

Ex.78

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE

HELD AT THE GUILDHALL, ABINGDON ON
FRIDAY, 1ST FEBRUARY, 2008 AT 2.30PM

Open to the Public, including the Press

PRESENT:

MEMBERS: Councillors Jerry Patterson (Chair), Tony de Vere (Vice-Chair), Mary de Vere, Richard Farrell, Jenny Hannaby, Bob Johnston and Angela Lawrence

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE: Steve Bishop, Alice Brander, Steve Culliford, William Jacobs, Steve Lawrence, Claire Litchfield, Andre Morgan, Paul Staines and Terry Stock

NON-PARTICIPATING MEMBERS: Councillors Roger Cox and Andrew Crawford

NUMBER OF MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC: 4

Ex.111 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None

Ex.112 MINUTES

The minutes (both public and exempt) of the Executive meeting held on 7 December 2007 were adopted and signed as a correct record.

Ex.113 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Angela Lawrence declared a personal and prejudicial interest in item 8(a) 'Referrals from the Overview and Scrutiny Committees - Call-In of Executive Decision – Transfer of Payroll Service' as her husband was employed by the Ridgeway Shared Service Partnership (minute Ex.118 refers).

Ex.114 URGENT BUSINESS AND CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair called for a minute's silence as a mark of respect for Councillor Jim Moley, former Councillor Margaret Mackenzie, and Dominic Burgess the Senior Housing Advice Officer, who had all passed away recently.

The Chair announced that a Flood Protection Products Fair would be held at the Guildhall, Abingdon on 7 February 2008 from 3pm to 8pm.

Ex.115 STATEMENTS AND PETITIONS FROM THE PUBLIC UNDER STANDING ORDER 32

None

Ex.116 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC UNDER STANDING ORDER 32

The Executive received three questions from a member of the public under Standing Order 32.

- (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 Councillor 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?"

Councillor Mary de Vere thanked Mr Clyne for his question and replied as follows. As Councillor Richard Farrell had explained in his answer at Development Control Committee, the Local Plan allocated land for housing but the Council did not have the power to force land owners to bring their land forward for development. So the Council can only estimate what developments would take place and then use this estimation to calculate what it believed would be a challenging target for the provision of affordable housing.

The Oxfordshire Housing Market Assessment, carried out in 2007, identified that the Vale of White Horse needed to provide about 850 homes every year to meet the housing needs of local people. At current prices this equated to an annual cost of affordable housing of £80 million. This was a sum far beyond the resources of the Council.

Central government had made it clear that the cost of affordable housing should be met by the value of developments themselves by using 'planning gain'. Section 106 agreements were made as part of the planning permission and these provided community benefits and affordable housing in turn for permitting developers and landowners to develop and sell open market housing. The Vale of White Horse had been quite successful in providing affordable housing in this way. Central government had stressed that the cost of housing should not be met by the public purse.

The Council's Housing Strategy embraced this approach to providing affordable housing but also recognised that there were exceptional circumstances where a site could be brought forward for development more easily if some public finance was applied. The Council encouraged Registered Social Landlords to apply to the Housing Corporation for grant funding whenever it could. As a last

resort the Council would consider funding a scheme itself but only when it was satisfied that all other revenue streams available to support the delivery of affordable housing had been exhausted.

The officers had estimated that between the years 2007/08 and 2010/11 the Council would provide 657 units of affordable housing. In doing this the Council would exceed its own target of an average of 100 affordable units each year but it would need to provide £600,000 to do this.

The Council believed that the provision of affordable housing with its enormous costs and long lead in times was not the only answer to assisting persons in housing need. The Council actively prevented people becoming homeless by helping them to find private rented accommodation both in the District and nearby if that suited their personal circumstances. To date in this year the Council had found accommodation and prevented 210 people from becoming homeless.

The Council had not cut any targets or reduced its plans to provide affordable housing.

Councillor Mary de Vere handed a copy of her reply in writing to Mr Clyne.

- (2) Question from Glynne Butt of Community in the Old Gaol to the Leader of the Council:

"Councillor Patterson has publicly acknowledged that there is a "cultural deficit" in Abingdon which needs to be addressed. Please can he therefore tell us:

- (a) whether the Vale Councillors have decided to ring fence part of the receipt from the sale of the Old Gaol for the provision of arts, cultural or leisure facilities elsewhere in Abingdon town centre, and if so the size of the allocated sum?
- (b) Since these needs were already recognised by the ABL report in 2005 and the Local Area Plan 2011 why (according to the Vale's representative quoted in this week's Herald) the Council plans to wait another three years before even looking at what facilities are needed? Do they realize that they could be out of power by that time and commitments made in 2008 would not be binding on a subsequent council?

Surely now would be an ideal time to harness the interest generated by the sale of the Old Gaol, by involving local people in the early stages of future planning."

Councillor Jerry Patterson informed Mrs Butt that he would send her a detailed written reply.

- (2) Question from Hester Hand of Community in the Old Gaol to the Leader of the Council:

"Given the severe constraints on the Vale's budget, please can Councillor Patterson explain why the Draft Budget before you today proposes a spend of £47k per annum (albeit some of it from S.106 funds) on the creation of the new post of "Leisure Planning and Projects Officer"?"

Would it not be better to use the Vale's scarce resources to fund actual projects and facilities – or alternatively, to fund consultation and planning on the use of the Old Gaol receipts in order to move ahead promptly on the much needed provision of arts and cultural facilities in Abingdon?"

Councillor Patterson replied by reporting that the Leisure Planning and Projects Officer post was a fixed term two year contract aimed at generating more section 106 funding that would bring further facilities, perhaps even arts and cultural facilities. The post holder would be involved in evidence gathering to support the need for facilities through these planning agreements.

Ex.117 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
(Time: 2.44pm to 2.46pm)

At its meeting on 22 January 2008, the Strategic Review Committee had 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.

The Executive Members who had attended the Committee meeting had found it useful and constructive. It was recognised that further savings needed to be identified; Members were confident these would be found. It was noted that the Committee had received an updated version of the draft budget, amended from the version publicised on 21 December 2007.

RESOLVED

that the views of the Strategic Review Committee be noted.

Ex.118 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
(Time: 2.46pm to 2.48pm)

(Councillor Angela Lawrence declared a personal and prejudicial interest and in accordance with Standing Order 34, she left the meeting during its consideration.)

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 asked that the Executive was advised that in future, full information should be included in all Executive Member decision notices.

RESOLVED

that the advice from the Scrutiny Committee be noted.

- (b) Review the Activity of the Executive
Minute Ex.102 – Health and Safety Training
(Time: 2.48pm to 2.58pm)

At its meeting on 13 December 2007, the Scrutiny Committee noted that the Executive had recommended that the Council made 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 requested that the Strategic Director and Monitoring Officer should arrange evening training session options to which other Members of the Council were 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 had recommended the Council accordingly.

The Executive received written advice from the Head of Legal Services. He reported that when breaches of health and safety legislation occurred, the regulatory authorities conducting an investigation looked at procedures, training, and the culture of an organisation, as well as the facts of the incident. Organisations were often criticised for not taking health and safety seriously.

Section 37 of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 stated:

"1. Where an offence under any of the relevant statutory provisions committed by a body corporate is proved to have been committed with

the consent or connivance of, or to have been attributable to any neglect on the part of, any director, manager, secretary or other similar officer of the body corporate or a person who was purporting to act in any such capacity, he as well as the body corporate shall be guilty of that offence and shall be liable to be proceeded against and punished accordingly.

2. Where the affairs of a body corporate [such as a local authority] are managed by its members, the preceding subsection shall apply in relation to the acts and defaults of a member in connection with his functions of management as if he were a director of the body corporate."

The Head of Legal Services believed that Members were potentially personally liable for breaches of health and safety legislation. Although the risk of liability was low, Members of the Executive and the Scrutiny Committee were strongly advised to attend such courses. Otherwise there was a risk of a finding against the Council that it had not done all it could. However, personal liability did not arise in relation to the Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act 2007. Officers were considering the implications of that Act.

The Executive recognised that health and safety legislation placed a personal responsibility on Members, more so than other legislation which tended to lay responsibility at the corporate body. The risk of a Member being held personally responsible was low but it existed. The Executive was recommended to confirm its view that this health and safety training should be mandatory for Executive Members and Scrutiny Committee Members should be recommended to be trained also. The Executive considered that this advice should be followed and be recommended to Council for debate on 27 February 2008. It was suggested that the written advice of the Head of Legal Services should also be submitted to Council.

Councillor Andrew Crawford, Vice-Chair of the Scrutiny Committee was invited to address the meeting on this point. He did not agree with the advice given and asked why it had taken over 30 years for this to be put forward since the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 was introduced. To his knowledge, there was no case law where a Councillor had been found guilty of such an offence and he knew of no other Council where training had been made mandatory for Scrutiny Committee Members. He also pointed to the Head of Legal Services' advice that personal liability did not arise in relation to the Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act 2007; this supported his viewpoint. Councillor Crawford also asked for a copy of the Health and Safety Review Board's minutes from the meeting that discussed this issue.

R E C O M M E N D E D (by seven votes to nil)

that the Council be advised that, further to the Executive's recommendation of 7 December 2007 and further to the Scrutiny Committee's recommendation of 13 December 2007, the Members of the Executive be required to be accredited to the Institute of Occupational Safety and Health 'Safety for Senior Executives' training standard and that the Members of the Scrutiny Committee should also be required to be accredited also.

Ex.119 FINANCIAL MONITORING

(Time: 2.58pm to 2.59pm)

The Executive received and approved requests for two virements totalling £43,000. Members also noted that four other virements had been approved by the Strategic Director and Chief Finance Officer under delegated authority.

RESOLVED (by seven votes to nil)

that the virement requests set out in the agenda report be approved.

Ex.120 FORWARD PLAN

(Time: 2.59pm to 3.02pm)

The Executive received the Forward Plan setting out Executive decisions to be taken from February to May 2008.

It was noted that the Forward Plan item relating to the Local Development Framework had been delayed as new guidance was awaited and would not be available until the spring. The item on Decriminalised Parking Enforcement had been deferred due to the need to reach agreement with Oxfordshire County Council. Members asked that an update was given to the next meeting of the Executive.

RESOLVED

(a) that the Forward Plan for February to May 2008 be noted; and

(b) that an update be given to the next meeting of the Executive on progress towards decriminalised parking enforcement.

Ex.121 BUDGET PROPOSALS 2008/09

(Time: 3.02pm to 3.12pm)

The Executive received and considered the draft budget proposals for 2008/09. This draft budget was the same as the version submitted to and considered at length by the Strategic Review Committee on 22 January 2008. The budget preparation had been a challenging exercise, with large increases in the Council's contribution to the Pension Fund necessary in 2008/09 and the ongoing Government requirement to make annual 3% efficiency savings.

It was noted that there would be minor changes before the final budget was proposed to the Council meeting on 27 February 2008. These changes would include detail on how the further £135,000 savings would be achieved. The Leader of the Council had a general delegation to make changes to the draft budget before it was proposed in its final form to the Council.

The Opposition Group was urged to submit any alternative budget proposals for consideration well before the Council meeting. Any change to the budget would have to be considered by the Section 151 Officer and be analysed to confirm that it was

robust and sustainable. The Leader stated that he would not consider it acceptable for uncosted verbal amendments to the budget to be put forward during debate during the course of the Council meeting.

It was noted that the intention was to make the Council's budget more sustainable in future years by not drawing on balances. To do this it was intended to review the Council's property portfolio during 2008/09.

Members thanked the officers involved in the production of the budget to date.

RESOLVED

that the draft budget proposal for 2008/09 be noted.

Ex.122 TREASURY MANAGEMENT AND INVESTMENT STRATEGY
(Time: 3.12pm to 3.17pm)

The Executive received and considered report 137/07 of the Strategic Director and Chief Finance Officer. The Treasury Management Policy, agreed by Council in December 2001, required the approval of an annual Treasury Management Strategy for the next financial year. This was in line with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Code of Practice on Treasury Management.

The then named Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) had issued guidance under Section 15 of the Local Government Act 2003 on Local Government cash investments which required approval of an Annual Investment Strategy. The report put forward an Annual Strategy for 2008/09 which complied with the CIPFA code and the DCLG guidance. This was largely unchanged from the existing strategy for 2007/08 with unchanged limits. The strategy was restricted to non-property investments.

Councillor Andrew Crawford, Vice-Chair of the Scrutiny Committee, was invited to speak. He asked if the Executive was content to approve the strategy, which allowed large sums to be deposited with the 30th largest building society. The Executive was content with the proposed strategy.

RESOLVED (by seven votes to nil)

that the Annual Treasury Management and Investment Strategy for 2008/09 and the limits and guidelines specified therein, as set out in Appendix A to report 137/07, be approved.

Ex.123 REVIEW OF SUB-NATIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND REGENERATION - CONSULTATION BY ACTVAR
(Time: 3.17pm to 3.20pm)

Appended to the agenda was a copy of a letter from the Association of Councils in the Thames Valley Region (ACTVaR) which sought a view from on the Review of Sub-National Economic Development and Regeneration. The proposal was for a single integrated regional strategy to provide a strategic regional framework, combining

existing regional economic, spatial and housing strategies. ACTVaR's Steering Group had been due to meet on 22 February 2008 to consider responses. However, it was reported at the Executive meeting that ACTVaR's meeting had been cancelled as the Government had decided to delay publication of its consultation document until late February 2008. The requirement to respond before 22 February had been overtaken by events.

RESOLVED (by seven votes to nil)

that the latest position of the Review of Sub-National Economic Development and Regeneration be noted.

Ex.124 REVIEW OF NATIONAL NON-DOMESTIC RATES DISCRETIONARY RELIEF
(Time: 3.20pm to 3.28pm)

The Executive received and considered report 138/07 of the Strategic Director and Chief Finance Officer, which reviewed the criteria for granting discretionary rate relief on any non-domestic property. The report sought agreement to a new simplified process for awarding National Non-Domestic Rate discretionary relief (business rates relief) that supported delivery of the Council's Corporate Plan and Community Strategy.

The Local Government Finance Act 1988, as amended, set out the general categories of organisations and properties eligible for relief. Certain types of organisations such as charities, some sports clubs and certain rural businesses, were entitled to mandatory relief from rates on any non-domestic property providing certain criteria were met. Local councils had discretion to grant further top-up relief on the remaining bill. Councils also had discretion to grant relief on all or part of any rate bill for property that was occupied by certain non-profit making bodies and business in rural areas. The report set out the existing criteria and suggested changes to the scheme.

The suggested changes were:

- there would no longer be a differentiation between sports clubs with or without licensed bars. Instead, clubs would be encouraged to register with HM Revenue and Customs as Community Amateur Sports Clubs
- sports clubs that registered would be entitled to 80% mandatory rate relief and this could be topped-up at the Council's discretion, effectively granting the same rights to rate relief as registered charities
- the criteria for discretionary rate relief should be changed to make it clear that any sports club that had not applied for registration would normally have its discretionary rate relief reduced, initially receiving 50% discretionary relief which would then be reduced to 30% over a three year period. However, if a sports club proved it was not eligible to register, it would continue to receive 50% discretionary relief
- a further incentive to encourage registration would be the offer of 5% discretionary top-up rate relief in addition to the 80% mandatory relief
- businesses that occupied premises with a rateable value of less than £15,000 were entitled to Small Business Rate Relief, subject to conditions, which was awarded at no cost to the Council. Potentially eligible clubs should be encouraged to apply for relief. Failure to apply would result in any award of discretionary rate relief being

based on what their rate liability would be if Small Business Rate Relief had been applied. Officers would encourage these organisations to appeal, as any reduction in the rate liability would also reduce the Council's rate relief burden

- the non-domestic rating legislation made provision for 50% mandatory rural rate relief for certain general stores, post offices, general food stores, petrol filling stations and public houses. Councils could also top-up the relief to 100%. Councils could also award discretionary rural rate relief for rural premises used for local community benefit. It was proposed that discretionary rural rate relief was awarded to all eligible rural post offices and general stores at 50% across the District
- with regard to village halls run by a registered charity, it was proposed that they would receive 20% discretionary top-up rate relief in addition to the 80% mandatory rate relief. The majority of village halls were already receiving 100% relief. Where village halls were not run by a registered charity it was proposed that they would receive 90% discretionary rate relief, reduced to 70% over a three year period. This would encourage adoption of charitable status
- organisations applying for discretionary rate relief would need to satisfy the Council that they supported its aims and objectives and did not discriminate against any sectors of the community
- it was recommended that a cap was placed on the amount of discretionary rate relief that any organisation could receive for individual premises. At present, the Council was potentially vulnerable if an organisation enlarged its premises and attracted a higher level of non-domestic rates as a result. A cap of £8,000 discretionary rate relief was proposed and £4,000 for top-up relief to charities or Community Amateur Sports Clubs. The limits should be reviewed on an annual basis and raised in line with inflation and the non-domestic rates multiplier
- it was proposed that a degree of flexibility was included where the financial interests of the Council could be helped. SOLL had a contract to manage several of the Council's leisure facilities. By awarding 20% top-up relief to SOLL and negotiating a reduction in the contract fee by the amount, it would provide savings for the Council. The same option could not be applied to CLS, which managed the White Horse Leisure and Tennis Centre, because it did not receive a management fee
- it was proposed that the decision to award discretionary rate relief, based on the categories agreed by the Executive, should be delegated to the Chief Finance Officer
- the targeting of discretionary rate relief in line with Council objectives promoted a strong and sustainable local economy and helped provide access to services and facilities. Other benefits included encouraging participation and local action and the protection and improvement of the local natural and rural environment
- the introduction of a new process based on categories of organisation that were eligible for discretionary rate relief ensured fair and equal treatment
- all potentially eligible categories of organisation had been compared with the Council's Community Strategy and Corporate Plan to determine priorities. Appended to the report was an assessment showing links to the Community Strategy and/or Corporate Plan priorities
- by awarding discretionary rate relief the Council would be providing significant financial support to the Vale's voluntary and community sector and some small, important rural businesses. This should be publicised

Members recalled that the full cost of mandatory rate relief was borne by the national non-domestic rate pool. The cost of discretionary rate relief was shared between the Council and the national non-domestic rate pool. The current budget for discretionary rate relief for 151 organisations was £58,870. The costs resulting from these changes were unknown as this was dependent on the number of applicants for charitable or Community Amateur Sports Club status. However, the more take-up that could be encouraged the better it would be for the Council financially. The officers estimated that in 2008/09 costs would not exceed the current budget based on the proposed changes. The annual cost should also reduce in the following two financial years when the incentives took effect. However, if relief was awarded to SOLL, there would be an overall saving to the Council of £10,173.

Members considered that the proposals were sound and approved them with effect from 1 April 2008. However, the Executive asked that the officers publicised as much of the schedule of rate relief as possible. It was considered that the public should be made aware of the organisations that received discretionary relief from the Council. In future, letters and application forms on this subject should advise organisations that the Council would publish this information. Members noted that where an individual recipient was concerned, the Council could be challenged under the Data Protection Act if this was to be published without the agreement of the individual.

Members asked that in Appendix B, reference to 'schools' should be preceded by 'independent'.

RESOLVED (by seven votes to nil)

- (a) that the categories of organisation eligible for National Non-Domestic Rates discretionary rate relief from 1 April 2008, as set out in Appendix A of report 138/07, be approved;*
- (b) that the level of award to different types of organisation from 1 April 2008, as set out in Appendix B of the report, be approved subject to any over-riding considerations that mitigate against making an award to a particular organisation and subject to Appendix B be amended to refer to 'independent schools';*
- (c) that a cap of £8,000 be approved on the amount of discretionary rate relief and £4,000 be approved on the amount of discretionary top-up rate relief that any organisation can receive in respect of any 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 be reviewed each financial year and rise in line with inflation and the non-domestic rates multiplier;*
- (d) that authority be delegated to the Chief Finance Officer to award discretionary relief on the categories agreed by the Executive;*
- (e) that a review be undertaken of the eligibility of the organisations that are currently being granted rate relief;*

- (f) *that the criteria for discretionary relief be reviewed at least every three years in line with the changing priorities of the Council commencing from year 2010/11; and*
- (g) *that the officers be requested to publish as much of the discretionary grant information as possible, subject to data protection constraints, and they be requested to change correspondence and application forms to make it clear that such discretionary rate relief awards will be publicised with effect from 2008/09.*

Ex.125 TUGWELL FIELDS, WANTAGE

(Time: 3.28pm to 3.30pm)

The Executive received and considered an agenda report regarding a request from Wantage Silver Band and Wantage Concords Football Club for an 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. Principal terms and conditions for the lease had been provisionally agreed, subject to appropriate authorisation. The funding position had not yet been determined. Both organisations required an agreement to build/conditional lease in order to qualify for grant funding.

The report set out the main heads of terms which included a nominal rent. The land was 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 would be granted. A portion of the hall might be used for Wantage Concords Football Club as changing rooms. The premises would only be used for community or charity purposes. A finite time period would form part of the agreement for the organisations to secure the necessary funding.

The Executive noted that the grant of a lease was conditional on obtaining consent of the superior landlord Oxfordshire County Council, obtaining planning consent, securing funding, and creating a pedestrian and vehicular access to the property and providing service conduits. The Vale's reasonable valuation and legal costs, together with other fees and disbursements, would be borne by the Wantage Silver Band.

The Executive considered that the lease should be granted on the terms set out in the agenda. Members thanked the Head of Property for the progress made. In answer to a question from a Member, the Head of Property reported that he had not seen a recent e-mail regarding a neighbour's right of access over the land at Tugwell Fields and had requested that a copy document, if it existed, was supplied.

RESOLVED (by seven votes to nil)

- (a) *that an agreement to build/conditional lease is granted to Wantage Silver Band and Wantage Concords Football Club upon the terms and conditions set out in the agenda report. The agreement to build/lease to be granted conditional upon sufficient funding being raised to complete the development;*
- (b) *that authority be delegated to the Chief Executive to vary and or amend the stated terms and conditions as occasion demands;*

- (c) *that no financial burden falls 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.*

Ex.126 CLIMATE CHANGE PROJECT BOARD

(Time: 3.30pm to 3.38pm)

The Executive recalled that the Council's first Climate Change Strategy had been approved by the Executive at its meeting on 7 December 2007. The Executive had requested that a further report was brought to its February meeting detailing the content and role of the proposed Climate Change Project Board. It was proposed that a project board should be established in accordance with the guidelines from the Organisational Development and Support service.

Members noted that the Climate Change Project Board would challenge and scrutinise the work of the Climate Change Project Team and monitor the implementation of the Climate Change Strategy. The project team would be composed of six to eight officers, all of whom had a key role in delivering some aspect of the Council's Climate Change Action Plan.

The proposed composition of the Project Board was:

- 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

Contrary to the officer's proposal, it was suggested that the composition should be amended to include 'an Executive Member'. It was considered that climate change was an issue affecting the whole authority, not just the Housing and Community Safety Service Area. It was noted that Councillor Angela Lawrence had been suggested for this role. However, the Executive was reminded that the Leader of the Council would need to amend his Executive Scheme of Delegation to allocate this project responsibility.

Similarly, it was suggested that two Deputy Directors should be appointed to this Project Board, at the choice of the Chief Executive. One was likely to have a direct contribution; the other would be from another Service Area. However, climate change applied to all Service Areas and Deputy Directors should consider this a corporate issue.

Turning to the climate change issue, Members regretted that the proposed budget for 2008/09 was lower than originally intended but it had been reduced due to budget pressures. Members believed the Project Board would need to focus on carbon management. It was expected that there would be a Local Area Agreement target for Councils to reduce their carbon footprint. The Project Board would also need to push for planning guidance to be reviewed with climate change in mind.

RESOLVED

that the Climate Change Project Board be 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:

- *an Executive Member to be nominated by the Leader of the Council*
- *two Deputy Directors of the Chief Executive's choice*

Ex.127 SETTING UP A JOINT WASTE PROCUREMENT PROJECT BOARD

(Time: 3.38pm to 3.39pm)

The Executive received and considered an agenda report regarding a proposed partnership with South Oxfordshire District Council to create a joint waste collection contract. Following the experience gained from setting up the Ridgeway Shared Services Organisation it was proposed that a joint project board was established for waste collection. Under the Council's Constitution it was not possible to form a joint committee, rather than a project board, that had Executive powers and allowed non-Executive Member representation. On the basis that this was a large contract, it was proposed that wider input from Council Members was required from the outset, involving an Executive Member, a non-Executive Member from the ruling political group, and an Opposition Member. This would be conditional upon South Oxfordshire agreeing a similar three-Member appointment.

An update was given at the meeting: South Oxfordshire had agreed to the proposal and the composition of the Joint Project Board. The Executive supported the proposal also. Currently, Councillor Tony de Vere represented the Council on the Oxfordshire Waste Partnership and led on the project for a new waste contract. It was noted that he would continue in this role and be a member of the Joint Waste Procurement Project Board until the annual review of Executive appointments and delegations due to take place in May 2008.

RESOLVED (by seven votes to nil)

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*

Exempt Information Under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972

None

The meeting rose at 3.39 pm