

Date: 27 March 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, 4TH APRIL, 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**

(Page 11)

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 minutes of the Executive meeting held on 1 February 2008, (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.

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**

(Pages 12 - 14)

(1) Scrutiny Committee – 14 February 2008

Implementation of Agresso 5.5 Financial Management System – Report of the Informal Agresso Working Group

The Scrutiny Committee requested that the informal Agresso Working Group's report (141/07) on the implementation of the Agresso 5.5 Financial Management System be forwarded to the Executive. The report is attached.

(2) West Area Committee - 20 March 2008

Eastern Expansion of Swindon

The West Area Committee discussed the possible eastern expansion of Swindon and has made the following recommendation to the Executive:

Recommendation

*That this Chief Executive be instructed to establish urgent co-operation (in view of the 12<sup>th</sup> May 2008 deadline to the draft core strategy proposals) between Planning Officers and Communications Officers and the Western Vale Villages Consortium of Parish Councils, with regards to their opposition to the expansion to the east side of Swindon.*

9. **Financial Monitoring: Virements and Permanent Budget Adjustments**

(Page 15)

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

**KEY DECISIONS**

**10. Forward Plan**

(Pages 16 - 20)

To receive the Forward Plan containing Executive decisions to be taken from April to July 2008.

Recommendation

*that the Forward Plan be received.*

**11. Community Grants**

(Pages 21 - 46)

To receive and consider report 180/07 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 October 2007 and the next meeting, at which the consideration of grants is planned, will be in October 2008.

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 budget for 2008/09 for Vale-wide grants is £21,714*
- .
- (b) *Members are asked to consider and determine the following grant applications and agree the Council agenda and priority:*
  - (i) *Ryder-Cheshire Volunteers, £2,000, towards running costs of supporting disabled people to pursue activities, Social Agenda, Access priority*
  - (ii) *Oxfordshire Visual Arts Festival, £1,000, towards printing and distribution of the brochure, Social Agenda, Town & Village Vitality priority*
  - (iii) *Oxfordshire Children's Information Service, £4,758, towards the cost of providing information and advice to parents, Social Agenda, Access priority*
  - (iv) *Age Concern Oxfordshire, £2,330, towards singing taster sessions, Social Agenda, Town & Village Vitality priority*
  - (v) *Oxfordshire Chinese Community & Advice Centre, £4,000, towards the Chinese New Year celebration and increased running costs*
  - (vi) *Oxfordshire Association for the Blind, £5,000, towards the introduction of a mobile resource centre and training courses, Social Agenda, Access priority*

- (vii) *My Life My Choice, £1,342.18, towards running self-advocacy groups, Social Agenda, Access priority*
  - (viii) *Oxfordshire Community & Voluntary Action, £5,000, towards a volunteer brokerage service, Social Agenda, Town & Village Vitality priority*
  - (ix) *Root and Branch, £1,000, towards the purchase of a kitchen range, Social Agenda, Access priority*
  - (x) *Oxford Film & Video Makers, £3,650, towards events in the Summerscreen 2008 festival, Social Agenda, Town & Village Vitality priority*
  - (xi) *Oxfordshire Rural Education Initiative, £2,000, towards educational work, Social Agenda, Town & Village Vitality priority*
  - (xii) *Vitalise, £1,741.75, towards the provision of holiday breaks for disabled people and volunteering opportunities, Social Agenda, Access priority*
- (c) *Members are asked to consider an application from Abingdon Citizens Advice Bureau for a one-off grant of £6,000, towards roof repairs and;*
- (d) *to make an award, in exceptional circumstances,, from savings made in the Community Strategy service budget; and*
- (e) *Members are asked to agree to the request from Area Committees to carry forward unspent grant budget from 2007/08.*

## **OTHER MATTERS**

### **12. Annual Audit and Inspection Letter**

To receive and consider the Audit Commission's Annual Audit and Inspection Letter. This will be circulated to all Members of the Council after the publication of this agenda.

### **13. Corporate Governance - Third Quarter 2007/08**

**(Pages 47 - 61)**

To receive and consider report 181/07 of the Senior Management Team.

#### **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)
- Progress with Business Process Improvement Reviews
- Financial commentary

At its meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> February the Senior Management Team (SMT) considered the third quarter 2007/08 Business Performance Report. This is an exception report which covers all of the aspects of corporate governance contained within this report. SMT agreed the exceptions (where performance / actions are not on target) to be reported to

the Executive and agreed the comments / actions which have been included in this report. The full versions of the individual reports are available on the Council's website. They can be accessed through the 'about your Council - performance' area of the website.

The contact officer for this report is Robert Woodside, Principal Performance Management Officer, telephone (01235 520202 ext 499). Email address: [robert.woodside@whitehorsedc.gov.uk](mailto:robert.woodside@whitehorsedc.gov.uk)

Recommendation

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

**14. Best Value Performance Indicator Report**

**(Pages 62 - 70)**

To receive and consider report 182/07 of the Strategic Director.

Introduction and Report Summary

This report compares the Council's performance for 2006/07 against that of the national top and bottom quartile data for 2006/07 which have been published by the Audit Commission.

The Contact Officer for this report is Robert Woodside, Principal Performance Management Officer (01235 520202 ext 499).

Recommendations

That Members note the Council's performance against the national top and bottom quartile results for 2006/07.

**15. Local Area Agreement 2**

**(Pages 71 - 96)**

To receive and consider report 183/07 of the Deputy Director (Housing and Community Safety).

Introduction and Report Summary

This report provides information about Oxfordshire's next local area agreement (LAA2).

The contact officers for this report are Toby Warren, Head of Community Strategy, tel. 01235 547695; and Paul Staines, Deputy Director, Housing and Community Safety, tel. 01235 547621.

Recommendations

*That the Executive:*

*Endorse the priorities within Oxfordshire's next local area agreement.*

*Give delegated authority for the Leader of the Council, in consultation with the Chief Executive, to agree targets for the priorities.*

16. **Draft South West Spatial Strategy – Panel Report December 2007**

**(Pages 97 - 103)**

(Wards Affected: Faringdon and The Coxwells; Shrivenham;)

To receive and consider report 184/07 of the Deputy Director (Planning and Community Strategy).

Introduction and Report Summary

The draft Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West (or South West Plan) covers the area which abuts the Vale's western boundary. This area includes Swindon. The report of the panel, which carried out an examination in public of the draft South West Plan, was published in December 2007. This report to the Executive is a summary of the main points arising out of the Panel's Report.

In the draft South West Plan, Swindon is identified as a Strategically Significant City or Town (SSCT) and the location for a strategic urban extension of about 12,000 dwellings on the eastern side of the town (policy SR8). The Council commented on this and other matters in the draft South West Plan (see report 30/06 to SLAG dated 26 June 2006). In particular, the Council objected to policy SR8 principally on the basis that the figure of 12000 dwellings (representing an ambitious annual build rate of 600 dwellings) was unlikely to be achieved and objected to the reference to a new upper Thames reservoir on the basis that Thames Water has yet to formally bring forward a fully justified reservoir proposal and that the reference to a reservoir was therefore premature. Other comments related to the absence of strategic gaps to safeguard the character, identity and setting of the rural villages and communities surrounding the development and the number of vehicle movements onto the A420 likely to be generated as a result of the eastern development.

The Panel Report, among other things, endorses the provision of 12,000 dwellings east of Swindon and identifies a new upper Thames reservoir as part of the key infrastructure. The Panel also accepted that highway improvements to cope with the vehicle movements should be part of the key infrastructure. The Panel includes no recommendation for strategic gaps.

The issue of how an ambitious annual build rate of 600 dwellings will be achieved has not been addressed in any detail by the Panel and the Panel's endorsement of a new reservoir in advance of its formal justification are therefore matters which remain of major concern to this Council.

The Panel Report is submitted to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government and is published for information purposes only. The publication of the Panel Report is not, therefore, a further stage of consultation with the public. However, in order that the Secretary of State should be properly briefed it is considered that she should be made aware of the Council's concerns.

The contact officer for this report is Nick Burroughs, Principal Planning Officer

(Planning and Community), telephone (01235 520202 extn. 496). Email address [nick.burroughs@whitehorsedc.gov.uk](mailto:nick.burroughs@whitehorsedc.gov.uk).

**Recommendations**

*that the Executive notes this report on the Panel Report into the draft Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West,*

*that the Executive remains concerned that the rates of development proposed for the Swindon East expansion are ambitious and unlikely to be achieved, at the absence of appropriate strategic gaps and that because the 'needs case' for the new reservoir has yet to be made, the reference to the new reservoir is premature.*

*that an appropriate summary of the Council's concerns is sent to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government and the Member of Parliament for the Wantage Constituency.*

**17. Planning Code of Conduct**

**(Pages 104 - 122)**

To receive and consider report 185/07 of the Deputy Director (Planning and Community Strategy).

**Introduction and Report Summary**

At full Council on 4<sup>th</sup> December 2007 Members considered a revised draft of the Planning Code of Conduct. Concerns were expressed about a new provision in the draft code which would establish the principle that local Members would be invited to observe and take part in pre-application discussions, in cases where a formal officers' Development Team has been set up to take forward discussions in response to large, proposed developments in the Vale. (The decision to set up a Development Team is taken by the Deputy Director in consultation with the Planning Service's Management Team where it is considered that this will promote and assist the efficient handling of applications for major development proposals prior to their submission).

Council resolved that the draft Code be referred back to the Strategic and Local Planning Advisory Group for the new provision to be given further consideration and, following its reconsideration by the Group, for the Code to be recommended back to the Council via the Development Control Committee, Executive and Standards Committee. This report sets out the background to the proposed new provision and suggests an alternative wording for the relevant section of the draft code, to clarify the arrangements governing Member involvement. A copy of the relevant paragraph of the original draft Code (4.6) is appended to the report. The recommendations below have been considered and endorsed by the Strategic and Local Planning Advisory Group.

The Contact Officer for this report is Rodger Hood (Deputy Director – Planning & Community Strategy), telephone (01235) 540340.

Email address: [rodger.hood@whitehorsedc.gov.uk](mailto:rodger.hood@whitehorsedc.gov.uk)

**Recommendations**

*that the wording of paragraph 4.6 of the draft Planning Code of Conduct dealing with*



*Member involvement in pre-application discussions be amended to read as follows:*

*“4.6 In response to large proposed developments, where a formal officers Development Team has been set up, local ward members may be invited to attend, observe and take part in pre-application discussions at meetings of the Team. A request to be involved in such discussions should be made by the ward member to the Deputy Director (Planning and Community Strategy) who will consider the request in consultation with the Chair and/or Vice Chair of the Development Control Committee and the Opposition Planning Spokesman. The views of the applicant on ward member involvement in a development team will be sought to help inform the consultation. In the event that a ward member is invited to become involved in pre-application discussions it is important that they restrict their involvement to receiving and gathering information about the proposals and providing views on the issues likely to be of concern in the locality. It is also important that matters of a commercially confidential nature to the potential applicant are respected and that any commercial confidentiality is maintained. Members should not engage in negotiations and should avoid giving any firm commitment or impression of a firm commitment that they hold any particular view about the merits of the proposal. If it is known that a Ward Member has publicly expressed a particular view about a major development proposal prior to requesting involvement in Development Team pre-application discussions, this will be taken into account in the decision whether to grant their request to attend and participate”.*

*that the draft Planning Code of Conduct with the proposed re-wording of paragraph 4.6, be recommended to the Development Control Committee, Executive and Standards Committee and subsequently to Council.*

**18. Decriminalised Parking Enforcement**

**(Pages 123 - 129)**

To receive and consider report 186/07 of the Strategic Director.

**Introduction and Report Summary**

Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) in 2005, resolved to introduce Decriminalised Parking Enforcement (DPE) throughout Oxfordshire and accordingly, in early 2006 started negotiations with the four rural District Councils with a view to establishing a single enforcement authority in each district area, with District Council's undertaking enforcement under an agency agreement with OCC.

The Executive received a report no 246/05 in March 2006 setting out the principles of DPE and authorised officers to commence negotiations with OCC. The purpose of this report is to update Members on the progress of the project.

The Contact Officer for this report is Gordon Willcox, Section Head (Transportation) telephone 01235 540390.

**Recommendations**

*That the Executive:*

*note the progress of this project;*

*reaffirm its commitment to the principle of Civil Parking Enforcement and its willingness to undertake on-street enforcement in the Vale on behalf of OCC together with off-street enforcement subject to reaching agreement with OCC on all operational, administrative and financial matters, given that any financial arrangements must accord with the Council's medium term financial plan.*

**19. 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 20 Property Matters

*(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**

**20. Property Matters**

To consider any property matters.