

Minutes

of a meeting of the

Executive

held at 3.15pm on Friday 4 December 2009
at the Guildhall, Abingdon



Open to the Public, including the Press

Present:

Members: Councillor Tony de Vere (Chair), Jerry Patterson (Vice-Chair), Mary de Vere, Richard Farrell, Jenny Hannaby, Angela Lawrence and Richard Webber

Officers: Katie Barrett, Steve Bishop, Alice Brander, David Buckle, Steve Culliford, William Jacobs, Clare Kingston, Mike Mackay, Matt Prosser, Anna Robinson, Paul Staines, Tim Treuherz, Chris Tyson, Gordon Willcox and Robert Woodside,

Number of members of the public: Seven

Ex.31 Apologies for absence

None

Ex.32 Minutes

The Executive adopted and signed as a correct the minutes from its meeting held on 2 October 2009.

Ex.33 Declarations of interest

None

Ex.34 Urgent business and chair's announcements

The Chair accepted one item of urgent business in order to allow a delegation to take place in early December to publish the Executive's draft budget for 2010/11.

Ex.35 Draft budget for 2009/10

The Executive considered how its draft budget should be approved before publication for consultation in accordance with the council's budget and policy framework procedure rules. Councillors considered that the draft budget should be published by the portfolio holder.

RESOLVED

that the Chair of the Executive be invited to delegate authority to the Executive portfolio holder for Finance to prepare and publish the Executive's draft 2010/11 budget for consultation purposes.

Ex.36 Statements, petitions and questions from the public relating to matters affecting Executive.

Mr Stephen King made a statement on behalf of the Abingdon shopkeepers and presented a petition containing 115 signatures. The petition called on the council carefully consider the impact on businesses and on town centre vitality generally, should any increase in car parking tariffs be approved. Moreover, the signatories expected the council to bring tariffs in line with that of Didcot, Wallingford, and Witney. Mr King reiterated these points.

Ex.37 Referrals from the Scrutiny Committee and other committees

(Time: 3.21pm to 3.24pm)

At the Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 17 November 2009, councillors conducted an annual review of the leisure contractors' performance. They referred the following matters to the Executive for consideration:

1. to investigate the possibility of introducing a unified leisure facilities membership card for use at all Vale sites, regardless of there being different centre management contractors;
2. to review the current parking restrictions at Tilsley Park; and
3. to request the officers to report on the nature of the dual use agreements at Faringdon and Wantage Leisure Centres to demonstrate that the agreements are in the council's interest.

The Executive noted that the officers were in discussion with the council's partners/contractors on the first and third item and would report in due course. With regard to the second item, this was an operational matter; the parking restrictions would be lifted shortly. The Executive welcomed this.

RESOLVED

- (a) that the officers be requested to investigate the possibility of introducing a unified leisure facilities membership card for use at all Vale sites, regardless of there being different centre management contractors;*
- (b) that the current parking restrictions at Tilsley Park be lifted; and*
- (c) that the officers be requested to investigate and report back on the nature of the dual use agreements at Faringdon and Wantage Leisure Centres to demonstrate that the agreements are in the council's interest.*

Ex.38 Budget virement requests

(Time: 3.24pm to 3.26pm)

The Executive considered an agenda report setting out requests for virements (table 1). Councillors approved the requests.

The Executive also noted a schedule of virements approved by the Chief Finance Officer under delegated authority (table 2).

RESOLVED (by 7 votes to nil)

that the virements set out in table 1 to the agenda report be approved.

Ex.39 Performance Monitoring Report: July to September 2009 - to monitor performance and take any necessary action

(Time: 3.26pm to 3.39pm)

The Executive received and considered report 75/09 of the Principal Performance Monitoring Officer. This monitored the council's performance from July to September 2009. It set out:

- how the council had performed against the national indicators that applied to district councils, nine of which were local area agreement targets;
- how the council performed against the local performance targets, set by the council;
- a summary of sickness and turnover; and
- a financial commentary.

The Executive was pleased with the council's performance in delivering affordable housing. However, councillors requested that the officers issued a media release to correct inaccuracies in a BBC report of the council's housing performance. The council had no restriction on who could join the housing register. This meant the waiting list could be longer than some other councils. However, the council had been successful in dealing with housing need, preventing homelessness, and keeping people out of temporary accommodation.

Councillors were pleased to note that the performance in processing planning applications had improved and were better than their targets. It was noted that the provisional planning delivery reward grant had been announced by the government but this had yet to be confirmed.

In terms of benefits' administration, the Executive was pleased with the recent performance in processing benefits applications but believed that there was a need for significant improvement in processing accuracy. The Executive would be looking for improved performance in the third quarter.

RESOLVED

(a) that the council's progress and the end of year predictions be noted; and

- (b) *that a media release be issued to correct the BBC's report on the council's housing performance.*

Ex.40 Car parking charging policy

(Time: 3.39pm to 3.52pm)

The Executive received and considered report 76/09 of the Head of Commercial Services. This set out how the council could regulate its car parking charges to meet the council's objectives of covering the cost of the service, influencing usage patterns, and supporting town centre vitality.

The report set out options for councillors to consider as part of the 2010/11 budget preparation. Each one would meet the council's strategic objectives. These options included:

- Free parking for the first hour
- Free parking after 4pm
- Increasing medium-stay charges
- Increasing long-stay charges
- Increasing permit charges
- Matching the Civic car park charges in Abingdon with those of the adjacent Cattle Market car park
- Reducing the level of enforcement
- Outsourcing the parking service

The Executive agreed to consider these options when preparing its budget for recommendation to the Council in February 2010. When considering this, the Executive would take into account the petition submitted by the Abingdon shopkeepers and the comments of New River Capital Limited that had been sent to the Chair. Any new car parking charges would take effect from 1 April 2010.

RESOLVED

that the car parking charging options be taken into consideration as part of the budget preparation for 2010/11.

Ex.41 Local development framework: towards a core strategy

(Time: 3.52pm to 4.07pm)

The Executive received and considered report 77/09 of the Head of Planning Services. This set out the recommendations of the Strategic and Local Planning Advisory Group on further changes to the draft core strategy as part of the council's local development framework. The

report advised the Executive to carry out public consultation on these changes to assess reaction to the revised proposals. This was a requirement of the local development framework procedure. The report also set out a revised timetable to complete the core strategy.

The key issue of debate at the advisory group had been over the need to provide for additional housing over that suggested in the original draft core strategy and the location of development. The advisory group recommended that this should be north-east of Wantage rather than south-west of Abingdon, due to the evidence that the latter site should not be pursued for development. Also recommended was a new housing allocation site in the northern part of the Harwell Science and Innovation Campus.

The advisory group reconsidered the policy seeking affordable housing on all new sites and recommended that affordable should be sought on housing sites where the application was for three or more homes. However, this would have to be subject to individual schemes remaining viable.

The advisory group also looked at proposals for additional shopping floor space in Abingdon and Faringdon town centres.

The Executive agreed with the advisory group's recommendations and agreed to consult the public on the further changes proposed to the draft core strategy. The consultation would take place from 18 December 2009 to 29 January 2010. Councillors noted the proposed consultation arrangements.

R E C O M M E N D E D

- (a) that the local development framework core strategy will not include a major housing site for up to 1,500 homes south-west of Abingdon as no deliverable solutions have been identified to resolve the traffic problems; and*
- (b) that work proceeds on the core strategy on the basis of including a major housing site north-east of Wantage;*

R E S O L V E D

- (c) that consultation is carried out for a six week period on the following:*
 - (i) the amount and distribution of housing outlined in paragraph 14 of report 77/09, including the preferred strategic sites west of Didcot, south of Park Road at Faringdon, and north east of Wantage, and a new strategic housing site in the northern part of the Harwell Science and Innovation Campus;*
 - (ii) a policy seeking affordable housing on all new sites in the district of three or more homes, subject to individual schemes remaining viable;*
 - (iii) a general policy relating to gypsies;*
 - (iv) current expectations on future economic development growth and the amount of land to be identified in the local development framework;*
 - (v) details of potential redevelopment schemes in Abingdon and Faringdon to provide additional retail floor space;*

- (vi) *a proposed new road west of the A34, linking the A417 south west of Didcot with the Harwell Science and Innovation Campus, to replace a link from the A417 to the A34 Chilton interchange to the east of the A34 as outlined in the preferred options report;*
- (vii) *a policy to safeguard land for the reservoir proposed by Thames Water;*
- (d) *that the consultation report will propose that the core strategy will not:*
 - (i) *contain information about the size of new homes, as this will be contained in a supplementary planning document;*
 - (ii) *include detailed policies for the centres of Wantage and Botley, as these will be covered in the managing development document to be produced at a later stage;*
 - (iii) *safeguard land for an Abingdon southern bypass, the Wantage western relief road or the reopening of the A34 slip roads at Drayton, as referred to in the preferred options report, as there is no justification in transport terms for these schemes at the present time. If a need is established through the revised local transport plan, land can be safeguarded through the managing development document;*
 - (iv) *include policies for the Green Belt, as these will be covered in the managing development document. However, it should be made clear that development is not proposed in the Green Belt;*
 - (v) *include detailed policies for the centres of Wantage and Botley, as these will be covered in the managing development document to be produced at a later stage;*
- (e) *that authority be delegated to the Head of Planning Services, in consultation with the planning portfolio holder, to approve the consultation report;*
- (f) *that the revised timetable for preparing the core strategy and managing development document be used as a basis for revising the local development scheme;*
- (g) *that the planning portfolio holder be requested to agree the revised draft local development scheme for submission to the government office;*
- (h) *that a joint area action plan is prepared for Didcot with South Oxfordshire District Council, on land up to and including the A34, to cover the matters referred to in paragraph 42 of report 77/09, and that this be included in the revised local development scheme.*

Ex.42 Local development framework: statement of community involvement

(Time: 4.07pm to 4.09pm)

The Executive received and considered report 78/09 of the Head of Planning Services. This set out the responses to the consultation on the draft statement of community involvement.

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The statement formed part of the local development framework. The statement explained how the council would involve the community in preparing the local development framework.

The advisory group had reviewed the schedule of responses received during the consultation period and made recommendations for changes to the statement. The Executive agreed with the proposed changes.

RESOLVED

- (a) *that the representations received on the statement of community involvement be noted; and*
- (b) *that the changes to the statement of community involvement, recommended in the schedule to report 78/09, be approved.*

Ex.43 Local development framework: supplementary planning documents – residential design guide and sustainable design and construction

(Time: 4.09pm to 4.10pm)

The Executive received and considered report 79/09 of the Head of Planning Services. This set out the responses received during the consultation period on the supplementary planning documents that gave guidance on residential design and sustainable design and construction. The council had a choice on whether to publish these documents as part of the council's local development framework. The Executive considered that publishing these documents would give important guidance to developers on design and construction.

The advisory group had reviewed the responses received during the consultation period and had made recommendations for some changes to the draft documents. The Executive agreed with the proposed changes.

RESOLVED

- (a) *that the representations received on the draft residential design guide and sustainable design and construction supplementary planning documents be noted; and*
- (b) *that the changes to the supplementary planning documents, recommended in the schedule to report 79/09, be approved; and*

R E C O M M E N D E D

- (c) *that the residential design guide and sustainable design and construction supplementary planning documents be adopted.*

Ex.44 CCTV control room service level agreement extension and monitoring arrangements

(Time: 4.10pm to 4.15pm)

The Executive received and considered report 80/09 of the Head of Planning Services. The report sought the Executive's agreement to extend the service level agreement with Thames Valley Police for the monitoring of CCTV (closed circuit television) cameras in South Oxfordshire district and to change monitoring arrangements.

The Executive noted that the CCTV control room at Abingdon had monitored South Oxfordshire District Council's CCTV cameras for almost five years; the contract was due to end on 31 January 2010. It was recommended that this agreement was extended to 31 March 2011. This would allow South Oxfordshire to review its CCTV service and for this council to consider South Oxfordshire's recommendations.

Following advice from Internal Audit, it was recommended that the Community Safety Manager was given the discretion to target staff resources at the busiest times.

The Executive supported both recommendations.

RESOLVED

- (a) *that the service level agreement with South Oxfordshire District Council for running the CCTV control room be extended to 31 March 2011; and*
- (b) *that authority be delegated to the Community Safety Manager to change the current CCTV monitoring arrangements to target resources at the busiest times.*

Ex.45 Exclusion of the public, including the press

RESOLVED

that in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public including the press be excluded from the remainder of the meeting to prevent the disclosure to them of exempt information, as defined in Section 100(l) of Part 1 of Schedule 12A, as amended, to the Act when the following items are considered:

Minutes

(Category 2 – Information which is likely to reveal the identity of any individual.)

(Category 3 – Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).)

Corporate property review

(Category 3)

Ex.46 Minutes

The Executive adopted and signed as a correct the exempt minutes from its meeting held on 2 October 2009.

Ex.47 Corporate property review

The Executive considered a report on a review of the council's property and supported changes to operational arrangements.