

Cherwell District Council

Executive

Minutes of a meeting of the Executive held at Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury, OX15 4AA, on 2 July 2012 at 6.30 pm

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

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 Michael Gibbard, Lead Member for Planning
Councillor Tony Ilott, Lead Member for Public Protection
Councillor D M Pickford, Lead Member for Housing

Also Present: Councillor Patrick Cartledge, Leader of the Labour Group
Councillor Tim Emptage, Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group

Apologies for absence: Councillor Nicholas Turner, Lead Member for Performance and Customers

Officers: Sue Smith, Chief Executive
Ian Davies, Director of Community and Environment
Martin Henry, Director of Resources / Section 151 Officer
Kevin Lane, Head of Law and Governance / Monitoring Officer
Ed Potter, Head of Environmental Services
Natasha Clark, Team Leader, Democratic and Elections

26 **Declarations of Interest**

Members declared interests in the following agenda items:

8. Local Government Resources Review and Welfare Reform Overview
Councillor G A Reynolds, Disclosable Pecuniary Interest, as a Landlord.

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

There were no petitions or requests to address the meeting.

28 **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

29 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 June 2012 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

30 **Low Carbon Energy Strategy 2012 and Use of Natural Resources**

The Head of Environmental Services submitted a report which sought consideration of the newly drafted Low Carbon Environmental Strategy 2012 as well as the progress of the Use of Natural Resources Group in delivering the Council's Low Carbon Management Plan.

In introducing the report, the Lead Member for Clean and Green explained that Low Carbon Environmental Strategy 2012 built on the Council's previous Environmental Strategy. It would help further the success of carbon reduction and energy saving work internally as well as across the district. The Strategy was divided into three main sections "Leading by Example", "Sustainable Communities – Our district – Our future" and "Working in Partnership and encouraging low carbon initiatives" and an action plan. The Lead Member for Clean and Green advised Executive that a one page summary would be circulated to all Members.

Councillor Patrick Cartledge, Leader of the Labour Group, addressed Executive and welcomed the report and the work being taken to address climate change. He commented that the Strategy focussed on Cherwell District Council and stressed the importance of encouraging local businesses to tackle climate change.

In response to the Labour Group Leaders' comments, the Lead Member for Clean and Green explained that the focus had been on Cherwell District Council and the Council had been leading the way. It was acknowledged that it was difficult to assess the impact and agreed that officers be requested to request the inclusion of the Low Carbon Energy Strategy 2012 on the agenda of meetings of the Banbury Chamber of Commerce and Bicester Chamber of Commerce.

Executive requested that their thanks to officers for their hard work in producing the Low Carbon Energy Strategy 2012 and their work as part of the Use of Natural Resources Group.

Resolved

- (1) That the Low Carbon Environmental Strategy 2012 and its action plan be approved.
- (2) That the achievements of the Use of Natural Resources Group in delivering the Carbon Management Plan in 2011/12 be noted.
- (3) That future initiatives of the Use of Natural Resources Group in delivering the Carbon Management Plan in 2012/13 be noted.

- (4) That officers be requested to request the inclusion of the Low Carbon Energy Strategy 2012 on the agenda of meetings of the Banbury Chamber of Commerce and Bicester Chamber of Commerce.

Reasons

Key to the internal and external environmental performance of the Council is the Low Carbon Environmental Strategy

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

Key to reducing energy costs and emissions is the Low Carbon Environmental Strategy as well as the Carbon Management Plan

Options

Option One To approve the Low Carbon Strategy 2012 and its action plan as well as the forward plan for the Use of Natural Resources Group

Option Two To reject

Option Three To ask officers to modify the proposals by setting lower emissions targets, recognising that this would conflict with public and national government expectations

Banbury Brighter Futures

The Director of Environment and Community submitted a report which sought consideration of a review of the second full year of the Brighter Futures Programme in Banbury and the proposed emphasis in the third and subsequent years.

In introducing the report, the Lead Member for Banbury Brighter Futures advised Executive that the programme had made significant progress with effective multi-agency focus and joint actions during the two years the programme had been running.

Members acknowledged the good work that had been undertaken and achievements to date and stressed the importance of maintaining the impetus as the project had been envisaged as a long term programme.

Councillor Patrick Cartledge, Leader of the Labour Group, addressed Executive and welcomed the report and the efforts being made to tackle the cycle of deprivation but raised concerns that the project did not have a long term vision. He also commented on the potential impact of the welfare reforms and queried how these would be addressed,

In response to the Labour Group Leaders' comments, the Lead Member for Banbury Brighter Futures explained that the Members and officers involved in the project were aware of the changes and would be proactive to address the potential impact.

Members noted that due to the multi-agency approach, there was an element of reliance on partners for delivery and stressed the importance of ensuring ongoing adequate resource for the project.

Resolved

- (1) That the good progress made in the second year of the Brighter Futures Programme be noted.
- (2) That the areas of emphasis and proposed activity in 2012/13 be supported.
- (3) That further reports as appropriate on progress be received.

Reasons

The Brighter Futures in Banbury programme will only be effective if it is targeted, long-term, multi-agency in nature and clear on its purpose and outcomes. A common understanding amongst all relevant agencies of what can and should be done underpins the proposals for 2012.

Options

Option One Adopt the recommendations as set out

Option Two Amend/add to the areas of focus for 2012/13

32 Local Government Resources Review and Welfare Reform Overview

The Head of Finance and Procurement submitted a report which summarise the Local Government Resources Review project and provides a welfare reform overview.

In introducing the report, the Lead Member for Financial Management provided an overview of the appendices to the report which provided detailed information on localised council tax support, business rates localisation, welfare reform and universal credit and the implications and options for the council.

Members were advised that as new data was being received all the time, regular updates and would be provided. Additionally, all Members would be offered the opportunity to attend training seminars on the issues presented by both the Local Government Resources Review and Welfare Reform.

Councillor Tim Emptage, Leader of Liberal Democrat Group, addressed Executive and thanked officers for a succinct report which covered the many

changes arising from the Local Government Resources Review and Welfare Reform. The Liberal Democratic Group Leader commented that it appeared the same groups of people would be affected by all changes and stressed the importance of alleviating the burden on vulnerable groups. He sought assurance that there would be effective consultation and Members would be kept informed.

The Leader of the Council confirmed that all Group Leaders would be briefed and kept up to date on matters.

Councillor Patrick Cartledge, Leader of the Labour Group, addressed Executive and highlighted that there would be tremendous financial implications on both the Council and residents across the district.

In response to the Labour Group Leader's questions regarding a possible countywide council tax localisation scheme, the Leader of the Council acknowledged that there would be benefits in having a countywide scheme and talks were at an early stage.

The Leader of the Council further commented that it was important for the Council to have strong policies which co-operated with each other to support residents in the current economic climate.

Resolved

- (1) That the contents of the report and the initial indications of the impact for the Council be noted.
- (2) That the consultation and timetable for Council Tax support be approved.
- (3) That, in principle, an application for pooling with Oxfordshire councils for Business Rates localisation be approved.
- (4) That it be noted that further report would be presented in September 2012 outlining progress and the impact on the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

Reasons

This report provides members with information on the Local Government Resource Review and Welfare Reform and potential implications for the Council, residents and services.

Options

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| Option One | To review and note the current situation and that further reviews will be likely. |
| Option Two | To approve or reject the recommendations above. |

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The meeting ended at 7.55 pm

Chairman:

Date: