

Date: 24 January 2008

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, 1ST FEBRUARY, 2008** at **2.30 pm**.

Yours faithfully

Terry Stock  
Chief Executive

Members are reminded of the provisions contained in the Code of Conduct adopted on 30 September 2007 and Standing Order 34 regarding the declaration of Personal and Prejudicial Interests.

## **A G E N D A**

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](mailto: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.

### **Open to the Public including the Press**

#### **Map and Vision**

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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 meeting of the Executive held on 7 December 2007, (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.

Any Member with a personal interest or a personal and prejudicial interest in accordance with the provisions of the Code of Conduct, in any matter to be considered at a meeting, must declare the existence and nature of that interest as soon as the interest becomes apparent in accordance with the provisions of the Code.

When a Member declares a personal and prejudicial interest he shall also state if he has a dispensation from the Standards Committee entitling him/her to speak, or speak and vote on the matter concerned.

Where any Member has declared a personal and prejudicial interest he shall withdraw from the room while the matter is under consideration unless

- (a) his/her disability to speak, or speak and vote on the matter has been removed by a dispensation granted by the Standards Committee, or
- (b) members of the public are allowed to make representations, give evidence or answer questions about the matter by statutory right or otherwise. If that is the case, the Member can also attend the meeting for that purpose. However, the Member must immediately leave the room once he/she has finished; or when the meeting decides he/she has finished whichever is the earlier and in any event the Member must leave the room for the duration of the debate on the item in which he/she has a personal and prejudicial interest.

**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.

(1) Question from Mr Les Clyne of Abingdon:

"Please could the following question be put on the 1st February 2008 Executive Meeting Agenda for written reply by Mary de Vere, as Executive Member responsible for housing, within 10 working days of the meeting.

1. The Executive Initial Draft budget for 2008/2009 has as one of its main objectives affordable housing and states an aim to produce 400 units over 4 years (April 2008 - April 2012). The Vale Local Development Plan published in 2006, which is still in force, has an aim to permit and complete 2126 units of housing between 1 April 2005 and 1 April 2011, of which around 2000 would fall in the category where the Vale's target for affordable housing of 40% would apply. Thus the Vale's overall target is to produce 40% of 2000, i.e. 800 units of affordable housing, by April 2011. To date (January 2008) only 120 of the 800 have been permitted (e-mail correspondence and table from Jerry Patterson to me dated 14th January 2008). Why is the Vale proposing to extend its timescale by a year (to 2012 instead of 2011) and to cut its planned target by around 50% from 800 to 400, has it informed central Government of this massive change to its development plan, and has it been given approval for this change?"

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

Strategic Review Committee – 22 January 2008  
The Executive's Initial Budget Proposal 2008/09

The Strategic Review Committee, at its meeting on 22 January 2008, considered the Executive's Initial Budget Proposal 2008/09. The Committee (by 7 votes to nil, with 4 abstentions (the Conservative Members having abstained)) accepted that the totality of the Executive's thinking in the budget round was reasonable; the growth proposals detailed in revised Appendix E were acceptable and understood; the Officer saving proposals identified in the revised Appendix G were clear in terms of the implications for services and outcomes; and that the risks of setting a Council Tax increase at 4.99% were understood.

However, the Conservative Group had concerns that the Medium Term Plan to 2011/12, as set out in the revised Budget Proposal, detailed further savings of £135,000 from 2009/10 onwards but had not identified how these would be achieved and whether there would be any impact on front line services.

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

Scrutiny Committee – 13 December 2007

(a) Call In of Executive Decision – Transfer of Payroll Service

At the meeting of the Scrutiny Committee, held on 13 December 2007, the decision taken by Councillor Jerry Patterson to transfer the Council's payroll service to South Oxfordshire District Council was called in for further scrutiny, as it was felt that one of the six options identified for the future delivery of the service (option 6) had not been explored sufficiently. At the meeting, the Committee considered further information from the Council's Head of Human Resources on option 6 and in the light of this the further information, had no concerns regarding the decision taken by Councillor Patterson. However, in reaching this decision the Scrutiny Committee resolved that the Executive be advised that in future full information should be included in all Executive Member decision notices.

(b) Review the Activity of the Executive  
Minute Ex.102 – Health and Safety Training

The Scrutiny Committee noted that the Executive, at its meeting on 7 December 2007, had recommended that the Council makes it a mandatory requirement for all Members of the Executive and the Scrutiny Committee to be accredited to the Institute of Occupational Safety and Health 'Safety for Senior Executives' training standard and request the Strategic Director and Monitoring Officer to arrange evening training session options to which other Members of the Council are to be invited also.

In considering this matter the Scrutiny Committee was opposed to making the training mandatory for Members of the Scrutiny Committee and has recommended Council accordingly.

**9. Financial Monitoring**

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

**KEY DECISIONS**

**10. Forward Plan**

**(Pages 12 - 14)**

To receive the Forward Plan containing Executive decisions to be taken from February to May 2008.

Recommendation

*that the Forward Plan be received.*

11. **Budget Proposals 2008/09**

To receive and consider the Draft Budget Proposal for 2008/09 (stapled separately).

**OTHER MATTERS**

12. **Treasury Management and Investment Strategy**

(Pages 15 - 21)

To receive and consider report 137/07 of the Strategic Director and Chief Finance Officer.

Introduction and Report Summary

The Treasury Management Policy, agreed by Council December 2001 requires the approval of an annual Treasury Management Strategy for the next financial year. This is in line with the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management.

The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) has issued guidance under Section 15 of the Local Government Act 2003 on Local Government cash investments which requires approval of an Annual Investment Strategy. The guidance acknowledges that it might be convenient to produce a single document that meets the requirements of the CIPFA code and the Secretary of State's guidance.

This report puts forward an Annual Strategy for this authority for 2008/09 which, as last year, complies with the CIPFA code and the DCLG guidance. This is largely unchanged from the existing strategy for 2007/08. This strategy restricts itself to non-property investments. For property investment, Members should refer to the Investment Policy last agreed by the Council on 24 March 2004

The Contact Officer for this report is Steve Lawrence, Principal Accountant (Technical), telephone (01235 540321), email: [steve.lawrence@whitehorsedc.gov.uk](mailto:steve.lawrence@whitehorsedc.gov.uk).

Recommendation

*Members are asked to approve the Annual Treasury Management & Investment Strategy for 2008/09 (set out at Appendix A), and the limits and guidelines specified therein.*

13. **Review of Sub-National Economic Development and Regeneration - Consultation by ACTVaR**

(Pages 22 - 26)

Attached is a copy of a letter from the Association of Councils in the Thames Valley Region (ACTVaR) which seeks a view from this authority on the Review of Sub-National Economic Development and Regeneration. ACTVaR's Steering Group is meeting on 22 February 2008 to consider responses. ACTVaR's agenda item

accompanies its letter attached on pages 22 - 26.

Recommendation

*That the Executive determines its response to ACTVaR's consultation.*

**14. Review of National Non-Domestic Rates Discretionary Relief**

**(Pages 27 - 35)**

To receive and consider report 138/07 of the Strategic Director and Chief Finance Officer.

Introduction and Report Summary

The purpose of this report is to agree a new simplified process for awarding National Non-Domestic Rate discretionary relief (business rates relief) that supports delivery of the Council's Corporate Plan and Community Strategy. The report will aim to establish a clear, transparent policy with an unambiguous link to the aims, objectives and priorities of the Council.

This report is a review of the criteria for granting discretionary rate relief from rates on any non-domestic property only and makes no proposals in relation to mandatory rate relief as the Council has no discretion in such matters; where it acts as the agent of central government.

The contact officer for this report is Paul Howden, Revenues & Benefits Client Manager (Tel: 01235 540385; email paul.howden@southoxon.gov.uk).

Recommendations

*Members are requested to approve:*

- 2.1 The categories of organisation eligible for National Non-Domestic Rates discretionary rate relief from 1 April 2008 as set out in Appendix A of the report.*
- 2.2 The level of award to different types of organisation from 1 April 2008 as set out in Appendix B of the this report, subject to any over-riding considerations that mitigate against making an award to a particular organisation.*
- 2.3 A cap of £8,000 on the amount of discretionary rate relief and £4,000 on the amount of discretionary top-up rate relief that any organisation can receive in respect of a particular premises in any one financial year, unless it is in the financial interests of the Council to facilitate a larger amount being awarded. The cap limits are to be reviewed each financial year and will rise in line with inflation and the non-domestic rates multiplier.*
- 2.4 The decision to award discretionary relief to be delegated to the Chief Finance Officer based on the categories agreed by the Executive.*
- 2.5 A review of the eligibility of the organisations that are currently being granted rate relief.*

2.6 *The criteria for discretionary relief will to be reviewed at least every three years in line with the changing priorities of the Council commencing from year 2010 – 2011.*

**15. Tugwell Fields, Wantage**

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(Wards Affected: Wantage Charlton)

A request has been received from Wantage Silver Band and Wantage Concords Football Club for a agreement to build / conditional lease which, subject to funding, would create a 99 year ground lease on an area of land measuring approximately half an acre. This land is cross hatched black on the attached plan. Principal terms and conditions for the lease have been provisionally agreed subject to appropriate authorisation.

The position of both organisations as regards funding has not yet been determined. Both organisations will require an agreement to build / conditional lease in order that they may qualify for grant monies. The agreement to build /conditional lease is therefore essentially required to lever in funding by external organisations.

The main heads of terms are as follows:

- A nominal rent.
- The land to be used solely for the construction and subsequent occupancy of a community hall to be used primarily by the Wantage Silver Band in whose name the lease will be granted. A portion of the hall will/may also be used for Wantage Concords as changing rooms.
- That the premises can be used only for purposes compatible with community or charity use.
- That a finite period of time be agreed with both organisations for the availability of funding to be confirmed or otherwise. Failing the identification of adequate funding the agreement would effectively fall away.

The land is held via a long lease from Oxfordshire County Council (the Superior Landlord). In addition access to the site will need to be improved to facilitate the construction of the hall.

The grant of a lease(s) will be conditional upon the following:

- (i) Obtaining the consent of the Superior Landlord to the transaction.
- (ii) Obtaining a satisfactory planning consent (insofar as necessary) for both the Landlord's works (the construction of the access road and possibly ancillary car parking), and the construction of the building. A planning permission was granted on the 13<sup>th</sup> December (Application No: WAN/20297).
- (iii) Obtaining the necessary funding for the construction of the building and approval of the funding institution to the transaction. Due to the nature of the various grant funding regimes a commitment to lease is required to qualify for such funding.
- (iv) Completion or an undertaking to complete the Landlord's works which will include the creation of pedestrian and vehicular access way to the property,

and the construction of service conduits to the property insofar as they are not already available.

Agreement as to the precise nature of the landlords works together with the form and extent of the building have yet to be finalised. Landlord works will be funded via Section 106 monies. The Vale's reasonable valuation and legal costs together with other fees and disbursements will be borne by the Wantage Silver Band.

**Recommendations**

- (a) *An agreement to build / conditional lease is granted to Wantage Silver Band and Wantage Concords upon the above terms and conditions. The agreement to build / lease to be granted conditional upon sufficient funding being raised to complete the development;*
- (b) *That delegated authority be given to the Chief Executive to vary and or amend the stated terms and conditions as occasion demands;*
- (c) *That no financial burden fall to this Council in facilitating the scheme; and*
- (d) *That the precise extent of the land to be leased particularly in relation to the provision of car parking be determined once the financial position of the respective organisations becomes clearer, together with such reserved rights as the Council may require.*

**16. Climate Change Project Board**

The Council's first Climate Change Strategy was approved by the Executive at its meeting on 7 December 2007. The Executive requested that a further report be brought to its February meeting detailing the content and role of the proposed Climate Change Project Board. It is proposed that a project board be established in accordance with the guidelines already established by the Organisational Development and Support Service. The Climate Change Project Board will challenge and scrutinise the work of the Climate Change Project Team, and monitor the implementation of the Climate Change Strategy. The project team will be composed of 6 to 8 officers, all of whom have a key role in delivering same aspect of the Council's Climate Action Plan as detailed in the Strategy.

The proposed composition of the Project Board is:

- The Executive Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Safety
- The Deputy Director (Housing and Community Safety) – Service provider with responsibility to deliver the strategy
- Another Deputy Director of the Chief Executive's choice

**Recommendation**

*That the Climate Change Project Board is established to challenge and scrutinise the work of the Climate Change Project Team, and monitor the implementation of the Climate Change Strategy and that the Project Board consists of:*

- *The Executive Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Safety*
- *The Deputy Director (Housing and Community Safety) – Service provider with responsibility to deliver the strategy*



- *Another Deputy Director of the Chief Executive's choice*

**17. Setting up a Joint Waste Procurement Project Board**

The Council is currently seeking to enter into partnership with South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC), in order to create a joint waste collection contract. Following the experience gained from setting up the Ridgeway Shared Services Organisation it is proposed that a joint project board is established for waste collection. Under the Vale's Constitution it is not possible to form a Joint Committee that has Executive powers and allow Members other than those on the Executive to sit on this. On the basis that this is the single largest contract that the Councils will enter into, it is recommended that wider input from Council Members is required from the outset, involving an Executive Member, Liberal Democrat backbencher and Opposition Member (conditional upon SODC agreeing a similar 3-Member appointment).

**Recommendation**

*That the Joint Waste Procurement Project Board includes:*

- *the Executive Member with responsibility for the new Waste contract*
- *a non-Executive Member from the Liberal Democrat Group and*
- *a Member from the Conservative Group*

**18. 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 item is considered:

Item 19 **Minutes**

(Category 1 - Information relating to any individual.)

(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.)

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

**19. Minutes**

To adopt and sign as a correct record the Exempt minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 7 December 2007, (previously circulated).