

## **Cherwell District Council**

### **Executive**

Minutes of a meeting of the Executive held at Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury, Oxon OX15 4AA, on 9 September 2024 at 6.30 pm

#### Present:

Councillor David Hingley, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategic Leadership, Chairman  
Councillor Lesley McLean, Deputy Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Finance, Property & Regeneration, Vice-Chairman  
Councillor Tom Beckett, Portfolio Holder for Greener Communities  
Councillor Chris Brant, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services  
Councillor Jean Conway, Portfolio Holder for Planning and Development  
Councillor Ian Middleton, Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhood Services  
Councillor Rob Parkinson, Portfolio Holder for Safer Communities  
Councillor Rob Pattenden, Portfolio Holder for Healthy Communities  
Councillor Chris Pruden, Portfolio Holder for Housing

#### Also Present:

Councillor Amanda Watkins, Leader of the Opposition, Leader of the Labour Group  
Councillor John Broad

#### Officers:

Gordon Stewart, Chief Executive  
Ian Boll, Corporate Director Communities  
Stephen Hinds, Corporate Director Resources and Transformation  
Michael Furness, Assistant Director Finance & S151 Officer  
Shiraz Sheikh, Assistant Director Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer  
Nicola Riley, Assistant Director Wellbeing & Housing  
Shona Ware, Assistant Director Customer Focus  
Tony Brummell, Building Control and Flood Risk Manager  
Natasha Clark, Governance and Elections Manager

#### Officers Attending Virtually:

Tim Hughes, Head of Regulatory Services & Community Safety  
Mona Walsh, Assistant Director - Property  
David Spilsbury, Head of Digital and Innovation

### **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest,

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

There were no petitions.

The Chair advised that Councillor Broad had requested to speak on exempt item 14, Cloud Support, Security Operation Centre and Managed Network Partner Tender.

The Chair welcomed Councillor Watkins, Leader of the Opposition Labour Group, to the meeting and invited Councillor Watkins to indicate if she wished to speak on any item.

30 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 July 2024 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

31 **Chairman's Announcements**

There were no Chairman's announcements.

32 **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

33 **Policy for Selecting the Names of New Streets**

The Assistant Director - Planning and Development submitted a report to approve an updated street naming policy containing clarifications on the approach to be followed by officers in providing the service to developers and local communities.

**Resolved**

(1) That the Policy and guidance for street naming be approved.

**Reasons**

The recommendation is to reaffirm but update the policy we have had for many years which is consistent with the guidance and protocols we have to work under when naming new streets. It provides clarity on a point that was previously ambiguous and will protect the Council against having to accept inappropriate suggestions that come forward.

**Alternative options**

Option 1: Do nothing

The alternative option to the one proposed is to do nothing. That would not provide the clarity that is required in respect of naming streets after those who have evidently contributed significantly and positively to the community which they served. It might also open the door to requests for new street names over which we have no vetoing discretion.

34

**New Cherwell District Council Housing Strategy 2025-2030**

The Assistant Director Wellbeing and Housing submitted a report to seek approval to consult on a new Housing Strategy 2025-30.

In response to questions from the Leader of the Opposition regarding whether there was an adequate supply of housing to address changes proposed in the Allocations Policy, the Assistant Director Wellbeing and Housing undertook to respond to the questions at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting the following day when the Committee considered the draft Allocations Policy. A response would be provided to the leader of the Opposition.

**Resolved**

- (1) That the commencement of public consultation on the reviewed and amended Housing Strategy 2025-30 be approved.

**Reasons**

It is important that the Council has up to date policies for its statutory and key service areas and it is important that they are legislatively and operationally sound. A periodic review of policies is therefore appropriate.

**Alternative options**

Option 1: Not bring forward a new Housing Strategy. This is rejected as it is a statutory duty that the Council produces and reviews its housing strategy.

35

**Money Advice Contract**

The Assistant Director Wellbeing and Housing submitted a report to propose an extension in the current Money Advice contract with Citizens Advice.

In considering the report, Executive members commented that in the current economic situation, the contract was excellent value for the service provided to residents.

**Resolved**

- (1) That the extension of the existing money advice contract by one year, until January 2026, be approved.

- (2) That officers be requested to bring a further report to Executive within six months to consider options beyond 2026, to allow sufficient time to reprocure such a contract, if necessary.

### **Reasons**

The money advice service is well used and is used by residents facing financial hardship, who may not be able to access other forms of financial advice and support. It is therefore recommended that it is continued for a further year considering the current contextual factors affecting households and household budgets.

### **Alternative options**

Option 1: To end the Money Advice Contract at the end of the contract period (January 2025)

There is an option in accordance with the contract end date. The option is rejected due to the continued cost of living issues being faced by clients and high demand for the money advice and related Council services.

Option 2: To extend the Money Advice Contract by 2 years (until January 2027)

This option is within the scope of the current contract. This option is rejected to ensure that a re-procurement exercise and/or a review of the current provision can take place sooner.

Option 3: To extend the Money Advice Contract by less than 1 year

There is scope to extend for less than two years, and the minimum term of extension is not defined within the contract. Within the contract is an annual cost of services, so a new contract could be required to make this adjustment and therefore we cannot extend the existing contract due to terms within it changing. Extending by a period of one year will also give more time to review and procure a future service, if necessary. This option is rejected.

### **CCTV Thames Valley Project**

The Head of Regulatory Services and Community Safety submitted a report to seek approval to join the Thames Valley CCTV partnership, with an associated transfer of CCTV assets and operational responsibility to Thames Valley Police under a 'single owner' model; and moving monitoring arrangements to a shared Oxfordshire hub.

In response to a question from the Leader of the Opposition seeking assurance CCTV cameras in Banbury would remain operational following the transfer, the Portfolio Holder for Safer Communities confirmed this would be the case.

In response to Executive member comments, the Portfolio Holder for Safer Communities explained that work on the SLA had not yet commenced but it

was anticipated there would be standard terms with specific aspects for each authority in the partnership.

### **Resolved**

- (1) That it be agreed to join the Thames Valley CCTV partnership, with an associated transfer of CCTV assets and operational responsibility to Thames Valley Police under a 'single owner' model; and moving monitoring arrangements to a shared Oxfordshire hub.
- (2) That capital funding of up to £250,000 in order to upgrade the public open space CCTV network and cameras to meet the necessary threshold to be included in the OPCC Thames Valley CCTV project be approved.
- (3) That authority be delegated to the Assistant Director Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to execute the formal agreements needed to join the Thames Valley Police CCTV Partnership.

### **Reasons**

The benefits to formally joining the Thames Valley CCTV partnership are clear. The proposed changes of the project bring increased resilience, reduce the operational burden on CDC and ensure that the CCTV network is upgraded ensuring a sustainable system able to exploit technological advances.

### **Alternative options**

Option 1: Executive could choose to cease provision of this discretionary service, however the case for continued provision of public space CCTV is clear. It assists the Council in meeting its duties under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and clearly has a role in the detection and prevention of crime.

Option 2: To retain the system as it currently is. The Thames Valley CCTV Partnership will go ahead without CDC - meaning there is real risk of the CCTV system in Cherwell becoming obsolete. If the existing CCTV system were to be retained, then there would still be a significant need for investment to bring the infrastructure up to a minimum standard to allow for its continued operation. The costs would be comparable to the £250,000 capital investment highlighted in the preferred option, although could be profiled over a long roll out period. The responsibility for long term resilience of CCTV monitoring would fall to CDC.

This has been rejected as it is likely to lead to an obsolete CCTV system and means the Council would be excluded from obtaining the benefits from being part of the Partnership.

The Assistant Director of Finance (S151 Officer) and Assistant Director – Customer Focus submitted a report to update Executive on the council's performance, risk, and financial positions at the end of Quarter 1 2024-25.

### **Resolved**

- (1) That the council's performance, risk and finance 2024-2025 Quarter 1 report be noted.
- (2) That the use of reserve requests set out at the annex to the Minutes (as set out in the Minute Book) of the report be agreed.
- (3) That the reprofiling of capital projects beyond 2024/25 set out at the annex to the Minutes (as set out in the Minute Book) and the subsequent update to the programme budget for this financial year be approved.
- (4) That the virement between capital schemes agreed under officer delegation of £0.045m from 'Banbury Health Centre' to 'Community Centre – Works' be noted.
- (5) That the use of S106 funding amounting to £0.560m to deliver more self-contained units of temporary accommodation within Cherwell in partnership with South Oxfordshire Housing Association be approved.

### **Reasons**

The council actively and regularly monitors its performance, risk, and financial positions to ensure it can deliver its corporate priorities and respond effectively to emerging issues.

This monitoring takes place at least monthly for the finance element and quarterly for performance and risk, so the council can identify potential issues at the earliest opportunity and put measures in place to mitigate them.

These updates are consolidated into a single report given the implications and interdependencies between them, and this is the summary for the end of Quarter 1 2024-25.

### **Alternative options**

Option 1: This report summarises the council's financial position up to the end of Quarter 1 2024-2025, therefore there are no alternative options to consider. Regarding the recommendations to approve changes in use of reserves, reprofiling of capital projects and use of S106 funding, members could choose not to reject these requests, however, the requests are in accordance with the councils' policies and within existing budgets. If members chose not to approve the changes, resource would need to be found for these projects separately.

38 **Budget and Business Planning Process 2025-26**

The Assistant Director Finance (Section 151 Officer) submitted a report to inform the Executive of the proposed approach to the 2025/26 Budget and Business Planning Process and provides context and background information on the existing Medium-Term Financial Strategy and information on latest government announcements relevant to the Strategy.

**Resolved**

- (1) That the Budget and Business Planning Process for 2025/26 be approved.
- (2) That the base assumptions to be used for the 2025/26 budget be approved.
- (3) That a five-year period for the Medium-Term Financial Strategy to 2029/30 and five-year period for the Capital Programme to 2029/30 be approved.
- (4) That the revised Reserves Policy be approved.

**Reasons**

The Council has a legal obligation to set a balanced budget and ensure it maintains a suitable level of reserves each year. The process laid out in this report will allow CDC to develop budget proposals that will allow it to meet these legal obligations.

**Alternative options**

The Council has a legal obligation to set a balanced budget and evaluate its level of reserves to ensure they are held at a suitable level. Therefore, there are no alternative options other than to carry out a budget process that reviews the levels of reserves and identifies a budget proposal that can be delivered within the overall level of resources available to the Council.

39 **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 provision 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.

40 **Cloud Support, Security Operation Centre and Managed Network Partner Tender**

The Head of Digital and Innovation submitted an exempt report in relation to the Cloud Support, Security Operation Centre and Managed Network Partner Tender. Due to the value of the contract, Executive approval was required.

**Resolved**

(1) As set out in the exempt Minutes.

**Reasons**

As set out in the exempt Minutes

**Alternative options**

As set out in the exempt Minutes

41 **Lease for Castle Quay**

The Assistant Director Property submitted an exempt report in relation to a lease renewal at Castle Quay, Banbury.

**Resolved**

(1) As set out in the exempt Minutes.

(2) As set out in the exempt Minutes.

(3) As set out in the exempt Minutes.

**Reasons**

As set out in the exempt Minutes

**Alternative options**

As set out in the exempt Minutes

The meeting ended at 8.00 pm

Chairman:

Date: