

Cherwell District Council

Executive

Minutes of a meeting of the Executive held at Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury, OX15 4AA, on 3 February 2014 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 Manager
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 Nigel Morris, Lead Member for Clean and Green
Councillor D M Pickford, Lead Member for Housing
Councillor Nicholas Turner, Lead Member for Performance and Customers

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

Officers: Sue Smith, Chief Executive
Calvin Bell, Director of Development
Karen Curtin, Director (Bicester)
Martin Henry, Director of Resources / Section 151 Officer
Kevin Lane, Head of Law and Governance / Monitoring Officer
Helen Town, Regeneration and Housing Development Team Manager
Louise Tustian, Senior Performance & Improvement Officer
Natasha Clark, Team Leader, Democratic and Elections

83 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

84 Petitions and Requests to Address the Meeting

The Chairman reported that he had agreed to allow Councillor Sibley to address Executive on agenda item 6: Graven Hill Potential Acquisition and Redevelopment Update.

85 **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

86 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 January 2014 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

87 **Chairman's Announcements**

There were no Chairman's announcements.

88 **Graven Hill Potential Acquisition and Redevelopment Update**

The Director (Bicester) submitted a report which provided an update on the due diligence process for the potential acquisition and redevelopment of Graven Hill.

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

Resolved

- (1) That the progress to date on due diligence be noted.
- (2) That the procurement process and timetable in relation to the proposed Fulfilment Centre be noted.

Reasons

This report is for information and provides an update on the due diligence process for the potential acquisition and redevelopment of Graven Hill.

Alternative Options

Option 1: To approve the recommendation

Option 2: To reject the recommendation

89 **Draft Budget and Business Plan 2014-15**

The Interim Head of Finance and Procurement submitted a report which provided the second and final opportunity for the Executive to shape and refine the interaction between corporate service plans and financial matters before the final budget would be presented to full Council on 24 February 2014.

Executive thanked and commended the Lead Member for Financial Management and Finance Officers for their hard work in producing a balanced budget.

In introducing the draft 5 year strategy, 2014-15 business plan and public pledges, the Lead Member for Performance highlighted the tabled amended public pledges that had been updated to include "Delivery of the Local Plan to provide a framework for sustainable housing, employment and infrastructure" and "Extend the Joint Working Programme to include new methods of service delivery and more services included in partnership". A savings target of £500k within the agreed timescales had also been set.

Resolved

- (1) That the draft budget in the context of the Council's service objectives and strategic priorities be approved.
- (2) That the balanced budget be approved.
- (3) That Full council be recommended to approve a Council tax freeze.
- (4) That the proposed 2014-15 capital programme (annex to the minutes as set out in the Minute Book) be approved.
- (5) That agreement be given to use 2013-14 retained business rates of £75,000 to pump prime the business rates support team.
- (6) That the draft 5 year strategy, 2014-15 business plan and public pledges, amended as tabled at the meeting (annexes to the minutes as set out in the Minute Book) be endorsed and authority delegated to the Director of Resources in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Lead Member for Performance and Customers to make any minor amendments to the plan or pledges as required before final publication in March 2014.
- (7) That the 2014-15 Business Plan and Budget Equality Impact Assessment be noted.
- (8) That it be noted that the latest MTFs financial forecast was currently being refreshed and would be reported back to the Executive once this exercise had been completed.
- (9) That officers be requested to produce the formal 2014-15 budget book on the basis of the report and associated appendices (annex to the minutes as set out in the Minute Book).
- (10) That the updated budget be recommended for adoption by the Council on 24 February 2014.
- (11) That authority be delegated to the Head of Finance and Procurement, in consultation with Director of Resources and the Lead Member Financial Management to amend the contributions to or from general fund balances to allow the Council Tax increase to remain at the level

recommended by Executive to full Council following the announcement of the final settlement figures and as a result of any financial implications arising from resolution (10).

Reasons

The Council is required to produce a balanced budget for 2014-15 as the basis for calculating its level of Council Tax. It has to base that budget on its plans for service delivery during the year, recognising any changes in service demand that may arise in future years.

The report and appendices represent the draft budget for approval by the Executive. If agreed, this will be taken onto Council on 24 February and will be considered alongside the setting of the 2014-15 Council Tax.

Alternative Options

It is a legal requirement to set a balanced budget and the recommendations as set out represent what is believed to be the best way of achieving this. Alternative options are:

To reject the current proposals and to make alternative recommendations or ask officers for further information.

90 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 item 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.

91 Build! ® Programme Update and Next Steps

The Head of Regeneration and Housing submitted an exempt report which provided an update on the Council's Build! ® programme and proposed next steps.

Resolved

- (1) That the progress to date in the following be noted:
 - Establishing Cherwell District Council as a Registered Provider and developer
 - Establishing Cherwell Community Land Trust as an Industrial and Provident Society
 - Assembling challenging brownfield sites
 - Securing substantial Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) grant funding
 - Developing a robust model for the delivery of self-build housing schemes

- Raising Cherwell's profile locally and nationally as an innovative and proactive local authority
- (2) That the fact that Build! ® works best as 'as a programme' with cross-subsidy within the programme and not as individual sites be noted.
 - (3) That the creation of a Council Build! ® Project board (with members appointed by the Leader and officer representation) to oversee the delivery of Build! ® and which would report into the Place Programme Board be approved.
 - (4) That the following be noted:
 - a) Detailed due diligence was being undertaken on a proposed model for delivery and final ownership of the Build! ® Schemes and the Council's wider development function going forward.
 - b) A report would be brought to the March Executive setting out this proposed model
 - (5) That increased delegated authority to the Procurement Steering Group, in consultation with the Head of Regeneration and Housing and the Lead Member for Financial Management to award contracts up to the value of £1.5m for the Build! ® programme be approved to enable delivery on schedule.

Reasons

This report updates the Executive on the progress to date in establishing the Build! ® programme and 'sets the scene' for the way forward.

The creation of an internal member and officer Build! ® Project board to oversee the delivery of Build! ® and report into the Place Programme Board is considered best practice and important for accountability

Alternative Options

Option 1: To do nothing. This is rejected for the following reasons:

- The Council would own a number of undeveloped sites which would cause maintenance liabilities, additional costs and have a negative impact on reputation with local residents
- The Council would be reneging on its contractual commitment to the HCA and in turn lose funding and credibility
- The HCA would not give a grant as it is only eligible for schemes which deliver housing
- The Council would not optimise the social and financial return on its investment.
- The Council would lose its opportunity to further build its reputation within Government and Industry as a leader in this field.

Executive - 3 February 2014

Chairman:

Date: