

**Committee:** Executive  
**Date:** Monday 16 March 2009  
**Time:** 6.30 pm  
**Venue:** Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury, OX15 4AA

### **Membership**

<b>Councillor Barry Wood (Chairman)</b>	<b>Councillor G A Reynolds (Vice-Chairman)</b>	
<b>Councillor Norman Bolster</b>	<b>Councillor Kieron Mallon</b>	<b>Councillor Nicholas Turner</b>
<b>Councillor Michael Gibbard</b>	<b>Councillor Nigel Morris</b>	
<b>Councillor James Macnamara</b>	<b>Councillor D M Pickford</b>	

## **AGENDA**

- 1. Apologies for Absence**
- 2. Declarations of Interest**

Members are asked to declare any interest and the nature of that interest that they may have in any of the items under consideration at this meeting.

- 3. Petitions and Requests to Address the Meeting**

The Chairman to report on any requests to submit petitions or to address the meeting.

- 4. Urgent Business**

The Chairman to advise whether they have agreed to any item of urgent business being admitted to the agenda.

- 5. Minutes (Pages 1 - 8)**

To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on 2 March 2009.

## **Strategy and Policy**

### **6. Access Strategy (Pages 9 - 47)**

**6.35pm**

Report of Strategic Director Customer Service and Resources

#### **Summary**

To update the Executive on the development of the Access Strategy and ask for comment on the direction it takes and the action plan it proposes, prior to finalising the draft.

#### **Recommendations**

The Executive is recommended to:

- (1) Agree the vision, aim and objectives of the strategy
- (2) Agree all, some or none of the main pillars of the action plan:
  1. deliver the services most face to face customers want (not just our local office customers), at locations near them.
  2. deliver more services through the telephone contact centre so that more customers have their enquiry or request satisfied at first contact.
  3. deliver the services our online customers want to access themselves, and persuade those customers to change from phone to online.
  4. Use information from customers to improve service delivery, ultimately reducing the amount of contact we handle that is classified as “avoidable” in the definition of NI14.
  5. use NI14 data, customers’ own feedback, complaints and compliments, mystery shopping and customer consultation, to improve our service processes so that the customer need be less proactive and the Council can make best use of its resources – principally staff time.
  6. identify potential efficiencies and improvements to service processes and the investment to achieve those efficiencies, and put in place a means of getting decisions about whether to realise those efficiencies and improvements.
- (3) Instruct the access strategy development group to complete work on the strategy and action plan and bring it back to the Executive for adoption

### **7. Management Information Strategy (Pages 48 - 66)**

**6.50pm**

Report of Head of Improvement

#### **Summary**

The report presents a Management Information Strategy and action plan for Cherwell District Council which will deliver continuous improvement in its information management arrangements, helping to improve service delivery and respond effectively to the new CAA assessment regime.

#### **Recommendations**

The Executive is recommended:

- (1) To identify any additional actions or initiatives to be included in the strategy and action plan
- (2) To agree the management information strategy and action plan
- (3) To require officers to report back on progress with the implementation of the strategy and action plan in March 2010

## **Value for Money and Performance**

### **8. Working in Partnership Annual Report (Pages 67 - 95)**

**7.00pm**

Report of Chief Executive

#### **Summary**

This Annual Partnerships Report:

- reviews the achievements of the Council's significant partnerships in 2008/09
- sets out the progress made improving the governance and performance management of the Council's significant partnerships.
- Sets out the key activities for significant partnerships in 2009/10.

#### **Recommendations**

The Executive is recommended to:

- (1) Note the key achievements of the Council's significant partnerships in 2008/09 and the contribution they make to delivery of the Council's strategic priorities
- (2) Review the progress made during the year in strengthening the governance of the Council's significant partnerships
- (3) Agree the actions proposed by the significant partnerships for 2009/10
- (4) Agree the proposals to improve partnership working detailed at paragraph 1.5 below
- (5) Refer this Annual Partnerships Report to Overview and Scrutiny as part of their future programme of work on the evaluation of partnerships.

### **9. Land Charges Value for Money Review (Pages 96 - 111)**

**7.20pm**

Report of Strategic Director Customer Service and Resources

#### **Summary**

To consider the findings of the Land Charges Value for Money (VFM) Review report and the recommendations arising from the report

## Recommendations

The Executive is recommended to:

- (1) Endorse the overall conclusion of the review that the service is high cost and has low performance in terms of its productivity, but is high quality in terms of its search turnaround times.
- (2) Agree that further improvements in value for money be sought and approve the following recommendations to achieve this;
  - a) Reduce staffing levels by 37hrs per week to eliminate surplus capacity and generate savings of £22,650. This will bring employee hours per thousand population more into line with the average authority. These savings have already been identified and accommodated in the 2009/10 budget.
  - b) Further reduce the capacity within the service by 15hrs per week in recognition of the continuing fall in demand due to the economic slowdown, but re-invest these hours in improving the council's digital records to improve future productivity by allocating them to the council's GIS team. Monitor work volumes and review this arrangement after 6 months in order to maximise possible savings (should search volumes continue to fall) end ensure continuity of the service (should search volumes increase).
  - c) Recalculate the contributions paid to other services through internal recharges so that these are based on a cost per search rather than a fixed overhead. This would produce savings of £24,865 for the service in 2009/10, although these costs would be transferred elsewhere in the council.
  - d) Ascertain the true costs of the service (in anticipation of likely legislative changes allowing cost recovery charging) by carry out a zero based budget analysis of support costs to remove any overhead cost loading on the service. This is to take place in autumn 2009 as part of the routine budget revision process.
  - e) Raise the standard search fee from £80 to £120 (around the average for other Oxfordshire authorities) to raise additional income of £55,000 per annum. This may carry a risk of further reducing demand for searches, although reduced fees have not been shown to have any demonstrable influence on demand.
  - f) If legislation is introduced to allow it, raise the fee for personal searches to at least £25. This would raise additional income of around £30,000 per annum.
  - g) Implement the TLC ICT system to improve the automation of electronically held information for searches
  - h) Move appointments bookings and advance payments for searches to the Customer Contact centre to provide a common standard of customer service to callers and to remove unproductive administrative work from the land charges team
  - i) Develop and introduce an online booking and payments system for appointments to complement the telephone service and further reduce administrative work

- j) Discontinue using Land Charges staff team to deal with personal search appointments in the mornings, transferring this work to reception staff (this has already been agreed and is being undertaken as an early outcome of this review).

## **Other Matters**

**10. The Future of Markets in Cherwell (Pages 112 - 113)**

**7.30pm**

Report of Overview and Scrutiny Committee

**\*\*Please note Appendix 1 is to follow\*\***

### **Summary**

To consider the report of the Task and Finish Group scrutiny review into the future of markets in Cherwell and the supporting recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

### **Recommendations**

The Executive is recommended to:

- (1) note the work of the Task and Finish Group scrutiny review into the future of markets in Cherwell as detailed in Appendix 1;
- (2) agree the Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommendations regarding the markets in Cherwell as detailed in the report from the Task and Finish Group (Appendix 1).

## **Urgent Business**

**11. Urgent Business**

Any other items which the Chairman has decided is urgent.

**12. Exclusion of the Press and Public**

The following reports contain exempt information as defined in the following paragraphs of Part 1, Schedule 12A of Local Government Act 1972.

1 – Information relating to any individual.

3 – Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

4 – Information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority or a Minister of the crown and employees of, or office holders under, the authority.

Members are reminded that whilst the following items have been marked as exempt, it is for the meeting to decide whether or not to consider each of them in private or in public. In making the decision, members should balance the interests of individuals or the Council itself in having access to the information. In considering their discretion members should also be mindful of the advice of Council Officers.

Should Members decide not to make a decision in public, they are recommended to pass the following recommendation:

“That, in accordance with Section 100A(4) of Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item(s) of business, on the grounds that they could involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1, 3 and 4 of Schedule 12A of that Act.”

13. **2009/10 Environment and Community Budget Reductions & Service Implications** (Pages 114 - 125) **7.40pm**

Report of Strategic Director Environment and Community

14. **Revenues and Benefits Service Delivery Options Appraisal** (Pages 126 - 134) **7.55pm**

Report of Strategic Director Customer Service and Resources

*(Please note Appendix 1 is to follow.)*

15. **Banbury Market** (Pages 135 - 143) **8.10pm**

Report of Head of Urban and Rural Services

**(Meeting scheduled to close at 8.25pm )**

## **Information about this Agenda**

### **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence should be notified to [democracy@cherwell-dc.gov.uk](mailto:democracy@cherwell-dc.gov.uk) or 01295 221587 prior to the start of the meeting.

### **Declarations of Interest**

Members are asked to declare interests at item 2 on the agenda or if arriving after the start of the meeting, at the start of the relevant agenda item. The definition of personal and prejudicial interests is set out in Part 5 Section A of the constitution. The Democratic Support Officer will have a copy available for inspection at all meetings.

**Personal Interest:** Members must declare the interest but may stay in the room, debate and vote on the issue.

**Prejudicial Interest:** Member must withdraw from the meeting room and should inform the Chairman accordingly.

With the exception of the some very specific circumstances, a Member with a personal

interest also has a prejudicial interest if it is one which a Member of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts would reasonably regard as so significant that it is likely to prejudice the Member's judgement of the public interest.

### **Local Government and Finance Act 1992 – Budget Setting, Contracts & Supplementary Estimates**

Members are reminded that any member who is two months in arrears with Council Tax must declare the fact and may speak but not vote on any decision which involves budget setting, extending or agreeing contracts or incurring expenditure not provided for in the agreed budget for a given year and could affect calculations on the level of Council Tax.

### **Queries Regarding this Agenda**

Please contact James Doble, Legal and Democratic Services james.doble@cherwell-dc.gov.uk (01295) 221587

**Mary Harpley**  
**Chief Executive**

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