

WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Executive.

Held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Woodgreen, Witney, Oxfordshire OX28 1NB
at 2.00pm on **Wednesday 17 April 2024**.

PRESENT

Councillors: Andy Graham (Leader), Duncan Enright (Deputy Leader), Charlie Maynard, Andrew Prosser, Alaric Smith, Geoff Saul, Tim Sumner and Lidia Arciszewska.

Officers: Giles Hughes (Chief Executive), Madhu Richards (Director of Finance), Andrea McCaskie (Director of Governance), Frank Wilson (Managing Director, Publica), Bill Oddy (Assistant Director, Commercial Development), Phil Martin (Assistant Director, Business Services), Claire Locke (Assistant Director, Property and Regeneration), Max Thompson (Senior Democratic Services Officer), Christine Elsasser (Democratic Services Officer), Murry Bennett (Strategic Housing & Development Officer), Chris Urwin (Finance Director, Ubico) and Beth Boughton (Managing Director, Ubico).

Other Councillors in Attendance: Michele Mead, Liam Walker and Julian Cooper.

172 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for Absence were received from Councillor Joy Aitman.

173 Declarations of Interest

There were no Declarations of Interest made by Members of the Executive.

174 Minutes of Previous Meeting

Councillor Andy Graham, Leader of the Council, proposed that the minutes of the previous meeting, held on Wednesday 6 March 2024, be agreed by the Executive as a true and accurate record, and signed by the Leader.

This was seconded by Councillor Duncan Enright, was put to a vote, and was unanimously agreed by the Executive.

The Executive **Resolved** to:

1. Agree the minutes of the previous meeting, held on Wednesday 6 March 2024, as a true and accurate record.

175 Receipt of Announcements

Councillor Andy Graham, Leader of the Council, welcomed Members and Officers to the meeting of the Executive. The Leader stated that West Oxfordshire District Council had been shortlisted for a National MJ Award, within the Innovation in Partnership category. The Leader thanked the work of those involved in achieving the accolade, including the work of Windrush Against Sewage Pollution (WASP). The Leader advised that the final award announcement was anticipated to be in June 2024.

Councillor Geoff Saul, Executive Member for Housing and Social Welfare, advised the Executive that Michael David had been appointed as the Council's Housing Programme Delivery Manager and that they had started their employment with the Council the day prior to the meeting. The Executive Member gave a short overview of Michael David's experience within local government and the private sector, adding that Michael David would take the lead of developing a programme of affordable homes across the district.

Councillor Duncan Enright, Deputy Leader of the Council and Executive Member for Economic Development, advised the Executive that the second tranche of the Small Business Grant Scheme had recently opened for applications. The Deputy Leader highlighted that a first tranche of funding had awarded £5,000 to 34 local businesses, and that subject to due diligence and checks from applicants, there were 43 grants available in the second tranche of funding. The funding opportunities had been publicised in the 'Business Matters' publications, and that applications were greatly anticipated.

176 Participation of the Public

There was no public participation at the meeting.

177 Reports from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

No matters had been raised by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The Leader gave the Executive an overview of the discussions from a recent meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, including a summary of feedback received from Members regarding a presentation made to the Committee by Mobile UK regarding mobile network coverage in the district.

178 Matters raised by Audit and Governance Committee

No matters had been raised by the Audit and Governance Committee.

179 Ubico Business Plan 24/25

Councillor Andy Graham, Leader of the Council, introduced the report which considered the Ubico Business Plan 2024-25. The report had been produced by Ubico, in consultation with the Directors and Shareholders. The report also recommended that the Leader (as Shareholder Representative) approve the plan.

Councillor Andy Graham 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.

The Executive Resolved to:

1. Note the 2024/25 Ubico Business Plan;
2. Note that the Leader of the Council, as shareholder representative, would sign the written resolution to approve the Ubico Business Plan 2024-2025 in due course.

The meeting was temporarily adjourned at 2.12pm owing to sound and technical issues being experienced with the live webcasting of the meeting. After the technical difficulties had been rectified, the meeting resumed at 2.21pm.

180 Local Authority Housing Fund Round 3 Application

Councillor Geoff Saul, Executive Member for Housing and Social Welfare, introduced the report, which determined whether to support a third-round application to the Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF) and sign the associated Memorandum of Understanding ('MoU').

At the invitation of the Leader, Councillor Julian Cooper queried the rationale behind the Council utilising Soha Housing to fulfil the requirements of the LAHF on behalf of the Council in respect of the delivery of a further 4 additional affordable homes. It was confirmed by Officers that Soha Housing were ready and willing to carry out the work on behalf of the Council, and that other providers did not have the desired capacity to carry out the requested works.

Councillor Geoff Saul 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. Approve the signature of the Memorandum of Understanding ('MoU') with government in respect of round three of the Local Authority Housing Fund ('LAHF');
2. Agree to accept a proposal from Soha Housing to fulfil the requirements of the LAHF on behalf of the Council in respect of the delivery of a further 4 additional affordable homes;
3. Agree to passport the funding received by the Council to Soha Housing underpinned by a funding agreement setting out the relevant grant terms;
4. Delegate authority to the Assistant Director for Resident Services, in consultation with the Director of Finance, to agree to provide funding (if necessary) from relevant refugee budget to fit out properties to an appropriate standard for affordable provision as set out in paragraph 4.2 of the report.

181 Funding Request for Asset Management Strategy

Councillor Alaric Smith, Executive Member for Finance, introduced the report, which presented the benefits of an Asset Management Strategy and Condition surveys and secure funding for their delivery.

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. Agree to commission an Asset Management Strategy and allocate funding of £50,000 from the Property Budget 2024/2025;
2. Delegate authority to the Director of Finance, in consultation with the Executive Member for Finance, to award the contract for Conditions surveys following an Open Procurement;
3. Agree to allocate funding of £30,000/year from future revenue budgets for a rolling programme of building and carpark condition surveys.

182 Funding for Decarbonisation Scheme – Carterton Leisure Centre

Councillor Andrew Prosser, Executive Member for Climate Change, introduced the report, which presented the business case for the decarbonisation of Carterton Leisure Centre and agree a strategy for funding the scheme.

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At the invitation of the Leader, Councillor Michele Mead queried the amount of money that had been spent on the project to date, and whether current finances could be redistributed to other project parts. It was confirmed by officers that circa £400,000 had already been spent on the project, and that a statement of finances was to be prepared showing what monies had been spent in relation to the project. Officers also confirmed that the total amount did not include any wasted works, and that all funding had been received through grant funding and eligible funding that did not need to be repaid.

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

The Executive **Resolved** to:

- I. Agree to pause the current project to decarbonise Carterton Leisure Centre, informing Salix that there will be no further expenditure of PSDS 3b funding, and to reapply for more PSDS funding in Autumn 2024 to enable the scheme to proceed.

The Leader drew the meeting to a close by highlighting that the meeting was the last in the current cycle of Executive meetings. The Leader put on record his thanks to both Executive colleagues and Officers for their continued hard work and dedication in support of both the Executive and wider Council during the civic year.

The Meeting Closed at 2.40pm.

CHAIR