

## WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

### Minutes of the meeting of the **Executive**

Held at Eynsham Village Hall, 46 Back Lane, Eynsham, Witney OX29 4QW at 2.00 pm on  
**Wednesday, 12 July 2023.**

#### PRESENT

Councillors: Andy Graham, Joy Aitman, Lidia Arciszewska, Dan Levy, Andrew Prosser, Carl Rylett, Geoff Saul and Alaric Smith.

Officers: Elizabeth Griffiths (Chief Finance Officer, Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer), Frank Wilson (Group Finance Director - Publica), Claire Locke (Group Manager - Commissioning), Bill Oddy (Assistant Director for Commercial Development), Andrew Brown (Democratic Services Business Manager) and Max Thompson (Senior Democratic Services Officer) (Senior Democratic Services Officer), Chris Hargraves (Planning Policy Manager), Barry Clack (Communications Manager), Anne Learmonth (Democratic Services Officer) and Michelle Ouzman (Democratic Services Officer).

Other Councillors in attendance: Michele Mead, Rosie Pearson and Julian Cooper.

#### **55 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for Absence were received from Councillor Duncan Enright.

#### **56 Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Carl Rylett declared that he lived in an adjacent property to the site of the West Eynsham Strategic Development Area (SDA), and that he would leave the meeting hall whilst the item was considered.

#### **57 Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The Minutes of the Previous Meeting, held on Wednesday 21 June 2023, were unanimously agreed by the Executive, and signed by the Leader of the Council as a true & accurate record.

#### **58 Receipt of Announcements**

The Council's Senior Democratic Services Officer, Max Thompson, gave the members of the public in attendance a brief overview of the way that the meeting would run.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Andy Graham, welcomed all attendees to the meeting, and thanked members of the public for attending. The Leader advised that the meeting was the fifth in the series of the Council's "Executive on Tour", with previous meetings being held around the West Oxfordshire District in Charlbury, Chipping Norton, Woodstock and Carterton.

The Leader advised public attendees that Members of the Executive would remain in attendance after the meeting had concluded, so they could meet each other on an informal basis, and discuss any issues that residents wished to raise with them.

The Leader further advised that the final two Agenda Items contained commercially sensitive information and details of a private nature, and as such, the meeting would need to agree to enter into private session prior to consideration of those items. The Leader informed attendees that this would be highlighted at the appropriate juncture.

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#### **59 Participation of the Public**

Councillor Ross Macken, Chair of Eynsham Parish Council, addressed the Executive and made a statement on behalf of Eynsham Parish Council. The statement related to the West Eynsham Strategic Development Area Masterplan.

A copy of the statement is attached to the original copy of the minutes.

#### **60 Financial Performance Report 2022/23 Year End (Q4)**

Councillor Dan Levy, Executive Member for Finance, introduced and gave a detailed overview of the report, which provided details of the Council's financial performance during Quarter 4 of Financial Year 2022/2023 (January 2023 to March 2023 inclusive).

The Chief Finance Officer, Elizabeth Griffiths explained and gave details of an amendment which had arisen relating to income received from the Council's leisure provider GLL, whereby levels of debt had been reduced since the end of the previous financial year, and that the debt provision would be adjusted as appropriate. The Executive noted the explanation given.

Councillor Dan Levy proposed that the Executive agree to the recommendations as listed on the report, taking into account the point raised by the Chief Finance Officer. This was seconded by Councillor Andy Graham, was put to a vote and was unanimously agreed by the Executive.

The Executive **Resolved** to:

1. Note the 2022/23 end of year financial performance;
2. Recommend to Council to approve the carry forward of the Capital Budget of £2,372,557;
3. Recommend to Council to approve the transfers to and between earmarked reserves as detailed in the report, and to include an additional adjustment from the bad debt provision of £670,207 to be placed in a budget deficit smoothing reserve as explained by the Chief Finance Officer for reasons set out at the meeting.

#### **61 Service Performance Report 2022-23 Quarter 4**

Councillor Dan Levy, Executive Member for Finance, introduced and gave an overview of the report, which provided details of the Council's operational performance during Quarter 4 of Financial Year 2022/2023 (January 2023 to March 2023 inclusive).

Councillor Dan Levy proposed that the Executive note the contents of the report. This was seconded by Alaric Smith, was put to a vote and was unanimously agreed by the Executive.

The Executive **Resolved** to:

1. Note the contents of the 2022/2023 Q4 performance report.

#### **62 West Eynsham Strategic Development Area (SDA) Masterplan**

Councillor Carl Rylett left the meeting ahead of the item being considered.

Councillor Dan Levy, Executive Member for Finance, introduced and gave an overview of the report, which considered an addendum to the West Eynsham SDA Masterplan which had been produced by the four main landowner/developers in response to further engagement with third party landowners.

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The Executive Member thanked the work of the Joint Climate and Environment & Economic and Social Overview and Scrutiny Committees for their work relating to the masterplan, and also thanked Eynsham Parish Council for their representations on the matter.

Councillor Dan Levy proposed that the Executive agree to recommendation 'A' and amend recommendation 'B' to approve the recommendation from overview and scrutiny to reject the masterplan addendum, and further agree to disregard recommendation 'C'. This was seconded by Lidia Arciszewska, was put to a vote and was unanimously agreed by the Executive.

The Executive **Resolved** to:

1. Note the content of the report;
2. Approve the recommendation of the Joint Climate and Environment & Economic and Social Overview and Scrutiny Committee, held on 8 June 2023 to;
3. Reject and not take forward the West Eynsham Strategic Development Area Masterplan Addendum.

Councillor Carl Rylett returned to the meeting hall at after the conclusion of this agenda item.

### **63 West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2041**

Councillor Carl Rylett, Executive Member for Planning and Sustainable Development, introduced and gave a detailed overview of the report, which considered a focused consultation paper which is intended to help inform the preparation of the new Local Plan 2041.

The Executive Member stated that the 8 week Local Plan public consultation would start in late August 2023. The Executive paid tribute to the strong response to a previous consultation and emphasised the importance of local residents having their say.

Councillor Carl 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.

The Executive **Resolved** to:

1. Note the content of the report;
2. Agree that the Local Plan focused consultation paper be published for an extended period of stakeholder engagement for 8 weeks from late August to help inform the preparation of the new Local Plan 2041;
3. Authorise the Planning Policy Manager to make any necessary minor amendments to the focused consultation paper in liaison with the Executive Member for Planning and Sustainable Development, prior to consultation taking place.

### **64 Updates to Terms of Reference of Future Oxfordshire**

Councillor Andy Graham, Leader of the Council, introduced and gave an overview of the report, which detailed changes to the programmes within the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal and required adjustments to the working of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership, including corresponding amendments to the Terms of Reference.

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Councillor Andy Graham 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.

The Executive **Resolved** to:

1. Approve the Future Oxfordshire Partnership's revised Terms of Reference and Memorandum of Understanding.

#### **65 Combe Village Design Statement (VDS)**

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 Combe Village Design Statement (VDS), following feedback from a 6-week period of public consultation. The report also recommended that Council formally adopt the statement as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).

The Executive Member and the Leader of the Council both paid tribute to the engagement and support of Combe Parish Council, commending them for their work on the project.

Councillor Carl 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.

The Executive **Resolved** to:

1. Note the content of the report including the consultation summary report;
2. Recommend to Council to formally adopt the final version of the Combe Village Design Statement as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).

#### **66 Our House Funding Extension for 2023-24**

Councillor Geoff Saul, Executive Member for Housing and Social Welfare, introduced and gave an overview of the report, which updated Executive members on the 'Our House' project since its inception, with a recommendation that funding be extended from 1 November 2023 to 31 October 2024.

In debate, the Executive detailed the importance of the Our House project, and whilst the project is not necessarily compulsory for the Council, it provides an important 'safety net' for tenants.

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

The Executive **Resolved** to:

1. Approve an extension to the Our House project for one year from 1 November 2023 to 31 October 2024;
2. Agree to use Housing Reserves of £112,500 as set out in section 3;
3. Agree to continue with the current Support Provider (Cottsway) via waiver;
4. Delegate authority to the Business Manager for Housing in consultation with the Executive Member for Housing and Social Welfare to make any minor amendments to this funding extension;

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5. Delegate authority to the Business Manager for Housing in consultation with the Executive Member for Housing and Social Welfare to apply for external funding should any become available to continue the project.

#### **67 Planned Expenditure of the Ukraine Homelessness Prevention Grant - Homes for Ukraine Top Up 2023-2024**

Councillor Geoff Saul, Executive Member for Housing and Social Welfare, introduced and gave an overview of the report, which considered the planned expenditure of the Homelessness Prevention Grant – Homes for Ukraine top-up 2023/2024.

Councillor Geoff 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.

The Executive **Resolved** to:

1. Approve the expenditure of £220,541 detailed within section 3 of the report;
2. Delegate authority to the Assistant Director for Resident Services in consultation with the Executive Member for Housing and Social Welfare and the Chief Finance Officer to make any amendments to these allocations, subject to compliance with the ring fenced grant conditions;
3. Delegate authority to the Assistant Director for Resident Services in consultation with the Executive Member for Housing and Social Welfare, and Chief Finance Officer to make decisions on any other uplifts or grants that may be given over the financial years 2023-24 to address increased demands on the Housing Service, subject to compliance with the ring fenced grant conditions.

#### **68 Leisure - Strategic Outcomes Planning Model (Districtwide)**

Councillor Alaric Smith, Executive Member for Leisure and Major Projects, introduced and gave an overview of the report, which sought approval for budgetary provision for the appointment of a consultant to prepare a Strategic Outcomes Planning Model for the District.

In debate, the Executive highlighted the importance of leisure provisions within the District and also more widely, and that it assists with good health and well-being practises.

Councillor Alaric Smith 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.

The Executive **Resolved** to:

1. Authorise Officers to commence a Strategic Outcomes Planning Model for the District;
2. Agree to include a provision of £26,850 within the 2023/24 Leisure budget;
3. Appoint specialist leisure consultants to undertake the work.

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

Councillor Dan Levy, Executive Member for Finance, introduced and gave a detailed overview of the report, which considered a recommendation made to the Executive by the Finance and Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee, at its meeting on 14 June 2023.

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Councillor Dan Levy proposed that the Executive agree it's response to the recommendation from the Finance and Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee as set out in Annex B. This was seconded by Councillor Alaric Smith, was put to a vote and was unanimously agreed by the Executive.

The Executive **Resolved** to:

1. Explore the idea of the recruitment of a permanent Credit Controller to help strengthen staffing levels within the Council's finance team.
2. Agree to consider the idea now with partners, and depending on the outcome of those discussions, include provisions within the draft budget for 2023/2024.

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### **Commercial Solar Photovoltaic Installations on Council Estate**

Councillor Andrew Prosser, Executive Member for Climate Change, introduced and gave a detailed overview of the report, which sought agreement to invest in the installation of Solar Photovoltaic Installations (PV) on the roofs of buildings owned, and in some cases leased by the Council, based on the business case set out in the report. The report further sought to agree to enter into a contract with the preferred contractor for the installation of the solar PV.

The Executive stated that proposed work would be carried out on a case by case basis, and would not be undertaken if any work were to be deemed financially unviable unless the work was unavoidable due to structural condition of the building.

Councillor Andrew Prosser proposed that the Executive agree to the recommendations as listed on the report, with the wording 'Chief Finance Officer' replaced with 'Section 151 Officer'. This was seconded by Councillor Dan Levy, was put to a vote and was unanimously agreed by the Executive.

The Executive **Resolved** to:

1. Recommend to Council to agree to proceed with investment in roof mounted solar PV based on the business cases in the report;
2. Agree to enter into sale agreements for the electricity generated, with the tenants, where financially viable and delegate decisions on whether or not to proceed with individual agreements to the Section 151 Officer in consultation with the Executive Member for Finance;
3. Agree to enter into contract with the preferred contractor identified in Annex A, for the provision and installation of Solar PV and related equipment;
4. Delegate to the Section 151 Officer in consultation with the Executive Members for Finance and Climate Change the decision to exclude any tenanted sites based on further Due Diligence associated with energy usage or vulnerability around continued tenant occupation;
5. Delegates to the Section 151 Officer the decision to adjust the indicative electricity sale price to tenants as long as changes to the projected project returns are in-line with projections contained within the report;
6. Recommend to Council to agree that funding for contingency costs of £27,634 is approved with delegation to the Section 151 Officer for expenditure of contingency subject to the business case still being viable or expenditure being unavoidable due to structural condition of the building;

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7. That revenue funding of £11,200/year is allocated for the part-time shared Energy Manager post and included in the next budget update. Noting that this will be funded from Solar PV income.

#### **71 Exclusion of Press and Public**

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

The Executive **Resolved** in accordance with the provisions of Paragraph 4(2)(b) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 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.

#### **72 Exempt Annexes for item 16: Commercial Solar Photovoltaic Installations on Council Estate**

This item was not considered at the meeting as the Executive did not make reference to any exempt information contained within the main agenda item.

#### **73 Cleaning and Maintenance of Public Conveniences**

Councillor Lidia Arciszewska, Executive Member for Environment, introduced and gave an overview of the report, which provided a summary of options for the delivery of the public convenience cleaning and maintenance service.

In debate, it was highlighted that there would be a review of the distribution of the services, when discussions are undertaken regarding potential further contracts.

Councillor Lidia Arciszewska 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.

The Executive **Resolved** to:

1. Approve a further one-year extension under a contract waiver for the cleaning and maintenance of Public Conveniences with Danfo;
2. Approve the reduced specification/service requirements for the one-year extension;
3. Instruct officers to conduct an in-depth review of service provision to be carried out during the period of extension to inform future contract options.

#### **74 Funding for Landlord's Works and Approval of New Lease's at Investment Property in Cumnor**

Councillor Dan Levy, Executive Member for Finance, introduced and gave an overview of the report, which sought authority to agree new leases with existing occupiers at the subject property, and to seek funding for Landlord's Works required.

Councillor Dan Levy 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.

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The Executive **Resolved** to:

1. Approve the proposed capital budget of up to £125,000 for refurbishment works;
2. Approve the proposed new leases to the current sub tenants;
3. Delegate the decision on the final costs of works and terms of leases to the Assistant Director for Property & Regeneration in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer and Executive Member of Resources;
4. Recommend to Council to add £125,000 to the Capital Programme for this item to be financed from the Property Improvement and Incentive Reserve.

The Meeting closed at 3.04 pm

CHAIR