

Date: 27 September 2007

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 **GUILDHALL, ABINGDON** on **Friday, 5th October, 2007** 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

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; e-mail: steve.culliford@whitehorsedc.gov.uk.

Please note that this meeting will be held in a wheelchair accessible venue. If you would like to attend and have any special access requirements, please let the Democratic Officer know beforehand and he will do his very best to meet your requirements.

Map and Vision

(Page 13)

A map showing the location of the venue for this meeting, together with a copy the Council Vision is 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 Executive meeting held on 13 July 2007, (copy 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**

(a) **Personnel, Regulatory and Appeals Committee - 28 September 2007**

The Personnel, Regulatory and Appeals Committee was due to meet on Friday 28 September 2007 and consider four reports containing recommendations to refer matters on to the Executive. The first is detailed below; the others appear under Exempt Information on this agenda.

Establishment of Post - Client Monitoring Officer for Leisure Facilities Contracts

The Personnel, Regulatory and Appeals Committee was recommended to establish a part-time post of Client Monitoring Officer for Leisure Facilities Contracts. The post is on scale 4 for a fixed term period of two years from the date of appointment, after which it would be subject to review. If the Committee approved this, the Executive will be recommended to approve a permanent budget adjustment of £11,600 (full year) to fund the new post from the permanent Wantage Civic Hall Facility Manager vacancy. An update on the Committee's decision will be given at the meeting.

(b) **Scrutiny Committee - 19 July 2007 – Waste Management Contract**

At its meeting held on 19 July 2007, the Scrutiny Committee received and considered the Waste Contract Annual Report 2006/07. In considering the report, Members recognised that the next Waste Management contract would need to find a more effective way of both penalising poor performance and rewarding good performance. Members also stressed the importance of clear performance management requirements. The Committee asked that these concerns were brought to the attention of the Executive.

9. **Financial Monitoring**

(Pages 14 - 16)

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

KEY DECISIONS

10. **Forward Plan**

(Pages 17 - 19)

To receive the Forward Plan containing Executive decisions to be taken from October 2007 to January 2008.

Recommendation

that the Forward Plan be received.

OTHER MATTERS

11. Community Grants

(Pages 20 - 32)

To receive and consider report 72/07 of the Strategic Director and Monitoring Officer.

Introduction and Report Summary

The purpose of this report is to set out the budget position for the Executive Committee in respect of Community Grants and to invite Members to consider and determine the grant applications received. The Executive currently considers grant applications bi-annually. Executive considered applications in April 2007 and the next meeting, at which the consideration of grants is planned, will be in April 2008 at the beginning of the next financial year.

The contact officer for this report is Lorna Edwards, Community Strategy Officer (Tel: 01235 547626).

Recommendations

- (a) *Members are asked to note that the Executive's remaining budget for 2007/08 for Vale-wide grants is £5,914.*
- (b) *Members are asked to consider and determine the following grant applications and agree the Council agenda and priority:*
 - (i) *Oxfordshire Association for the Blind, £5,000, towards the cost of services for blind and visually-impaired residents in the Vale, Social Agenda, Access priority*
 - (ii) *South & Vale Carers Centre, £10,000, towards the cost of running the Outreach Service, Social Agenda, Access priority*
- (c) *Members are asked to consider and determine the following applications for funding from the Lottery and Other Grants Support Fund to release a grant from TOE (Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment) or WREN (Waste Recycling Environmental Ltd), noting that the Fund currently has an unallocated balance of approximately £22,500:*
 - (iii) *Charney Hall and Field Trust, £5,000, to secure a TOE grant of £50,000, towards the redevelopment of Charney Village Hall;*
 - (iv) *Sutton Courtenay Parish Council, £5,318.83, to secure a WREN grant of £48,353 towards phase 2 of the Village Hall refurbishment; and*
 - (v) *Wootton and Dry Sandford Community Centre, £5,000, to secure a TOE grant of £50,000, towards the redevelopment of the Community Centre.*

12. Open Space, Sport and Recreation Provision Strategy and a Supplementary Planning Document

(Pages 33 - 109)

(a) Draft Strategy

To receive and consider report 73/07 of the Strategic Director and Chief Finance Officer.

Introduction and Report Summary

The title of this draft strategy reflects the fact that it derives from the work done to deliver objectives outlined in the Government's planning guidance PPG17 "Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation" (July 2002). This draft strategy is based on a wide-ranging assessment of provision established through a detailed physical audit of all facilities across the Vale (whether in District, Parish or other ownership), a Vale Voice Citizens Panel survey in 2006 and a survey of Town and Parish Councils.

Open spaces and sport and recreation facilities are fundamental to quality of life in the Vale and the Council needs a strategy to manage and develop these facilities. The strategy identifies the key issues facing the Council and provides a vision and plan for tackling these issues. It provides an evidence base to support policies for open space, sport and recreation in the Council's developing Local Development Framework. It also strengthens the Council's ability to justify and secure s106 contributions from developers. The strategy is supported by a detailed background document, including amongst other things the detailed survey documentation.

The contact officer for this report is Mike Mackay, Deputy Director (Contracts and Procurement), telephone 01235 540337. Michael.mackay@whitehorsedc.gov.uk

Recommendation

That the Executive approves the draft strategy.

(b) The Strategy and a Supplementary Planning Document

The Council's consultants are currently preparing an audit and strategy for green space, sport and recreation, as referred to in (a) above. To implement this strategy the officers are currently producing a Supplementary Planning Document to set out standards for provision which will enable contributions for these facilities to be collected from new housing developments. The draft Supplementary Planning Document will be considered by the Strategic and Local Planning Advisory Group on 22 October 2007.

Under the Local Plan system, the Executive delegated authority to approve draft Supplementary Planning Guidance for public consultation. It is recommended that a similar process should be established for Supplementary Planning Documents.

Recommendation

That authority be delegated to the Deputy Director (Planning and Community Strategy), in consultation with the Strategic and Local Planning Advisory Group, to agree all future draft Supplementary Planning Documents for public consultation.

13. **Corporate Governance Report - First Quarter 2007/08**

(Pages 110 - 116)

To receive and consider report 74/07 of the Strategic Director and Monitoring Officer.

Introduction and Report Summary

The Corporate Governance Report looks at the key areas of:

Corporate Priorities

Best Value Performance Indicators

Progress against Service Prioritisation Plans

Key staffing data (sickness levels and turnover)

Financial commentary

Corporate Governance reporting to the Executive during 2006/7 included the full versions of all of the individual reports. For 2007/8 the Executive have asked that only exceptions be included in the quarterly report to the Executive. The Senior Management Team (SMT) now has a standard quarterly agenda item for their meetings (which are held monthly) which considers all aspects of corporate governance. At its meeting on 20th August SMT agreed the exceptions to be reported to the Executive and the appropriate comments / actions proposed have been included in this report. In addition, a number of areas of good performance have been highlighted. These have been included in section 4.

This new style of reporting has significantly reduced the length of the Quarterly Corporate Governance report. Previous versions were up to 40 pages long and contained too much detail. However, the full versions of the individual reports will be still available on the Council's website. They can be accessed through the performance section of the Council and Democracy area of the website.

The contact officer for this report is Tim Sadler, Strategic Director, telephone (01235 540360). Email address: tim.sadler@whitehorsedc.gov.uk

Recommendation

That the Senior Management Team's Corporate Governance exception report and proposals be noted.

14. **Budget Setting Process 2008/09**

(Pages 117 - 120)

To receive and consider report 75/07 of the Strategic Director and Chief Finance Officer.

Introduction and Report Summary

Following the creation of the finance shared services partnership there is a need to develop common practices across the Council's and South Oxfordshire District Council's (SODC) finance function to ensure operational efficiencies are realised. This report proposes a harmonised approach to budget setting.

The report sets out the four stages the budget setting process will follow.

The contact officer for this report is William Jacobs (Head of Finance) telephone (01235 540455). Email address William.jacobs@ridgeway-ssp.gov.uk.

Recommendations

That the budget setting process as detailed in this report and summarised in the timetable at appendix 1 is approved by the Executive.

That the Executive delegate authority to the Head of Finance in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance to develop virement and supplementary estimate procedures appropriate to the budget setting process.

15. Communications Strategy

(Pages 121 - 128)

To receive and consider report 76/07 of the Strategic Director and Monitoring Officer.

Introduction and Report Summary

This report proposes the adoption of the communications strategy for the Vale as part of the Corporate Priority "Improving internal and external communications". The strategy needs to be adopted to move the priority forwards.

The strategy is based on information from the Senior Management Team and their service areas, the staff and Member survey and the public general satisfaction survey completed last financial year by polling company Ipsos MORI as part of the Best Value Performance Indicator requirement. The strategy is built from the position of where we are now and what we aim to achieve over the next three years. The communications policy is an inherent part of this.

The contact officer for this report is Nikki Malin, Head of Communications, telephone (01235 540376). **Email address nikki.malin@whitehorsedc.gov.uk**

Recommendations

- (a) *that the Executive approve in principle the draft strategy to implement the Communications policy to be recommended to Council;*
- (b) *that the following policy which underpins the communications strategy is recommended for adoption by Council:*

"The Council will adopt and implement a Communications Strategy which aims to safeguard and continuously improve:

- *Customer satisfaction*
- *Involvement, engagement and information flow with staff and the community*
- *The Vale's reputation*
- *The Vale's website"*

16. **South East Plan - The Panel's Report**

(Pages 129 - 133)

The report of the Panel that considered the draft South East Plan was published at the end of August. This was considered by the Strategic and Local Planning Advisory Group on 24 September 2007. A copy of the report has been made available in the Members' Lounge at Abbey House, Abingdon and is available on line at www.gose.gov.uk/gose/planning/regionalplanning. Annex 1 (attached) contains a summary of those issues in the Panel's report affecting the Vale.

There is no formal opportunity to comment at this stage; the next opportunity will be to respond to the Government's proposed modifications to the draft Plan due to be published at the end of the year. However, if there are matters of particular concern, a letter could be written to the Government Office as it may influence their consideration of the Panel's report and the subsequent modifications. The Advisory Group considers there are three areas where the Council should consider writing to the Government Office, as set out below.

Recommendations

that the Deputy Director (Planning and Community Strategy) be asked to write to the Government Office about the Panel's report on the draft South East Plan to:

- (i) Advise that there is an error in the housing figures for the Vale;*
- (ii) Point out that full funding for the Harwell by-pass has not yet been identified but that every effort should be made to secure funding, including developer contributions. The Council therefore strongly supports the Panel's recommendation to refer to the pooling of developer contributions in the lower case text; and*
- (iii) Object to the reference to the Upper Thames reservoir being developed in Oxfordshire.*

17. **Partial Review of the South East Plan - Provision of Caravan Sites for Gypsies and Travellers**

(Pages 134 - 137)

To receive and consider report 77/07 of the Strategic Director and Monitoring Officer.

Introduction and Report Summary

SEERA is undertaking a partial review of the South East Plan relating to the provision of sites for gypsies and travellers in the south east. The first stage of the review is an opportunity for councils to submit their advice on the expected numbers and distribution of sites in their areas. In Oxfordshire a steering group of Councillors representing the County Council and the five District Councils has worked with the support of an officer working group to provide a response.

This work has involved consultation with stakeholders, a recalculation of the expected need as set out in the Association of Councils of the Thames Valley Regions (ACTVaR) Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) and an alternative disaggregation of the County figure down to District level. The recalculated need for the County to 2016 is 42 pitches in comparison to the original GTAA figure of 98 to 2016.

Advice on travelling showpeople was also requested but it was not considered that it was advisable to carry out a survey in the summer so the intention is that a survey will be carried out this winter. In line with other areas it was considered that advice could not be submitted to SEERA on transit provision and detailed costings.

Following submission of the advice to SEERA there will be public consultation on draft preferred option document and Sustainability Appraisal by SEERA May to July 2008, followed by submission of a draft Partial Review document and Sustainability Appraisal to Government in December 2008 and then an Examination in May 2009.

The Contact Officer for this report is Peter Williams, Principal Planning Officer, (01235 520202)

Recommendations

- (a) *that the Executive, in accordance with the agreed process approves the suggested overall provision of 42 pitches in Oxfordshire and provision for the Vale of either 1 pitch under option A or 8 pitches under option B and that a preference for option A be recorded by Executive for reference in future consultations;*
- (b) *that the participation in a joint study on travelling showpeople in winter 07/08 is approved by Executive, and*
- (c) *that the Executive approves no response being made to the request for transit site provision, as this should be considered by SEERA, or to the request for detailed implementation costs.*

18. Joint Procurement of Waste Management Services - Memorandum of Understanding

(Pages 138 - 139)

To receive and consider report 78/07 of the Strategic Director and Chief Finance Officer.

Introduction and Report Summary

The Vale has been working for a year with West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC) and South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) with a view to jointly procuring the next contract for waste collection services. A recent report produced for the Oxfordshire Waste Partnership indicated that this was the lowest risk / best option for Oxfordshire Waste Collection Authorities (WCAs) in terms of achieving financial efficiencies within the time frame of placing new contract(s) in 2009/10.

The Vale's Deputy Director for Contracts and Procurement is currently exploring two options for delivering the new contract(s) – a tri-partite approach by WODC, SODC and the Vale; or support for the South East Centre of Excellence, who are aiming to put in place Regional Framework Agreements for use by WCAs in the South East.

Joint working between the three authorities would be greatly facilitated by a Memorandum of Understanding committing each authority to the joint procurement exercise, to be signed by each participating authority as part of the governance

arrangements.

The contact officer for this report is Steve Bishop, Strategic Director (Chief Finance Officer) 01235 540332. steve.bishop@whitehorsedc.gov.uk

Recommendations

- (c) *The Executive approves that the Council should sign a Memorandum of Understanding committing the Council to a joint procurement exercise for waste collection services; and,*
- (d) *The Executive delegates authority to the Strategic Director (Chief Finance Officer) in consultation with the Head of Legal Services and the Portfolio Holder for Waste Procurement to agree and sign a suitably worded Memorandum of Understanding on Joint Waste Procurement.*

19. Planning Delivery Grant 2007/08 – Provisional Second Tranche Allocations

Members will be aware that the Department of Communities & Local Government has announced the latest Provisional Allocations of Planning Delivery Grant (2007/8) and that the Vale is likely to receive in the order of £389k. The Government has advised that this additional funding is to enable local authorities to improve their planning resources and services and to assist in the introduction of the many changes involved in its programme of planning reforms. The grant is required to be split 75%-25% between the recipient authority's resource and capital budgets.

The Vale's 2007/8 grant award is made up of the following award elements:

- Development Control performance: £147k
(Reward for meeting application processing targets for major, minor & other applications in 2006/7)
- Housing: £180.5k
(Reward for housing delivery in a "High Demand" area based on the net additions to housing stock over a rolled forward three year period)
- Plan making
(Meeting the milestone targets in the Local Development Scheme & the extent to which the authority is able to report on a range of National Core Output indicators in its Local Development Framework Annual Monitoring Report) £ 58.5k
- E Planning
(Reward for achieving e planning targets – the smallest component of the national award) £ 3k

The grant award will not be confirmed until later in the year, however, as the Executive will be preparing its revenue budget & capital programme over the next few months it would seem sensible to have the mechanism in place to authorise Planning Delivery Grant (PDG) expenditure, in particular where this can be seen to relieve pressures on the service area budget. Officers will be working up proposals designed to accord with

the Government's PDG objectives & ensure planning performance can be maintained and enhanced, but also, the aim will be to invest in schemes that will be of corporate wide benefit.

Recommendation

That authority to agree expenditure of the Council's 2007/8 Planning Delivery Grant award be delegated to the Deputy Director (Planning & Community Strategy) in consultation with the Executive Portfolio holder for Planning & Community Strategy & the Opposition Planning Spokesperson.

20. Building Regulation Charges 2007/08

(Pages 140 - 150)

To receive and consider report 79/07 of the Strategic Director and Chief Finance Officer.

Introduction and Report Summary

This report contains proposals to update this Council's Scheme of Charges for Building Regulations.

The changes are intended to ensure that the Charges:
do not fall below the "proper costs" of the service provided
are maintained at competitive and reasonable levels
are presented in a simple and logical format and
continue represent best value and the provision of a quality service

The contact officer for this report is Richard Beel, Head of Building Control. Tel: 01235 540355.

Recommendation

*The Executive recommends to the Council that:
The Council adopts the revised "Scheme for the Recovery of Building Regulation Costs and Associated Matters" as its formal scheme, made under the Building (Local Authority Charges) Regulations 1998, and to take effect from 1 October 2007.*

21. Comments, Complaints and Compliments – Annual Review 2006/07

(Pages 151 - 160)

The Comments and Complaints Annual Review for 2006/07 is attached. 125 complaints were received at Stage 1 under the Council's Comments and Complaints procedure and 99 recorded compliments. The majority of complaints were in connection with the procedures adhered to by Council staff and as part of the Complaints process recommendations will be discussed with relevant service areas to find ways of improving procedures where necessary. The recording of comments and complaints continues to be seen as a positive way of highlighting residents concerns.

Recommendation

That the Comments and Complaints Annual Review for 2006/07 be received.

22. 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, as amended, to the Act when the following items are considered:

- Item 23 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.)
- Item 24 References from Other Committees
(Category 1 - Information relating to any individual.)
(Category 2)
(Category 3)
- Item 25 Property Matters
(Category 3)

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

STANDING ITEMS

23. Minutes

To adopt and sign as a correct record the Exempt minutes of the Executive meeting held on 13 July 2007, (copy previously circulated).

OTHER MATTERS

24. References from Other Committees

(Page 161)

To consider the attached references from the Personnel, Regulatory and Appeals Committee.

25. Property Matters

To consider any property matters.