

Cherwell District Council

Executive

Minutes of a meeting of the Executive held at Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury, OX15 4AA, on 1 July 2013 at 6.30 pm

Present: Councillor Barry Wood (Chairman), Leader of the Council
Councillor G A Reynolds (Vice-Chairman), Deputy Leader of the Council

Councillor Norman Bolster, Lead Member for Estates and the Economy

Councillor John Donaldson, Lead Member for Banbury Brighter Futures

Councillor Michael Gibbard, Lead Member for Planning

Councillor Tony Ilott, Lead Member for Public Protections

Councillor D M Pickford, Lead Member for Housing

Councillor Nicholas Turner, Lead Member for Performance and Customers

Also Present: Councillor Sean Woodcock, Leader of the Labour Group

Apologies for absence: Councillor Ken Atack, Lead Member for Financial Management
Councillor Nigel Morris, Lead Member for Clean and Green
Councillor Tim Emptage, Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group

Officers: Sue Smith, Chief Executive
Calvin Bell, Director of Development
Kevin Lane, Head of Law and Governance / Monitoring Officer
Adrian Colwell, Head of Strategic Planning and the Economy (for agenda items 8 and 10)
Jo Pitman, Head of Transformation (for agenda Item 16)
Nicola Jackson, Corporate Finance Manager
Ed Potter, Head of Environmental Services (for agenda items 9 and 15)
Helen Town, Strategic Housing Officer (for agenda items 6 and 7)
Marianne North, Housing Needs Manager (for agenda item 7)
Natasha Clark, Team Leader, Democratic and Elections

14 **Declarations of Interest**

Members declared interests in the following agenda items:

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

There were no petitions or requests to address the meeting.

16 **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

17 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 3 June 2013 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

18 **Graven Hill Acquisition Update**

The Head of Regeneration and Housing submitted a report which sought consideration of the next steps towards the acquisition of Graven Hill Executive and provided an update on the progress being made with the acquisition of Graven Hill.

Resolved

- (1) That Full Council be recommended to add the acquisition and redevelopment of Graven Hill and prudential borrowing into the Policy Framework and make available the capital sums required as part of the budget.

Reasons

To ensure that the Council is following correct procedures in making key decisions

Options

Option One: To approve the recommendation

Option Two: To reject the recommendation

19 **Cherwell Housing Strategy and Tenancy Strategy 2012-17**

The Head of Head of Regeneration and Housing submitted a report which provided an update on the Housing Strategy 2012-17 and Tenancy Strategy 2012-17.

In introducing the report, the Lead Member for Housing report on the work being done in the District by the council and partners to deliver affordable housing, housing related support and to prevent homelessness and improve housing standards.

Housing Services had enabled the delivery of 113 new affordable homes in 2012/13 by supporting Registered Provider's (RP's) and working with planners and developers and the Council's 'Build' Programme had delivered 7 refurbished properties for single people.

The Lead Member for Housing explained that the Welfare Reform Act 2012 which had introduced major changes to the social welfare system would mean a fundamental change for housing organisations and for those receiving benefit. In terms of the social sector size criteria, which affected over 900 social tenancies in Cherwell, the Council had worked with Registered Providers to minimise the effects by changing the priority for downsizers in the Allocations Policy, by the use of Discretionary Housing Payments and through the development programme providing a greater number of one and two bedroom homes. Officers were working with Sanctuary Housing to monitor the impact.

Resolved

- (1) That the contents of the report and progress to date in delivering the Council's Housing Strategy and the Council's Tenancy Strategy be noted.
- (2) That officers be requested to submit a further update in twelve months' time.

Reasons

The Council's Housing Strategy contains six main priorities that the Council identified it would deliver over the period of the Strategy.

The Council's Tenancy Strategy provides guidance for Registered Providers operating in the Cherwell area.

Options

None

20

Criteria for Local Heritage Assets Register

The Head of Strategic Planning and the Economy submitted a report which sought consideration of the criteria for a District wide Local Heritage Assets Register.

Resolved

- (1) That the criteria for the selection of Local Heritage Assets be approved.

Reasons

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires local authorities to ensure that local heritage is protected. This is done by understanding local heritage assets and managing change to ensure that the significance is not harmed. The criteria for assessing Local Heritage Assets is therefore

important to ensure that local heritage assets are appropriately managed and their significance is not harmed. The criteria from Cherwell District Council will help provide long term protection for the heritage of the District.

Options

Option One: To accept the document as criteria and process for the purposes of planning.

Option Two: To decline the document as criteria and process for the purposes of planning.

21

Carbon Management

The Head of Environmental Services submitted a report which sought consideration of the progress the Council's Low Carbon Management Plan and well as other low carbon related projects.

Resolved

- (1) That the achievements of the ongoing delivery of the Carbon Management Plan be noted.
- (2) That the success of the investment in solar panels on key buildings be noted.
- (3) That the results of the Energy & Environment Survey be acknowledged.
- (4) That Cherwell's sign up to the national Climate Local Commitment be supported.

Reasons

The Low Carbon Environmental Strategy is key to reducing energy costs and emissions along with the Carbon Management Plan

The work already achieved by the Use of Natural Resources Group needs to continue to deliver the Carbon Management Plan.

Key to the internal and external environmental work of the council is to understand residents' opinions and expectations regarding climate change and energy efficiency and to engage with them.

Options

Option One: To approve the forward plan for the Use of Natural Resources Group for 2013/14, to note the results of the Energy & Environment Survey and to support Climate Local

Option Two: To reject either all or some of the proposals under Option One

Option Three: To ask officers to modify either all or some of the proposals under Option One

22

Enabling Business Investment in Cherwell

The Head of Strategic Planning and the Economy submitted a report which sought consideration of how to use recent research to enable business investment in Cherwell.

In introducing the report, the Lead Member for Estates and the Economy explained that independent research had been undertaken across England, the results of which could contribute towards the planning and economic development objectives of the Council.

Local Futures' Place Profiles were computer-generated reports that provided a high-level analysis of an area and told a 'story of place'. The reports provided a quick, easy to understand and yet comprehensive analysis of an area in relation to a national index by using standard data sources. Cherwell had been examined in terms of its attractiveness to inward investors and businesses considering the District as a location.

The overall analysis revealed that, despite some areas of weakness, Cherwell performed extremely well overall and had the highest Business Location Index when compared to surrounding districts and compared very strongly at an English level. Cherwell ranked 11th out of all 325 local authority areas in England.

Resolved

- (5) That agreement be given to share this research and engage with members of the Cherwell-M40 Investment Partnership (CHIP) to identify competitor locations and points of Cherwell's competitive advantage to form the basis of a promotional campaign to strengthen the economic base of the District and attract inward investment and this should also assist the retention of local SMEs and support them to prosper, all of which will contribute to growth in business rates and the vitality of Cherwell.
- (6) That new District- wide promotional material to secure new investment including Investor Profiles for our portfolio of major sites, setting out location, characteristics of the population, local demographics etc. be commissioned.
- (7) That agreement be given for Cherwell District Council to lead new initiatives in 2013/14 including a bulletin for businesses to promote investment, and a District wide business forum to enhance the networks the IoD, FSB and local Chambers within the District as a whole.

Reasons

The Cherwell Economic Development Strategy (2011-16), adopted by both the District Council and the Local Strategic Partnership, identifies the importance of a strong and resilient economy for the future of north Oxfordshire. By leading and enabling investment in three broad areas: people, business and place, specific commitment was given to take action on the following inter-related themes:

- a) Promote business & cluster development
- b) Attract new investment
- c) Promote employment sites & premises

Options

Option One: To take no action and retain the funding for other purposes.

Option Two: To implement the plans described in the recommendations.

Option Three: To alter and implement the plans described in the recommendations.

23 Joint Arrangements Steering Group (CDC/SNC/SDC) Terms of Reference

The Head of Law and Governance submitted a report which sought agreement to adopt formal terms of reference for the “three way” Joint Arrangements Steering Group involving members and officers of Cherwell District Council, South Northamptonshire and Stratford on Avon.

Resolved

- (8) That the terms of reference for the “three way” Joint Arrangements Steering Group (JASG) be adopted.

Reasons

As discussions on shared working with SDC bear fruit and significant progress is made towards recommended implementation of proposals it is important to define the role and responsibilities of the “three way” JASG in a way which is consistent with the existing terms of reference for the SNC/CDC JASG.

Options

Option One: To approve the recommendation.

Option Two: To amend the proposed terms of reference, but this is not recommended as they have the support of all three sets of Council members on the body and are consistent with the existing terms of reference for the CDC/SNC JASG.

24 Transformation Challenge Award

The Head of Finance and Procurement submitted a report which outlined proposals for bidding against the transformation challenge award and detailed the process and timetable for completion.

Resolved

- (1) That the contents of the report and the purpose of the transformation challenge award be noted.
- (2) That the areas suggested for collaboration with South Northamptonshire and Stratford upon Avon Councils be endorsed.
- (3) That authority be delegated to the Director of Resources in consultation with the Head of Finance and Procurement and the Leader of the Council to finalise submissions ahead of the deadline date of 14 July 2013.

Reasons

Through the Transformation Challenge Award the Government is making funding available to support local authorities that are at the cutting edge of innovation for service transformation so that they are going further and faster in re-engineering service delivery and achieving efficiency savings.

The 3 way Joint Arrangements Steering Group has recommended areas the 3 councils could bid for funds together and independently. In order to satisfy the bidding criteria we need to be able to evidence that the areas for collaboration have political support and the JASG is asking the Executive to confirm this support.

Options

Option One: Implement as per recommendations

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

25 **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 1, 2, 3 and 4 of Schedule 12A of that Act.

26 **Shared Services - Environmental Services**

The Head of Environmental Services submitted an exempt report which sought approval of the implementation of Stage 1 of a shared service covering

Environmental Services in Cherwell District Council and South Northamptonshire Council.

Resolved

- (9) That the implementation of Stage 1 of a shared service covering some elements of Environmental Services be approved.
- (10) That it be noted that a report covering Stage 2 of a shared service will come forward later in the financial year.

Reasons

This report is presented to provide information on Stage 1 of a shared service. The impact on staff is very low and the savings proposed are achievable and some need to be delivered in 2013/14.

Stage 2 business case will be developed later during 2013.

Options

Option One: To approve the implementation of the shared service.

Option Two: To not approve the implementation of the shared service.

Option Three: Investigate other options

27 Proposal for a Shared Human Resources Service with South Northamptonshire District Council and a Collaborative Approach to the Delivery of HR Services with Stratford On Avon District Council

The Head of Transformation submitted an exempt report which sought consideration of the proposal for a shared Human Resources service with South Northamptonshire District Council and a Collaborative Approach to the Delivery of HR Services with Stratford on Avon District Council

Resolved

- (11) That the responses to the consultation process with the affected staff and trade union representatives be noted.
- (12) That the approval of the Personnel Committee of the staffing aspects in relation to the proposal for a Shared HR Service with SNC be noted.
- (13) That the proposal to work in collaboration with Stratford on Avon District Council in relation to the delivery of HR Services be approved.
- (14) That the proposed final business case to share an HR Service between CDC and SNC be approved and implemented, subject to similar approval by SNC Cabinet and Full Council.

Reasons

The introduction of a shared HR Service will continue to build upon the Shared Service model between CDC and SNC, whilst supporting the principle of collaborative working with SDC.

It will provide increased resilience to all partners and ensure that specialisms and best practice can be developed internally to be shared across all partners.

It will deliver service improvements, increase efficiency, avoid duplication and deliver financial savings for CDC.

Options

Option One: To reject the proposal meaning the two services continue to operate independently. This would not deliver the benefits or financial savings to CDC identified in the business case.

Option Two: Approve the business case as attached

The meeting ended at 7.20 pm

Chairman:

Date: