



Cherwell

DISTRICT COUNCIL
NORTH OXFORDSHIRE

**Summary of the decisions taken at the meeting
of the Executive held on Monday 8 July 2024**

1. Date of publication of this summary: Tuesday 9 July
2. Decisions (if any) taken as a matter of urgency under Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules as set out in the Constitution (and not therefore subject to the call-in procedure): None
3. Date by which notice of call-in of any of the following decisions must be received in writing by the Chief Executive (see notes below):- Noon on Monday 15 July 2024
4. Notes:-
 - (a) For background documentation to the following decisions, please refer to the agenda and supporting papers (copies of which are available on the Council's website (www.cherwell.gov.uk) or from Democratic Services);
 - (b) Notice of call-in must be submitted in writing, by email or text to the Chief Executive by the deadline specified above, and must state the reason or reasons why "call-in" has been requested;
 - (c) Call-in can be requested by any five non-executive members of the Council.
 - (d) Decisions not called-in by the deadline specified above will become effective immediately the deadline has expired (unless they are recommendations to the Council).
 - (e) The Council has stipulated that the call-in procedure should not be used to challenge decisions as a matter of course and should be used only when fully justified.

**Shiraz Sheikh
Monitoring Officer**

| Agenda Item and Recommendation | Decision | Reasons | Alternative Options | Conflicts of Interest Declared and Dispensations Granted by Head of Paid Service |
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| <p>Agenda Item 7 New Cherwell District Council Housing Allocations Scheme</p> <p>Report of Assistant Director Wellbeing and Housing</p> <p>Recommendations</p> <p>The Executive resolves:</p> <p>1.1 To approve the commencement of public consultation on the reviewed and amended Housing Allocations Scheme.</p> <p>1.2 To approve the changes to the previously agreed approach, of allocating properties that are delivered through</p> | <p>Resolved</p> <p>(1) That the commencement of public consultation on the reviewed and amended Housing Allocations Scheme be approved.</p> <p>(2) That changes to the previously agreed approach of allocating properties that are delivered through Oxford's Unmet Housing Need, whereby Cherwell District Council would allocate properties and administer the applications, be approved to enable discussions and a potential agreement</p> | <p>It is important that the Council has up to date policies and procedures for its statutory and key service areas and it is important that they are legislatively and operationally sound. A periodic review of policies is therefore appropriate.</p> | <p>Option 1: Not bring forward a new Allocations Scheme. This is rejected as it is important that the Council has Policies that are up to date with legislation and can respond to current challenges.</p> <p>Option 2: Continue discussions with Oxford City regarding the previously agreed approach to allocating the unmet need properties. Both Councils have been working to deliver the agreed solution, and delivery of this may be possible. However, this is rejected as there is a concern that the approach may not be legally sound, so to continue is not considered prudent, and</p> | <p>None</p> |

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| <p>Oxford's Unmet Housing Need. This will enable discussions and a potential agreement with Oxford City Council to progress. The approach outlined in this report is reflected in the new draft policy.</p> | <p>with Oxford City Council to progress and it be noted that the revised approach is reflected in the new draft policy.</p> | | <p>thus an alternative has been suggested.</p> | |
| <p>Agenda Item 8 Council Tax Discretionary Relief policy (Section 13a)</p> <p>Report of Assistant Director of Finance & Section 151 Officer</p> <p>Recommendations</p> <p>The Executive resolves:</p> <p>1.1 To note the contents of the reviewed policy for</p> | <p>Resolved</p> <p>(1) That the contents of the reviewed policy for Section 13a Council Tax be noted.</p> <p>(2) That the policy for Council Tax Section 13a be approved.</p> | <p>The Section 13a policy has not been reviewed for several years. It is good practice to review policies to ensure they remain relevant and in line with supporting the delivery of the Council's policies. It is recommended that the policy is endorsed by Executive to conform with legislation.</p> | <p>Option1: To not approve the Section 13a policy. In accordance with S13a (2) Local Government Finance Act 1992 each billing authority in England must make a scheme specifying the reductions which are to apply to amounts of council tax payable, in respect of dwellings situated in its area, by—</p> | <p>None</p> |

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| <p>Section 13a Council Tax.</p> <p>1.2 To approve the policy for Council Tax Section 13a.</p> | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (a) persons whom the authority considers to be in financial need, or • (b) persons in classes consisting of persons whom the authority considers to be, in general, in financial need. <p>Therefore, the local authority must have a system in place to allow a person to make the request.</p> | |
| <p>Agenda Item 9 Non-Domestic Rate Discretionary Relief Policy</p> <p>Report of Assistant Director for Finance & Section 151 Officer</p> <p>Recommendations</p> | <p>Resolved</p> <p>(1) That the contents of the reviewed policy for Non-Domestic Rate Discretionary Rate Relief be noted.</p> | <p>The Non-Domestic Rate Discretionary Rate Relief policy has not been reviewed for several years. It is good practice to review policies to ensure they remain relevant and in line with supporting the delivery of the Council's</p> | <p>Option 1: To not approve the discretionary rate relief policy. Members could choose not to agree the proposed policy, but it would mean that we wouldn't be able to continue to support local</p> | <p>None</p> |

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| <p>The Executive resolves:</p> <p>1.1 To note the contents of the reviewed policy for Non-Domestic Rate Discretionary Rate Relief.</p> <p>1.2 To approve the policy for Non-Domestic Rate Discretionary Rate Relief.</p> | <p>(2) That the policy for Non-Domestic Rate Discretionary Rate Relief be approved.</p> | <p>policies. It is recommended that the policy is endorsed by Executive to conform with legislation.</p> | <p>businesses, charities and voluntary organisations and would also reduce our financial flexibility in the future.</p> <p>The local authority must have a system in place to allow a person to make the request.</p> | |
| <p>Agenda Item 10 Local Government Productivity Plan</p> <p>Report of Assistant Director of Finance & Section 151 Officer</p> <p>Recommendations</p> <p>The Executive resolves:</p> | <p>Resolved</p> <p>(1) That the Productivity Plan be approved for submission to the Government.</p> | <p>The council is required to submit a productivity plan to Government which has been endorsed by Members. This productivity plan answers the questions raised by the Local Government Minister at the time the productivity plan was requested.</p> | <p>Option1: The alternative option is to not submit a productivity plan to the Government. This is not recommended as submission of a productivity plan is a requirement of the Government.</p> | <p>None</p> |

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| <p>1.1 To approve the Productivity Plan for submission to the Government.</p> | | | | |
| <p>Agenda Item 11 Internal Audit and Counter Fraud Provision</p> <p>Report of Assistant Director of Finance & Section 151 Officer</p> <p>Recommendations</p> <p>The Executive resolves:</p> <p>1.1 To agree for the council to pay a £20k fee to join Veritau Public Sector Limited and become a member in the company and delegate authority to the Assistant Director of Finance (S151 Officer) to sign the members’</p> | <p>Resolved</p> <p>(1) That it be agreed the council pay a £20k fee to join Veritau Public Sector Limited and become a member in the company and delegate authority to the Assistant Director of Finance (S151 Officer) to sign the members’ agreement and service contract with Veritau Public Sector Limited and any subsequent paperwork required to become a member.</p> <p>(2) That the Assistant</p> | <p>There are very limited options available to a district council to provide a low-cost internal audit and counter fraud function. The option to join a LGWOC in the form of Veritau Public Sector Limited appears to be both the most cost effective, value for money approach whilst also providing significant levels of stability through having a significant level of skills and capacity across its workforce.</p> | <p>Option 1: In house The in house option is not recommended for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant additional cost compared to budget • Significant difficulties in recruiting and retaining staff • Overall lack of resilience in the service <p>Option 2: Other Local Authority Provider The current arrangement with OCC is via an SLA and this could be replicated with another local authority via a section</p> | |

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| <p>agreement and service contract with Veritau Public Sector Limited and any subsequent paperwork required to become a member.</p> <p>1.2 To appoint the Assistant Director of Finance (S151 Officer) to the board of Veritau Public Sector Limited as a director of the company.</p> | <p>Director of Finance (S151 Officer) be appointed to the board of Veritau Public Sector Limited as a director of the company.</p> | | <p>113 arrangement. A number of LAs were approached and the majority indicated they would not be able to provide a service to the council. Of the two authorities initial discussion was had with, neither authority would be able to provide a full Internal Audit and Counter Fraud service immediately and the charge for the service would exceed the current budget.</p> <p>Option 3: Open Market Procurement An approach could be made to the open market but this is likely to cost significantly more than the current budget with no corresponding increase in service levels so is not</p> | |

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| | | | anticipated to provide value for money and is also likely to cost significantly more than the proposed option. | |
| <p>Agenda Item 12 Finance Monitoring Report May 2024</p> <p>Report of Assistant Director Finance & Section 151 Officer</p> <p>Recommendations</p> <p>The Executive resolves:</p> <p>1.1 To consider and note the contents of the council's financial management report as at May 2024.</p> <p>1.2 To approve the use of reserve requests set</p> | <p>Resolved</p> <p>(1) That the contents of the council's financial management report as at the end of May 2024 be noted.</p> <p>(2) That the use of reserve requests as set out in Appendix 5 of the report be approved.</p> <p>(3) That the write offs totalling £398,796.89 as set out in exempt Appendix 6 be approved.</p> | <p>This report provides an update on the council's financial positions as at May 2024 and seeks Executive agreement where required in accordance with the Constitution.</p> | <p>Option 1: This report summarises the council's forecast financial position up to the end of March 2025, therefore there are no alternative options to consider.</p> | <p>None</p> |

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| <p>out in Appendix 5.</p> <p>1.3 To approve the write offs totalling £398,796.89 set out in exempt Appendix 6.</p> <p>1.4 To approve the reprofile of the following capital project beyond the 2024/25 financial year, this has already been assumed in Appendix 1: 40296 – S106 Ambrosden Outdoor Sports - £0.130m</p> <p>1.5 To approve the consolidation of the three projects relating to North Oxfordshire Academy (40309 – S106 NOA Improvements - £0.678m, 40010 – North Oxfordshire</p> | <p>(4) That the reprofile of the following capital project beyond the 2024/25 financial year (already been assumed in Appendix 1 to the report) be approved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 40296 – S106 Ambrosden Outdoor Sports - £0.130m <p>(5) That the consolidation of the three projects relating to North Oxfordshire Academy (40309 – S106 NOA Improvements - £0.678m, 40010 – North Oxfordshire Academy Astro turf - £0.134m and 40323 – NOA 3G Pitch Development -</p> | | | |

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| <p>Academy Astro turf - £0.134m and 40323 – NOA 3G Pitch Development - £1.600m), note the total project cost is now expected to be £1.600m, and approve the reprofile of the project beyond the 2024/25 financial year. This has already been assumed in Appendix 1.</p> | <p>£1.600m) be approved and it be noted the total project cost was now expected to be £1.600m, and the reprofile of the project beyond the 2024/25 financial year (already assumed in Appendix 1 to the report) be approved.</p> | | | |
| <p>Agenda Item 14 Finance Monitoring Report May 2024 - Exempt Appendix 6</p> | <p>Agreed under item 12</p> | <p>Agreed under item 12</p> | <p>Agreed under item 12</p> | <p>None</p> |
| <p>Agenda Item 15 Castle Quay Relocation</p> | <p>Resolved</p> | <p>Completion of the project works will enable the Council</p> | <p>Option 1: Not make the contract award has been</p> | <p>None</p> |

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| <p>Project - Award of Tender</p> <p>Exempt report of Corporate Director Resources</p> | <p>(1) That authority be delegated to the Assistant Director Property, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources, Monitoring Officer and S151 Officer, to award the contract to undertake the strip-out and refurbishment works required to create the new office facilities at Castle Quay once the evaluation of tender submissions has been concluded.</p> <p>(2) That authority be delegated to the Assistant Director Law and Governance to enter into the call off contract and</p> | <p>move to new offices at Castle Quay. The new offices, located in an easily accessible location, will be better suited to modern ways of working and service delivery and will help the Council reduce its carbon footprint.</p> <p>The Scope of Works was developed following consultation with Council staff and an independent project team provided the resource and advice needed to develop and finalise the Scope of Works and prepare the tender documentation.</p> <p>Delegating approval to the Assistant Director Property, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder, Monitoring Officer and S151 Officer, to award the contract will enable</p> | <p>rejected as an option because the Council has already made the decision to move to Castle Quay and the space identified needs to be altered and fitted out to make suitable for Council operations.</p> <p>Option 2: Retender the works required with a lower specification has been rejected as an option because of the time needed to complete the exercise and which would mean the Council is not able to move to the new offices by its planned completion date.</p> | |

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| | associated agreements in this connection. | the Council to meet its target move date. | | |