

Cherwell District Council

Executive

Minutes of a meeting of the Executive held at Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury, OX15 4AA, on 4 November 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 Ken Atack, Lead Member for Financial Management
Councillor Norman Bolster, Lead Member for Estates and the Economy
Councillor John Donaldson, Lead Member for Banbury Brighter Futures
Councillor Tony Ilott, Lead Member for Public Protection
Councillor Nigel Morris, Lead Member for Clean and Green
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
Councillor Tim Emptage, Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group

Apologies for absence: Councillor Michael Gibbard, Lead Member for Planning

Officers: Sue Smith, Chief Executive
Calvin Bell, Director of Development
Kevin Lane, Head of Law and Governance / Monitoring Officer
Tim Madden, Interim Head of Finance and Procurement
Jo Pitman, Head of Transformation (for agenda item 8)
Claire Taylor, Corporate Performance Manager (for agenda item 8)
Marianne North, Housing Needs Manager (for agenda item 7)
Natasha Clark, Team Leader, Democratic and Elections

Declarations of Interest

Members declared interests in the following agenda items:

7. Housing Strategy Priority Five: Homelessness Prevention Action Plan.

Councillor Sean Woodcock, Non Statutory Interest, as an employee of one of the council's registered providers.

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

There were no petitions or requests to address the meeting.

49 **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

50 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 October 2013 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

51 **Chairman's Announcements**

The Chairman had no announcements.

52 **Housing Strategy Priority Five: Homelessness Prevention Action Plan**

The Head of Regeneration and Housing submitted a report which introduced a new Homelessness Prevention Action Plan 2013 – 2015.

In introducing the report, the Lead Member for Housing explained that since the production of the Housing Strategy 2012 the impact of proposed welfare reform had resulted in a need to revisit the strategy to ensure it was robust to deal with the potential challenges ahead. The Homelessness Prevention Action Plan would add the necessary focus and detail to the Actions set out in the Housing Strategy and ensure continued performance.

Executive thanked all members of the Housing Service for their hard work in continuing to meet targets and support residents in the district.

Resolved

- (1) That the Homelessness Prevention Action Plan, which had been produced as part of a review of Cherwell's overarching Housing Strategy in the context of achieving the Gold Standard set up by DCLG through the National Housing Advisory Service, be approved.
- (2) That the continued ring-fencing of the DCLG Grant for homelessness prevention and partnership working until March 2015 be noted.

Reasons

The Homelessness Prevention Action Plan highlights some elements of the work being done by the Council and its partners to prevent homelessness.

The Homelessness Prevention Action Plan is the result of a review of the actions in Chapter 5 of the Housing Strategy 2012 – 17 in the light of policy changes including Welfare Reforms and responds to local factors

Adopting the Homelessness Prevention Action Plan is an important step in the process of meeting the Gold Standard Challenge for homelessness services, demonstrating corporate commitment to the prevention of homelessness as well as the Councils' intention to work actively in partnership

Options

Option 1: Not to adopt a Homelessness Prevention Action Plan. It is a legal requirement to have a Homelessness Strategy which is reviewed annually

Option 2: Not to accept the Gold Challenge for Homelessness services. The Gold Standard is a government initiative which enables the Council to continue its high levels of homelessness prevention and offers free resources

Option 3: Not to continue partnership working. A reduction in current partnership working will place the Council at risk of a rise in homelessness and increased costs for temporary accommodation

53

Customer Satisfaction Survey Results 2013

The Head of Transformation submitted a report which updated the Executive on the results of the annual satisfaction survey and identify any areas to be reflected in future business and/or performance plans.

Resolved

- (1) That the results of the customer survey, with particular reference to improvement in the following areas that were identified as priorities as an outcome of the survey undertaken in 2012: The way the Council deals with anti-social behaviour; The Council's approach to dealing with environmental crime; and, Car Parking Services, be noted.
- (2) That the following priorities and areas of focus for future action be agreed:

Priorities:

- 1) Household waste collection
- 2) Household recycling collection and food/ garden waste collection service
- 3) Supporting the creation of jobs in the local area
- 4) Street cleaning and tackling environmental crime
- 5) Providing affordable housing
- 6) Dealing with anti-social behaviour/ nuisance

Areas of focus for future action:

- a) Dealing with Anti-Social Behaviour: whilst improvement in this area has been recorded it is still rated as one of the areas of lowest satisfaction and is an area of high priority for local residents.

- b) Dealing with Environmental Crime: littering, fly-tipping, graffiti and dealing with dog waste, all key in terms of delivering a high quality local environment and services that are valued by local residents. This is an area where the Council needs to improve (currently it has the lowest rating) and as such should remain a priority.
- c) Continuing to focus on Street Cleansing: like 'dealing with environmental crime' one of the 'top 6' priorities street cleansing is a service that is experienced by all residents and plays an important part in terms of quality of life and enjoyment living within a local area. It is a service upon which the Council is judged and valued by many residents and as such should remain an on-going area of focus.
- d) Continued focus on communication with local residents and businesses: as noted above the better the quality of communication and access to information about Council services local residents have the more likely they will be able to access services and be satisfied with the results. Whilst there are currently solid satisfaction ratings with communication it should remain an area of on-going focus.

Reasons

This report presents a summary of the findings from the 2013 customer satisfaction survey. It highlights a general trend of improvement across council services as well as areas where continued focus is required.

The report also highlights customer priorities and these will be used to help inform budget setting, the development of the Council's Business Plan, Performance Pledges and 5 year Strategy.

As well as these high level findings the survey includes a wealth of service specific detail that will be used by service managers to help underpin service planning.

Options

Option 1: To accept the recommendations as outlined in part one of this report.

Option 2: To reject the recommendations and request additional work or alternative priorities arising from the survey findings.

Award of Liquid Fuel Contract

The Interim Head of Finance and Procurement submitted a report which sought consideration of the award of contracts to supply diesel to Cherwell District Council.

Resolved

- (1) That contracts be awarded to GB Oils for the supply of red diesel and Harvest for the supply of white diesel.

Reasons

Following a 'best practice' procurement exercise GB Oils and Harvest have submitted the lowest cost tenders for the supply of Diesel to Cherwell District Council for the next two years and the Executive is recommended to authorise the award.

Options

No reasonable alternatives

55 **Transformation Bid Acceptance and Accountable Body Arrangements**

The Chairman reported that consideration of this item was deferred as information was still awaited from the Government department in relation to the terms and conditions of the grant award.

The meeting ended at 7.00 pm

Chairman:

Date: