

## WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the

### **Executive**

Held in Committee Room 1, Woodgreen, Witney OX28 1NB at 2.00 pm on **Wednesday, 21 June 2023**

### PRESENT

Councillors: Andy Graham (Leader of the Council), Duncan Enright (Deputy Leader), Joy Aitman, Lidia Arciszewska, Dan Levy, Andrew Prosser, Alaric Smith, Carl Rylett and Geoff Saul.

Officers: Giles Hughes (Chief Executive), Elizabeth Griffiths (Chief Finance Officer, Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer), Andrea McCaskie (Director of Governance and Monitoring Officer), Frank Wilson (Executive Director (Finance) - Publica), Claire Locke (Assistant Director, Property and Regeneration), Phil Martin (Assistant Director, Business Services), Bill Oddy (Assistant Director, Commercial Development), Andrew Brown (Business Manager, Democratic Services), Phil Shaw (Business Manager, Development Management and Sustainability), Mandy Fathers (Business Manager, Environment, Welfare and Revenues), Andrew Turner (Business Manager, Assets & Council Priorities, Land, Legal and Property), Max Thompson (Senior Democratic Services Officer), Barry Clack (Communications Officer), Elise Chowdhury (Communications Officer), Chris Hargraves (Planning Policy Manager) and Michelle Ouzman (Strategic Support Officer).

Other Councillors in attendance: Andrew Coles and Julian Cooper.

#### **40 Apologies for Absence**

There were no Apologies for Absence received from members of the Executive.

#### **41 Declarations of Interest**

There were no Declarations of Interest received from members of the Executive.

#### **42 Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the previous meeting, held on Wednesday 19 April 2023, were approved by the Executive, and signed by the Leader as a true and accurate record.

#### **43 Participation of the Public**

Councillor Andy Graham, Leader of the Council, welcomed all attendees to the meeting. The Leader also stated that if members of the public wished to stay behind after the meeting to speak informally with Executive members, they were welcome to do so.

Max Thompson, Senior Democratic Services Officer, explained to the Executive that in advance of the meeting, the Executive had received one public question to be answered during the meeting. The following answer was given to question put:

**QI Asked by Sandra Coleman:**

A shortage of open space in Chipping Norton was identified and well documented in WODC's own Open Space Study published in 2013. This included a shortfall of 5.55 hectares of public playing pitches. Since then about 500 homes have been built but no playing pitches provided. WODC was about to publish a masterplan for the 1200 homes East Chipping Norton as Planning Guidance before it was abandoned, and that also showed no playing

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pitches. 1200 homes would generate a need for 2.88 hectares of playing pitches based upon the nationally accepted Fields in Trust standards. In total, then, we will have a shortfall of about 8.5 hectares of playing pitches. Can you explain to the people of Chipping Norton how the adopted West Oxfordshire Playing Pitch Strategy and Action Plan, approved last year, was able to conclude that no additional playing pitches were needed at Chipping Norton?

**AI Answered by Councillor Alaric Smith, Executive Member for Leisure and Major Projects:**

The rationale for developing the playing pitch strategy was to provide the District Council with a robust and objective assessment of the current quality and quantity of pitch provision and ancillary facilities, and to determine the potential need now and in the future. In terms of pitch analysis the study was only undertaken on playing pitches (sites which have a delineated area for a particular sport) and playing fields which contained at least one playing pitch. Therefore it wasn't an assessment of general open spaces for recreation. The playing pitch strategy scope included the assessment of the following pitch provision; Football, Rugby, Cricket, Hockey, Bowls and Tennis.

One of the initial stages in the development of the strategy was to consult with all relevant clubs, National Governing Bodies of sport and the Town and Parish Councils. In Chipping Norton the following were consulted; Chipping Norton Swifts, Chipping Norton Cricket Club, Chipping Norton Rugby Club, Chipping Norton Town Football Club, Chipping Norton School and Chipping Norton Town Council.

Future demand was based on team generation rates which were driven by the clubs individual development plans but also population increases. The potential housing growth from the East Chipping Norton development was taken into account at the time the strategy was developed.

In terms of sport specific requirements, there is spare capacity for football pitches with no increase in future demand identified by the club. Although Chipping Norton Town Football Club relocated in 2014 to Enstone, the strategy indicates that given there are only 2 adult teams in the town and 4 suitable pitches available, there is adequate provision to accommodate the need.

For Cricket there is space capacity on Sundays and mid-week and Rugby only identified limited capacity at peak times. The Rugby club also indicated a need for enhanced sports lighting and ancillary facilities. All of which have been included in the strategy action plan.

Also identified was the underutilisation of Chipping Norton School pitches which are available to hire for community use.

Given all the evidence that was gathered, only additional pitches were required for rugby, but this could be solved by relocating to Chipping Norton School for training to alleviate the overplay on the Greystone pitches.

As part of the Playing Pitch Strategy delivery, we meet quarterly with all the governing bodies of sport and also have an annual steering group to update and ensure the data and need is still correct at that point in time. Therefore any concerns that are raised can be picked up at these sessions, to see whether any adjustments need to be made to the action plan.

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#### 44 **Receipt of Announcements**

Councillor Andy Graham, Leader of the Council, welcomed Andrea McCaskie to West Oxfordshire District Council, who had recently taken up post as the Council's Director of Governance. The Leader stated that he would look forward to working with the Director of Governance.

Councillor Joy Aitman, Executive Member for Stronger, Healthy Communities, announced the receipt of the annual review regarding the Council's 'YouMove' programme, which would also be shared with all Members of the Council. The Executive Member gave a brief overview of the project, paid tribute alongside the Leader to the Communities team, and strongly encouraged all Members to read the report once it had been disseminated.

#### 45 **Transfer of Playing Areas to Witney Town Council**

Councillor Joy Aitman, Executive Member for Stronger, Healthy Communities, introduced and gave an overview of the report, which outlined proposals to transfer the responsibility of Playing Areas from West Oxfordshire District Council to Witney Town Council.

Councillor Andrew Coles stated that he supported the report and asked for a progress update regarding Unterhatchen park located in Witney. The park had historically been subject to anti-social behaviour, graffiti and was deemed to have needed significant work, all of which had negative effect on neighbouring properties and residents. The Executive Member, in conjunction with Bill Oddy, Assistant Director for Commercial Development, confirmed that the transfer of responsibility for the park was imminent, and the desired repair works were noted, particularly to lighting within the park.

Councillor Aitman proposed that the Executive agree to the recommendations as listed on the report. This was seconded by Councillor Dan Levy, was put to a vote and was unanimously agreed by the Executive.

Executive **Resolved** to:

1. Agree to the proposals outlined in the paper to transfer the Playing Areas from WODC to Witney Town Council;
2. Delegate authority to the Section 151 Officer, in consultation with the Executive Member for Finance and the Executive Member for Stronger, Healthy Communities to agree the final Heads of Terms for each transfer.

#### 46 **Development Management Improvement Programme**

Councillor Carl Rylett, Executive Member for Planning and Sustainable Development, introduced and gave a detailed overview of the report, which updated on progress against Phases 1 and 2 of the Development Management Improvement Programme, and made recommendations for further improvements (Phase 3), following receipt of a Planning Advisory Service (PAS) Report.

In debate, the Executive paid tribute to the work of the Development Management teams, recognised some of the challenges faced in the past and supported proposed improvement changes that would take effect in the future.

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Councillor Rylett proposed that the Executive agree to the recommendations as listed on the report. This was seconded by Councillor Andrew Prosser, was put to a vote and was unanimously agreed by the Executive.

Executive **Resolved** to:

1. Note the improvement progress to date;
2. Approve the changes detailed in paragraph 4.1 of the Agenda Reports Pack.

#### **47 Chipping Norton Leisure Centre Roof Repairs**

Councillor Dan Levy, Executive Member for Finance, introduced and gave an overview of the report, which requested approval to repair the roof at Chipping Norton Leisure Centre.

In debate, the Executive highlighted the effects that the leaking roof had caused to and within the Leisure Centre, and that detailed, immediate action would be greatly welcomed both by users of the Leisure Centre, and also more widely by residents of Chipping Norton.

Councillor Levy proposed that the Executive agree to the recommendations as listed on the report. This was seconded by Councillor Alaric Smith, was put to a vote and was unanimously agreed by the Executive.

Executive **Resolved** to:

1. Approve the repair works required, as detailed in the report;
2. Recommend that, the authority to approve the final budget to cover the repair cost, is delegated to the Assistant Director for Property & Regeneration in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer and the Executive Member for Finance.

#### **48 Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)**

Councillor Carl Rylett, Executive Member for Planning and Sustainable Development, introduced and gave an overview of the report, which considered the final version of the West Oxfordshire District Council Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).

In debate, the Executive highlighted the number of responses received in a recent consultation, and the community & commercial aspects related to the updated document.

Councillor Rylett proposed that the Executive agree to the recommendations as listed on the report. This was seconded by Councillor Lidia Arciszewska, was put to a vote and was unanimously agreed by the Executive.

Executive **Resolved** to:

1. Note the contents of the report;
2. That subject to any amendments the Executive may wish to make, Council be invited to formally adopt the final version of the West Oxfordshire District Council Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).

#### **49 Council Chamber Refit Design and Procurement of Contractors**

Councillor Andy Graham, Leader of the Council, introduced and gave an overview of the report, which sought agreement for the Council Chamber refit design and associated costs, and to proceed with the procurement of contractors via an open tender process.

In debate, the Executive highlighted the extensive work that had been undertaken in relation to planned improvement works for the Council's Woodgreen site, including the Council Chamber. These included decarbonisation, sustainability upgrades, and meeting the needs of an ever-changing work and lifestyle balance. The Executive also highlighted the community benefits of the regeneration work, an example of which would see a refurbished Council Chamber becoming available for hire by residents of the District. The Executive also paid tribute to the Agile Working project team, for both their work to date, and for being able to help deliver the Council Chamber refurbishment project at an underspend.

Councillor Graham proposed that the Executive agree to the recommendations as listed on the report. This was seconded by Councillor Alaric Smith, was put to a vote and was unanimously agreed by the Executive.

Executive **Resolved** to:

1. Agree to the Chamber design as proposed by the Agile Steering Group;
2. Agree to proceed to the contractor procurement phase.

#### **50 Approval of Award of Contract for External Printing and Postage (Hybrid Mail)**

Councillor Dan Levy, Executive Member for Finance, introduced and gave an overview of the report, which considered the result of a procurement exercise to award a new contract for the provision of external printing and postage for the Council and its partners.

Councillor Levy proposed that the Executive agree to the recommendations as listed on the report. This was seconded by Councillor Alaric Smith, was put to a vote and was unanimously agreed by the Executive.

Executive **Resolved** to:

1. Award the contract for external printing and postage from 1 August 2023 to iMail for a period of 3 plus 1 year.

#### **51 Matters raised by Overview and Scrutiny or Audit and Governance**

Councillor Carl Rylett, Executive Member for Planning and Sustainable Development, introduced the report, which considered recommendations from the Climate and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee, held on 23 March 2023.

The Executive Member gave a brief summary of the Motions raised and debated at Full Council in February 2023, which were subsequently referred to the Council's Climate and Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee for consideration. The Executive Member explained that the considerations would consider policy options desired to be included within the review of the Local Plan, including Grampian conditions.

Councillor Rylett proposed that the Executive agree to the recommendations as listed on the report. This was seconded by Councillor Andy Graham, was put to a vote and was unanimously agreed by the Executive.

Executive **Resolved** to:

1. Agree its response to the following recommendations from Overview and Scrutiny:
  - a) That Officers include, within the current review of the Local Plan, specific policies in respect of Swift Nesting Sites, as per the motion.

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b) That Officers include, within the current review of the Local Plan, specific policies in respect of Development Grampian Conditions, as per the motion.

## **52 Exclusion of Press and Public**

Councillor Duncan Enright, Deputy Leader of the Council and Executive Member for Economic Development, proposed that Executive agree to exclude the press and public from the meeting for the remaining exempt items of business, on the basis that public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information. This was seconded by Councillor Andy Graham, was put to a vote and was unanimously agreed by the Executive.

Executive **Resolved** to:

1. Exclude the press and public from the meeting on the grounds that their presence could involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as described in paragraphs 1 and 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

## **53 Disposal and Development of land at Walterbush Road, Chipping Norton, for custom build zero carbon homes.**

Councillor Geoff Saul, Executive Member for Housing and Social Welfare, introduced and gave an overview of the report, which sought to agree a delivery approach for the development of homes at Walterbush Road.

In debate, the Executive praised the work of Officers relating to the Scheme, and that the proposal in front of the Executive, was deemed to be the right action course, after exploring multiple avenues to find the right solution, and also after the Executive had deliberated, at length, on the subject matter. Local interest in the scheme was also highlighted by the Executive, and it was further noted that further, unnecessary delays would not be in keeping with the Council's priority of putting residents first.

Councillor Saul proposed that the Executive agree to the recommendations as listed on the report. This was seconded by Councillor Dan Levy, was put to a vote and was unanimously agreed by the Executive.

Executive **Resolved** to:

1. Agree to cease the relationship with the current proposed developer;
2. Seek formal Expressions of Interest on the site for a development which as a minimum delivers affordable homes but also encourages net carbon zero and self-build proposals;
3. Delegate to the Chief Finance Officer, in consultation with the Executive Member for Finance, the decision to proceed with cable diversion and award a contract.

## **54 Letting at Marriott's Walk Witney**

Councillor Duncan Enright, Deputy Leader of the Council and Executive Member for Economic Development, introduced and gave an overview of the report, which requested approval for a lease, as set out in the report, and to recommend to Council a new process to approve transactions at Marriott's Walk in the interests of commercial efficiency.

Councillor Enright proposed that the Executive resolve to amend recommendation 'b', as originally stated within the original agenda report, to remove the words "*in consultation with the members of the Capital Programme Investment Board*", to replace them with "*in*

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*consultation with the Executive Member for Finance and the Executive Member for Economic Development*". This was seconded by Councillor Dan Levy, was put to a vote and was unanimously agreed by the Executive.

Executive **Resolved** to:

1. Amend recommendation 'b' to state:

*"Recommend that Council amend the delegation arrangements to give authority to the Chief Finance Officer in consultation with the Executive Member for Finance and the Executive Member for Economic Development to approve future lettings at Marriott's Walk"*.

Councillor Enright proposed that the Executive agree to the amended recommendation, alongside recommendation 'a' as listed in the original recommendations listed within the agenda report. This was seconded by Councillor Dan Levy, was put to a vote and was unanimously agreed by the Executive.

Executive **Resolved** to:

1. Approve the grant to lease at Marriott's Walk on the terms detailed in the report;
2. Recommend that Council amend the delegation arrangements to give authority to the Chief Finance Officer in consultation with the Executive Member for Finance and the Executive Member for Economic Development to approve future lettings at Marriott's Walk.

The Meeting closed at 2.48 pm

CHAIR