

Date: 29 September 2005

TO: All Members of the Executive
FOR ATTENDANCE

TO: All Other Members of the Council
FOR INFORMATION

Dear Sir/Madam

Your attendance is requested at a meeting of the **EXECUTIVE** to be held in the **SEMINAR ROOM 1, COSENER'S HOUSE, ABBEY CLOSE, ABINGDON** on **Friday, 7th October, 2005** at **2.30 pm**.

Yours faithfully

Terry Stock
Chief Executive

Members are reminded of the provisions contained in Part 2 of the Local Code of Conduct, and Standing Order 34 regarding the declaration of Personal and Prejudicial Interests.

A G E N D A

SECTION I (Open to the Public including the Press)

A large print version of this agenda is available. Any background papers referred to may be inspected by prior arrangement. Contact Steve Culliford, Democratic Services Officer on telephone number (01235) 540307.

Map and Vision

(Pages 8 - 9)

Maps showing the location of the venue for this meeting, together with a copy the Council Vision are attached.

STANDING ITEMS

1. Apologies for Absence

To receive apologies for absence.

2. Minutes

To adopt and sign as a correct record the public minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 2 September 2005 (previously circulated).

3. Declarations of Interest

To receive any declarations of Personal or Personal and Prejudicial Interests in respect of items on the agenda for this meeting.

In accordance with Part 2 of the Local Code of Conduct and the provisions of Standing Order 34, any Member with a personal interest must disclose the existence and nature of that interest to the meeting prior to the matter being debated. Where that personal interest is also a prejudicial interest, then the Member must withdraw from the room in which the meeting is being held and not seek improperly to influence any decision about the matter unless he/she has obtained a dispensation from the Standards Committee.

4. Urgent Business and Chair's Announcements

To receive notification of any matters, which the Chair determines, should be considered as urgent business and the special circumstances, which have made the matters urgent, and to receive any announcements from the Chair.

5. Statements and Petitions from the Public Under Standing Order 32

Any statements and/or petitions from the public under Standing Order 32 will be made or presented at the meeting.

6. Questions from the Public Under Standing Order 32

Any questions from members of the public under Standing Order 32 will be asked at the meeting.

7. Referral under the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules or the Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules

None

8. Referrals from the Overview and Scrutiny Committees and Other Committees

(Page 10)

(a) Strategic Review Committee - Review of the Grants Allocation Formula

The Strategic Review Committee, at its meeting on 6 September 2005, received an update from the Grants Review Panel on its review of the Council's Grants Allocation Formula. The Panel had identified three options for allocating the total grants budget across the Executive and each of the Area Committees, as follows:-

- £600 lump sum and 50p for each elector
- £500 lump sum and 58p for each elector
- £400 lump sum and 67p for each elector

Each of the options investigated proposed a lump sum payment to each Parish (in the

case of Abingdon and Wantage to each Ward) irrespective of size, together with a variable figure based on the number of electors in each Parish and/or Ward. Each of the options proposed was based on the 2005/06 Grants Budget Allocation. A table detailing each of the options and the proposed allocation of grant monies across the Executive and each Area Committee is attached at Annex 1.

The Executive is recommended to:

- (a) *amend the principle of the Grants Budget Allocation Formula from one of an electorate based allocation to one which reflects electorate and geographical factors;*
 - (b) *use Option 3 (£400 lump sum for each parish and 67p for each electorate) as the starting point in allocating the 2006/07 Grants Budget across the Executive and each of the Area Committees; and*
 - (c) *undertake an annual review of the Grants Allocation Formula as part of the formulation of the Executive's budget proposals.*
- (b) **Scrutiny Committee – Procurement of Financial Services**

The Scrutiny Committee, at its meeting on 22 September 2005, considered a report of the Strategic Director which gave an update on the joint work currently being undertaken by this Council and South Oxfordshire District Council on exploring the scope for shared financial services.

that the Executive be recommended:

- (i) *to agree that the Scrutiny Committee establish a small group of Members to operate as an advisory group to the Executive in respect of the joint work currently being undertaken by this Council and South Oxfordshire District Council in exploring the scope for shared financial services, so that the Committee is kept informed of developments and thereby avoid the need for any future call-in;*
- (ii) *that an Executive Member be appointed to support the in-house bid.*

9. Items Deferred from the Previous Meeting

None

10. Financial Monitoring

Members are requested to consider any significant budget variances, and any requests for virement or permanent budget adjustment.

KEY DECISIONS

11. Forward Plan

(Pages 11 - 14)

To receive the Forward Plan containing Executive decisions to be taken from October 2005 to January 2006.

Recommendation

that the Forward Plan be received.

OTHER MATTERS

12. Review of Treasury Management Activities 2004/05

(Pages 15 - 17)

To receive and consider report 134/05 of the Strategic Director.

13. Roll Forward Budget to 2006/07

(Pages 18 - 28)

To receive and consider report 137/05 of the Strategic Director.

14. Access to Contingency

The Council sets a contingency budget each year to meet unexpected costs. It is also used to house corporate budgets such as pay award and capacity-building before they are allocated to services. The Strategic Director (Chief Finance Officer) is the Contingency budget-holder.

The process covering the use of Contingency was approved in 1999 (report 759/98) and it has been operating generally well since. One aspect which has caused delays is the requirement for reports to be made to Committee before contingency budget can be released.

Much of the contingency budget is earmarked for specific purposes, so the need for a separate report is unnecessary. Also, the un-earmarked element is often needed at short notice to resolve an unexpected or urgent matter, which is delayed by the necessity to submit a report to Members.

It would assist officers if contingency could be released for proper purposes without the need for a report. In order to maintain clear accountability the Chief Finance Officer should have sole authority to release contingency after consultation with the Chair of the Executive.

Recommendation

that the Executive delegates authority to release Contingency budget to the Chief Finance Officer in consultation with the Chair of the Executive.

15. Request for New Post of Database Co-ordinator

(Pages 29 - 31)

To receive and consider report 135/05 of the Strategic Director.

16. Building Regulation Charges 2005/06

(Pages 32 - 44)

To receive and consider report 136/05 of the Strategic Director.

17. Scheme or Out-of-Hours Working for Incidents of Dangerous Structures and Emergencies

(Pages 45 - 48)

To receive and consider report 125/05 of the Assistant Director (Building Control).

18. Vale of White Horse Local Plan to 2011: Joint Inspectors Report Relating to the Major Housing Development West of Didcot

(Pages 49 - 71)

(Wards Affected: Harwell)

As part of the Vale's Local Plan applies to the proposed major development area west of Didcot which was also covered by the South Oxfordshire Local Plan, a joint Local Plan Inquiry was held into objections to this development at the end of 2004. The joint Inspectors' Report was published in May 2005.

The normal process following the Council's consideration of the Inspectors' recommendations would be to publish proposed modifications to the Local Plan for further comment. However, this could not take place until the Council had received and considered the recommendations in the Inspector's Report on the main part of the Local Plan. The Inspector had indicated that he expected his report to be with the Planning Inspectorate by the end of this year. Rather than not progressing the Inspectors' recommendations for Didcot at all at this stage, the Strategic and Local Planning Advisory Group considered that in view of the planning applications for Didcot West, it would be useful for the Council to consider the Inspector's recommendations on the joint inquiry for Didcot and publish 'draft proposed modifications'. These will be formally published with the Local Plan next year. At the Advisory Group meeting held on 31 August 2005, a Local Member expressed her disquiet at this situation.

The Advisory Group considered the Inspector's recommendations and agreed largely with the officer's recommended responses, as set out in Appendix 2, but Members added wording to indicate that the Vale's view was that the provision of a Harwell by-pass should be a priority. A copy of the Officers' report to the Advisory Group, complete with appendices is appended to this agenda.

Members asked that the Political Assistants should be advised when the Inspector's report was published on the Council's website.

Recommendation

That the Executive be recommended to:

- (i) agree the officer's observations and recommendations in Appendix 2 and paragraph 4.5 to report 86/05, subject to the addition of the words "The Council considers that the provision of a Harwell by-pass is a priority" to the end of paragraph 8.51; and*
- (ii) that the recommended changes to the draft Local Plan, as set out in Appendices 3 and 4 be posted as draft proposed modifications to the Plan on the Council's website pending the publication of the proposed modifications to the main part of the Local Plan next year.*

19. Review of Home Renewal Strategy and Housing Capital Grants Policy

The Executive will be aware that a review of the housing grants regime, originally due before the Executive at this meeting has been delayed to allow the Strategic Review Committee to examine the policy implications in more detail and to provide the Executive with a report and recommendations in time for it to inform the 2006-7 budget.

At the meeting held on 6 September 2005 the Strategic Review Committee considered a request from the portfolio holder that they set up a working party alongside her to progress this matter. The committee considered instead that they would prefer to receive a full report and presentation on this from the Assistant Director (housing and community safety) at the November meeting.

A report to the Executive will follow the November meeting of the Strategic Review Committee.

20. Request for a Recurring Supplementary Estimate - U13 in OX14 Partnership Grant

'U13 in OX14' is a scheme which helps young people in one of the Vale's most deprived wards to overcome anti-social behaviour and criminal activity. The project focuses on reducing offending behaviour by breaking the negative peer influence coming from older groups of young people in the area. Twelve youngsters successfully completed the mentoring course last year, helping them integrate into the community; and a further five are currently being mentored.

The scheme relies on volunteers and grant aid. The Council has previously made a partnership grant commitment to support the scheme with £8k annual funding. (Although, like all partnership grants this is being re-assessed as part of the Service Prioritisation Plan to reduce grant costs).

Due to an oversight, no budget has been approved for this grant from 2005/06 onwards. This is contrary to the Council's service level agreement.

Recommendation

that the Executive approves an £8k recurring supplementary estimate to be met from Contingency from 2005/06 onwards for this partnership grant.

21. Exclusion of the Public, including the Press

The Chair to move 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(I) and Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act when the following items are considered:-

Item 22 Minutes

(Category 1 - Information relating to a particular employee, former employee or applicant to become an employee of, or a particular office-holder, former office-holder or applicant to become an office-holder under, the authority).

(Category 9 - Any terms proposed or to be proposed by or to the authority in the course of negotiations for a contract for the acquisition or disposal of property or the supply of goods or services).

Item 23 Property Matters

(Category 9)

EXEMPT INFORMATION UNDER SECTION 100A (4) OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

STANDING ITEMS

22. Minutes

To adopt and sign as a correct record the Exempt minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 2 September 2005 (previously circulated).

KEY DECISIONS

None

OTHER MATTERS

23. Property Matters

To consider any property matters.