

Council Minute Book
Monday 15 October 2012

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Please note that the minutes of this meeting will follow as it is being held after the publication of the agenda.

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

31 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

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.

The meeting ended at 7.55 pm

Chairman:

Date:

Cherwell District Council

Executive

Minutes of a meeting of the Executive held at Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury, OX15 4AA, on 3 September 2012 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 Protection
Councillor D M Pickford, Lead Member for Housing
Councillor Nicholas Turner, Lead Member for Performance and Customers
- Also Present: Councillor Andrew Beere (in place of Councillor Patrick Cartledge, Leader of the Labour Group)
Councillor Sean Woodcock (in place of Councillor Patrick Cartledge, Leader of the Labour Group)
- Apologies for absence: Councillor Patrick Cartledge, Leader of the Labour Group
Councillor Tim Emptage, Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group
- Officers: Sue Smith, Chief Executive
Calvin Bell, Director of Development
Ian Davies, Director of Community and Environment
Martin Henry, Director of Resources / Section 151 Officer
Kevin Lane, Head of Law and Governance / Monitoring Officer
Jo Pitman, Head of Transformation
Chris Rothwell, Head of Community Services
Ed Potter, Head of Environmental Services
Gavin Halligan-Davis, Community and Corporate Planning Manager
Pat Simpson, Programme Manager
Stuart Cruickshank, Depot & Transport Manager
James Doble, Democratic and Elections Manager
Lesley Farrell, Assistant Democratic and Elections Officer

33 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

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

There were no petitions or requests to address the meeting.

35 **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

36 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 2 July 2012 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

37 **Design and Conservation Strategy for Cherwell**

The Head of Strategic Planning and the Economy submitted a report which sought approval of the Design and Conservation Strategy for Cherwell.

In introducing the report, the Lead Member for Planning applauded its content. Cherwell boasts a rich heritage and the purpose of the strategy was to protect local heritage and promote high quality design. The Strategy fitted with the draft Local Plan for development and the National Planning Policy Framework. The Strategy had been subject to public consultation and a number of bodies had been encouraged by content.

Resolved

- (1) That the content of the Design and Conservation Strategy be noted.
- (2) That the Design and Conservation Strategy for Cherwell be adopted.

Reasons

The strategy sets out the Council's remit in the areas of design and conservation, illustrates what has been achieved and what we will strive to achieve in the future. The document covers a three year period from September 2012 to March 2015. The Strategy has been subject to consultation and fits with the draft Local Plan. Accepting the recommendation is believed to be the best way forward.

Options

- | | |
|---------------------|--|
| Option One | To accept the recommendation |
| Option Two | To not accept the recommendation, thereby not establishing and setting clear priorities for the way the Council approaches design and conservation matters for the next three years. |
| Option Three | To not accept the recommendation and refer the document back to the Head of Strategic Planning and the Economy for further alterations. |

38 **Banbury Museum Trust Project Developments**

The Head of Community Services submitted a report which highlighted the work of the Banbury Museum Trust Project Board in developing an independent organization to run the services and the costs associated with this process.

Executive was advised that the Museum Project Board had agreed to seek trust status. Following an extensive recruitment process, Mr Bob Langton had been recommended as an appropriate appointment for Shadow Board Chairman. In terms ensuring the probity of the transfer of the service to the independent organisation, specialist and independent advice must be made available to the Shadow Board, the costs of which would be met from a fund established specifically for that purpose.

Resolved

- (1) That the selection of Mr Bob Langton to the role of Shadow Board Chairman be approved.
- (2) That the Deputy Leader be approved as the Council's nominated representative on the Shadow Trust Board.
- (3) That a budget of £20,000 to enable the project to be delivered be approved.

Reasons

The Executive at its meeting on 3 October 2011 agreed in principle the transfer of Banbury Museum to independent status, knowing this preserves a valuable and visited cultural asset for local residents whilst securing some financial benefit to the Council.

The first step towards independence is the creation of a Shadow Board. The interview panel for the Shadow Board Chairman considered the candidates against a range of stringent criteria covering previous experience and expertise in a comparable role as well as personal interest in the cultural sector. They selected Mr Bob Langton as their preferred candidate having scored highly against the majority of the person specification for the role.

Specialist and independent advice must be made available to the Shadow Board to ensure the probity of the transfer, the costs of which will be met from a fund established specifically for that purpose.

Options

Option One To continue without any further independent and specialist advisors; and to make alternate recommendation on appointment of Shadow Trust Board Chairman and the Council's nominated representative.

Option Two To engage external and independent advice and

approve the appointment of the Shadow Trust Board Chairman and the Council's representative to the Shadow Board as set out in this report.

39 **Update on Major Programmes**

The Head of Transformation submitted a report which updated Members on Major Programmes and progress toward implementing robust governance of major change projects.

In introducing the report, the Chairman advised that it was good discipline to have a proper regime to look after projects with the same reporting frame for both Cherwell District Council and South Northamptonshire. As additional time and commitment was necessary by Lead Members, Member Champions should be appointed by the Chief Executive to maintain stability.

Resolved

- (1) That the progress in relation to the implementation of governance standards for the 9 major projects which Members have identified as key to the delivery of regeneration and economic development (the Place Programme) and change (Transformation Programme) for Cherwell District Council and South Northamptonshire Council be noted.
- (2) That the Member champions assigned to each of the programme boards be noted.
- (3) That authority be delegated to the Chief Executive be delegated in consultation with the Leader of the Council to approve member champions as required.

Reasons

Members have already approved the general approach to maximising the effective use of scarce resource through the organisation of projects into programmes. This report seeks simply to update members.

Options

Option One To agree the recommendations as set out

Option One To amend the recommendations

40 **Performance and Risk Management Framework 2012/13 First Quarter Performance Report**

The Director of Resources and the Interim Corporate Performance Manager submitted a report which covered the Council's performance for the period 1 April to 30 June 2012 as measured through the Performance Management Framework.

In introducing the report, the Lead Member for Performance Management and Improvement explained that the report showed a full summary of the performance for the first quarter which indicated a satisfactory progress at 93.7%. There was only one red which was on the public perception of street cleanliness for the annual customer satisfaction survey results were due in September/October. Executive was assured that overall standards had not fallen and the results would give an independent third party view.

Members commented that there was considerable repetition of statistics which did not change every quarter and agreed that a review should take place by all Lead Members with their Head of Service to decide which indicators the report should focus on in each quarter.

Resolved

(1) That the following achievements be noted:

Cherwell: A District of Opportunity

- Actions are on-going to promote apprenticeships and other routes to work and education. In June, 6 regular Job Clubs were held: 2 in Banbury, 3 in Bicester and 1 in Kidlington. 4 'Career & Opportunity Gateway' Job Clubs were held at the Mill Cottage on Wednesdays. 4 additional Job Club workshops were introduced in June, on Thursdays at the Mill Cottage. This brings the total number of job clubs for Q1 to 25. A successful Job Fair (to allow job seekers to meet employers) was also held in Banbury in April.
- Progress is currently on track for the delivery of 100 affordable homes in the District and current risks to delivery are being managed, in particular, further assessments are being made of the contribution the South West Bicester development can make by year end. The schemes at Dashwood Road School in Banbury and Bryan House in Bicester are due to complete by early September with official scheme openings happening later that month. 31 homes delivered in Quarter 1 against target of 27.
- Key strategic sites for the provision of new commercial and leisure facilities in Banbury have been clearly identified and initial consideration has been given to potential development strategy through some initial soft market testing. Sites also form on-going process of completing necessary Supplementary Planning Documents and master planning, running alongside the production and publication of the Core Strategy. These sites are being project managed at present through the Banbury Development Group.
- Bicester Town Centre continues to progress well. A name for the Centre is urgently required to progress marketing of the units. Minor

changes now required to entrance/layout of the new Cinema due to new operator but these can be accommodated by the contractor.

A Cleaner Greener Cherwell

- Very wet first three months have made garden waste tonnages fluctuate wildly with some weeks low tonnages & some very heavy tonnages. Some Environment Agency changes regarding street sweepings may reduce recycling rates by 1% in the future.
- The Annual customer satisfaction survey results due in September/October. Overall standards haven't fallen - entered in Clean Britain awards - results due September 2012 which should give an independent third party view. The Neighbourhood Blitz programme in Banbury continues successfully.
- The Cocoon scheme has secured additional external funding to provide free cavity wall insulation in all cases and free loft insulation in some cases. The Council has been helping to fund the discount on both types of insulation and, in response to the changes in the Cocoon scheme, has been able to revise the way its contribution is used so that all home owners and private landlords in Cherwell can get insulation free. New leaflets have been produced and promotion is on-going.
- The legal agreement and planning permission have been issued and the developers have appointed contractors and are in the process of clearing conditions and obligation requirements to enable a start on site of the Eco-Bicester houses project this year.

A Safe, Healthy and Thriving Cherwell

- Dates were agreed in May for the initial sign up to the Best Bar None Scheme by participating premises and date agreed for completion (November 2012). Although there has been some slippage against target for sign up with potential participants in June, the project is expected to be brought back on track in July/August.
- On-going effective Partnership working through Cherwell Community Safety Partnership (CCSP), Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) and voluntary sector. Joint Agency Tasking & Co-ordination group (JATAC) working with Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) Hub in identifying individuals and information sharing for future interventions.
- Earthworks at South West Bicester Sports pitches have been delayed by wet weather but still expect to seed and plant the area from September.
- Preferred bidder for the replacement community hospital in Bicester on the existing site announced by the Primary Care Trust (PCT). Planning application submitted. On-going dialogue between the PCT and Strategic Health Authorities (SHA) to progress the project

An Accessible, Value for Money Council

- Savings of c £600,000 of the £800,000 secured and plans are in place to address the remainder.
 - Customer survey commissioned, we will have a challenge to bring up satisfaction rates in the current economic climate so there is some risk associated with this performance objective.
 - The website improvement project is undertaking final checks with the stakeholders before making it available to the public. Time scales beginning in Quarter 2.
- (2) That officers be requested to report in the second quarter on the following items where performance was below target or there are emerging issues or risks.

Corporate Scorecard – Customer Feedback

Telephone call response rates – Target was reduced to 1min from 1min10 (last year's target) following significant improvements in response times. Appointments moving contact from Face to Face to Phones and a 5 week backlog of Benefit processing work has generated increased customer contact, this combined with reduced staffing has resulted in an increase in response times during the first quarter. A significant increased number of calls received, 3000 on this time last year.

- (3) That the responses to issues raised in the end of year performance report be noted.
- (4) That a review take place of all indicators and the frequency of reporting and that this process includes the lead member meeting with their Heads of Service to consider whether indicators should be reported quarterly, half yearly, annually or no longer measured'.

Reasons

This report presents the Council's performance against its corporate scorecard for the first quarter of 2012/13. It includes an overview of successes, areas for improvement and emerging issues to be considered.

Options

- Option One**
- (1) To note the many achievements referred to in paragraph 1.3.
 - (2) To request that officers report in the second quarter on the items identified in paragraph 1.4 where performance was below target or there are emerging issues or risks..
 - (3) To agree the responses identified to issues raised in the end of year performance report in paragraph 2.1

or to request additional action or information.

- (4) To identify any further performance or risk related matters for review or consideration in future reports.

Option Two To identify any additional issues for further consideration or review.

41 **Quarter 1 2012/13 Finance Report and Local Government Resources Review Update**

The Head of Finance and Procurement submitted a report which summarised the Council's Revenue and Capital performance for the first 3 months of the financial year 2012/13 and projections for the full 2012/13 period. The report also considered treasury and procurement performance for the first quarter and compares against strategy and action plans. A short update on the Local Government Resources Review (LGRR) Project was also included.

In introducing the report the Lead Member for Financial Management reported on the many achievements of the first quarter. The variances on the revenue and capital projections were within the Council's stated tolerances of +2% / - 5% and all peaks and troughs should even out over the course of the year.

The Joint Procurement Team had been in place since the beginning of July and has been working together on drawing up a joint forward plan to provide savings targets and support a range of programmes across the Councils. Cashable savings had already been made and procurement exercises were also underway with Stratford District Council which would bring financial benefit.

Members were advised that the LGRR was progressing and that the LGRR project team are continuing to meet to model the financial and other implications so that they can feed into the medium term financial forecast and corporate planning.

Resolved

- (1) That the projected revenue & capital position at June 2012 be noted.
- (2) That the Q1 performance against the 2012/13 investment strategy and the financial returns from each of the 3 funds be noted.
- (3) That the contents and the progress against the Corporate Procurement Action Plan and the Procurement savings achieved at June 2012 be noted. .
- (4) That the latest position on the Local Government Resources Review project be noted.

Reasons

This report illustrates the Council's performance against the 2012/13 Financial Targets for Revenue, Capital, Treasury and Procurement Monitoring.

Options

Option One To review current performance levels and considers any actions arising.

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

42 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 paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of that Act.

43 Award of Contract for the Provision of Refuse Collection Vehicles

The Head of Finance and Procurement and Head of Environmental Services submitted an exempt report which sought approval for the purchase of Refuse Collection Vehicles under a Framework until 31 May 2015

In introducing the report the Lead Member for Financial Management advised that the tender had been carried out jointly Oxfordshire City Council and but there was flexibility for other authorities to join in the future.

Members agreed it was a good procurement exercise that showed what could be achieved tendering with other councils.

Resolved

- (1) That the purchase of the Council's 10 refuse collection vehicles from 2013 – 2015 using the Government Procurement Service vehicle procurement framework (ref 859) in collaboration with Oxford City Council be approved.

Reasons

A procurement exercise has been undertaken in the form of a mini competition for orders of refuse collection vehicles until 31 May 2015. Cherwell District Council and Oxford City Council have aggregated their refuse collections vehicles requirements to secure the best possible deal for refuse collection vehicles. The new contract reduces the expected capital and revenue requirements.

Executive - 3 September 2012

The meeting ended at 7.30 pm

Chairman:

Date:

COUNCIL

RECORD OF LEAD MEMBER DECISIONS FOR THE PERIOD JULY TO SEPTEMBER 2012

15 October 2012

Area of Responsibility

Decision Subject Matter

Leader of the Council

**Appointment of Representatives to Outside
Bodies 2012/13**

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Cherwell District Council

Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee held at Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury, OX15 4AA, on 27 June 2012 at 6.30 pm

Present: Councillor Trevor Stevens (Chairman)
Councillor Mike Kerford-Byrnes (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Andrew Fulljames
Councillor Barry Wood

Substitute Members: Councillor Patrick Cartledge (is substitute for Councillor Andrew Beere)

Also Present: Councillor Ken Atack, Lead Member for Financial Management

Apologies for absence: Councillor Andrew Beere
Councillor Colin Clarke
Councillor Lawrie Stratford
Councillor Rose Stratford

Officers: Martin Henry, Director of Resources / Section 151 Officer
Karen Curtin, Head of Finance and Procurement
Chris Dickens, Chief Internal Auditor
Nicola Jackson, Audit Manager, Audit Commission
Edward Cooke, Interim Technical Accountant
Gavin Lane, Democratic and Elections Officer

1 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

2 Petitions and Requests to Address the Meeting

There were no petitions or requests to address the meeting.

3 Urgent Business

There was no urgent business.

4 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 19 March 2012 and 16 May 2012 were agreed as correct records and signed by the Chairman.

5 **Statement of Accounts Approval**

The Committee considered a report of the Head of Finance and Procurement which sought agreement of the Statement of Accounts 2011 – 12.

The Head of Finance and Procurement reported that the informal review meeting on 20 June 2012 raised a total of twenty-two questions and that all of the editorial changes proposed, including signage and brackets, had been made.

Resolved

- (1) That the report be noted.
- (2) That the outcomes from the informal review meeting on 20 June 2012 be noted.
- (3) That it be agreed that the “subject to audit” Statement of Accounts approval sign-off be delegated to the Chief Financial Officer for signing on, or before, the statutory deadline of 30 June 2012.

6 **Annual Governance Statement 2011/12**

The Committee considered a report of the Head of Finance and Procurement which sought approval of the Annual Governance Statement 2011 – 12.

The Committee was advised that the final draft had been circulated on 26 June 2012 and had been signed by the Chief Executive and Leader of the Council.

Resolved

- (1) That the Annual Governance Statement 2011/12 be approved, subject to audit.

7 **Treasury Management Report**

The Committee considered a report of the Head of Finance and Procurement on the Council’s treasury management performance and compliance with the treasury management policy for the first quarter of 2012 – 13.

The Head of Finance and Procurement stated that the Council had invested £10.5 million and £11.7 million with fund managers Tradition UK and Investec respectively and that a further £51 million was managed in-house.

The Committee was informed that the Council regularly reviewed its banking and investment arrangements and that a report would be presented to the next meeting of the Committee that outlined the current options available.

The Committee was advised that despite recent problems regarding a widespread computer failure at the Council's bank, Natwest, all Council staff received their pay as expected during June 2012.

The Head of Finance and Procurement stated that a report on the Investment Strategy 2012 – 13 would be presented to Full Council in October 2012 and that consequently it would not be considered by the Committee in September 2012.

The Head of Finance and Procurement reported that a report on the Council's investment in Investec would be circulated to the Committee, in addition to a statement on the position at May and June 2012 during the first quarter.

Resolved

- (1) That the contents of the report be noted.
- (2) That it be noted that a report would be presented to the next meeting of the Committee that outlined the current options available to the Council in relation to its banking and investment arrangements.
- (3) That it be noted that a report on the Council's investment in Investec would be circulated to the Committee, in addition to a statement on the position at May and June 2012 during the first quarter.

8 External Audit Progress Report

The Committee considered a report of the Head of Finance and Procurement on the progress of the work undertaken by external audit.

The Committee was advised that a certification exercise regarding benefits claims processed by the Council had concluded that the level of errors identified from the sample testing pushed the Council over the acceptable level of errors expected of a Local Authority.

It was reported that following the certification exercise, further detailed work on 'start dates' and 'employment earnings' was completed and an updated Qualification Letter was presented to the Department for Work and Pensions on 22 May 2012. The letter demonstrated an improved performance by the Council which was now below the upper threshold for local authority errors.

The Committee was informed that the number of these errors was higher than average during 2010 – 11 as a consequence of the transfer to Capita and the fact that claims for housing benefit peaked during the period. Clerical errors could compromise the accuracy of the Council's figures and officers managed Capita in order to ensure that the level of errors remained as low as possible.

It was reported that the Secretary of State would confirm the Council's revised repayment rate in relation to local authority errors in due course.

The Head of Finance and Procurement stated that a report would be presented to the next meeting of the Committee on the level of housing

benefit errors made, including the ratio of errors to the total number of transactions.

Resolved

- (1) That the contents of the progress report be noted.
- (2) That it be noted that a report would be presented to the next meeting of the Committee on the level of housing benefit errors made, including the ratio of errors to the total number of transactions.

9 **Internal Audit Annual Report**

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Finance and Procurement on the Chief Internal Auditor's annual opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the Council's system of internal control.

The Committee was informed that the programme of internal audit work for the year until 31 March 2012 had been completed, with the exception of the planned Joint Member workshop. The work of internal audit had identified 22 low, 19 moderate and 1 high-rated risks that could prevent the Council from achieving its objectives. It was reported that improvements were required in these areas to enhance the efficacy of risk management by the Council.

It was reported that the high-risk issue pertained to the fact that no purchase orders were in place for 84% of invoices received by the Council in year.

The Head of Finance and Procurement stated that this high-risk issue had been addressed within the Council's Annual Governance Statement.

The Committee was advised that the number of internal audit findings and recommendations had reduced considerably with a total number of 42 findings in 2011 – 12, compared to a total of 98 findings in the previous year.

Resolved

- (1) That the Internal Audit Annual Report be approved.

10 **Internal Audit Progress Report**

The Committee considered a report by the Chief Internal Auditor on the progress of the work undertaken by internal audit.

The Committee was advised that a low-risk rating had been issued regarding the Council's IT firewall as a consequence of significant improvements to previously identified issues and the introduction of new robust controls.

The Head of Finance and Procurement stated that improvements to the IT firewall had been reported within the Council's Annual Governance Statement and that a report would be presented at the next meeting of the Committee.

The Chief Internal Auditor reported that, at a national level, Local Authorities had successfully delivered against an ambitious programme of savings during the last financial year without any perceived reduction in the quality of frontline services, although there was notable nervousness regarding further financial pressures beyond the current spending review period.

Resolved

- (1) That the Internal Audit Progress Report be approved.

11 **Subsidy Update**

The Head of Finance and Procurement reported that a full report would be presented to the next meeting of the Committee.

12 **Risk Management**

The Head of Finance and Procurement reported that a full report would be presented to the next meeting of the Committee.

13 **Exclusion of the Press and Public**

Resolved

That under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting to enable consideration of Appendices 1a and 1b of the following item on the grounds that, if the public were present, it would be likely that exempt information falling under provisions of Schedule 12A, Part I, Paragraph 3 would be disclosed to them and that, in all circumstances of the cases, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

14 **Treasury Management Report - Exempt Appendices 1a and 1b**

The Committee considered the exempt annexes to the Report of the Head of Finance and Procurement which updated Members on the Council's investments and counterparties at 30 April 2012.

Resolved

- (1) That the exempt appendices be noted.

The meeting ended at 7.39 am

Chairman:

Date:

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Cherwell District Council

Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee held at Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury, OX15 4AA, on 19 September 2012 at 6.30 pm

Present: Councillor Trevor Stevens (Chairman)
Councillor Mike Kerford-Byrnes (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Andrew Beere
Councillor Colin Clarke
Councillor Andrew Fulljames
Councillor Lawrie Stratford
Councillor Rose Stratford
Councillor Barry Wood

Also Present: Maria Grindley, Audit Commission
Alan Witty, Audit Commission
Charlotte Blisworth, PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP

Officers: Martin Henry, Director of Resources / Section 151 Officer
Karen Curtin, Head of Finance and Procurement
Karen Muir, Technical & Project Accountant
Denise Taylor, Corporate Accountant
Edward Cooke, Interim Technical Accountant
Gavin Lane, Democratic and Elections Officer

15 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

16 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 27 June 2012 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

17 Petitions and Requests to Address the Meeting

There were no petitions or requests at the meeting.

18 Urgent Business

There was no urgent business.

External Audit Annual Governance Report

The District Auditor submitted the External Audit Annual Governance Report.

The Committee heard that due to outstanding work from the Audit Commission, it had not been possible to publish the Annual Governance Report with the agenda and it was tabled in hard-copy for consideration at the meeting.

The Committee was advised that during the Audit, the Audit Manager assigned to the Council by the Audit Commission, Nicola Jackson, applied for and was successful in attaining the position of Corporate Finance Manager for Cherwell District Council and South Northamptonshire Council. In order to safeguard the independence of the audit, Nicola Jackson was replaced as Audit Manager by Alan Witty to complete the audit. Alan Witty undertook a full file review of the work completed by the team during the audit to ensure the report had been independently checked.

The District Auditor reported that the Council's draft financial statements were approved by the Committee on 27 June 2012 and certified by the Council's Director of Resources on 29 June 2012. However, the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011 required that the Committee approve the final version of the Accounts on behalf of the Council by 30 September 2012.

The Committee heard that the District Auditor had concluded that the Council had made proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.

The District Auditor had originally identified an error of £46,000 relating to the rental income from Castle Quays, which had subsequently been corrected.

The Committee was advised that the District Auditor had identified significant risks in relation to recovering funds from Icelandic banks and the failure of the Council's cash collection arrangements to comply with Payment Card Industry data security standards. It was reported that the District Auditor was satisfied that appropriate action on these issues had been agreed with the Council.

The Committee heard that the implementation of joint working arrangements with South Northamptonshire Council had resulted in a number of redundancies during 2011 – 2012. The District Auditor had concluded that the rationale and approval for the redundancies was generally satisfactory, but that the Council had not retained robust evidence to support some of the key decisions made.

In relation to any future severance arrangements, the Committee was informed that a system would be introduced to ensure supporting documentation was available to evidence all decisions made by the Council.

The Committee was advised that three weaknesses of internal control had been identified and resolved with the Council's management, specifically:

- (a) the retention of evidence to support the checking of Capita's work on Council Tax;
- (b) the reconciling of Pay and Display car park income from the Council's machines to its bank account; and
- (c) the reconciling of the Council's Co-op bank account.

The Committee heard that the Audit Commission had paid a rebate of £9,147 to the Council to reflect the attainment of internal efficiency saving, which had reduced the Commission's annual audit fee for 2011 – 2012 to £105,191.

Resolved

- (1) That the matters raised in the draft Annual Governance Report be noted, prior to approval of the 2011 – 2012 financial statements.
- (2) That the adjustments to the financial statements stated in Appendix Three of the Annual Governance Report be noted.
- (3) That the Draft Letter of Management Representation outlined in Appendix Four of the Annual Governance Report be agreed.
- (4) That the Action Plan outlined in Appendix Six of the Annual Governance Report be agreed.

20

Statement of Accounts 2011/12

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Finance and Procurement on the Council's Statement of Accounts 2011 – 2012 following audit by the Audit Commission.

The Committee heard that due to outstanding work from the Audit Commission, it had not been possible to publish the amended Statement of Accounts and Summary Statement of Accounts with the meeting agenda. Both documents were therefore tabled in hard-copy for consideration at the meeting.

The Committee heard that the Summary Statement of Accounts would be updated to reflect any changes and uploaded onto the Council's website.

The Committee heard that the District Auditor had originally identified an error of £46,000 relating to the rental income from Castle Quays, which had subsequently been corrected.

Resolved

- (1) That the proposed amendments to the 2011 – 2012 financial statements be approved.

- (2) That authority to approve the Statement of Accounts 2011- 2012 be delegated to the Director of Resources, in consultation with the Chairman, before the target deadline of 30 September 2012.
- (3) That it be noted that the 2011 – 2012 Annual Report and Summary of Accounts was currently being prepared.
- (4) That the letter to the District Auditor regarding compliance with internal auditing standards, signed by the Chairman on 31 July 2012, be noted.

21 **Consultation Response to the Draft Local Audit Bill**

The Committee considered a report of the Head of Finance and Procurement on the Council's consultation response to the draft Local Audit Bill.

The Committee was advised that the Council's proposed response was broadly supportive of the draft Bill as it would result in a significant reduction in future audit fees and enable the Council to appoint its own auditor.

The Director of Resources reported that officers were of the opinion that the independent auditor panels proposed in the Bill were excessive and unnecessary as politically-balanced Audit Committees should suffice.

The Committee noted that the Council's response identified the district as a rural area and the Director of Resources agreed to clarify what constituted a rural area with the Department for Communities and Local Government.

The Committee heard that the deadline for the Council's response was 31 August 2012 and the Director of Resources agreed to report to Members on the timeframe for the introduction of the proposed Bill.

Resolved

- (1) That the Council's response to the consultation on the Local Audit Bill be noted.

22 **Treasury Management Annual Report 2011-12**

The Committee considered a report of the Head of Finance and Procurement on the Council's Treasury Management Annual Report 2011 - 2012.

The Committee was advised that the Council's return on its investments for the 2011 – 2012 financial year was £1.230 million. Of that interest, a total of £216k had been received in relation to the investment of Eco Town funds.

The Committee heard that the Council's budget was based on an average investment balance of £68 million with an interest rate of 1.06%. However, the actual average balance was £72.56 million with an average return of 1.70%.

The Head of Finance and Procurement reported that the Council had received repayment of £5.7 million of the initial capital investment of £6.5 million held in

the failed Icelandic bank, Glitnir. However, the outstanding balance of £729k remained frozen in a deposit account with Icelandic bank Cronia, at an interest rate of 3.4%.

The Committee was advised that after its current investments with Tradition UK had reached maturity, the Council would not reinvest in this fund.

The Committee heard that at the end of August 2012, the interest received on Council investments was 24% higher than budgeted. This performance was due to a higher level of capital programme slippage from 2011-12 resulting in higher balances than planned for; success in obtaining better rates of interest from the Council's investments; and changes in the balance of funds between the Council's investments with Investec, In House and Tradition UK.

Resolved

- (1) That the performance of the Council's Fund Mangers during 2011 - 2012 be noted.

23 External Audit Progress Report

The Committee considered a report of the Head of Finance and Procurement on the progress of the work undertaken by external audit.

The Committee heard that the Council's transition to Ernst and Young was proceeding smoothly.

Resolved

- (1) That the report be noted.

24 Internal Audit Progress Report

The Committee considered a report by the Chief Internal Auditor on the Internal Audit Progress Report (Quarter1) 2012 - 2013.

The Committee heard that PWC had completed 23 audit days out of a planned 160 and was on track for completion ahead of the year end.

In order to ensure the audit plan remained fit for purpose, the Committee heard that the following revisions had been made:

- (a) a joint review would be undertaken following the merger of the Council's payroll systems with those at South Northants Council.
- (b) a 3-day review of the monitoring and performance mechanisms relating to the Council's leisure contract was to be undertaken, in place of a planned 3-day secondment of a member of the Housing Benefits team to support testing on claims in advance of the Council's subsidy claim.

The Committee was advised that PWC had identified a number of areas where the Council's Capita contract had not been delivered by the supplier or the Council. The Head of Finance and Procurement reported that a full assessment of the contract would be undertaken to determine if contractual requirements were not being met or whether services were not required.

The Committee heard that PWC had undertaken a review of the costs and recharges associated with the Council's Joint Management Team. The review examined the budget information and spend incurred during Quarter 4 of the last financial year. In sum, no issues or errors were identified by the review.

Resolved

- (1) That the report be approved.

25 **Risk Management - First Quarter Review**

The Committee considered a report of the Corporate Performance Manager on the management of the Council's strategic, corporate and partnership risks during the first quarter of the 2012 - 2013 financial year.

The Director of Resources advised the Committee that none of the risk associated with the Council's activities had changed during the first quarter and, consequently, that there were no particular risk issues to raise with the Committee.

The Committee stressed that the process of continual improvement required that the Council's risk register should be a living document, subject to ongoing revision. In relation to the risk register, future reports to the Committee should identify any potential significant risks facing the Council and any plans to offset these risks. In addition, future reports should not only identify any changes to the register, but also explain any risks that had not changed.

Resolved

- (1) That the Strategic, Corporate and Partnership risk register be noted.

26 **Subsidy Update**

The Committee considered a verbal update from the Head of Finance and Procurement on the Council's subsidy.

The Committee heard that a full report would be presented to its next meeting, but that £116k of the Council's subsidy needed to be repaid. The burden of the repayment was to be met equally by the Council and Capita and was less than had been predicted by the Finance Team. An action plan had been devised to offset the possibility of such a problem reoccurring in the future.

The Committee requested that a press release be issued once the arrangements for the subsidy repayment had been confirmed.

Resolved

- (1) That the verbal update be noted.

27

Exclusion of Public and Press

Resolved

That under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting to enable consideration of Appendices 2 and 3 of the following item on the grounds that, if the public were present, it would be likely that exempt information falling under provisions of Schedule 12A, Part I, Paragraph 3 would be disclosed to them and that, in all circumstances of the cases, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

28

Treasury Management Report - Exempt Appendices 2 and 3

The Committee considered the exempt annexes to the report of the Head of Finance and Procurement on the Council's Treasury Management Annual Report 2011 - 2012.

Resolved

- (1) That the exempt appendices be noted.

The meeting ended at 8.30 pm

Chairman:

Date:

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Cherwell District Council

Personnel Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Personnel Committee held at Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury, OX15 4AA, on 12 September 2012 at 6.30 pm

Present: Councillor Lynn Pratt (Chairman)
Councillor Melanie Magee (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Ken Atack
Councillor Norman Bolster
Councillor Surinder Dhesi
Councillor Mike Kerford-Byrnes
Councillor G A Reynolds
Councillor Alaric Rose
Councillor Lynda Thirzie Smart
Councillor Barry Wood

Substitute Members: Councillor Victoria Irvine (In place of Councillor Rose Stratford)
Councillor Alastair Milne Home (In place of Councillor Lawrie Stratford)

Apologies for absence: Councillor Lawrie Stratford
Councillor Rose Stratford

Officers: Jo Pitman, Head of Transformation
Stephanie Rew, HR Manager
Louise Aston, Team Leader, Democratic and Elections

11 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interests.

12 Petitions and Requests to Address the Meeting

There were no petitions or requests to address the meeting.

13 Urgent Business

There was no urgent business.

14 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 June 2012 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

15 **Employment Statistics Quarter 1 2012/13**

The Head of Transformation submitted a report detailing the employment statistics, by Directorate, for information and monitoring purposes.

Resolved

- (1) That the report be noted.

The meeting ended at 7.00 pm

Chairman:

Date:

Cherwell District Council

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held at Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury, OX15 4AA, on 24 July 2012 at 6.30 pm

Present: Councillor Ann Bonner (Chairman)
Councillor Daniel Sames (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Colin Clarke
Councillor Tim Emptage
Councillor Melanie Magee
Councillor Alastair Milne Home
Councillor Jon O'Neill
Councillor Nigel Randall
Councillor Lawrie Stratford

Substitute Members: Councillor Lynn Pratt (In place of Councillor Chris Heath)

Also Present: Councillor Barry Wood

Apologies for absence: Councillor Chris Heath
Councillor Leslie F Sibley

Officers: Jenny Barker, Major Developments Team Leader /Eco Bicester Project Manager
Dave Parry, Interim Democratic and Elections Officer
Natasha Clark, Team Leader, Democratic and Elections

7 **Declarations of Interest**

Members declared interests in the following agenda items.

7. Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2012/13 (RAF Bicester)
Councillor Jon O'Neill, Personal, employee of Royal Academy of Engineering.

8 **Urgent Business**

There was no urgent business.

9 **Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 19th June 2012 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

10 **Eco Bicester: A Garden City of the Future**

The Chairman welcomed Councillor Barry Wood (Leader of the Council with Executive responsibility for this area) and the Eco-Bicester Project Manager to the meeting.

The Committee received a presentation from the Eco-Bicester Project Manager, on the background to the recent Executive decision to explore the possible identification of Eco-Bicester as a next generation garden city.

The Eco Towns programme was originally launched in 2007, with North West (NW) Bicester being identified as an Eco Town location in 2009. Since then work had taken place to provide highly sustainable new developments in NW Bicester, together with other developments elsewhere in the Town. However, recent Government guidance no longer referred to Eco Towns, but instead encouraged development that met the 8 Garden City principles, and a prospectus detailing how to apply these principles was due later in the year. As there were many areas where the Eco-Town standards were mirrored in the new Garden City initiative, it had been agreed to explore the opportunity of securing Government monies through identifying Eco Bicester as a next generation Garden City. The Eco Bicester Strategic Delivery Board had also considered this matter and were supportive of exploring the opportunity.

Councillor Barry Wood commented that although the new initiative could be seen as essentially a re-branding exercise and perhaps also an attempt to stimulate the provision of infrastructure projects, if it provided an opportunity to access Government funding, the Council should do all it could to secure investment in the District.

The Committee agreed the matter should be investigated further and, although it was also noted that care was needed to ensure expectations were not raised at this early stage, it was requested that a further update be provided to the Committee upon publication of the Governments Garden Cities prospectus, together with information on the rolling-out of the Eco-Bicester project.

Resolved

- (1) That the decision of the Executive to explore with the Department of Communities and Local Government the identification of Eco Bicester as a next generation Garden City be endorsed.
- (2) That the Committee receive a further report on the initiative upon publication of the Governments Garden Cities prospectus, together with information on the rolling-out of the Eco-Bicester project.

11 **Draft Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2011/12**

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Law and Governance which presented the draft Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report, 2011/12.

Resolved

- (1) That the Overview and Scrutiny Annual report be noted.
- (2) That delegated authority be granted to the Head of Law and Governance, in consultation with the former and current Chairmen of the two Scrutiny Committees, to complete the forward and make any minor amendments to the annual report before submission to Council.

12 **Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2012/13**

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Law and Governance which presented the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2012/13

Forward Plan

The Committee agreed that there were no items on the Forward Plan for August to November 2012 that they wished to include on their Work Programme in 2012/13.

Potential Work Programme items 2012/13

Impact of Employment Initiatives

Noting that the Council had contributed to various employment initiatives, it was agreed that the Committee should receive a briefing advising on what outcomes had been achieved as a result.

Identification of Service Priorities and Budget Resources

Consideration was given to the means by which the Committee might influence the identification of service priorities and budget resources. It was agreed that Councillor Lawrie Stratford would work with officers in preparing a scoping document.

Air Quality

It was agreed that the previously identified item regarding Air Quality be scheduled for consideration at the October meeting of the Committee.

Planning and Building Control Enforcement

It was agreed that, at the October meeting, the Committee receive a briefing on the operation of the Council's Enforcement service.

Agenda for 11 September, 2012

Banbury Brighter Futures

Noting that there would be a briefing on this item at the next meeting, the Committee agreed that the Lead Member for Housing Services (Councillor

Pickford) be invited to attend, and the briefing should include figures for the current number of NEET's (young people not in Employment, Education or Training).

RAF Bicester

It was agreed that the Committee should receive some briefing material prior to consideration of this item at the next meeting.

National Benefit Changes

It was agreed that all members of the Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board be invited to attend the next meeting for consideration of this item and that a representative from the Housing Team also be invited to attend.

Mission Statement

The Chairman asked the Committee to note and endorse the following Mission Statement for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

'In the face of budgetary pressures, the role of the Scrutiny Committees is even more important in ensuring the needs of our service users are at the forefront of policy. Instead of being in the main retrospective, we are now moving towards considering key policy proposals as part of the decision making process. Scrutiny must now have a central role in assessing whether the Authority is meeting targets set out in the Core Business Strategy and ensuring savings are delivered in the most effective way.'

Resolved

- (1) That there were no items in the current version of the Forward Plan (August to November, 2012) to include on the Work Programme for 2012/13.
- (2) That it be noted that the October meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee will now be held on Tuesday, 9 October, 2012.
- (3) That the following Mission statement for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be noted and endorsed:-

'In the face of budgetary pressures, the role of the Scrutiny Committees is even more important in ensuring the needs of our service users are at the forefront of policy. Instead of being in the main retrospective, we are now moving towards considering key policy proposals as part of the decision making process. Scrutiny must now have a central role in assessing whether the Authority is meeting targets set out in the Core Business Strategy and ensuring savings are delivered in the most effective way.'

The meeting ended at 7.55 pm

Chairman:

Date:

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Cherwell District Council

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held at Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury, OX15 4AA, on 11 September 2012 at 6.30 pm

Present: Councillor Ann Bonner (Chairman)
Councillor Daniel Sames (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Tim Emptage
Councillor Chris Heath
Councillor Melanie Magee
Councillor Alastair Milne Home
Councillor Jon O'Neill
Councillor Nigel Randall

Substitute Members: Councillor Lynn Pratt, as substitute for Councillor Colin Clarke

Also Present: Councillor G A Reynolds - Deputy Leader
Councillor John Donaldson - Lead member for Banbury Brighter Futures
Councillor D M Pickford - Lead Member for Housing
Councillor Nicholas Mawer
Councillor Sean Woodcock

Apologies for absence: Councillor Colin Clarke
Councillor Leslie F Sibley
Councillor Lawrie Stratford

Officers: Calvin Bell, Director of Development
Ian Davies, Director of Community and Environment
Karen Curtin, Head of Finance and Procurement
Natasha Clark, Team Leader, Democratic and Elections
Dave Parry, Interim Democratic and Elections Officer

13 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

14 **Urgent Business**

There was no urgent business.

15 **Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 24 July 2012 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

16 **RAF Bicester**

The Committee received a presentation from the Director of Development, and Head of Finance and Procurement, advising on the background to the recent Executive decision to investigate the potential for securing the RAF Bicester site for heritage purposes through a strategic partnership with Bomber Command Heritage (BCH). The site was being marketed by the Defence Infrastructure Office, and the Council would support any bid by BCH through the provision of professional and strategic advice. The Council would not be acquiring the site itself, and any financial support would be within current budgets. If BCH were successful in their initial bid, any requirement for additional revenue support would have to be considered by the Executive.

In the course of discussion the Committee noted:

- There were understood to be up to six potential bidders interested in acquiring the site, and all were likely, at least initially, to meet the criteria set by the Defence Infrastructure Office.
- Separate to its involvement in the partnership, the Council could exercise considerable control and influence over any future development through the Bicester Master Plan and Planning Policy Guidelines.
- Although the Council could support the partnership bid through direct grant funding, support could also be given through assisting BCH in securing additional sources of funding from other grant providers.
- The Council's Senior Conservation Officer had visited the site to make an initial assessment.
- There were no circumstances where the Council, through its Planning obligations, would have to take responsibility for the site and its liabilities.

The Chairman thanked Officers for their informative presentation on what was a very worthy project, however, cautioned, that the main priority must be to protect the residents of the District from any financial liability.

The Committee agreed to monitor the progress of the project, and invited Officers to report back to a future meeting.

Resolved

- (1) That RAF Bicester be retained on the Committee's work programme and officers be invited to a future meeting to provide a further update.

17 **Banbury Brighter Futures**

The Chairman welcomed the Lead Member for the Banbury Brighter Futures Programme, and the Director of Community and Environment.

The Lead Member for the Banbury Brighter Futures Programme presented the report of the Director of Community and Environment which sought consideration of the progress and priorities of the Brighter Futures in Banbury programme. It was emphasised that, despite the challenges posed by multi-partner working, positive achievements were being made. The Lead Member was confident this good work would continue, even though each of the partner organisations faced budget and resource pressures.

The Director of Community and Environment circulated an extract from the Banbury Brighter Futures website (www.brighter-futures.org.uk) and explained that, whilst originally introduced in 2009, the programme had now been running for a sufficient period to allow the report to detail the progress made in each of the six theme areas over a 12 month period. Emphasising the breadth and complexity of the Programme, he advised that some thirty organisations were involved. To help ensure no loss of momentum, Theme Leaders met every other month and, in addition, action was frequently taken in between these meetings to address rapidly changing situations and circumstances.

In response to Members' queries regarding whether the Programme was adequately resourced to meet the identified priorities for 2012/13, the Director of Community and Environment advised that, whilst the Councils resourcing was sufficient to deliver current priorities, the key issue remained the ability of other partners to meet their resourcing obligations.

Referring to the figures contained in the report relating to those young people not in education, employment, or undertaking training ('NEET's'), the Director of Community and Environment advised that data relating to the District as a whole had been included, as work was being done across the District to address this issue. However, it was nevertheless the case that efforts to reduce the number of NEET's were concentrated in areas of greatest need. Regarding the overall unemployment situation; although the three Wards in the Programme showed the highest rate in the District, the figures were still comparable with the national average. Noting this, the Committee requested that future reports contain more comparative information in order to assist in identifying areas where efforts and resources might be concentrated.

In conclusion, the Lead Member for the Banbury Brighter Futures Programme emphasised the importance of feedback, and urged members to contact either the Director of Community and Environment or himself with any information or proposals they might have, as communication was the key to the continued success of the programme.

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 noted.

18 **Health Sector Reforms and Emerging New Local Arrangements**

The Chairman welcomed the Deputy Leader and the Director of Community and Environment, who proceeded to present the report of the Director of Community and Environment which sought consideration of the changes to the local health sector, and the resultant new structures and functions arising as a consequence of the health sector reforms.

Noting the wide ranging nature and complexity of the new arrangements, the Committee expressed concern that with District level Members only having a limited involvement (one appointee on each of the proposed four new Boards representing all Oxfordshire Districts), the opportunity to influence would be limited. Communicating the changes to the public and helping them identify who would be delivering services would also be a major challenge, particularly as the proposed changes were required to deliver some of the savings required in the Health sector as a whole. In this respect the Committee welcomed the undertaking of the Director of Community and Environment to re-draw the diagram providing an overview of the NHS Reforms to enable the public to better understand the changes and identify service providers.

Resolved

- (1) That the new Oxfordshire and local arrangements for the Health and Wellbeing Functions, Healthwatch and Clinical Commissioning be noted.
- (2) That the District Council's involvement in the appropriate parts of the Health & Wellbeing partnerships structure be supported.

19 **National Benefit Changes**

The Committee received a presentation from the Lead Member for Housing and the Head of Finance and Procurement advising on the introduction, from April 2013, of wide-ranging National Benefit reforms including:

- A Benefit Cap
- Size Criteria for Social Housing
- Disability Living Allowance
- Introduction of Universal Credit
- Local administration of Social Fund by County Council

Collectively, these changes would have significant implications for the Council and its customers. With respect to the new arrangements for those customers in receipt of Housing Benefit (currently paid directly to the landlord by the Council), not only would they find the level of benefit capped, but the monies were to be received direct, and they would be personally responsible for paying their rent. This would probably prove unpopular with landlords, and was likely to result in a decrease in property available for rent and a corresponding increase in homelessness and Discretionary Housing

Payments. There was also likely to be an increase in customer contact as the introduction of Universal Credit impacted on customers. A report had been submitted to the Executive in July and the Council was looking to work closely with partners, adopt a proactive communications strategy for both claimants and landlords, and review the implications for the budgets in respect of Discretionary Housing Payments, temporary accommodation, Housing and Customers services, service assurance and the Capita contract.,

Noting the impact on the Councils services and resources, the Committee also identified that there were likely to be significant implications for other service providers, particularly the Citizens Advice Bureau. In addition, it was agreed that Councillors should be advised of the number of properties in their Wards where there were residents who would be affected. However, it was also acknowledged that the changes were being introduced not only with a view to reducing the overall welfare budget, but also to move people away from a dependency on benefits and encourage them into work. In this respect the Council must continue in its efforts to create a business friendly District of opportunity.

In conclusion, the Lead Member for Housing reminded the Committee that the draft for the new Allocations Policy would be discussed at meetings to be held on the 3 and 4 October at 6.00pm. The proposed changes would also have a significant impact, and she encouraged Members to attend and participate.

The Chairman thanked the Lead Member for Housing and the Head of Finance and Procurement for their comprehensive presentation on this challenging area.

Resolved

- (1) That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee receive a further report on this subject at it meeting on 12 March 2013

20

Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2012/13

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Law and Governance which presented the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2012/13.

Forward Plan

The Committee agreed that there were no items on the Forward Plan for September to December 2012 that they wished to include on their Work Programme in 2012/13.

Agenda for 9 October 2012

It was noted that the meeting in October would receive briefings regarding Air Quality and the Council's Planning and Building Control Enforcement function.

Resolved

- (1) That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee work programme 2012/13 be noted.

- (2) To no items in the current version of the Forward Plan (September to December, 2012) be included on the Work programme for 2012/13.

The meeting ended at 9.10 pm

Chairman:

Date:

Cherwell District Council

Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board

Minutes of a meeting of the Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board held at Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury, OX15 4AA, on 10 July 2012 at 6.30 pm

Present: Councillor Nicholas Mawer (Chairman)
Councillor Douglas Webb (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Alyas Ahmed
Councillor Maurice Billington
Councillor Patrick Cartledge
Councillor Margaret Cullip
Councillor Neil Prestidge
Councillor Nigel Randall
Councillor Lawrie Stratford
Councillor Douglas Williamson
Councillor Sean Woodcock

Apologies
for
absence: Councillor Jon O'Neill

Officers: Ed Potter, Head of Environmental Services (for agenda items 6 and 7)
Paul Almond, Street Scene & Landscape Manager (for agenda item 7)
Brendan Bodger, Cleansing Services Manager (for agenda item 6)
James Doble, Democratic and Elections Manager (for agenda item 5)
Natasha Clark, Team Leader, Democratic and Elections

10 **Declarations of Interest**

Members declared interests in the following agenda item:

5. Chairman of the Council's Allowance.

Councillor Lawrie Stratford, Personal, as Vice-Chairman of the Council to whom the Chairman's allowance may apply in due course.

11 **Urgent Business**

There was no urgent business.

12 **Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 12 June 2012 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

13 **Chairman of the Council's Allowance**

The Chairman began by providing an overview of the consideration that had been given to the proposal to pay an allowance to the Chairman of the Council at the 12 June 2012 Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board meeting.

At this meeting, the Board had agreed, in principle that an allowance should be paid to the Council Chairman as this would help ensure no Member felt precluded from accepting the position of honour due to concerns about potential personal financial cost. Members also agreed that it was extremely important that a Scheme of Reference be developed to ensure transparency to the public about what was and was not covered by the allowance. The Scheme would also provide clarity for the Council Chairman.

At the Board's request, consideration of the content of the Scheme of Reference had been deferred to this meeting to enable consideration of supplementary information including feedback from former Council Chairmen, detailed information from neighbouring authorities detailing their provisions for Chairman's allowances and civic budgets and a draft Council Chairman Scheme of Reference.

In considering what the Chairman's allowance should cover, Members agreed that it should cover the expenses of office, e.g. clothing; subsistence; sundry donations including collections and raffle tickets; drinks at official events.

The Board noted that in addition to the allowance, there was also a Chairman's budget, the purpose of which was to support the following activities as Chairman (within the available budget as set annually) with certain caveats, in particular in relation to travel arrangements and the purchase of tickets for events:

- Mileage for attendance at official events to which the Chairman has been invited in his/her official capacity as Chairman of the Council (any queries as to what constitutes an official event are to be determined by the Head of Law and Governance)
 - Claims are to be submitted on the Chairman's claim form within two months of the expense being incurred and paid at the standard rate for Members mileage.
- Tickets for the Chairman and consort to attend events within the United Kingdom to which the Chairman has been invited in his/her official capacity as Chairman of Cherwell District Council
 - The Chairman's Personal Assistant is authorised to purchase tickets to events to the value of £50 per ticket. The purchase of tickets for events costing more than £50 must be authorised by the Head of Law and Governance.
- Travel (e.g. train/taxi) within the United Kingdom for attendance of the Chairman and Consort in his/her official capacity as Chairman of Cherwell District Council.
 - The Chairman's PA will be responsible for making travel arrangements.
 - If the Chairman arranges his/her own travel, this will come out of the Chairman's allowance. However, in exceptional

circumstances at the discretion of the Head of Law and Governance, the Chairman may submit and receive payment for a travel claim.

- Any requests not included in this Scheme of Reference for the official representation of the Chairman of Cherwell District Council (and his/her consort), including attendance at any events outside the United Kingdom should be submitted to the Executive for consideration and approval
- Arranging events for the Chairman
 - The Chairman's Personal Assistant will be responsible for arranging events in consultation with the Chairman and the Head of Law and Governance.
- Associated expenditure for Annual Council
- Training
- Gifts at the end of the Chairman's term of office
- Refreshments for events hosted by the Chairman
- Maintenance of the Chairman's Chain

Having considered the items that should be covered by the Chairman's allowance and those by the Chairman's budget, the Board concluded to recommend to Council that an allowance of £2000 per year of office be paid to the Chairman and that it be paid annually as a lump sum upon appointment as Chairman. This was to cover initial expenditure anticipated upon taking office.

The Board agreed that it was important that the Scheme of Reference included a provision should the Chairman of the Council cease to hold office during their term of appointment. Members considered that the Head of Law and Governance will be responsible for determining the appropriate consequential arrangements in light of the circumstances.

As part of the review, the Board also considered the budget provision and arrangements for the Chairman's/Civic budget and agreed that officers be requested to review the Chairman's budget so that it is aligned with the municipal year.

Resolved

- (1) That authority be delegated to the Head of Law and Governance, in consultation with the Chairman of the Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board, to finalise the Chairman's Allowance Scheme of Reference to reflect the decisions of the Board prior to submission to Council.
- (2) That Council be recommended to agree:
 - (1) That an allowance of £2000 be paid to the Chairman of Cherwell District Council for the municipal year 2012/13 with immediate effect.
 - (2) That a scheme of reference for the Chairman's allowance be adopted.

- (3) That officers be requested to review the Chairman's budget operating period so that it is aligned in terms of with the municipal year as opposed to the financial year.

(Councillor Lawrie Stratford requested that his abstention from the vote be recorded)

14

Briefing on Street Cleansing Performance

The Chairman welcomed the Head of Environmental Services and the Cleansing Services Manager to the meeting and explained that Members had requested a briefing on the council's street cleansing performance in light of the 2011/12 Quarter 3 Performance Management Framework which had indicated a reduction in customer satisfaction with street cleansing.

The Head of Environmental Services explained that the Street Cleansing service carried out a wide range of activities including litter picking, litter bin emptying, sweeping of roads and pavements, fly tip removal & emptying dog bins in villages and in the three urban centres. To keep the district clean a combination of operational performance, education and enforcement was employed. The team was made up of a Street Cleansing Manager, two Street Cleansing supervisors and around 26 staff operating from the two depots.

In terms of performance, the Board was advised that until 2011 the annual customer satisfaction survey had shown consistent rises in satisfaction levels. The Head of Environmental Services reported that the fall in customer satisfaction in 2011 had been difficult to understand as there appeared to be no fall in Street Cleansing standards and in some areas standards were still increasing.

The Board was advised that to test out standards, Cherwell had entered the Clean Britain awards. This involved a days unannounced independent inspection at some point during July or August. The result of this award will be known in mid- September and a report will be received.

Additionally, since the survey the profile of the service had been increased through increased press releases, through more articles in Cherwell Link and ensuring the few areas which can get dirty get attended to quickly. In addition Neighbourhood blitz events had been broadened to try and involve more organisations and individuals.

The Head of Environmental Services advised Members that the results of the 2012 Customer satisfaction survey would be known in September 2012 and it would then be evident if the 2011 results were a blip.

In response to Members' questions, the Head of Environmental Services and the Cleansing Services Manager reported that there were increasing numbers of fly tipping cases involving tyres and confirmed that several successful prosecutions for fly tipping were achieved each year.

Members commended the work of the team and made particular reference to the litter blitzes which were welcomed by residents. The Head of

Environmental Services explained that the teams activities were largely restricted to adopted highways and resources were generally not committed to private estates or sites although the enforcement team does investigate where appropriate and work with housing associations and private landlords to address issues that are reported.

The Board thanked the Head of Environmental Services and the Cleansing Services Manager for attending the meeting. Members commended the work of the street cleansing team and requested that they be advised of the outcome of the 2012 customer satisfaction survey in relation to street cleansing when this information was available.

Resolved

- (1) That officers be requested to submit a further update once the 2012 customer satisfaction results are available.

15 Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board Work Programme 2012/13

The Board considered a report of the Head of Law and Governance presented the Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board work programme 2012/13 for consideration. Members noted that the Finance Scrutiny Working Group had met on 3 July 2012 and reviewed the 2011/12 year end finance monitoring report. The notes of this meeting would be considered at the 17 July Board meeting.

Oxfordshire Waste Partnership (OWP) Update

The Chairman explained that the Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board had scrutinised the council's role in the OWP in 2010/11 and agreed to retain the item on the work programme to monitor in light of uncertainty about the financial arrangements.

The Head of Environmental Services provided an overview of the financial arrangements that existed in the OWP, which were developed to encourage collection authorities to invest in collection systems to reduce the amount of waste going to landfill. In 2011/12, collection rates had surpassed the targets resulting in payments by the County Council to the collections authorities of around £1m per year, which was less than if the County Council had had to pay for waste to go to landfill.

The Board was advised that the County Council had stated it wished to reduce payments to collection authorities but is unable to unilaterally implement changes as these need to be agreed by all partners. Any changes could potentially have significant financial implications on partners and discussions were ongoing between OWP partners. A paper on the issue is being taken forward to the Chief Executives in mid- July before going forward to the Leaders group. It was expected that the issue would come back to the Oxfordshire Waste Partnership after responses from the Chief Executives and Leaders have been considered.

Members noted the update and requested that the Head of Environmental Services report back to the Board at the appropriate time on the proposed

arrangements to allow Members to consider and provide comments to the Executive/Lead Member.

Contract Review: Landscape Maintenance Contract

The Street Scene and Landscape Manager provided an overview of the council's landscape maintenance contract covering the history of the contract, the service level, agency and contract agreements, the officer time allocated to contract management, the contract management methods, the financial deductions that had been imposed where performance had not been up to the contract standard, the contractor performance and the three year contract extension until 2015 which had been agreed by the Executive in December 2010.

The Board was advised that the landscape maintenance contract was generally well performing although there were issues from time to time. Monitoring/managing of the performance of the contract to ensure the contract standards were met was ongoing and officers continued to look for more efficient ways to provide the Landscape Service.

Some Members raised concerns about the performance of the contractor and highlighted some issues that had arisen across the district. Members also commented that it was important to provide assurance that areas of low performance were being addressed and that the council was adequately resourced to do this. Members who were also Bicester Town Council councillors highlighted some of the concerns of the Town Council and agreed that a meeting between officers and the Town Council would be useful to consider these concerns.

The Board agreed that they wanted to be involved in the contract renewal process. Members noted that the contract would commence in 2015 but the process would be in spring 2013 and agreed that this should be added to the work programme for consideration in April 2013.

Resolved

- (1) That the Resources & Performance Scrutiny Board work programme 2012/13 be noted.
- (2) That feedback from the 3 July 2012 Finance Scrutiny Working Group meeting be considered at the 17 July 2012 Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board meeting.
- (3) That the update on the Oxfordshire Waste Partnership be noted and that officers be requested to submit a further update, when available, advising the Board on the proposals for the revised financial arrangements.
- (4) That the update of the Landscape Maintenance Contract be noted and that this be retained on the work programme for Members to be briefed on the contract renewal process and timetable in April 2013.

The meeting ended at 9.00 pm

Chairman:

Date:

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Cherwell District Council

Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board

Minutes of a meeting of the Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board held at Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury, OX15 4AA, on 17 July 2012 at 6.30 pm

- Present: Councillor Nicholas Mawer (Chairman)
Councillor Douglas Webb (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Douglas Webb
Councillor Alyas Ahmed
Councillor Maurice Billington
Councillor Margaret Cullip
Councillor Jon O'Neill
Councillor Nigel Randall
Councillor Lawrie Stratford
Councillor Douglas Williamson
Councillor Sean Woodcock
- Substitute Members: Councillor Andrew Beere (In place of Councillor Patrick Cartledge)
Councillor Rose Stratford (In place of Councillor Neil Prestidge)
- Officers: Karen Curtin, Head of Finance and Procurement (for agenda item 7)
Jo Pitman, Head of Transformation (for agenda item 6)
Stephanie Rew, HR Manager (for agenda item 6)
Natasha Clark, Team Leader, Democratic and Elections

16 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

17 **Urgent Business**

There was no urgent business.

18 **Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 10 July 2012 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

19 **Exclusion of the Public and Press**

Resolved

That, in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the 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 and 4 of Schedule 12A of that Act.

20 **Business Case to Restructure the Resources Directorate Support Team**

The Board considered an exempt report of the Head of Transformation which presented the business case to restructure the Resources Directorate Support Team.

In introducing the report, the HR Manager explained that the present structure had been formed in February 2010 to bring together one administrative support team within the directorate. On 1 September 2012 a new Joint Management Team Support Team would be implemented and as a consequence of the creation of this team, consideration needed to be given to the wider Resources Directorate Support Team.

Following consideration of three options and consultation with affected staff and Unison, the proposal that would bring most benefit was to de-centralise the Resources Directorate Support Team and return the 8 individual post holders back to the local service teams within that Directorate.

In response to Members' questions, the Head of Transformation explained that the review of the Resources Directorate Support Team had been necessitated by the changes in the provision of support to the Joint Management Team and confirmed that the review would not result in any redundancies.

Resolved

- (1) That plans to de-centralise the Resources Directorate Support Team and return the 8 individual post holders back to the local service teams within that Directorate be noted and welcomed.

21 **Readmittance of the Public and Press**

Resolved

That the press and public be readmitted to the meeting.

Local Government Resources Review

The Chairman welcomed the Head of Finance and Procurement to the meeting and advised Members that the briefing on the Local Government Resources Review (LGGR) would serve as an introduction to the Board's scrutiny of the budget 2013/14 and assist Members in agreeing the approach for the budget scrutiny.

The Head of Finance and Procurement gave a presentation which provided an overview of the financial context, financial projections, the impact of the LGGR, the budget setting process and suggested topics for Members to consider as part of the budget 2013/14 scrutiny review.

The Board was advised that the 2012-13 budget was £14.3m. There had been a net reduction of 31% in the Council's budget between 2008/08 and 2012/13, in part as the decision taken by the Council in 2008/09 to cease reliance on investment income. Reductions in Government Grants and the 2012 spending review had also necessitated budget cuts to ensure a balanced budget was achieved.

In terms of the impact of the LGGR, the Head of Finance and Procurement explained that from April 2013 council tax benefit would be abolished and replaced with a council tax support scheme, which must be defined by individual Local Authorities. Funding for the scheme would be a grant based on the current Council Tax Benefit expenditure with a reduction of 10%. Local Authorities were required to set their own scheme by 31 January 2013 otherwise a default scheme would be imposed by Central Government.

The first phase of the LGGR included plans to change the way in which Business Rates were collected and distributed from April 2013. The intention of the scheme was to give Local Authorities an incentive to promote growth over the longer term and reduce dependency on central government. The scheme allowed for authorities to form pools and be treated as a single authority under the scheme. The Board was advised that at their July meeting the Executive had agreed for CDC to express an interest in pooling across Oxfordshire.

The Head of Finance and Procurement advised the Board that there were five key elements to Welfare Reform: benefit cap; the extension of size eligibility criteria to social housing; the replacement of the Disability Living Allowance (DLA) by a Personal Independence Payment (PIP); and, the localisation of Social Fund.

Members raised concerns about the potential impacts of the welfare reforms the financial implications for CDC fulfilling its social responsibilities and on residents in the district and agreed that it would be useful to consider the implications with Housing Officers.

In response to Members' comments, the Head of Finance and Procurement explained that officers were working closely with partners, including the County Council, the Citizen's Advice Bureau and Registered Providers and would be providing assistance to individuals who would be affected by the changes.

The Head of Finance and Procurement provided an overview of the budget setting process advising Members of the current Medium Term Financial Strategy assumptions, current financial projections and draft 2013/14 budget forecast. The budget guidelines would be submitted to the Executive for consideration in October 2012, draft 1 of the budget in December 2012 and draft 2 in February 2013 prior to submission to Council in February 2013.

The Board then considered potential topics for the budget 2013/14 scrutiny. The Chairman reminded Members that at their June meeting Councillors Lawrie Stratford, Nigel Randall and Maurice Billington had been nominated to work with officers on the development of a Concessions Policy for the Council and that Councillor Sean Woodcock be kept informed of the development of the Policy. Members agreed that the remit of this Group should be extended to review fees and charges, which was undertaken bi-annually by the Board as part of the budget scrutiny process. The Group would meet with officers during August and September and report back to the Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board in October.

As part of the annual budget scrutiny the Board reviewed the capital bids and Members agreed this should continue to form part of the budget scrutiny review. The Board agreed that the Performance Scrutiny Working Group and Finance Scrutiny Working Group meetings scheduled in September should be used to score and review the capital bids and that all Members should be invited to attend both meetings. Members noted that disabled facilities grants, which was included on the Board's work programme, would be considered as part of the capital bid review.

Members agreed that they would also like to consider homelessness and temporary accommodation budgets in light of potential implications of Welfare Reform. Members noted that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee would be receiving a briefing on benefit changes focussing on what it would mean for CDC service delivery and the impact upon residents in the district and requested that the Democratic and Elections Team Leader liaise with the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Chairman regarding inviting Board members to this meeting. Members noted that within the remit of each scrutiny committee, the Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board would consider the financial implications whilst the Overview and Scrutiny Committee would consider policy matters.

The Board also requested that an update on recommendations from the previous two budget scrutiny review be presented to Members for consideration.

In terms of other budget scrutiny topics, the Board agreed that they should consider Environmental Services with a focus on waste and recycling including any budgetary issues with Oxfordshire Waste Partnership (OWP) credits as this was an area they had not considered previously as part of the budget scrutiny but the OWP remained on the work programme following a review of the council's role in the OWP and uncertainty about the financial arrangements,

Resolved

- (1) That the following topics form the budget 2013/14 scrutiny review:
 - Fees and Charges: concessions and bi-annual review
 - Capital programme
 - Environmental Service
 - Homelessness and Temporary Accommodation Budgets
 - A review of all proposals recommended over the last 2 years
- (2) That the Chairman, Head of Finance and Procurement and the Democratic and Elections Team Leader liaise to agree the timetable for the budget 2013/14 scrutiny.

23 **Draft Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2011/12**

The Board considered a report of the Head of Law and Governance which presented the draft Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2011/12.

Resolved

- (1) That the draft Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2011/12 be noted.

24 **Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board Work Programme 2012/13**

The Board considered a report of Head of Law and Governance which presented the Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board work programme 2012/13 for consideration.

The Board noted that in light of the discussions at the previous agenda item, the October R&PSB meeting would now take place on 16 October 2012 and the 18 September Finance Scrutiny Working Group and 25 September 2012 Performance Scrutiny Working Group meetings would be used to consider the capital bids as part of the budget scrutiny work.

Resolved

- (1) That the Resources & Performance Scrutiny Board work programme 2012/13 be noted.

The meeting ended at 8.45 pm

Chairman:

Date:

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Cherwell District Council

Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board

Minutes of a meeting of the Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board held at Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury, OX15 4AA, on 4 September 2012 at 6.30 pm

Present: Councillor Nicholas Mawer (Chairman)

Councillor Alyas Ahmed
Councillor Maurice Billington
Councillor Patrick Cartledge
Councillor Margaret Cullip
Councillor Jon O'Neill
Councillor Neil Prestidge
Councillor Nigel Randall
Councillor Sean Woodcock

Apologies for absence: Councillor Douglas Webb
Councillor Lawrie Stratford
Councillor Douglas Williamson

Officers: Karen Curtin, Head of Finance and Procurement
Ed Potter, Head of Environmental Services
Natasha Clark, Team Leader, Democratic and Elections

25 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

26 **Urgent Business**

There was no urgent business.

27 **Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 17 July 2012 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

28 **Exclusion of the Public and Press**

Resolved

That, in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the 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 paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of that Act.

29

Budget Scrutiny 2013/14

The Chairman welcomed the Head of Environmental Services and the Head of Finance and Procurement to the meeting and explained that the Members would receive an overview of the Environmental Services and homelessness and temporary accommodation budgets and frame recommendations to the Executive as part of the budget 2013/14.

Environmental Services

The Head of Environmental Services advised Members that Environmental Services delivered many of the front line services of the Council including Waste Collection, Street Cleansing, Public Conveniences, and Landscape Management. These services were the services that the Council is most well known for amongst its residents and accounted for a significant percentage of overall Council expenditure. The overall revenue budget for Environmental Services for 2012/13 was £5.86 million

The Head of Environmental Services provided an overview of the restricted briefing note on Environmental Services finances which covered revenue and income within the service, future revenue and capital cost pressures and opportunities.

Waste Recycling

In terms of fuel costs for vehicles, Members noted that officers sought to address the rising cost of fuel through various means such as reviewing waste collection and street cleansing routes, purchasing more fuel efficient vehicles and stockpiling fuel.

The Board was advised that vehicle repair costs were kept under control, through better procurement, more robust vehicles and better maintenance practices. Additionally, the replacement cycle for replacing vehicles had increased from six years to seven years reducing capital requirements but repair costs had been kept under control.

In terms of compost gate fees, Members noted that following the introduction of a garden waste/food waste mixture collection in the brown bin, during late 2009/10, this was processed via a contract with Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) contract. At present CDC did not receive credits due to the waste/food mix. In the course of the discussion, the Board heard that some other local authorities in Oxfordshire offered a separate weekly food waste collection and received compost credits from OCC. In response to Members comments that regarding the financial viability of a weekly food waste collection in CDC, the Head of Finance and Procurement explained that preliminary calculations had indicated that the cost of implementing such a scheme would greatly outweigh any compost credits received.

Members commented that a potential source of income for the service could be through the collection of commercial waste and agreed that consideration should be given to this.

In response to Members' queries regarding the feasibility of cross county waste collection routes, the Head of Environmental Services explained that there were opportunities for cross county working however there were also many difficulties due to dealing with disposal authorities and collection services being different.

The Board was advised that future capital pressures included the replacement of green residual bins and future vehicle replacement programmes. Various options were currently under consideration.

The Board was advised that there were around 90 recycling banks in Cherwell which accounted for 6% of the overall recycling rate in the district. In response to Members' questions, the Head of Environmental Services confirmed that satisfaction with recycling banks was generally high.

At the 10 July 2012 meeting, the Board had received an update on the Oxfordshire Waste Partnership (OWP) at which time the Head of Environmental Services had provided an overview of the financial arrangements that existed in the OWP, which were developed to encourage collection authorities to invest in collection systems to reduce the amount of waste going to landfill. The Board was advised that the payment of landfill credits was currently under debate within the Oxfordshire Waste Partnership as the County Council was seeking to remove these payments. The Board noted that this item was already on the work programme and agreed it should be retained and the Head of Environmental Services be requested to report back to the Board at the appropriate time on the proposed new arrangements to allow Members to consider and provide comments to the Executive/Lead Member.

Street Cleansing

The Head of Environmental Services advised the Board that the budget for street cleansing services had remained relatively consistent in recent years. Consideration was currently being given to shared working opportunities for this service. The Board had received a briefing on street cleansing performance at their 10 July 2012 meeting and had commended the work of the team.

Homelessness Budget

The Head of Finance and Procurement advised the Board that the council's homelessness budget had remained at the same level for the previous two years. The Government had confirmed that the council's homelessness grant would remain the same for the next two years but this was not ring fenced.

It was anticipated that the need for homelessness support would increase as a result of the Government's Local Government Resources Review and Welfare Reforms. This could cause budget pressures for the council and Finance and Housing Officers were currently considering various scenarios. The Board agreed that they should retain a watching brief through the Finance Scrutiny Working Group.

Budget Scrutiny Timetable

The Board noted the budget scrutiny timetable. The September meetings of the Performance Scrutiny Working Group and the Finance Scrutiny Working Group would be used to review the capital bids. At the October meeting, Members would consider recommendations to the Executive for consideration on the capital bids and the Environmental Services and Homelessness budgets.

Resolved

- (1) That the briefing on the Environmental Services budget be noted.
- (2) That the update on the Homelessness budget be noted and the Finance Scrutiny Working Group retain a watching brief on the budget.
- (3) That the timetable for the budget scrutiny 2013/14 be noted,

30 **Readmittance of the Public and Press**

Resolved

That the press and public be readmitted to the meeting.

31 **Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board Work Programme 2012/13**

The Board considered a report of the Head of Law and Governance which presented the Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board work programme 2012/13 for consideration.

Resolved

- (1) That the Resources & Performance Scrutiny Board work programme 2012/13 be noted.

The meeting ended at 8.10 pm

Chairman:

Date: