

Cherwell District Council

Executive

Minutes of a meeting of the Executive held at Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury, OX15 4AA, on 12 April 2010 at 6.30 pm

Present: Councillor Barry Wood (Chairman)
Councillor G A Reynolds (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Ken Atack
Councillor Michael Gibbard
Councillor James Macnamara
Councillor Kieron Mallon
Councillor Nigel Morris
Councillor D M Pickford
Councillor Nicholas Turner

Also Present: Councillor Lawrie Stratford

Apologies for absence: Councillor Norman Bolster

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
Pat Simpson, Head of Customer Service & Information Systems
Craig Forsyth, Communications Officer
Natasha Clark, Senior Democratic and Scrutiny Officer

124 **Declarations of Interest**

Members declared interest with regard to the following agenda item:

9. LGPS Pension Scheme Update.

Councillor D M Pickford, Personal, as a contributor to the Council pension scheme.

Councillor Kieron Mallon, Personal, as a contributor to the Council pension scheme.

Councillor Nicholas Turner, Personal, as a contributor to the Council pension scheme.

Councillor Nigel Morris, Personal, as a contributor to the Council pension scheme.

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

There were no petitions. The Chairman confirmed that he had agreed a request to address the meeting from Councillor Lawrie Stratford in respect of agenda item 11, Constitution Update.

126 **Urgent Business**

There was no urgent business.

127 **Minutes**

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

128 **Corporate Procurement Strategy and Action Plan**

The Head of Finance submitted a report which sought approval for the procurement strategy for the council. The primary objective of the procurement strategy was to procure services that are affordable, fit for purpose, met the needs of local people and service users and provided value for money.

The Executive thanked officers for their hard work on developing the Council's Procurement Strategy in recent years and noted that the Audit Commission had also praised the Council's procurement management.

Resolved

(1) That the draft procurement strategy for the council be approved.

Reasons - The procurement strategy has been written as part of the recommendations of the National Procurement Strategy.

129 **Customer Access by Phone**

The Head of Customer Service and Information Systems submitted a report which sought approval for a new approach to using our contact centre and switchboard telephone systems to improve their resilience, make it quicker for customers to get the information they need, and improve the quality of information available to the Council about how calls are handled.

Resolved

- (1) That the use of a short menu of options on some of the main customer contact numbers be approved.
- (2) That the use of recorded information on those lines where customer research has shown it to be helpful to the customer be approved.
- (3) That the improvement to telephony response and business continuity for customer contact brought about by these changes be noted.
- (4) That the development of a publicity campaign to help customers get the best number for their service requirements be approved.
- (5) That the use of mystery shopping to measure the completeness of service delivered at first contact by phone be approved.

Reasons - The centrality of the telephone to the delivery of all the Council's services means it is of paramount importance that people who use the phone get the best possible service from the contact centre advisers, and the need to be responsive in terms of getting information to customers in the case of unexpected events and emergencies.

Options

Option One Divert 252535 into the contact centre as the **main** number for all council services, but also retain the "direct" lines for services. These numbers are already in wide circulation through publications and advertising, so customers who know what they need simply call the appropriate number and skip a step.

The disadvantage of this approach is that the menu options would have to be directly under 252535. This would put an immediate additional barrier between the customer and someone who can help them. It would also distort the calculation of wait and abandoned rates.

Option Two Another alternative is to publish 252535 as the **only** number for all council services (along with direct dial numbers to council officers) and have it answered directly by the customer service advisers. There are many disadvantages to this option. While all fully-trained customer service advisers are capable of dealing with all enquiries and transactions for those parts of the services currently transferred into their remit (except new recruits still in training) the customer benefits of the contact centre system would be lost – as would the contact management benefits – without grouping of services. For instance:

- Advisers would have no idea what subject was about to be presented and so be much slower in delivering the information or service
- We would not be able to report on call volumes for each group of services,
- We would not be able to present recorded information to

the customer with a high probability of answering their question, releasing capacity to deliver more services without needing more people

- Being able to give trainees only those calls they can deal with
- Overflow calls in times of high demand to specialists elsewhere in the council.

Advantages of this option are that we publish just one number for everything. However, given the range of numbers currently published this can also be a disadvantage.

Option Three

Continue as we are, reducing as speedily as possible the services that people have to use 252535 to reach, and advertising very prominently the contact centre numbers. While migrating customers away from 252535 appoint a dedicated telephone operator (it would take two to cover the whole day) to handle calls to 252535 thus leaving customer service advisers to talk solely with customers. Aim to converge 252535 with 227001 after two years.

130

Overview and Scrutiny: Report of Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board: Partnership Scrutiny - Oxfordshire Rural Community Council

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services submitted a report which presented the Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board report on the Council's partnership with Oxfordshire Rural Community Council.

Councillor Morris presented the report.

Resolved

- (1) That the work of the Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board scrutiny review into the Council's partnership with Oxfordshire Rural Community Council be noted.
- (2) That the following Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board recommendations regarding the Council's partnership with Oxfordshire Rural Community Council as detailed below be agreed:

Recommendation 1:

That it be noted that the Council's partnership with Oxfordshire Rural Community Council is an important partnership which should continue and be regarded as critical to the delivery of the rural agenda.

Recommendation 2:

That a Service Level Agreement for the rural community development and community transport elements of the partnership be adopted.

Recommendation 3:

That an annual programme of aims/objectives (aligned to the Rural Strategy Action Plan and the Council's corporate priorities) be agreed with Oxfordshire Rural Community Council and regularly reviewed and

monitored by officers, the elected Member representative from a rural ward and reported to the Portfolio Holder.

Recommendation 4:

That the role and involvement of elected Members (the representative from a rural ward and the Portfolio Holder) in the Council's partnership with Oxfordshire Rural Community Council be clarified and strengthened.

Recommendation 5:

That the elected Member representative from a rural ward should work closely with rural community development officers and community transport officers to provide overall steer and direction for the partnership.

Recommendation 6:

That the Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board should monitor progress against each of the above recommendations and review the situation, initially in September 2010.

131 **LGPS Pension Scheme Update**

The Head of Finance and Head of People and Improvement submitted a report which set out an overview of the current position on the funding of the pension scheme, the potential implications arising from the triennial review of the pension fund and a review of local discretions on the scheme.

Resolved

- (1) That the contents of the report be noted.
- (2) That officers be asked to provide an analysis of the financing options available to the Council once the 2010 valuation is finalised including the impact on the Medium Term Financial Strategy.
- (3) That the changes to local pension discretions be approved.

Reasons - The pension fund triennial valuation is due to be conducted in March 2010. The likelihood is that this will require an increased employer's contribution rate, which the Council will need to fund. The pension regulations require the Council to formulate, publish and keep under review its policies in respect of certain areas of the pension scheme where it may exercise its local discretion.

132 **Performance Management Framework Corporate Scorecard, Performance and Risk Reporting in 2010/11**

The Chief Executive and Corporate Planning, Performance and Partnerships Manager submitted a report which introduced the Corporate Scorecard and performance reporting arrangements for 2010/11. It included the proposed format and content of the Corporate Scorecard and performance reports

through which the Council will monitor and report its priority targets around strategic priorities, service delivery and organisational performance.

Resolved

- (1) That the proposed scorecard, performance reports and performance monitoring arrangements for 2010/11 be agreed.
- (2) That the updated risk strategy for 2010/11 and the Risk Register comprising strategic, corporate and partnership risks for 2010/11 be adopted.

Reasons - The corporate scorecard and performance management arrangements for 2010/11 are robust and focus on the delivery of the corporate plan, the public pledges, the corporate improvement plan, the quality of service delivery and key strategic projects, partnership plans including the Local Area Agreement and the Sustainable Community Strategy.

Options

Option One

1. To agree the proposed scorecard, performance reports and performance monitoring arrangements for 2010/11.
2. To adopt the updated risk strategy for 2010/11 and agree the Risk Register comprising strategic, corporate and partnership risks for 2010/11.

Option Two

To identify any additional performance targets or risks to include in the corporate scorecard.

133

Constitution Update

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services submitted a report seeking approval for amendments and updates to the Council's constitution.

Councillor Lawrie Stratford addressed the meeting.

Resolved

That Council be recommended to approve the following:

- (1) That the changes to the scheme of delegation detailed in the report be approved and to delegate to the Head of Legal and Democratic Services the detailed reallocation of powers reflecting the recent review of the Extended Management Team and the retirement of the Head of Safer Communities and Community Development.
- (2) That the revised Proper Officer provisions be approved.
- (3) That the Contract Procedure Rules detailed in the report be approved.

- (4) That the revised and updated Finance Procedure Rules be approved subject to the addition of the following text at 7.1: "The Executive is responsible for agreeing procedures for carrying forward under and overspending on budget headings."

Reasons - The constitution needs to be kept updated so that it reflects the current structure. Powers must be exercised properly in order to minimise challenge.

Options

Option One To approve the recommendations as drafted

Option Two To amend the recommendations

At the conclusion of the item the Leader noted that this was the last meeting of the Executive in 2009/10 and expressed his best wishes to all Councillors in the forthcoming election.

The Leader advised Executive that this was Councillor Mallon's last meeting as a member of Executive and thanked him for his hard work and valuable contribution.

134 **Exclusion of the Press and Public**

Resolved

That, in accordance with Section 100A(4) of Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business, on the grounds that they could involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 3 and 5 of Schedule 12A of that Act.

135 **Value for Money Review of Finance**

The Chief Executive and Head of Finance submitted an exempt joint report which considered the findings of the Value for Money (VFM) Review of Finance and the recommendations arising from the report.

Resolved

That the recommendations as set out in the exempt report be agreed.

136 **Legal Action to Recover Icelandic Deposits**

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services and Head of Finance submitted an exempt joint report which sought authority to institute and pursue legal proceedings in order to recover the financial deposits currently held in Glitnir bank and to agree to fund such legal action.

Resolved

That the recommendations as set out in the exempt report be agreed.

The meeting ended at 7.50 pm

Chairman:

Date: