

Council Minute Book
Monday 19 October 2015

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Executive Lead Member Decisions

There have been no Lead Member decisions taken between 20 July 2015 and 9 October 2015.

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Cherwell District Council

Executive

Minutes of a meeting of the Executive held at Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury, OX15 4AA, on 7 September 2015 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 Housing
Councillor Michael Gibbard, Lead Member for Planning
Councillor Tony Ilott, Lead Member for Public Protection
Councillor Kieron Mallon, Lead Member for Banbury Futures
Councillor D M Pickford, Lead Member for Clean and Green

Also Present: Councillor Mark Cherry, representing the Leader of the Labour Group
Councillor Nicholas Mawer

Apologies for absence: Councillor Nicholas Turner, Lead Member for Change Management, Joint Working and IT
Councillor Sean Woodcock, Leader of the Labour Group

Officers: Martin Henry, Director of Resources
Karen Curtin, Commercial Director (Bicester)
Ian Davies, Director of Community and Environment
Kevin Lane, Head of Law and Governance / Monitoring Officer
Paul Sutton, Head of Finance and Procurement
Jo Pitman, Head of Transformation, for agenda item 6
Adrian Colwell, Head of Strategic Planning and the Economy, for agenda item 10
Ed Potter, Head of Environmental Services, for agenda items 17 and 19
Natasha Clark, Team Leader, Democratic and Elections

23 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

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

There were no petitions or requests to address the meeting.

25 **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

26 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 July 2015 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

27 **Quarter 1 2015/16 Performance Report**

The Head of Transformation submitted a report which presented the Council's performance for the period 01 April – 30 June 2015 (quarter one), as measured through the performance management framework.

Resolved

- (1) That the following achievements be noted: Neighbourhoods blitzes; Processing of Housing Benefit (HB) Claims; Continue to support skills development; Contribute to the creation and safeguarding of jobs; Processing of planning applications; Car parking revenue; and, Council Tax / NNDR Collections.
- (2) That the following performance related matters be identified for review or consideration in future reports: Establish new management arrangements for Stratfield Break Sports Group on behalf of Kidlington Parish Council; Fly Tips Recorded; Fly Tip Enforcement Actions; ASB/Nuisance Cases responded to and resolved; Carbon management plan; and, 3-way Joint Working with SNC and SDC : Transformation.
- (3) That the lack of feedback on performance issues from the Overview & Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 1 September 2015 provided directly to The Leader be noted.

Reasons

In this report we show that the Council has again commenced the new performance year well, building on the high performance of 2014/15 and continuing the positive impact upon the 4 strategic priorities for our District that we set out to achieve. There are a small number of areas which the Council needs to keep under review to ensure targets are met and actions delivered. These and the rest of the business plan will be closely monitored over the next quarter and reported through the performance management framework.

Alternative options

Option 1: To note the report

Option 2: To request additional information on items and/or add to the work Programme for review and/or refer to Overview and Scrutiny

28 **Quarter 1 2015-16 - Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring Report**

The Director of Resources submitted a report which summarised the Council's Revenue and Capital position as at the end of the first three months of the financial year 2015-16 and projections for the full 2015/16 period.

Resolved

(1) That the projected revenue and capital position at June 2015 be noted.

Reasons

In line with good practice budget monitoring is undertaken on a monthly basis within the Council. The revenue and capital position is reported monthly to the Joint Management Team and formally to the Budget Planning Committee on a quarterly basis.

The revenue and capital expenditure in Q1 has been subject to a detailed review by Officers and reported monthly to management as part of the corporate dashboard.

Alternative options

Option 1: This report illustrates the Council's performance against the 2015-16 Financial Targets for Revenue and Capital. As this is a monitoring report, no further options have been considered. However, members may wish to request that officers provide additional information.

29 **Annual Review and Report of the Brighter Futures in Banbury Programme**

The Director of Community and Environment submitted a report to consider the activity and achievements of the Brighter Futures in Banbury Programme during 2014/15 and to consider a different approach to managing the partnership activity and its areas of focus from this year.

In introducing the report, the Lead Member for Banbury Futures reported that the programme had continued to meet its objectives and address the local challenges during 2014/15 and seen a greater push on engagement with the voluntary and community sector in Banbury with a range of support initiatives.

The lessons that had been learned during the past six years of the Programme could be exported to other areas in the district if there were similar issues.

The Lead Member for Banbury Futures explained that the recently obtained 2011 census information had identified changes in the make-up of the ward population which needed to be considered in the context that the whole public sector was still under fiscal pressure with on-going austerity measures and welfare reform. The meeting was advised of the change in approach to partnership activity, whereby alongside the six themes, there would be focus on specific issues and best use of existing resources made. The priorities for 2015/16 were based on partnership activity concentrating on child poverty, health inequalities, employability and supporting the most vulnerable.

Resolved

- (1) That the Brighter Futures in Banbury Programme progress made in 2014/15 and the areas requiring continuous improvement be noted.
- (2) That the change in approach to partnership activity be supported.
- (3) That the new priorities from 2015/16 be supported.
- (4) That a further detailed report on the changes to the County Council's Children's Early Intervention Services to enable the Council to contribute to the formal consultation process be received.

Reasons

The Brighter Futures partnership has for several years continued to work effectively in focussing the best use of resources on those most in need. The work of the six themes is proving valuable but continuous improvement remains to be achieved as there are still specific areas of concern which are well below comparative averages.

The context in which the partnership is operating is changing in relation to population, funding and organisational change. Organisational and service change in a partnership context is particularly challenging. This combined with future significant budget and service cuts means that it is even more important for the Council to lead and concentrate partnership resources to best effect.

The Programme to date has been progressed based on a number of theme lead meetings for coordination purposes and occasional wider Steering Group meetings to consider the overall Programme and its direction. This has required support from CDC to administer and is dependent on the availability of key representatives in different organisations being able to attend. This has proven to be challenging on occasions due to the additional pressures caused by regular changes in partnership organisations.

The recently obtained 2011 census information has identified changes in the make-up of the ward population in relation to a big increase in private rented households, an increase in single adults, lone parents and HMOs, increasing ethnic diversity, and specific issues such as a lack of qualifications of lone

parents. Of particular concern is the comparatively high level of child poverty in our wards.

It is important to periodically review the Programme and in light of the scale and nature of the challenges described above, now is an appropriate time. When doing so, there is a need to take account of current strengths and to consider what other partnership opportunities there are along with specific issues which are relevant to the people of the wards being supported. This is why the proposed wider partnership activity concentrating on child poverty, health inequalities, employability and supporting the most vulnerable are all inter related, relevant to the Brighter Future's Programme's objectives and capture other partnership opportunities which are in place.

Alternative options

Given the very wide ranging nature of the Brighter Futures Programme, there can be many different options and permutations of key priorities, areas of focus and mechanisms to progress. Therefore, no specific alternative options are identified.

30

Empty Homes Premium

The Head of Finance and Procurement submitted a report to seek approval to recommend to Council that, from 1 April 2016, an Empty Homes Premium of 50% be applied for properties that have remained empty for over two years.

Resolved

- (1) That Full Council be recommended to agree that an Empty Homes Premium of 50% be introduced from 1 April 2016 for properties that have been empty for over two years.

Reasons

From 1 April 2013, Local Authorities have been able to charge a premium on a class of property which has been unoccupied and unfurnished for a period of two years or more. The premium can be up to 50% on the property.

The decision to make a determination is made under Section 11B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and is made at the discretion of the Council. The Government has provided guidance as to which properties should be charged the premium but ultimately, the decision is one for members to make.

Alternative options

Option 1: To decide not to make a recommendation to Council on introducing an Empty Homes Premium of 50%.

Proposal for a Joint Economic Growth Service with South Northamptonshire Council

The Head of Strategic Planning and the Economy submitted a report which presented the final business case, following consultation, for a Joint Economic Growth Service across Cherwell District Council (CDC) and South Northamptonshire Councils (SNC).

The report recommended the formation of a two way Joint Economic Growth Service and in doing so sought the Executive's agreement for the non-staffing elements of the business case. The proposal was part of the wider transformation programme across the two Councils.

Resolved

- (1) That the exempt final business case and the consultation responses in relation to non-staffing matters be considered and noted.
- (2) That it be noted that the exempt business case would be considered by the Joint Commissioning Committee with regard to staffing matters on 1 October 2015 and this would include consultation responses from affected staff and trade union representatives.
- (3) That the implementation of the proposed final business case to share a joint Economic Growth Service between CDC and South Northamptonshire Council (SNC) be approved, subject to similar consideration and approval by SNC Cabinet and approval of the staffing implications by the Joint Commissioning Committee.
- (4) That authority be delegated to the Head of Strategic Planning and the Economy, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to make any non-significant amendment that may be required to the business case following the decision by SNC Cabinet and/or the Joint Commissioning Committee.

Reasons

The business case represents a major milestone in the revised transformation programme across CDC and SNC. The proposed joint team would provide an improved and strengthened service to support economic growth in each district by existing businesses and those looking to invest by working together, sharing expertise and best practice and taking advantage of economies of scale and providing resilience.

Alternative options

Option 1: Retain the status quo

Retaining the status quo is an option should Members wish to do so as each team has demonstrated its effectiveness in delivering economic growth and each Council has examples of best practice. However, retaining the status quo would limit the opportunities available to progress the work carried out by Deyton Bell and the recommendations from the LGA report, including

collaboration and moving towards an 'open for business' approach. The 'do-nothing' option is not recommended.

Option 2: Two-way shared service with a single Economic Growth Manager

An alternative two way shared service structure has been considered. This would see an additional post 'Economic Growth Manager' reporting directly to the Head of Service and having line management responsibility over the two team leaders.

This option has been discounted as the preferred option of two Lead Officers is an affordable model that provides geographic focus for the partners and reflects the different priorities and economies of each district. Adding an additional service manager would represent a cost increase on the proposed structure. This option could be re-visited in the future should additional partners join the structure or significant changes occur to the organisational structure of the Councils.

Option 3: Three-way collaboration and shared service with Stratford-on-Avon District Council.

A three-way collaboration with SDC is certainly a realistic option and has been given serious consideration. However, while it remains possible to progress with certain economic collaboration activities with SDC and this should be encouraged where it benefits all parties, due to the SDC Council decision in December no further formal shared service projects are being considered across the three Councils at this time.

Option 4: Three-way collaboration and shared service with other partners.

A three-way collaboration with other partners is certainly an option to consider in the future, as there are clear benefits to wider economic growth collaboration.

However, other than SDC (considered above) there are no other existing relationships at a sufficient stage to consider as part of a three-way shared service at this point. The process of developing such a relationship is likely to be lengthy and while this option should be considered again in the future, it should not be pursued at this time to the detriment of other options.

The approach in the recommendations is believed to be the best way forward. The proposal is to establish a Joint Economic Growth service between CDC and SNC and to begin a programme of collaboration and alignment including the sharing of best practice, aligning strategies and developing common projects.

Asset Management Strategy Action Plan Update

The Commercial Director (Bicester) and Head of Housing and Regeneration submitted a report to update the Executive on the progress of the priority actions arising from the Asset Management Strategy Review as reported in December 2014 and as part of the 2015/16 budget process.

Resolved

- (1) That updates on the priority actions arising from the Asset Management Plan (exempt annex to the Minutes as set out in the Minute Book) be noted.
- (2) That the allocation of up to £120k from earmarked reserves, which will allow the progression of the key activities which focus on the priority actions arising from the Asset Management Strategy Review (exempt annex to the Minutes as set out in the Minute Book) be approved.
- (3) That the use of £80k of the approved The Hill Youth and Community Centre capital budget to progress the Hill project to the next stage as be approved.
- (4) That it be noted that a comprehensive project plan was being monitored through the Accommodation Asset Strategy Board to ensure the vision set out in the 2014–2019 Asset Review and Strategy (exempt annex to the Minutes as set out in the Minute Book) would be delivered by 2019 and that progress against this action plan would be presented to the Executive in March 2016.

Reasons

It is important that adequate resource and a number of specialist reviews are available during this financial year in order to inform the work programme, capital programme and current strategic development projects. It has been estimated that the resources required in 2015/16 can be met from windfall income or earmarked capital receipts subject to Executive approval.

Alternative options

There is an option not to provide funding during 2015/16 and submit bids for the 2016/17 budget process. This is not recommended as a number of priority actions require resources now as they impact on other Council projects and priorities.

33

Graven Hill Update

The Director of Resources and Commercial Director (Bicester) submitted a report to update members on the work being undertaken by the Graven Hill Development Company in delivering the large scale self build project and to present the 2015/16 business plan and financial forecast as per the Council's governance and financing requirements for this investment.

Resolved

- (1) That the significant progress being carried out by the Graven Hill Development Company be noted.
- (2) That the 2015/16 Business Plan and objectives be approved.
- (3) That the updated Financial Forecast (exempt annex to the Minutes as set out in the Minute Book) be approved and officers asked to reflect

the changes from the baseline model into Council financial forecasts and funding plans.

- (4) That, subject to resolution (6) below, the membership of the Partnering Board be approved as follows: 5 Elected Members - Leader of the Council, Lead Member for Financial Management, Lead Member for Housing, Lead Member for Estates and the Economy and the Leader of the Opposition group and the Council's S 151 Officer and the Monitoring Officer.
- (5) That it be noted that the Partnership Board has responsibility for safeguarding the Council's equity investment and lending to the Company by undertaking more detailed monitoring of the Business Plan and providing advice and recommendations to Executive.
- (6) That the addition of a member of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to the membership of the Partnering Board be approved and that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be requested to appoint a member to the Board at its next meeting.

Reasons

As at 24 August 2015 (latest Board Meeting) the work programme for Graven Hill is on track in terms of current programme, budget and risk management.

This is a significant investment for the Council and one that is innovative and delivers many positive benefits to the District. It is therefore imperative that the strong governance that has been put place continues to actively manage the work programme, budgets, risks and mitigations.

The Partnering Board has as per the governance arrangements actively managed and monitored the delivery of the initial work programme and financial appraisal of the development company. The vision document and updated financial appraisal has been reviewed in detail and is presented to the Executive for ratification.

The Executive will receive an update in Q4 on progress against the targets.

Alternative options

There is an option to ask for a further review of the vision document and financial forecast.

34

Exclusion of the Press and Public

Resolved

That under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the ground that, if the public and press were present, it would be likely that exempt information falling under the provisions of Schedule 12A, Part 1, Paragraphs 2, 3 and 4 would be disclosed to them, and that in all the

circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

35 **Proposal for a Joint Economic Growth Service with South Northamptonshire Council - Exempt Appendix**

Resolved

- (1) That the exempt appendix be noted.

36 **Asset Management Plan 2015/16 - Exempt Appendices**

Resolved

- (1) That the exempt appendices be noted.

37 **Graven Hill Update - Exempt Appendix 2**

Resolved

- (1) That the exempt appendix be noted.

38 **Dry Recycling Contract**

The Head of Environmental Services submitted an exempt report relating to the dry recycling contract.

Resolved

- (1) As set out in the exempt minutes.
- (2) As set out in the exempt minutes.

Reasons

As set out in the exempt minutes.

Alternative options

Option 1: Approve the recommendations as set out.

Option 2: Reject the recommendations and accept the proposed price reduction.

Option 3: Ask officers to develop alternative options.

39 **Revenues and Benefits Service Options**

The Head of Finance and Procurement submitted an exempt report relating to Revenues and Benefits Service options.

Resolved

- (1) As set out in the exempt minutes.
- (2) As set out in the exempt minutes.

Reasons

As set out in the exempt minutes.

Alternative options

As set out in the exempt minutes.

40 **Highway Verge Grass Cutting**

The Head of Environmental Services submitted an exempt report to consider the highway verge grass cutting difficulties in 2015 and alternative service delivery options for 2016.

Resolved

- (1) That the action taken to address in part the 2015 highway verge difficulties in Cherwell's three urban parishes be noted and supported.
- (2) That Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) be requested to reinstate a highway verge grass cutting agency agreement for 2016 with this Council for Bicester and Kidlington/Gosford & Water Eaton for five years.
- (3) That Cherwell District Council supports Banbury Town Council to achieve the same for Banbury.
- (4) That Cherwell District Council offers to share the additional costs net of any OCC funding on a 50:50 basis with the urban parishes to achieve a reinstatement of the 2014 highway verge grass cutting standards.
- (5) That the additional cost to Cherwell District Council of the 2015 action be included in the mid-year budget review process and the longer term proposal be considered as a growth item in the 2016/17 draft Revenue Budget process.

Reasons

The inadequacy of the highway verge grass cutting standards in 2015 in Cherwell's three urban parishes and the widespread adverse public response prompted the need for immediate action given OCC's stance of only

undertaking one grass cut. The town councils of Banbury and Bicester agreed a 2015 response through the use of Cherwell's landscape management contractor for additional two cuts which mitigated in part the difficulties caused.

However, there is a need to consider putting in place alternative longer term, cost efficient arrangements which avoid a repetition of the 2015 difficulties. The options considered are to repeat the approach in 2015 with supplementary grass cuts funded jointly with the urban parishes or to reinstate the OCC agency agreement in the most cost efficient and best value way.

The recommended approach for the future is to reinstate the agency agreement for grass cutting on the highway verges of the three urban areas (albeit there will be two agreements to accommodate a more cost efficient Banbury solution) and through this plus the reduced funding from OCC, to reinstate the grass cutting standard of 2014 with the additional cost shared on a 50:50 basis between this Council and the urban parishes.

Alternative options

Option 1: to repeat the supplementary cuts arrangement in 2015. This approach has not been well received due to the late start by OCC, the grass height between cuts and the subsequent significant arisings remaining and has been confusing for the public because of no clarity regarding about who is responsible. It also carries the risk that OCC can unilaterally change its cutting schedule with little time for this Council to respond through its own contractor.

Option 2: to do nothing and allow OCC to continue with two cuts of urban area highway verges. This will result in a repeat of the significant adverse public reaction experienced in 2015.

41 New Woodgreen Leisure Centre Management Contract and Facility Improvements

The Director of Community and Environment submitted an exempt report which updated the Executive with the progress of this project, sought consideration of specific aspects to enable the project to move forward, the outcome of the tender evaluation process and to agree the shortlist for final tender submissions.

The Executive commended officers for their hard work in ensuring that the timetable for the project had been met to date.

Resolved

- (1) That the evaluation process outcome and conclusion be noted.
- (2) That the evaluation conclusion to invite remaining bidders to submit final tenders as indicated in the report be supported.
- (3) That the request in the final tenders in relation to the loss of whole or part of the bowls hall not be supported.

- (4) That the analysis of the financial implications arising from this report for this stage in the process be noted.
- (5) That both mandatory variants of lifecycle annual maintenance and utility tariff risk be included in the request for final tenders.
- (6) That the retained, shared and transferred risk approach be supported.
- (7) That the progress of all other aspects of the project be noted.
- (8) That the approach taken with Oxfordshire County Council in relation to the incorporation of the Woodgreen Library be supported.
- (9) That the timeline and key decision dates of the project plan be noted.
- (10) That Full Council be recommended to approve a supplementary capital estimate of up to £130,000 in order to undertake the priority building works prior to new contract commencement.

Reasons

As set out in the restricted minutes.

Alternative options

As set out in the restricted minutes.

The meeting ended at 7.35 pm

Chairman:

Date:

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Cherwell District Council

Budget Planning Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Budget Planning Committee held at Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury, OX15 4AA, on 28 July 2015 at 6.30 pm

Present: Councillor Nigel Randall (Vice-Chairman, in the Chair)

Councillor Ian Corkin
Councillor Russell Hurle
Councillor Mike Kerford-Byrnes
Councillor Barry Richards
Councillor Barry Wood
Councillor Sean Woodcock

Apologies for absence: Councillor Nicholas Mawer
Councillor Ken Atack
Councillor Colin Clarke
Councillor Carmen Griffiths
Councillor Douglas Webb

Officers: Martin Henry, Director of Resources / Section 151 Officer
Mandy Anderson, Financial Analyst
Joanne Kaye, Service Accountant - Community & Environment Directorate
Natasha Clark, Team Leader, Democratic and Elections
Lesley Farrell, Assistant Democratic and Elections Officer

3 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

4 Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

5 Minutes

The Minutes of the meetings of the Committee held on 17 February 2015 and 19 May 2015 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

6 Chairman's Announcements

There were no Chairman's Announcements.

7 **Quarter 1 2015-16 - Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring Report**

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Resources which detailed Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring for Quarter 1 of 2015-2016.

In considering the report, Members commented on the cost of Consultancy, the Director of Resources explained that consultants were brought in where there was either a lack of capacity or lack of expertise within the organisation and there was an identified budget. The Committee requested that a report be submitted to a future meeting with more detail regarding consultancy expenditure and requirements.

In response to Members' comments regards the large increase in Housing Benefit payments, the Director of Resources explained that cash flow profiling for housing benefit was difficult to forecast. Whilst CDC does get reimbursed by the Department for Work and Pensions, the council does have to pay these initially and may not always have adequate funds to do so.

Given the complexity of the subject, the Committee agreed that an all member briefing be arranged to include the process, how they are claimed and paid and the drivers of the cost.

With regards to retail income, in particular at Castle Quay which was assumed to be significantly down, the Committee noted that Portas funding received by the council, had been used to pay for two Town Centre Managers and suggested that the occupancy of outlets in Castle Quay should be given higher priority than high street units, as greater occupancy of Castle Quay would be of more financial benefit to the council.

Resolved

- (1) That the projected revenue and capital position at June 2015 be noted.
- (2) That officers be requested to submit a report on the council's use of consultancy, including expenditure and requirements, to a future meeting
- (3) That officers be requested to arrange an all Member briefing on Housing Benefits

8 **2015-2016 Business Rates Quarterly Monitoring Report**

The Director of Resources submitted and presented a report which provided members of the Budget Planning Committee with an update on the business rates position as at the end of Quarter 1 of the 2015-2016 financial year.

The Committee was advised that business rates were higher than anticipated and by year end, income should be higher than budgeted for. The Business Support Unit had been set up to maximise income from business rates and also to explore other avenues of possible income.

In response to questions from the Committee regarding changes to council tax banding, for example when there had been an extension to a property or a house converted into flats, the Director of Resources agreed to circulate a response to Members outside of the meeting.

Resolved

- (1) That the contents of the report be noted.

9 **Medium Term Revenue Plan**

The Director of Resources submitted a report which provided an update on the Council's Medium Term Revenue Plan.

The purpose of the report was to set out the current medium term financial forecast as a base position to then build on and update at each meeting.

Resolved

- (1) That the contents of the report be noted.

10 **Review of Committee Work Programme 2015-2016**

The Director of Resources and Vice-Chairman gave a verbal update on the Committee Work Programme. They had been in discussions with the Chairman and the work programme would be circulated when finalised.

Resolved

- (1) That the verbal update be noted.

The meeting ended at 7.45 pm

Chairman:

Date:

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Cherwell District Council

Budget Planning Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Budget Planning Committee held at Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury, OX15 4AA, on 8 September 2015 at 6.30 pm

Present: Councillor Nicholas Mawer (Chairman)
Councillor Nigel Randall (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Ken Atack
Councillor Carmen Griffiths
Councillor Douglas Webb
Councillor Sean Woodcock

Substitute Members: Councillor Mark Cherry (In place of Councillor Barry Richards)

Apologies for absence: Councillor Colin Clarke
Councillor Ian Corkin
Councillor Russell Hurle
Councillor Mike Kerford-Byrnes
Councillor Barry Richards
Councillor Barry Wood

Officers: Paul Sutton, Head of Finance and Procurement
Natasha Clark, Team Leader, Democratic and Elections
Sharon Hickson, Assistant Democratic and Elections Officer

11 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of Interest.

12 Urgent Business

There were no items or Urgent Business.

13 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 28 July 2015 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

14 **Chairman's Announcements**

There were no Chairman's announcements.

15 **Review of Capital Slippage 2015/16**

The Committee considered a report of the Head of Finance and Procurement reviewing the capital budgets slipped into 2015/16 and compare against spend at Quarter 1.

In response to concerns raised by the Committee, the Head of Finance and Procurement confirmed that in future reports each capital scheme would contain more detailed information providing a clear record of the status of each scheme

The Committee also requested that further information, such as the date the slippage was first requested, in order for them to be able to monitor more accurately the length of time and reasoning for the slippage be included in future slippage reports,.

It was agreed that inviting relevant budget holders to future meetings to answer project specific questions would also be useful.

Resolved

- (1) That the report be noted.
- (2) That it be noted that going forward the monitoring and management of the capital programme would be undertaken in more detail and more detailed information would be presented to the Committee in future capital slippage monitoring reports.

16 **Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2016-2017**

The Committee considered a report of the Head of Finance and Procurement which detailed the implications of the current Council Tax Reduction Scheme and provided options for 2016-2017.

The Committee discussed the implications of each of the individual options and unanimously agreed that Option 1, no change, was the fairest and most cost effective and should be recommended to Executive for consultation to be undertaken.

Resolved

- (1) That the contents of the report and any financial implications for Cherwell District Council be noted.
- (2) That it be recommended to Executive that Option 1 - No change to the current local Council Tax Reduction scheme, be considered for the

Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2016-17 in order for consultation to be undertaken.

17 **Council Tax - Empty Homes Premium**

The Committee considered a report of the Head of Finance and Procurement detailing the proposal from Executive that a council tax empty homes premium of 50% be applied for properties that have remained empty for over two years.

In response to member questions the Head of Finance and Procurement confirmed that legislation did not allow for a premium of more than 150% to be applied.

At the request of Members, the Head of Finance and Procurement agreed to provide a breakdown of the locations of empty properties within the district.

Resolved

- (1) That the Executive recommendation to Full Council that an Empty Homes Premium of 50% be introduced from 1 April 2016 for properties that have been empty for over two years be supported.

18 **Budget Planning Committee Work Programme 2015/16**

The Committee considered the draft Work Programme for 2015/16.

The Head of Finance and Procurement reported Budget Guidelines 2016/17 would be changed from the 6 October meeting to the 3 November meeting and that items on Revenue & Capital and Capital Slippage would be added to the 6 October meeting

Resolved

- (1) That the work programme be noted.

19 **Exclusion of the Press and Public**

Resolved

That under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the ground that, if the public and press were present, it would be likely that exempt information falling under the provisions of Schedule 12A, Part 1, Paragraph 3 would be disclosed to them, and that in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

Medium Term Revenue Plan

The Committee considered an exempt report of Head of Finance and Procurement which presented an update on the Councils Medium Term Revenue Plan position.

Resolved

- (1) That the report be noted.

The meeting ended at 7.45 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 14 July 2015 at 6.30 pm

Present: Councillor Lynn Pratt (Vice-Chairman, in the Chair)

Councillor Claire Bell
Councillor Timothy Hallchurch MBE
Councillor Chris Heath
Councillor Matt Johnstone
Councillor Alastair Milne Home
Councillor James Porter
Councillor Neil Prestidge
Councillor Sandra Rhodes
Councillor Lawrie Stratford

Apologies for absence: Councillor David Hughes
Councillor Bryn Williams

Officers: Louise Tustian, Acting Corporate Performance and Insight Manager, for agenda item 6
Natasha Clark, Team Leader, Democratic and Elections
Emma Faulkner, Democratic and Elections Officer

10 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

11 **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

12 **Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 2 June 2015 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

13 **Chairman's Announcements**

There were no Chairman's announcements.

14 **Customer Insight Report**

The Committee considered a report from the Head of Transformation which detailed customer feedback and complaints received between October 2014 and March 2015.

The Acting Corporate Performance Manager advised the Committee that work was underway to clarify the 'unknown' category of the valid/invalid complaints tables in section 4.1 of both appendices.

In response to questions from the Committee, the Acting Corporate Performance Manager provided an overview of the complaints process and explained that correspondence was registered as a complaint if it involved dissatisfaction with a service the Council had provided.

Resolved

- (1) That the report be noted
- (2) That the new reporting practices for the Customer Insight report be agreed

15 Work Programme 2015/16

The Committee considered a report of the Head of Law and Governance which detailed the Overview and Scrutiny work programme for the coming year.

With regard to the Youth Engagement Scrutiny review, officers advised the Committee that an update would be given at the September meeting.

In connection with the Recycling review, officers advised the Committee that a report regarding a Strategic Review of Recycling was due to be submitted to the October meeting of Executive, and suggested that the Head of Environmental Services be invited to the September meeting of this Committee to give an overview ahead of its consideration by Executive. The Committee endorsed this suggestion.

Councillor Lawrie Stratford updated the Committee on progress of the Website Panel since the last meeting. A further meeting had been held with the Head of Joint ICT Business Service, and an assurance had been given that there would be scrutiny involvement in the website project.

Following receipt of the Inspectors report on the Examination of the Local Plan, the Committee requested that items relating to a review of the local plan process, wind turbines and their locations and the application of fracturing, and rural exception sites and allocation policy be scheduled for the October meeting.

The Committee also requested an update on the Graven Hill development be submitted to the September meeting.

With regards to other potential scrutiny review topics, Members suggested the Local Management Organisation for North West Bicester and Grounds Maintenance. It was also noted that the Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee had made a referral to the Committee to investigate the retrospective issue of capital slippage where no spend had occurred and if there were issues with either the management of services or problems with business planning where staff time for capital schemes should be allocated. The Committee asked officers to consider the feasibility of these potential review items with the Chairman and advise Members accordingly.

Resolved

- (1) That, subject to the following amendments, the work programme be noted:
 - Update on Youth Engagement to September meeting
 - Review of Local Plan Process; Wind Turbines and their locations, and the application of the fracturing mining technique; and Rural Exception Site and Allocations Policy to be scheduled for the October meeting
 - Management of the self-build element of the Graven Hill Development to be scheduled for the September meeting
- (2) That the Head of Environmental Services be invited to the September meeting of the Committee to discuss the Strategic Review of Recycling

The meeting ended at 7.30 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 1 September 2015 at 6.30 pm

Present: Councillor David Hughes (Chairman)

Councillor Claire Bell
Councillor Timothy Hallchurch MBE
Councillor Matt Johnstone
Councillor Alastair Milne Home
Councillor Neil Prestidge
Councillor Lawrie Stratford
Councillor Bryn Williams

Substitute Members: Councillor Rose Stratford (In place of Councillor Lynn Pratt)

Also Present: Councillor D M Pickford - Lead Member for Clean and Green
Councillor G A Reynolds – Deputy Leader of the Council

Apologies for absence: Councillor Lynn Pratt
Councillor Chris Heath
Councillor James Porter
Councillor Sandra Rhodes

Officers: Balvinder Heran, Joint Head of ICT Business Services for agenda item 6
Ed Potter, Head of Environmental Services, for agenda item 8
Shirley Vaughan, Performance and Planning Officer, for agenda item 7
Natasha Clark, Team Leader, Democratic and Elections
Emma Faulkner, Democratic and Elections Officer

16 **Declarations of Interest**

8. Strategic Review of Recycling.

Councillor Lawrie Stratford, Non Statutory Interest, as an Oxfordshire County Councillor (OCC) and would not participate in any discussion relating to OCC should it arise.

9. Work Programme 2015/16.

Councillor David Hughes, Declaration, as a Director of Graven Hill Village Holdings Limited.

9. Work Programme 2015/16.

Councillor Timothy Hallchurch MBE, Declaration, as a Director of Graven Hill Village Holdings Limited.

17 **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

18 **Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 14 July 2015 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

19 **Chairman's Announcements**

The Chairman announced that agenda item 8, Strategic Review of Recycling, would be moved up the order and taken as item 6.

20 **Strategic Review of Recycling**

The Chairman welcomed the Head of Environmental Services and the Lead Member for Clean and Green to the meeting to give an overview of the Strategic Review of Recycling which was due to be considered by the Executive at its October meeting.

The Head of Environmental Services explained that changes in the recycling strategy were required due to the value of recycled materials dropping. In addition to the drop in value, some recycling facilities were increasing the gate costs charged per rate of material. Gate fees were currently picked up by contractors, but during the next tender process it was possible that the council would need to pick up such charges instead. In addition to this, changes to the rules around materials which could be recycled meant that the overall recycling rate had remained at the same level for a number of years. Therefore, any improvement in the overall rate would need to be accompanied by additional spend.

The Head of Environmental Services added that Oxfordshire County Council was currently consulting on proposed changes to their own waste arrangements, including the potential closure of the Ardley waste recycling centre, and confirmed that the council would be responding to the consultation.

Resolved

(1) That the verbal update on the Strategic Review of Recycling be noted

21 **Scrutiny Review Updates: Website and Member IT**

The Chairman welcomed the Joint Head of ICT Business Services to the meeting to give an overview on the future provision of Member IT.

The Joint Head of ICT Business Services explained that Windows tablets would be issued to all Members after the all-out elections in May 2016. The tablets had been chosen due to the functionality they provided, and the model provided would be expected to last four years. A small group of Members were currently trialling the devices, and the Joint Head of ICT Business Services invited Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to take part.

The Joint Head of ICT Business Services added that the move to tablet devices would result in a reduction in the number of paper agendas produced. A capital bid would be submitted to cover the initial cost of the devices, which would be reviewed by the Budget Planning Committee as part of the budget setting process prior to consideration by Full Council.

The Joint Head of ICT Business Services responded to detailed technical questions from the Committee.

Resolved

- (1) That the presentation on the provision of Member IT be noted

22 **Quarter 1 Performance Report, including Introduction to Performance Management Briefing**

The Performance and Planning Officer presented the report of the Head of Transformation which detailed the Council's performance during quarter 1, 1 April to 30 June 2015.

In connection with indicator CBP3 5.1b, number of visits to Woodgreen Leisure Centre, North Oxfordshire Academy and Cooper School, the committee requested that the Quarter 2 report include reference to the same figures for previous years, to provide an annual comparison.

With regard to indicator CBP3 7.6, percentage of planning appeals allowed against refusal, the committee asked if it would be possible for the figure to be broken down to show those applications refused by officers, and those refused by the Planning Committee.

Resolved

- (1) That the report be noted
- (2) That no performance related matters be referred to the Executive

23 **Work Programme 2015/16**

The Committee considered a report of the Head of Law and Governance which detailed the Overview and Scrutiny work programme for the coming year.

Councillor Neil Prestidge updated the Committee on progress of the Youth Engagement Scrutiny review. Following a meeting with the Senior Recreation Development Officer, a number of members had been appointed as 'School Champions' at schools across the district, and would speak to students to find out their concerns. The scheme would be launched during Democracy week in October, and local MP's Victoria Prentis and Nicola Blackwood would also be visiting schools that week.

The champions appointed were as follows:

Wariner School – Councillor Bryn Williams
Banbury School – Councillor Surinder Dhesi
Blessed George Napier – Councillor Claire Bell
North Oxford Academy – Councillor John Donaldson
Bicester Community College – Councillor Melanie Magee
Cooper School – Councillor Dan Sames
Gosford Hill School – Councillor Sandra Rhodes

An article would also be included in the next edition of 'In Brief' to raise awareness of the champions.

Following the presentation from the Head of Environmental Services earlier in the meeting, the Committee felt that a further update on the strategic review of recycling would be required following consideration of the report by the Executive, and requested that the item be scheduled for the October meeting.

With regard to the Website Review, the Committee requested that the Joint Head of ICT Business Services submit a written report to the November meeting of the Committee, outlining progress made so far and intended action for the website redevelopment.

Following previous requests of the Committee in relation to the Graven Hill development, officers advised that an update report had been published as part of the Executive agenda for the meeting on 7 September. One of the recommendations of the report was for a member of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to be appointed to the Graven Hill Partnering board. In the event that Executive approved the recommendation, a representative would need to be appointed at the October Overview and Scrutiny meeting.

The Committee also requested that the Safeguarding report be scheduled for the November meeting, following its consideration by Executive.

Resolved

- (1) That, subject to the following amendments, the work programme be noted:
 - Recycling be scheduled for the October meeting, to update on discussions regarding the strategic review following consideration of the report by Executive
 - The Joint Head of ICT Business Services be requested to submit a written update on the website redevelopment to the November meeting

- Safeguarding be scheduled for the November meeting, following its consideration by Executive

The meeting ended at 8.45 pm

Chairman:

Date:

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