

Cherwell District Council

Executive

Minutes of a meeting of the Executive held at Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury, OX15 4AA, on 7 October 2013 at 6.30 pm

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

Councillor Ken Atack, Lead Member for Financial Management
Councillor Norman Bolster, Lead Member for Estates and the Economy

Councillor John Donaldson, Lead Member for Banbury Brighter Futures

Councillor Michael Gibbard, Lead Member for Planning

Councillor Nigel Morris, Lead Member for Clean and Green

Councillor D M Pickford, Lead Member for Housing

Councillor Nicholas Turner, Lead Member for Customers and Performance

Also Present: Councillor Sean Woodcock, Leader of the Labour Group
Councillor Tim Emptage, Leader of the Liberal Democrats
Councillor Les Sibley

Officers: Sue Smith, Chief Executive
Calvin Bell, Director of Development
Martin Henry, Director of Resources / Section 151 Officer
Karen Curtin, Director (Bicester)
Kevin Lane, Head of Law and Governance / Monitoring Officer
Tim Madden, Interim Head of Finance and Procurement
Adrian Colwell, Head of Strategic Planning and the Economy
Natasha Clark, Team Leader, Democratic and Elections

38 **Declarations of Interest**

Members declared interests in the following agenda items:

6. Local Plan Update.

Councillor Nicholas Turner, Disclosable Pecuniary Interest, as a tenant of Trinity College, at Drayton Lodge Farm, that has had land under discussion and also being leasee of Drayton Leisure Golf Centre that is adjacent to one of the sites in the Local Plan.

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

The Chairman reported that there were no petitions and he had agreed a request from Councillor Les Sibley to address the Executive on agenda items 6, Local Plan Update, and 12, East West Local Rail Contribution.

40 **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

41 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 2 September 2013 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

42 **Local Plan Update**

The Head of Strategic Planning and the Economy submitted a report which sought consideration of the draft Submission Local Plan for Cherwell.

In introducing the report, the Lead Member for Planning explained that the report updated Members on the preparation of the draft Submission Local Plan, reviewed the Sustainability Appraisal, Viability Assessment, the development of the evidence base, representations received, the draft Submission Local Plan itself and the next steps.

The Lead Member for Planning advised that the final iteration of the Sustainability Appraisal was nearing completion and, subject to the resolution of Executive, the final version would be presented to Full Council. The Infrastructure tables in the Local Plan would be replaced in due course by a full Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP).

Councillor Woodcock, Leader of Labour Group, addressed Executive and commented that he was very impressed with the comprehensive document and consultation which had provided useful feedback.

Councillor Emptage, Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group, addressed Executive and commended the Lead Member for Planning and officers for their hard work throughout the process. Councillor Emptage advised Executive that Kidlington Parish Council continued to have issues regarding the provision of housing in Kidlington and queried the status of the Kidlington Masterplan in relation to the Local Plan.

The Head of Strategic Planning and the Economy explained that the Local Plan was a snapshot in time which focussed on strategic policies and sites and it was recommended there be no revisions at this time. It was confirmed that the Kidlington Masterplan process would include an assessment of housing. A Local Neighbourhoods DPD was being developed which would look at sites with less than 400 houses.

At the discretion of the Chairman, Councillor Sibley addressed Executive and raised a number of queries in relation to Bicester and Graven Hill each of which was duly responded to.

Resolved

- (1) That the draft Submission Local Plan be endorsed and recommended to Full Council for approval, subject to the Final Sustainability Appraisal being presented at Full Council.
- (2) That it be noted that the Infrastructure tables in the draft Local Plan would be replaced in due course by a full Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) for submission.
- (3) That it be recommended to Full Council that authority be delegated to the Head of Strategic Planning and the Economy, in consultation with the Lead Member for Planning, to make minor changes to the draft Submission Local Plan text to delete the references to 'draft' or 'emerging' Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) once the IDP is finalised.

Resolved

The draft Submission Local Plan has now been subjected to extensive consultation. The evidence base for the Plan is nearing completion and the Plan complies with obligations flowing from the recent reforms to the Planning system. A recommendation by the Executive of the draft Submission Local Plan to the meeting of Full Council will enable the Plan to be submitted for Examination and take Cherwell one major step closer to having an up to date, 'sound' and 'adopted' Local Plan.

Options

Option 1: To endorse the draft Submission Local Plan.

Option 2: To amend the draft Submission Local Plan with the effect of requiring further delay whilst the proposed changes are consulted upon and a new Sustainability Appraisal commissioned.

Option 3: To not endorse the draft Submission Local Plan

Sister City Agreement with Xishuangbanna

The Chief Executive submitted a report which updated Members on the recent signing of a 'Letter of Intent' between Cherwell District Council and Xishuangbanna Dai Nationality Autonomous Prefecture to establish formal 'Sister City' status between the two authorities.

Resolved

- (1) That the signing of the Letter of Intent be noted.

- (2) That agreement be given to the establishment of a cross-party Member, Officer, Education and Business group to maximise the benefits of this link and authority be delegated to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, for the establishment and running of the group.

Reasons

The establishment of the sister city agreement will enable the people living and working in the Cherwell area to have closer links with a fascinating part of China. Businesses will be able to get introductions to potential partners or supply chains and schools and other groups will be able to link with similar groups in the region. Ultimately both Xishuangbanna (XSBN) and Cherwell will benefit economically from this agreement.

It is suggested that a steering committee is established to support and promote the development of the agreement between the two authorities. The group could include Members from all parties, officers, representatives from Banbury & Bicester College, MPs, town councils, Bicester Village, Chambers of Commerce and perhaps the LEPs and the UKTI. It is also worth trying to identify any businesses in the district that already have strong ties to China and inviting them to join the group. This will ensure buy in from all parts of the district and, hopefully, ensure that real benefits for both XSBN and Cherwell come out of this agreement.

Options

Option 1: To accept the recommendations of the report.

Option 2: To reject the recommendations of the report.

44

New Homes Bonus - Year 3 Allocations 2013-14

The Director of Resources submitted a report which asked Executive to determine how they wished to allocate the New Homes Bonus received for the third year of the scheme, the award confirmed for 2013-14.

Resolved

- (1) That the year 3 allocations of £1,340,156 be agreed as follows:
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|------------------------------------|-------------------|
| • Affordable Housing | £100,240 |
| • Financial Pressure Allocation | £619,958 |
| • Economic Development | £450,669 |
| • Planned Growth in the District | £169,289 |
| Total year three allocation | £1,340,156 |
- (2) That authority be delegated to the Director of Resources and the Head of Strategic Planning and the Economy in consultation with the Lead Member for Financial Management and the Lead Member for Estates and the Economy to determine the schemes on which those funds allocated for economic development purposes should be spent.

- (3) That authority be delegated to the Director of Resources and the Head of Strategic Planning and the Economy in consultation with the Lead Member for Financial Management and the Lead Member for Estates and the Economy to agree future year allocations of New Homes Bonus.

Reasons

It is recommended that the allocation method set out in this report are agreed in order to be clear about how the New homes Bonus is going to be used in the third year of its receipt.

Options

Option 1: Not to consider how these funds should be allocated. This is not good financial management and is therefore not advocated. It is also important to give a degree of certainty around how such funds will be allocated and used.

45

Budget Strategy 2014 to 2015 and Beyond

The Director of Resources submitted a report which informed Executive of the service and financial planning process for 2014-15, sought approval of the 2014-15 budget strategy and agreement of budget guidelines for issue to service managers to enable the production of the 2014-15 budget.

The report also presented the most recent medium term financial forecasts, sought consideration of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2014-15 and agreement of the Council's approach to Business Rates pooling for 2014-15.

Resolved

- (1) That the updated Medium Term Financial Strategy forecast for the Council's revenue budget for 2014-15 to 2018/19 be noted.
- (2) That the overall 2014-15 budget strategy and service and financial planning process be endorsed.
- (3) That the proposed budget guidelines and timetable for 2014-15 budget process be agreed.
- (4) That it be agreed that the current Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS) remains as it is for 2014-15.
- (5) That support in principle be shown for continuing to work on business rate pooling and agreement be given to carry out more detailed work to ascertain whether Cherwell District Council forms a pool with the County or not for 2014-15 and authority be delegated to the Director of Resources in consultation with the Lead Member for Financial Management to make the final decision.

Reasons

The Council needs to set guidelines and a timetable for the preparation of draft estimates for 2014-15. These guidelines should support the objectives contained in the Business Plan, Service Plans and the Medium Term Financial Strategy which is currently being refreshed.

The guidelines provide a framework to identify areas of potential cost reductions across the organisation informed by our public consultation, previous investment, value for money reviews and our strategic priorities.

Council will be asked to agree the 2014-15 budget and corporate plan (and the service plans that underpin delivery) at their meeting in February 2013.

Oxfordshire authorities are not in a business rate pool for 2013-14 as the financial benefits of such an arrangement were outweighed by the risks associated with them if all authorities in Oxfordshire participated. Consideration has been given to formulating a business rates pool with just those authorities in Oxfordshire that are growing so that the amount of levy paid to the government is minimised and a greater share is kept locally than would otherwise be the case. Initial work has been carried out to estimate the financial benefit and this shows that it could be financially beneficial. However, more recent will be input into the model before a final recommendations made.

Options

Option 1: To disagree with the recommendations set out above. This is rejected as it will unnecessarily delay the formulation of the detailed budget for 2014-15.

46

East West Local Rail Contribution

The Director of Development submitted a report which requested Executive to recommend to Council the level of local contribution to be made towards the construction of East West Rail.

At the discretion of the Chairman, Councillor Sibley addressed Executive.

Resolved

- (1) That Full Council be recommended to add the promotion and support of the construction of East/West rail to the policy framework.
- (2) That Full Council be recommended to approve a local contribution from Cherwell District Council of £4.353m towards the delivery of East West Rail.

Reasons

The East West Rail project will lead to the restoration of a strategic transport corridor of national significance. With it will come significantly improved

access, which will link those centres of economic activity and remove a key barrier to realizing the ambition to secure the economic and growth potential for the Bicester area.

The Council's contribution will help to secure the £500m investment identified through the HLOS process as agreeing to pay the local contribution is a pre-condition for its release.

Options

Option 1: To proceed with the Policy as recommended in this report, this is the preferred option and supported by the information in the report.

Option 2: Executive could refuse to recommend making any level of contribution towards delivering EWR. This is not recommended as this could significantly increase the risk of the whole project not progressing.

Option 3: Executive could agree to recommend a lesser amount. This is not recommended as the balance would have to be found by the other partners which could increase the risk of the project not progressing and would also damage the Councils position within the consortium.

The meeting ended at 8.00 pm

Chairman:

Date: