

# Ex.41

## MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE

HELD AT THE THE GUILDHALL,  
ABINGDON ON FRIDAY, 4TH  
AUGUST, 2006 AT 2.30PM

### Open to the Public, including the Press

PRESENT:

MEMBERS: Councillor Tony de Vere (Vice-Chair), Mary de Vere, Joyce Hutchinson and Roz Smith

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE Steve Culliford, Nikki Malin, Tim Sadler, Terry Stock and Toby Warren

NON-PARTICIPATING MEMBERS: Councillors Derek Rawson and Melinda Tilley

NUMBER OF MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC: 1

#### Ex.64 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Jerry Patterson (Chair), Richard Farrell and Bob Johnston.

Councillor Tony de Vere, Vice-Chair, took the Chair for this meeting.

#### Ex.65 MINUTES

The public minutes of the Executive meeting held on 7 July 2006 were adopted and signed as a correct record.

#### Ex.66 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Roz Smith declared a personal interest in item 5 'Statements and Petitions from the Public' in so far as the speaker objected to action taken by Oxfordshire County Council, of which Councillor Smith was a member (minute Ex.68 refers).

#### Ex.67 URGENT BUSINESS AND CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair accepted two items as a matter of urgent business. One related to a request from Save Radley Lakes (minute Ex.60 refers); the other was a property matter considered in the Exempt part of the meeting (minute Ex.83 refers).

#### Ex.68 STATEMENTS AND PETITIONS FROM THE PUBLIC UNDER STANDING ORDER 32

(Councillor Roz Smith declared a personal interest in this item and in accordance with Standing Order 34, she remained in the meeting during its consideration.)

Lynda Pasquire made a statement in support of her request on behalf of Save Radley Lakes, a group seeking the Council's support towards possible a legal challenge. The group believed that the application approved by Oxfordshire County Council, to allow the tipping of fuel ash into Radley Lakes, would cause great damage to the landscape, visual amenity, recreation and wildlife in the Green Belt. The application had been referred to the Secretary of State as a departure from the Structure Plan. This referral was delayed while the County Council investigated a series of complaints about maladministration. It was possible that the Secretary of State would call the application in for determination. Alternatively, Save Radley Lakes could mount a legal challenge. The group was inviting this Council, along with Abingdon Town Council and Radley Parish Council to:

1. express serious concern about the way the decision was taken by the County Council

2. urge this Council to write to the Secretary of State asking for the application to be called in, if this has not already been done
3. agree in principle to consider a future request for support for legal action if this became necessary
4. hear an update at the next Executive meeting on 1 September 2006

The application had also raised the issue of disposal or re-use of pulverised fuel ash (PFA). Equipment was in use elsewhere in the country that re-used PFA to make it saleable. RWE NPower, the applicants, appeared unwilling to consider any alternatives. Ms Pasquire also believed that the quoted 500 lorries a week was misleading.

The Chair thanked Ms Pasquire for her statement. The Executive debated her request under minute Ex.69.

Ex.69 RADLEY LAKES  
(Time: 2.40pm to 2.45pm)

The Executive received and considered a request from Save Radley Lakes for financial support towards possible legal action against Oxfordshire County Council's decision to approve an application to allow the tipping of fuel ash into Radley Lakes. Ms Lynda Pasquire had written to the Chief executive setting out her group's position and embellished their case with a statement to the Executive (minute Ex.68 refers).

The Chief Executive advised that concerns had already been expressed to the County Council and he had also written to the Secretary of State asking for the application to be called in and refused. He urged Members not to agree to support the request to financially support this cause. Whilst the Council might have sympathy with the objections and concerns raised, it would be unprecedented to contribute public money to a pressure group. The Executive might wish to consider its position at a later date if the Secretary of State refused the request to refuse the application. It was up to the Executive whether it wished to receive an update in September.

The Executive accepted the Chief Executive's advice in not offering financial support to this cause but welcomed any update the group wished to make to the Executive's September meeting.

*RESOLVED*

*that no financial support be offered to Save Radley Lakes towards a possible legal challenge.*

Ex.70 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC UNDER STANDING ORDER 32

None

Ex.71 REFERRAL UNDER THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PROCEDURE RULES OR THE BUDGET AND POLICY FRAMEWORK PROCEDURE RULES

None

Ex.72 REFERRALS FROM THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES AND OTHER COMMITTEES

Scrutiny Committee - 13 July 2006  
(Time: 2.45pm to 2.50pm)

At its meeting on 13 July 2006, the Scrutiny Committee received the Executive minutes from the meeting held on 7 July. The Committee noted that a petition had been received regarding the locking of the gates at Manor Road Recreation Ground in Wantage and noted the Executive's response. In considering the matter the Committee noted that expressions of interest had been sought by the Executive for the locking and unlocking of the gates to the Manor Road Recreation Ground by local residents but advised the Executive to think carefully of the implications before accepting any offer.

The Executive noted that there had been no offers from local residents to lock and unlock the gates. Members agreed that caution should be used before accepting any offer as this might put the volunteer in a confrontational position. The Executive considered that its previous decision should be rescinded and alternatives should be investigated. If this meant that a security company was needed to carry out this task in the current financial year then a recommendation would need to be made to the Council to authorise funding.

*RESOLVED*

*that the Executive's decision taken on 7 July 2006, inviting local residents to lock and unlock the gates at Manor Road Recreation Ground in Wantage, be rescinded and that alternative methods of maintaining security be investigated.*

Ex.73 FINANCIAL MONITORING  
(Time: 2.50pm to 2.55pm)

The Executive received and considered requests to approve two virements totaling £26,150 and noted three other virements approved by Directors totaling £19,210. The Executive also received requests to approve four permanent budget adjustments totalling £20,000 and noted that seven supplementary estimates totalling £48,670 had been approved by the Strategic Director under delegated authority.

In answer to a question from a Member, it was reported that the level of support from this Council to the County Council for the Wild Waste Show would be reported to Members outside of the meeting.

*RESOLVED (by four votes to nil)*

*that the permanent budget adjustments be approved, as set out in the agenda report.*

Ex.74 FORWARD PLAN  
(Time: 2.55pm to 2.58pm)

The Executive received the Forward Plan setting out Executive decisions to be taken from August to November 2006.

Members noted that the Oxfordshire Waste Strategy was still in draft form and it was hoped this would be available for the Executive's consideration on 1 September 2006. It was requested that the report on the review of service delivery options for Internal Audit was submitted to the Executive in September also. The Chief Executive reported that October was a more realistic timescale.

*RESOLVED*

*that the Forward Plan for August to November 2006 be received.*

# Ex.44

Ex.75 SERVICE AREA ANNUAL REPORTS

(Time: 2.58pm to 3.01pm)

The Executive received and considered copies of the Service Area Annual Reports which had been circulated to Members of the Executive and the Scrutiny Committee in advance of the agenda. Members of the Executive were asked to report back on any significant issues for the service areas for which they were responsible.

Portfolio Holders submitted summaries of the annual reports; these were tabled at the meeting. The Executive noted the reports and summaries and asked that they were made available to all Members and staff on the Council's Intranet.

*RESOLVED*

*that the Deputy Director (Organisational Development and Support) be requested to make the Service Area Annual Reports and the Executive Portfolio Holders' summaries available to Members and staff on the Council's Intranet.*

Ex.76 PROSPECTUSES TO TARGET GRANTS FOR THE BENEFIT OF VALE RESIDENTS

(Time: 3.01pm to 3.05pm)

The Executive received and considered report 50/06 of the Strategic Director that set out prospectuses from the four Area Committees. These would be used to create greater awareness of the types of projects that were a priority for support for each Area Committee and guide Members when determining grants. Each Area Committee noted that the Chair of the Executive requested that all four prospectuses were submitted to the Executive. The intention was to ensure that whilst the prospectuses reflected local priorities, they still retained a degree of consistency.

Members believed that as authority to award community grants had been delegated to the Area Committees, it should be those committees that decided how the budgets were allocated. Differences between the four prospectuses were welcomed. Members suggested a minor change to the fourth bullet point under the heading 'Town and Village Vitality' being amended to read 'Parish action plans in parishes or groups of parishes that do not already have them'.

*RESOLVED*

*that the Prospectuses to target grants for the four Area Committees be welcomed and endorsed, subject to the Area Committees being recommended to amend the fourth bullet point under the heading 'Town and Village Vitality' to read 'Parish action plans in parishes or groups of parishes that do not already have them'.*

Ex.77 LGA REPUTATION PROJECT

(Time: 3.05pm to 3.10pm)

The Executive received and considered report 51/06 of the Strategic Director regarding the LGA Reputation Project. The project was a joint I&DeA (Improvement and Development Agency) and LGA (Local Government Association) campaign aimed at bridging the gap between the positive reputation of individual council services and the negative reputation of councils as a whole. It was based on MORI research which found people knew little about their council. As a result an action plan had been developed aimed at increasing public confidence based on the drivers of public satisfaction. The drivers were:

- Perceived quality of services overall
- Perceived value for money

- Media coverage
- Direct communications
- A clean, green and safe environment
- Positive experiences in contact with staff

The success of the project depended upon consistency at a local and national level. Once signed up, councils had to fulfil the requirements of the 12-point action plan, and had commenced working on the action plan within 12 months. The action plan focused on the cleaner, safer, greener agenda and communications.

So far 196 councils had signed up to the project. While the Vale had already met some of the requirements partially or wholly, there were still some adjustments to be made to meet the requirements of the plan.

Members welcomed the work undertaken so far and looked forward to improvements to the internal and external communications strategies. It was suggested that there were several external agencies that might be able to assist with this work. Members were content that the Head of Communications managed the project and consulted the Leader of the Council. It was considered that all Members of the Council and staff should be appraised of the project and the Leader of the Opposition should be kept up-to-date with its progress.

*RESOLVED*

- that the Vale signs up to the Reputation campaign;*
- that the project is managed by the Head of Communications, in consultation with the Leader of the Council;*
- that the action plan be agreed and rolled out over the next two years with separate reports being submitted for any budget implications; and*
- that Members of the Council and staff be appraised of the project and the Leader of the Opposition be kept up-to-date with its progress.*

Ex.78 BUILDING REGULATION TRADING ACCOUNT

(Time: 3.10pm to 3.11pm)

The Executive received and considered an agenda report which advised about the ring-fenced Building Regulation Charges Trading Account and the use of any surplus to re-invest in order to maintain the effectiveness and efficiency of the Building Control service. In order to accommodate new and additional responsibilities, the Deputy Director (Commercial Services) was planning to restructure Commercial Services to use the established revenue budget for the Trainee Building Control Surveyor for other posts.

In turn, this would allow the opportunity for the Trading Account surplus to fund the trainee post on a three-year fixed-term basis. This would help to support the Building Control service and contribute to succession planning and provide long term continuity.

Members supported the request.

*RESOLVED*

*that up to £60,000 of the Building Regulation Charges Trading Account be used to fund a Trainee Building Control Surveyor (including the relevant training programme) for a period of three years.*

Ex.79 LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT  
(Time: 3.11pm to 3.14pm)

Delegated authority was sought to sign the Local Area Agreement on behalf of the authority. It was noted that the final target regarding affordable housing had not yet been agreed by the Government Office for the South East. The Chief Executive reported that he would not sign the agreement unless all of the targets and requirements for this Council were known. The Executive supported this request.

Members noted that a report would be submitted to the next meeting of the Executive setting out the implications of the agreement for this Council.

*RESOLVED*

*that authority be delegated to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader and the relevant Portfolio Holder to sign the Local Area Agreement on behalf of the authority.*

Ex.80 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(I) and Part 1 of Schedule 12A, as amended, to the Act when the following items are considered:*

Minutes

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

Evaluation of Proposal from Capita

*(Category 3)*

Property Matters

*(Category 3)*

**SUMMARY OF EXEMPT ITEMS CONSIDERED AT THE MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE ON FRIDAY 4 AUGUST 2006 AT 2.30PM**

Ex.81 Minutes

The Exempt minutes of the Executive meeting held on Friday 7 July 2006 were adopted and signed as a correct record.

Ex.82 Evaluation of Joint Multi Channel Contact Centre Proposal from Capita

The Executive rejected a proposal from Capita for a joint multi-channel contact centre.

Ex.83 Property Matters

The Executive let a property and delegated authority to implement a revised proposal for another property.