

# **Cherwell District Council**

## **Council**

**22 July 2019**

<p><b>Cherwell District Council / Oxfordshire County Council Signage Agency Agreement</b></p>
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### **Report of Assistant Director: Environmental Services**

This report is public

#### **Purpose of report**

To agree to enter into agency agreements with Oxfordshire County Council regarding unauthorised signs, sponsorship of roundabouts and maintenance of the roundabouts outside Bicester Village.

#### **1.0 Recommendations**

The Council is recommended:

- 1.1 To note the progress on partnership working with Oxfordshire County Council;
- 1.2 To approve entering into Section 101 agreements with Oxfordshire County Council for the purpose of transferring to the district council the following responsibilities:
  - i. Removal of unauthorised signs
  - ii. the landscape maintenance of roundabouts outside Bicester Village and
  - iii. the sponsorship of roundabouts
- 1.3 To delegate negotiation and final agreement of the Section 101 agreements to the Assistant Director: Environmental Services in consultation with the Lead Member for Clean and Green, the Director: Law and Governance and the Executive Director: Finance.

#### **2.0 Introduction**

- 2.1 Officers at Cherwell District Council and Oxfordshire County Council have been jointly exploring opportunities for working more closely together and undertake formal partnership arrangements.
- 2.2 Following a joint workshop in December 2018, a programme of initial, low-risk projects was established across several service areas. This is now being progressed with the aim of delivering some tangible benefits for both authorities and customers.

- 2.3 One of the initiatives identified is temporary signage within this Council's area. This is an area that has caused some local frustration especially relating to the number of illegal signs and is being addressed with an informal joined-up approach at the moment. The proposed Agency Agreement would pass this activity onto this Council to manage. It will ensure that any non-approved signage is dealt with quickly and efficiently and would take effect as soon as the agreement is signed.
- 2.4 Another initiative being pursued is delivering landscape maintenance to the roundabouts outside Bicester Village. A further agency agreement for these roundabouts has been prepared. Under this agreement the Council will receive a commuted sum of £204k to carry out maintenance for the long term on the new roundabout. This commuted sum covers in excess of 15 years of maintenance work.
- 2.5 Oxfordshire County Council Cabinet approved the proposed agency agreements on 18 June 2019

### **3.0 Report Details**

- 3.1 The two authorities already have an existing successful Agency Agreement with a lifetime of 5 years which covers grass cutting that has been in place since February 2016. The proposal is to extend this agreement to include the Council to approve and manage the removal of temporary signs e.g. for housing developers, local events
- 3.2 The Council already offers sponsorship on many key roundabouts. This isn't formally incorporated into an agency agreement so the opportunity will be taken to incorporate this into an agency agreement. Income generation from sponsorship will be monitored with this Council providing all the necessary information to Oxfordshire County Council (OCC). All income will be used to offset the costs of managing the temporary signs and maintaining the landscapes on roundabouts. Any surplus income will be shared between the two authorities.
- 3.3 The agreement will require that OCC policies, specifications and best practice will be adhered to. This will include ensuring required information is uploaded to the county council's asset management systems.
- 3.4 The Agency Agreements will detail the escalation process should the need arise through poor performance or other reasons. This will include clauses for termination of the agreement by either party
- 3.5 The exact process for the removal of signs will be agreed with the Lead Member for Clean & Green and will be clear & transparent.

### **4.0 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations**

- 4.1 Entering into Section 101 agreements with Oxfordshire County Council will transfer the responsibility for the removal of unauthorised signs and the landscape maintenance of the roundabouts outside Bicester Village to this Council. In addition the existing sponsorship of roundabouts will be incorporated into an agency agreement.

4.2 These are low risk agreements which will improve service levels.

## **5.0 Consultation**

Oxfordshire County Council

## **6.0 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection**

6.1 The following alternative options have been identified

Option 1: To support the adoption of the Section 101 agreements.

Option 2: To reject the Section 101 agreements and ask officers to reconsider the strategy.

## **7.0 Implications**

### **Financial and Resource Implications**

7.1 There are no immediate significant financial implications with adopting these agreements. The costs associated with these Section 101 agreements are small and will be met by income streams from unauthorised signage. The roundabouts at Bicester Village costs will be covered by the commuted sum transferred from Oxfordshire County Council.

Comments to be checked by  
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### **Legal Implications**

7.2 Local authorities have, in the Local Government Act 1972 (LGA 1972), section 101 specific statutory power to arrange for the discharge of their functions to a committee, sub-committee or an officer of the authority or to any other local authority. This power is subject to any express provision within LGA 1972 or any subsequent Act.

The transfer of the statutory function the subject of this report from Oxfordshire County Council to the district council shall be recorded in formal agreement(s) to be negotiated and concluded between the parties.

Comments checked by:  
Richard Hawtin, Team Leader: Non-contentious, Email:  
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### **Risk Implications**

7.3 The report sets out the risk implications for the Council. The Section 101 agreements are low risk for the Council with a clear escalation process to deal with

any issues or poor performance and the opportunity to terminate the agreement by either party.

Comments checked by  
Hedd Vaughan-Evans, Assistant Director Performance & Transformation, 0300 003 0111, hedd.vaughanEvans@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk

## 8.0 Decision Information

### Wards Affected

All

### Links to Corporate Plan and Policy Framework

Cherwell: Safe, Clean and Green

### Lead Councillor

Councillor Dan Sames, Lead Member for Clean and Green

### Document Information

Appendix No	Title
None	
Background Papers	
None	
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