

(Open to the Public, including the Press)

PRESENT:

MEMBERS: Councillor Jerry Patterson (Chair), Tony de Vere (Vice-Chair), Mary de Vere, Richard Farrell, Joyce Hutchinson, Bob Johnston and Roz Smith.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE Steve Bishop, Rodger Hood, Jason Lindsey, Nikki Malin, Andrew Morgan and Terry Stock.

NON-PARTICIPATING MEMBERS: Councillors Terry Cox and Derek Rawson.

NUMBER OF MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC: 5

Ex.84 Apologies for Absence

None.

Ex.85 Minutes

The public Minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 4 August 2006 were adopted and signed as a correct record.

Ex.86 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Richard Farrell declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 15 – Treasury Management - Review of Activities in 2005/06, insofar as he was previously employed by Investec, the Council's External Investment Fund Manager. Councillor Roz Smith declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 14 – Reservoir, insofar as she had previously been involved in a Scrutiny Review Panel on water usage, in her capacity as a Member of Oxfordshire County Council.

Ex.87 Urgent Business and Chair's Announcements

Chair's Announcements

The Chair advised that with the consent of the meeting he would take Agenda Item 14 – Reservoir immediately after Agenda Item 8, as a representative of Thames Water Utilities Ltd had registered to make a statement at Agenda Item 5 regarding the reservoir. This was agreed.

The Chair advised that there were two property matters to consider in the exempt part of the meeting.

Finally, he announced that the Council was actively seeking to finalise all legal matters, which were at an advanced stage, in respect of the proposed lease extension and associated improvements to the Bury Street Precinct, Abingdon. The successful conclusion of these negotiations would then allow the leaseholder to begin the process of bringing forward a scheme to improve the precinct.

Ex.88 Statements and Petitions from the Public Under Standing Order 32

Mr R Aylard – Thames Water Utilities Ltd

Mr Aylard made a statement regarding Thames Water's plans to commence public consultation on proposals for a new reservoir in the District. He explained the two stage consultation process and the associated timetable. In this regard he explained that the timetable for the first stage of consultation would have to be strictly adhered to, although Thames Water would be content to receive both formal and informal submissions from the Council, an important consultee, at any time leading up to the planned submission date of mid 2008.

The Chair thanked Mr Aylard for his statement, the contents of which would be taken into account in consideration of the reservoir report.

Ex.89 Questions from the Public Under Standing Order 32

None.

Ex.90 Referral under the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules or the Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules

None.

Ex.91 Referrals from the Overview and Scrutiny Committees and Other Committees

None.

Ex.92 Financial Monitoring

Time: (3.17pm to 3.20pm)

The Executive received and considered requests to approve four permanent budget adjustments totalling £96,500 and noted that six supplementary estimates totalling £34,200 had been approved by the Strategic Director under delegated authority.

The Strategic Director and Chief Finance Officer amended the Supplementary Estimates report, as follows:-

- The cost centre name for Nos 2 and 3 should read "Contingency"
- The "Account to" for No 2 should read "901"
- The Description for No 2 should read "New income from..."

One Member welcomed the provision of a promotions budget for the Guildhall, Abingdon and Civic Hall, Wantage.

RESOLVED (nem con)

- that the permanent budget adjustments be approved, as set out in the agenda report;*
- that the Deputy Director (Contracts and Procurement) be requested to report back on the effectiveness of the use of the promotional budget for the Vale Halls to the Executive after the year-end.*

Ex.93 Forward Plan
(Time: 3.20pm to 3.21pm)

The Executive received the Forward Plan setting out Executive decisions to be taken from September to December 2006.

RESOLVED (nem con)

that the Forward Plan for September to December 2006 be received.

Ex.94 Corporate Governance - First Quarter 2006/07
(Time: 3.21pm to 3.46pm)

The Executive received and considered report 59/06 of the Directors which reported on corporate governance for the first quarter 2006/07. The report looked at the key areas of:-

- Corporate Priorities
- CPA Corporate High Level Improvement Action Plan
- Best Value Performance Indicators
- Local Performance Indicators linked to priorities for improvement
- Financial Information
- Key staffing data.

In considering the report, the Executive made the following observation/comments:-

Corporate Priorities Report – Creating a Cleaner, Greener, Safer and Healthier Community and Environment

The achievement of a combined Recycling and Composting rate of 29% for 2006/07 was on target. The take up of brown wheeled bins for garden waste was continuing to increase and a report on the roll out of the next 4000 would be made to the next meeting of the Executive.

Building our Capacity through Managerial & Organisational Development

The Deputy Director (Organisational Development) was making good progress with the implementation of a permanent structure to enable delivery of Organisational Development programme of work. Those staff affected by the re-structuring were content with the proposals.

The Executive welcomed the detail set out in the Corporate Priorities report and stressed the importance of this being communicated both internally and externally. Officers responsible for the work undertaken were commended.

Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs)

BVPI 213 – This indicator was on target and should be coloured green in the report.

BVPI 82a – Disappointment that the amount of dry recyclate had not increased at the expected rate and the Council would have to consider an alternative approach.

BVPI 84a – Performance in this indicator had declined due to the increase in the amount of green waste collected. The Council still had one of the lowest waste arisings per household in the Country.

BVPI 109a, b and c – Latest performance showed the Council above the Government target in respect of b and c and just below target in respect of a.

Financial Report

The adjusted variance amounting to £837,331 was due largely to a timing issue and the Joint Head of Finance was currently reviewing the budgeting procedures of both the Vale and South Oxfordshire to put in place more accurate financial reporting. It was hoped that in the next financial year, the Council would be in a position to report the predicted financial outturn on a quarterly basis.

RESOLVED (nem con)

that the Director's Group Corporate Governance Report 59/06 be noted.

Ex.95 Commitments to the Oxfordshire Local Area Agreement (Time:3.40pm to 3.46pm)

The Executive received and considered report 60/06, setting out the Oxfordshire Local Area Agreement (LAA) and the commitments made by the Council. The Council had agreed to support in principle the generality of the LAA, together with the stretch and non-stretch targets by adjusting work plans where this did not conflict with Council policies and priorities and was achievable within existing resources.

The Chief Executive confirmed that the Council had not yet formally signed off the LAA as the Government had still to agree the stretch targets contained therein. It was agreed that the heading of the last column should be amended to read "Vale Service Commitments".

It was noted that the Vale would attend meetings in respect of the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership but not direct additional resource to these areas.

RESOLVED (nem con)

- (a) *that the commitments made by the Council in respect of the Local Area Agreement for Oxfordshire be confirmed as those set out in Appendix 1 (report 60/06); and*
- (b) *that these commitments be communicated to Members, staff and partners.*

Ex.96 Oxfordshire County-Wide Waste Strategy (Time: 3.46pm to 3.59pm)

The Executive received and considered report 61/06 of the Strategic Director, which sought the Council's support for the "No time to Waste" – The Oxfordshire Joint Municipal Waste Strategy. The report summarised the scope and content of the Strategy; referred to the associated developments and Action Plans; outlined the main strategic considerations for the Vale's own waste strategy; and identified which of the waste collection options modelled by the Oxfordshire Waste Partnership should be developed further across the County.

It was noted that the Strategy had strategic implications for the Vale. The 50% target for recycling had major cost implications and provision would need to be made in the Medium Term Plan. Discussions would also need to be held with Oxfordshire County Council on identifying a more effective way to credit collected recyclate and achieve the higher recycling

target. It was noted that improved partnership working with other Oxfordshire Districts and the County Council would be an important consideration.

R E C O M M E N D E D (nem con)

- (a) that Members confirm support for “No time To Waste” – The Oxfordshire Joint Municipal Waste Strategy of August 2006 (The Strategy) and adopt its principles in the development of the Vale’s strategy for waste management;*
- (b) that support for the Strategy is subject to affordable action plans being agreed by all relevant parties;*
- (c) that Members note the outcome of the modelling work set out in Appendix A to report 61/06;*
- (d) that Members recommend to the Oxfordshire Waste Partnership (OWP) that on the basis of the results of the modelling work, the Strategy and the additional information presented in this report, Option I as detailed in the Appendix A is supported for further development in Oxfordshire;*
- (e) that Members note that it is an Executive function to agree the individual Action Plan for the Vale as required by the Strategy.*

Ex.97 Reservoir

(Time: 2.41pm to 3.17pm)

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

The Executive received and considered report 62/06 of the Chief Executive and Deputy Director (Planning and Community Strategy) which drew some of the immediate issues of Thames Water Utilities Ltd intention to begin public consultation on its plans for a reservoir in the District. The report invited the Executive to set a framework for this Council’s response and to consider future working arrangements with potential partner organisations involved in assessing the reservoir proposal. The Executive also had regard to the statement made by Mr R Aylard earlier in the meeting.

The Executive noted Thames Water’s inability to formally extend the eight week first stage consultation period and the reasons for this but stressed the importance of the Vale setting its own timescale to respond in full to the stage 1 consultation and advising Thames Water accordingly. It was recognised that time required to submit a full response would be dependent on the level of public consultation undertaken by the Council. The Executive was grateful for the acknowledgement by Thames Water of the significance of the Vale’s contribution to the consultation and that it would be willing to receive both formal and informal submissions from the Council at any time leading up to the planned submission date of mid 2008. The need for the Council to agree its own consultation plan as a matter of urgency and the role of the Council’s Reservoir Advisory Group in offering advice on the most appropriate type of consultation was acknowledged, together with the suggestions for consultation set out in the report. Officers stressed that any response to Thames Water within the eight week period would have to be on an interim basis given the scale of the documentation to be examined and the need to undertake meaningful consultation.

The important role of the Environment Agency in the consultation process was recognised and in this regard it was noted that an officer level meeting had been arranged for 8 September with the Environment Agency, to explore the scope for joint working and the sharing of information. The Chief Executive reported that he had received a letter from the Environment Agency offering a private briefing to all Members of the Council on 29 September 2006.

RESOLVED (nem con)

- (a) that the Head of Communications and Leader of the Council be designated as the official contact points at the Council;*
- (b) that all Members of the Council be invited to a private briefing on the proposal prior to the submission of the Council's response to the first consultation;*
- (c) that the Executive is grateful for the acknowledgement by Thames Water Utilities Ltd that the Council is considered to be a major consultee and it would be willing to receive both formal and informal submissions from the Council at any time leading up to the planned submission date of mid 2008;*
- (d) that the Chief Executive be delegated authority in consultation with the Reservoir Advisory Group to decide on the most appropriate form of public consultation by the Council and to report the outcome to the next meeting of the Executive. In the event that it is not possible to convene a meeting of the Advisory Group, the Chief Executive be delegated authority in consultation with the Leader of the Council and Leader of the Opposition;*
- (e) that the County Council and South Oxfordshire District Council be invited to join the proposed consultation exercise, both to avoid duplication and to share the costs;*
- (f) that the Environment Agency be approached to see whether agreement can be reached on joint working and the sharing of consultants on those aspects which directly affect both bodies;*
- (g) that the County Council and South Oxfordshire District Council also be approached to explore the scope for joint working in order to avoid duplication and additional costs;*
- (h) to request the Officers to bring a further report to the next meeting of the Executive, in the light of the public consultation by Thames Water, on the resource implications (in both time and finance) and proposals on how the Council could best approach its obligations to respond to this potential major development.*

Ex.98 Treasury Management - Review of Activities in 2005/06
(Time: 3.59pm to 4.07pm)

(Councillor Richard Farrell had declared a personal interest in this item and in accordance with Standing Order 34 he remained in the meeting during its consideration).

The Executive received and considered report 63/06 of the Strategic Director which detailed the Council's cash investment performance in the financial year 2005/06 and raised treasury management issues.

It was suggested by one Member that it might be an appropriate time to review the service provided by the External Fund Manager. In response the Strategic Director and Chief Finance Officer advised that the Council Investment Adviser provided quarterly reports on the performance of the External Fund Manager and he could make these available to Members.

He advised that it would be appropriate to review the service provide by the current External Fund Manager towards the end of the current contract, in 12 – 18 months. Councillor Farrell undertook to look at the quarterly reports provided by the Council's Investment Adviser in the first instance.

The Executive congratulated the In house team on its performance during the past year and asked that this be so recorded in the Minutes.

RESOLVED (nem con)

- (a) *that the return on cash invested during 2005/06 and the balances of the funds at 31 March 2006 be noted; and*
- (b) *that the prospects for the return on cash investments in 2006/07 be noted.*

Ex.99 Invitation from the Friends of Abbey Meadow Outdoor Pool
(Time: 4.07pm to 4.13pm)

The Executive considered an invitation from the Friends of Abbey Meadow Outdoor Pool to nominate a representative to sit on its Management Committee.

The Executive, although appreciative of the offer to nominate a representative to sit on the Management Committee, felt that it would be more appropriate to appoint an observer member, who could offer advice and information to the Management Committee but not speak authoritatively on behalf of, or contractually bind, the Council.

RESOLVED

- (a) *that the Friends of Abbey Meadow Outdoor Pool be thanked for the invitation to appoint a Council representative to serve its Management Committee but that the offer be declined (by 7 votes to nil);*
- (b) *that if the Friends of Abbey Meadow Outdoor Pool was minded to invite the Council to appoint an observer member to sit on the Management Committee, Councillor Janet Morgan be appointed as the observer member for the remainder of the 2006/07 Municipal Year (by 6 votes to 1).*

Ex.100 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.)

Oxfordshire County-Wide Waste Strategy

(Category 3)

Property Matters

(Category 3)

**SUMMARY OF EXEMPT ITEMS CONSIDERED AT THE MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE ON
FRIDAY 1 SEPTEMBER 2006 AT 2.30PM**

Ex.101 Minutes

The Exempt Minutes of the Executive meeting held on Friday 4 August 2006 were adopted and signed as a correct record.

Ex.102 Oxfordshire County-Wide Waste Strategy

The Executive received and considered exempt Appendix B to report 61/06.

Ex.103 Property Matters

The Executive considered two property matters.