

Minutes

of a meeting of the

Executive

held at 3pm on Friday 2 July 2010
at the Guildhall, Abingdon



Open to the Public, including the Press

Present:

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

Officers: John Backley, Steve Bishop, David Buckle, Steve Culliford, Matt Prosser and Robert Woodside

Number of members of the public: Nil

Ex.14 Apologies for absence

None

Ex.15 Minutes

RESOLVED

To approve as correct records the Executive's minutes of 19 and 28 May 2010 and agree that the Chair signs them.

Ex.16 Declarations of interest

Councillors Angela Lawrence and Jenny Hannaby declared personal interests in item 9 "capital programme". They were members of Abingdon and Wantage Town Council's respectively (minute 21 refers).

Ex.17 Urgent business and chair's announcements

None

Ex.18 Statements, petitions, and questions relating to matters affecting the Executive

None

Ex.19 Corporate plan 2009/12 - annual review

The Executive considered report 19/10 of the Head of Corporate Strategy. This reviewed the corporate plan for 2009-12 and detailed the progress made against the plan's key actions and targets. The report also proposed a few amendments to ensure the plan remained relevant and reflected internal and external changes.

The Executive noted the progress made and agreed the changes. Councillors believed that the council had made good progress with the plan in a difficult financial climate. They asked for this to be publicised through the council's newsletter. In particular, the Executive cited examples of passing the target to provide 200 affordable homes, and attracting funds for market town schemes in Faringdon and Wantage. The Executive thanked the staff concerned.

RESOLVED

- (a) To note the progress made with the key actions, targets, and measures included in the Corporate Plan 2009-12; and
- (b) To agree the changes to the key actions, targets, and measures contained in the plan as follows:
 - Amending the finish date for the new customer contact strategy pending the outcome of the fit for the future programme
 - Removing the national indicator NI 140 for fair treatment by local services as this was no longer part of the national indicator set
 - Removing the action to designate dog fouling action areas due to a reduced dog warden service
 - Removing the local performance target to record the number of homeless households placed in temporary homes as this was duplicated by national indicator NI 156
 - Removing national indicator NI 15 for serious violent crime rates as this was outside the council's control
 - Removing the national indicator NI 17 for the perception of anti-social behaviour as this was no longer part of the national indicator set

Ex.20 Local investment agreement

The Executive considered report 20/10 of the Strategic Director. It summarised the outcome of partnership work with the Homes and Communities Agency on the Oxfordshire Local Investment Plan and recommended that the council entered into a local investment agreement.

The report set out a new approach for distributing government funds. A pilot scheme from the Homes and Communities Agency included a “single conversation” where the agency worked with councils and other bodies to ensure effective and co-ordinated investment decisions across a county. Oxfordshire was part of the pilot. Oxfordshire would receive funds in line with its housing needs assessments. The partnership would determine where funding would go, and would be able to retain funds for Oxfordshire if there was a delay in any scheme. The single conversation went further, tying together all housing, infrastructure, transport, regeneration, and economic development priorities. This was set out in a document called the Local Investment Plan.

The Executive noted that the Oxfordshire Partnership had set up a sub-group, the Spatial Planning and Infrastructure Partnership (SPIP). This would act for the Oxfordshire councils; the Leader of the Council was a member. The partnership had drafted a local investment agreement to commit parties to the plan. Although not legally binding, the agreement was a statement of intent and commitment to work in partnership to deliver the objectives of the single conversation. The partnership agreed that this was the best way to secure government funding.

The Executive considered the signing of this partnership agreement important, given the future economic climate and likely public spending restraints. Councillors noted that the Homes and Communities Agency was impressed with the Oxfordshire Partnership’s work and used it as an example to others. The Vale had pushed this forward in Oxfordshire. Councillors congratulated the staff involved in this work.

RESOLVED

- (a) To agree that the council enters into the proposed Oxfordshire Local Investment Agreement; and
- (b) To delegate authority to the Strategic Director, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to finalise the Local Investment Agreement wording.

Ex.21 Treasury management - review of activity in 2009/10

The Executive considered report 21/10 of the Head of Finance on treasury management performance in 2009/10. The report highlighted the performance of cash invested by the in-house team and that managed by Investec, the council’s investment manager. Performance was also analysed by Butlers, the council’s investment adviser. The in-house team achieved a return of 1.07 per cent, while Investec achieved 1.31 per cent. At 31 March 2010, the fund balances for the in-house team and investment manager were £0.59M and £15.3M respectively.

Councillors noted that a report on return on property investments would follow in September.

The Audit and Governance Committee believed that the report for 2009/10 should reflect the loss of investment in the Icelandic bank, Landsbanki. The Head of Finance produced a briefing note for the Executive showing the impact of this. Councillors noted that in 2008/09 the in-house performance dropped from 4.84 per cent to a 4.44 per cent return from the Landsbanki loss, whereas performance in 2009/10 was unaffected. The council expected to receive most of its investment back with interest, but this could take until 2018. Since the loss of the Landsbanki investment, the in-house team's lending criteria were more cautious.

Butlers concluded that the return on investment in 2009/10 was lower than expected due to low interest rates. However, Butlers recommended no changes to the council's approach as this allowed a balance of investments of top-quality and good liquidity. The Executive recognised that it would be difficult for the council to achieve the expected return for 2010/11 if interest rates did not rise as market analysts had predicted.

RESOLVED

- (a) To note the return on cash invested during 2009/10 and the balances at 31 March 2010, together with the briefing note updating the report following the Audit and Governance Committee meeting; and
- (b) To note the prospects for the return on cash investments in 2010/11.

Ex.22 Provisional capital programme out-turn 2009/10 and capital budget carry forward requests

Councillors Angela Lawrence and Jenny Hannaby declared personal interests in this item. Complying with the council's standing order 34, they stayed in the meeting for this item.

The Executive considered report 22/10 of the Head of Finance. This set out the end of year position with the capital programme. The report also set out requests to carry forward capital funding to 2010/11, to complete unfinished projects. These requests totalled £308,891, of which £44,790 were external funds.

Councillors noted that by agreeing the requests, they would not be spending outside the council's budget, but would be reallocating previously approved budget. They had the option to approve all, some or none of the requests. However, councillors recognised that refusing requests would mean leaving projects unfinished and the council might be legally required to make contractual payments anyway. The Executive approved the carry forward requests.

RESOLVED

- (a) To note the spending on capital projects in 2009/10; and

- (b) To agree the revised spending profiles for capital projects and to agree the carry forward requests to 2010/11.

Ex.23 Award of public convenience cleaning contract

The Executive moved this item from the public part of the meeting to consider it in private session as it contained exempt information (minute Ex.24 refers).

Ex.24 Exclusion of the public, including the press

RESOLVED

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

Award of public convenience cleaning contract

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

Summary of exempt minutes

Ex.25 Award of public convenience cleaning contract

The Executive awarded a contract to clean the council's public toilets.