

Cherwell District Council

Executive

Minutes of a meeting of the Executive held at Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury, OX15 4AA, on 10 January 2011 at 6.30 pm

Present: Councillor Barry Wood (Chairman)
Councillor G A Reynolds (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Ken Atack
Councillor Norman Bolster
Councillor Colin Clarke
Councillor Michael Gibbard
Councillor James Macnamara
Councillor Nigel Morris
Councillor D M Pickford
Councillor Nicholas Turner

Also Present: Councillor Daniel Sames
Councillor Leslie F Sibley

Officers: Ian Davies, Interim Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service
John Hoad, Strategic Director - Planning, Housing and Economy
Liz Howlett, Head of Legal & Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer
Martin Henry, Chief Finance Officer / Section 151 Officer
Karen Curtin, Head of Finance
Gillian Greaves, Head of Housing Services
Richard McIntyre, Senior Housing Options Officer
Martyn Swann, Strategic Housing Manager
Kate Winstanley, Strategic Housing Officer
James Doble, Democratic, Scrutiny and Elections Manager

95 **Declarations of Interest**

Members declared interests in the following agenda items:

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

There were no petitions or requests to address the meeting.

97 **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

98 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 December 2010 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

99 **Housing in Cherwell and the Current Economic Climate**

The Head of Housing Services submitted a report to:

- Update the Executive on the progress made in implementing the Affordable Housing and the Recession Action Plan approved by Executive in January 2009
- Advise the Executive on the Government's proposed housing policy changes and housing and welfare benefit reform and its potential impact on the Council's housing function in the current economic climate
- Recommend to Executive a Housing & Current Economic Climate Action Plan to steer the Council through these changes until the new Housing Strategy is in place in April 2012.
- Advise Executive on plans to bring forward a new Cherwell Housing Strategy in 2012 that will respond to the new policy context and financial climate
- Endorse a Cherwell District Council response to the Government consultation "Local Decisions: a fairer future for social housing"

In the course of discussion it was noted that there were significant changes to both the terminology and delivery of social housing and Members requested a seminar be arranged to clarify these changes.

Resolved

- (1) That the progress and completion of the Affordable Housing and the Recession Action Plan be noted.
- (2) That the Housing and the Current Economic Climate Action Plan for moving forward as set out in the annex to the minutes (as set out in the minute book) be endorsed.
- (3) That the response to the Government consultation paper as set out in the annex to the minutes (as set out in the minute book) be endorsed.
- (4) That the current and proposed housing and welfare benefit changes and the potential impact upon the Housing Service be noted.
- (5) That the plans to bring forward a Cherwell Housing Strategy and approve the structure for Member involvement in the Housing Strategy Programme Board be approved.

Reasons

The Coalition Government is proposing changes which will substantially affect the provision of housing services and housing related support. To support

members in understanding the local impacts of these changes, this report outlined the work that was being proposed to ensure the Council is able to continue to respond to its Corporate Plan priorities, and deliver housing services within a value for money context.

Options

- Option One** Accept the recommendations contained in this report, thereby endorsing the response to Government housing consultation, instructing officers to implement the Housing and Current Economic Climate Action Plan and approving medium term plans to bring forward a new Cherwell Housing Strategy
- Option Two** Accept the recommendations contained in this report subject to any amendments by Members
- Option Three** Not to approve plans to bring forward a Cherwell Housing Strategy. This would require new plans being produced for Members, and is not recommended.

100

Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document

The Strategic Director Planning, Housing and Economy submitted a report to consider the Planning Obligations Draft Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and sought approval for the use of the draft SPD as informal guidance with immediate effect.

During the course of the debate members made a number of detailed comments and observations, in light of which it was agreed would be considered prior to public consultation. Therefore recommendation 2 as set out in the report was withdrawn and recommendation 1 amended to enable the timing of the consultation to be at the discretion of the Portfolio Holder.

It was also requested that members of the Executive should be provide with full copies of any documents that they were being asked to consider for public consultation.

Resolved

- (1) That the Planning Obligations Draft Supplementary Planning Document be noted and subject to the consideration of observation raised at the meeting endorsed for public consultation, the timing of which to be at the discretion of the Portfolio holder.
- (2) That the Strategic Director, Planning, Housing and Economy, be authorised in consultation with the Portfolio Holder Planning and Housing, to make any further minor non-substantive changes as are necessary to the draft Supplementary Planning Document prior to the publication for public consultation.

Reasons

A Planning Obligations Draft Supplementary Planning Document has been prepared to offer more detailed guidance to supplement the policies in the Core Strategy on how the Council (as Local Planning Authority - LPA) will decide what new infrastructure and facilities need to be provided as a consequence of development and assess requirements for "in kind" provision and / or financial contributions towards provision. Existing guidance on the Council's requirements for planning obligations is given in the document 'Interim Guidance on Planning Obligations' approved in April 2007.

Options

Option One To endorse the SPD for public consultation and approve the use of the draft SPD as informal guidance for development control purposes with immediate effect.

Option Two To endorse the SPD for public consultation with amendments and to approve the use of the draft SPD as informal guidance for Development Control purposes following amendment.

Option Three Not to endorse the SPD for public consultation and not to approve the use of the draft SPD as informal guidance for Development Control purposes.

101

Recommendations from Overview and Scrutiny Committee- Car Parking Charges Call-in

The Executive considered a referral back to them for reconsideration following consideration of a Call-in by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, as set out below

We the named Councillors and non-executive members of Cherwell District Council hereby give notice that we wish to call in for further scrutiny the Executive decision's of Monday 6th December 2010 regarding the proposals to increase Car Parking Fees, the extension of car parking hours, the introduction of parking fees for Blue Badge Holders and the decision to begin negotiations with regards to Watts Way, Kidlington.

Councillor Sames, Chairman of the overview and Scrutiny Committee presented the referral as set out below:

That the proposals of the Executive to increase Car Parking Fees, the extension of car parking hours, the introduction of parking fees for Blue Badge Holders and the decision to begin negotiations with regards to Watts Way, Kidlington be referred back to the Executive and that in reconsidering the decision the Executive should take note of the concerns expressed at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting and the following 5 points:

1. *Ensure proper consultation on Watts Way, Kidlington*
2. *Request the Executive investigate alternative ways to find funds (e.g. £39k to offset the introduction of evening charges)*
3. *Investigate the feasibility of barrier parking/pay on exit*
4. *Study the economic impact of parking charges*
5. *Investigate the number of disabled bays across the district, the ratio of short to long stay spaces and motorcycle parking availability*

As Labour Group Leader Councillor Sibley addressed the meeting.

In considering the referral, the Executive welcomed the detailed consideration the Committee had given to the issue and noted that there had been the opportunity for all interested parties at the meeting to contribute.

Resolved

- (1) That the decisions of the Executive on 6 December 2010 in connection with the implementation of car parking proposals be reaffirmed , in order to achieve a balanced budget, and for these to be introduced on or as soon after 4 April 2011 as is practicable:
- (2) That the decision of the Executive on 6 December 2010 to begin negotiations with Eames with regard to the covenant for Watt's Way car park, Kidlington be reaffirmed
- (3) That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be requested to take forward in its work programme in 2011/12 further investigation of the following strategic parking issues:
 - The balance and location of long stay/short stay parking in Banbury, Bicester and Kidlington
 - The wider economic impact of Parking Policy on the Districts urban centres
 - The cost benefit of alternative management arrangements for car parks, including 'Pay on Exit'.
- (4) That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be requested to report back to the Executive at the end of 2011 the outcome of its findings from 3 above and any recommendations for change.

Reasons

The Executive consider that on balance taking in to consideration all the evidence presented at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, that their decisions on 6 December 2010 remain justified.

Options

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| Option One | To agree the recommendations |
| Option Two | Not to agree the recommendations |
| Option Three | To amend the recommendations |

102

Budget 2011/12 Draft 2

The Head of Finance submitted a report which provided the second opportunity for the Executive to shape and refine the interaction between corporate plan service plans and financial matters before the final budget is presented to the Council on the 21 February 2011.

Resolved

- (1) That the outcome of the 2011/12 provisional settlement be noted;
- (2) That the draft revenue budget 2be noted in the context of the Council's service objectives and strategic priorities
- (3) That the draft corporate plan for 2011/12 which is currently subject to consultation, be noted;
- (4) That the approach to the overall capital programme and 10/11 expenditure profile set out in the annex to the minutes (as set out in the minute book) be agreed;
- (5) That no further matters be taken into consideration in producing a balanced budget for the next meeting of the Executive at this time ;
- (6) That the Tax Base Report set out in the annex to the minutes (as set out in the minute book) be noted and
 - that, in accordance with the Regulations, as amended, the amount calculated by the Cherwell District Council as its council tax base for the year 2011/2012 shall be 50,337; and
 - the report of the Head of Finance, made pursuant to the Local Authorities (Calculation of Tax Base) Regulations 1992, as amended, and the calculations referred to therein for the purposes of the Regulations be approved; and
 - that the tax base for parts of the area be in accordance with the figures shown in column 13 in the annex to the minutes (as set out in the minute book).
 - the council continue with the discretionary awards that it resolved to give on December 1 2008.

Reasons

The Council has to adopt a budget for 2011/12 as the basis for calculating its level of Council Tax and 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.

Options

Option One To review draft revenue and capital budget to date and consider actions arising.

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

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Culture and Heritage Value for Money Review

The Interim Chief Executive submitted a report to consider the findings of the Value for Money (VFM) Review of Culture and Heritage report and the recommendations arising from the report

Resolved

- (1) That the overall conclusion of the review that the service is low cost for the Museum but high cost for its Arts service, has high performance in terms of visitor numbers to the museum and is high quality in terms of user satisfaction for the museum be endorsed.
- (2) That improvements in value for money be sought and that the following recommendations for achieving savings of £81,130 in 2011/12 be approved;
 1. Introduce single staffing at Banbury Museum, saving £13,385
 2. Reduce the Museum exhibitions budget and operational costs, saving £15,476
 3. Reduce arts funding by £31,906, ending grant aid support for all provision other than The Mill, Banbury
 4. Reduce Arts Officer hours to 43 per week, saving £15,108
 5. Reduce the operational revenue budget for Arts officers by 26%, saving £5,255
- (3) That core service funding of The Courtyard, Bicester be ceased due to the intended change in use of the facility from a dedicated youth arts centre which, prima facie, negates the operational agreement the Council is party to. However, retain the provision of a dedicated arts officer to the facility to continue support for the remaining youth arts provision. Subject to further negotiation with OCC and the Arts Council Lottery Unit, this will enable further savings of £38,000 in 2011/12.
- (4) That subject to further assessment, it be agreed in principle to transfer the operation of the Museum and Tourist Information Centre (TIC) into a bespoke Trust developed for the purpose from 2013/14, saving an estimated £64,000 in NNDR.

- (5) That officers be requested to bring a detailed report on the creation of a Trust for the Museum and TIC to a future meeting.

Reasons

This review forms part of the Value for Money programme of reviews, which aims to cover all services within the Council and improve the value of services offered to residents of Cherwell. Culture and Heritage was selected as an area for a 'health check' review during 2010/11 along with a number of other services as these had not previously been covered by the VFM programme but account for a high level of expenditure. The aim of such reviews is to quickly identify potential savings using information that is readily available.

Options

Option One To make savings of £183,130 as set out in the recommendations, which will significantly reduce the costs of the service, including arts funding, while still retaining a reasonable level of service provision

Option Two To make further savings of £66,000 in arts development funding to bring it in line with the average spend of comparator authorities. This would require the loss of two posts and the end of funding to The Mill, putting the sustainability of the service in question.

The meeting ended at 8.55 pm

Chairman:

Date: