in the national performance regime
 2. Reduce the budget for research and consultation, focusing the remaining resources on high priority areas and supporting in house consultation
 3. Change the operating arrangements for performance management software to scale back its costs and provide better value for money
- (4) To agree that improvements in value for money be sought in Treasury Management and approve the following recommendations to achieve minimum savings of £30,000;
 1. Review the Council's declining investment funds and allocate over two funds, rather than three.

2. Ensure that this allocation is in place by 31 March 2011.

Reasons

This review forms part of the Value for Money programme of reviews for 2010/11, which aims to cover all services within the council and improve the value of services offered to residents of Cherwell, and contributes to meeting the Council Promise of securing £800,000 of new savings by 1 April 2011.

Options

The report contains options for achieving efficiency and value for money.

91

Value for Money review of Recreation and Sport

The Strategic Director Environment and Community submitted a report to consider the findings of the Value for Money (VFM) Review of Recreation and Sport report and the recommendations arising from the report.

Resolved

- (1) That the overall conclusion of the review that the service is below average cost for the operation of its leisure centres, according to national benchmarking, has good performance in terms of its sports development assessment, and is high quality in terms of good and improving levels of customer satisfaction be endorsed.
- (2) That it be agreed improvements in value for money be sought and the following approved;
 1. Further grants to village halls be withdrawn from 2011/12, saving £39,000 per annum
 2. Reductions be made in the service establishment through reduced hours and the deletion of a vacant project officer post, saving £56,817 per annum
 3. Additional savings of £33,077 be progressed through reductions to the Leisure Development and Sports Development budgets,
- (3) That it be noted the target savings of £80,000 from the joint use agreements at Coopers School and North Oxfordshire Academy are currently part of the Council's scrutiny activities and subject to negotiation with the management of the two education sites.
- (4) That it be agreed to progress negotiations with the sports centres contract operator to achieve savings through changes to the contract specification and through income benchmarking.
- (5) That a capital bid be requested as part of 2011/12 budget setting for electricity generation at leisure centres outlining its costs and likely savings.

Reasons

This review forms part of the Value for Money programme of reviews for 2010/11, which aims to cover all services within the council and improve the value of services offered to residents of Cherwell.

Options

The report contains options for achieving efficiency and value for money.

92

Value for Money Review of Urban and Rural Services

The Strategic Director Environment and Community submitted a report to consider the findings of the Value for Money (VFM) Review of Urban and Rural Services report and the recommendations arising from the report.

Resolved

- (1) That the overall conclusion of the review that the service is low cost in terms of benchmark expenditure comparisons and is good quality in terms of overall positive levels of customer satisfaction be endorsed.
- (2) That it be agreed improvements in value for money be sought and approval given to:
 1. Implement the Medium Term Financial Strategy savings proposals, saving £73,194 per annum
 2. Secure a net saving of £60,000 per annum currently charged for the provision of specialist advice to the planning service by exploring options to achieve this, such as a reduction in the staff establishment, increasing fee income from planning advice and securing new clients to offset costs
 3. Create a Bus Station Safety Officer post to release a Vehicle Parks Warden post to achieve a net income of £16,000 per annum
- (3) That the recommendations of Scrutiny with regard to increases to car park charges be noted. That the recommendation of the inclusion of an evening tariff to generate further income of £39,640 per annum in addition to the £480,289 already recommended also be noted.
- (4) That the scrutiny process associated with the introduction of a pay and display parking scheme in Watts Way, Kidlington and the need for further negotiations with a view to implementing the scheme within 12 months if these are successful be noted.
- (5) That the proposal to extend the landscape maintenance contract for a further three years to 2015 and secure potential savings of £135,461 through negotiations with the contractor and an extended client base be noted.

- (6) That the provision of a Shopmobility scheme in Bicester be continued and it be agreed in future seek to offset a proportion of its costs through service charges to tenants on completion of the town centre redevelopment
- (7) That the feasibility of charging residents for tree inspections to offset costs of arboricultural staff be explored.

Reasons

This review forms part of the Value for Money programme of reviews, which aims to cover all services within the council and improve the value of services offered to residents of Cherwell.

Options

The report contains options for achieving efficiency and value for money.

93

Budget 2011/12 Draft 1

The Head of Finance submitted a report, providing the first of three opportunities for the Executive to shape and refine the interaction between the Corporate Plan, the service plans that underpin the corporate plan and financial matters before the final budget is presented to Council on the 21 February 2011.

Resolved

- (1) That the draft Corporate Plan for 2011-12 (annex to these minutes as set out in the minute book) be endorsed.
- (2) That the proposed service priorities for 2011-12 (annex to these minutes as set out in the minute book) be endorsed.
- (3) That the draft budget be noted in the context of the Council's service objectives and strategic priorities.
- (4) That the areas of unavoidable revenue growth (annex to these minutes as set out in the minute book) be noted.
- (5) That the areas of additional income or cost reductions that will be considered in order to get to a balanced 2011/12 budget (annex to these minutes as set out in the minute book) be noted.
- (6) That the proposal on Council Tax for 2011-12 be noted.
- (7) That the outcome of the pay negotiations on 2011/12 pay deal be noted.
- (8) That officers be requested to prepare a response to the New Homes Consultation and a report detailing the implications.

- (9) That officers be requested to give consideration to the impact of the recent planning fees consultation and the implications on income generation.
- (10) That the approach to the overall capital programme and 2011/12 expenditure profile (annex to these minutes as set out in the minute book) be agreed.
- (11) That it be noted that the recommendations of the scrutiny reviews of training, fees and charges and capital programme that were considered at the Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board on 30th November 2010 and all the recommendations (annex to these minutes as set out in the minute book) be approved.
- (12) That at this stage no other matters be taken into consideration in producing a balanced budget for the meeting of the Executive on 10 January 2011.
- (13) That the draft revenue and capital budget and corporate plan be approved as the basis for consultation.

Reasons

The budget will form the financial expression of the Council's strategic priorities and service delivery plans for 2011/12; the allocation of resources against agreed service priorities and is necessary in order to achieve its strategic priorities.

Options

Option One To review draft revenue and capital budget to date and consider actions arising.

Option Two To approve or reject the recommendations above or request that Officers provide additional information.

94

Chief Executive

The Executive noted that this would be the Chief Executive's last Executive meeting as she was leaving Cherwell District Council to take up a new role as Chief Executive at the London Borough of Hounslow in January 2011. The Executive and Officers wished the Chief Executive all the best for her new role.

The meeting ended at 9.00 pm

Chairman:

Date: