

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 12 June 2024.**

PRESENT

Councillors: Andy Graham (Leader), Duncan Enright (Deputy Leader), Alaric Smith, Rizvana Poole, Geoff Saul, Tim Sumner and Lidia Arciszewska.

Officers: Giles Hughes (Chief Executive), Madhu Richards (Director of Finance), Andrea McCaskie (Director of Governance), Phil Martin (Assistant Director, Business Services), Andy Barge (Assistant Director, Communities), Andrew Brown (Business Manager, Democratic Services), Andrew Turner (Business Manager, Assets and Council Priorities), Jacqui Wright (Business Manager, Leisure and Wellbeing), Mandy Fathers (Business Manager, Environmental, Welfare & Revenue Services), Max Thompson (Senior Democratic Services Officer), Alison Borrett (Senior Performance Analyst), Gemma Moreing (Business Information and Performance Lead) and Christine Elsasser (Democratic Services Officer).

Other Councillors in Attendance: Michele Mead, Sandra Simpson, and David Melvin.

183 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for lateness were received from Councillor Duncan Enright.

184 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest made by members of the Executive.

185 Minutes of Previous Meeting

Councillor Andy Graham, Leader of the Council, proposed that the minutes of the previous meeting, held on Wednesday 17 April 2024, be agreed by the Executive as a true and accurate record.

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

The Executive **Resolved** to:

- I. Agree the minutes of the previous meeting, held on Wednesday 17 April 2024, as a true and accurate record.

Councillor Duncan Enright arrived at the conclusion of the agenda item.

186 Receipt of Announcements

There were no announcements made by the Executive at the meeting.

187 Participation of the Public

There was no public participation at the meeting.

188 Reports from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Leader confirmed that the recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, would be considered as part of the Approval for Upgrading Public Space CCTV Provision and New Monitoring Arrangements agenda item.

189 Matters raised by Audit and Governance Committee

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

190 Changes to Customer Telephone Access Times

Councillor Alaric Smith, Executive Member for Finance, introduced the report, which proposed that a trialled change to customer telephone access times became a permanent arrangement. A trial of reduced telephone access hours from 9.00am – 2.00pm to the public, had proved the concept that customers were continuing to shift to digital channels.

The Executive thanked the work of officers that brought the report to the Executive, and praised their resolve in ensuring that changes to operating models had a positive effect for both residents and staff morale within the Residents Services department.

Councillor Alaric Smith proposed that the Executive agree to the recommendation 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:

- I. Agree to adopt the reduced telephone access arrangements on a permanent basis.

191 Approval For Upgrading Public Space CCTV Provision and New Monitoring Arrangements

Councillor Geoff Saul, Executive Member for Housing and Social Welfare, introduced the report, which recommended upgrading the public open space CCTV cameras covering areas of Carterton and Witney to high definition digital, together with the installation of five new cameras in Chipping Norton.

The report further recommended that the Council joined the Thames Valley CCTV partnership, with an associated transfer of CCTV assets and operational responsibility to Thames Valley Police under a 'single owner' model; and move monitoring arrangements to a shared Oxfordshire hub.

The Executive Member stated that the Executive had received a recommendation from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, requesting that the priority order of the steps that would be taken to address the funding shortfall of up to £55,000 (paragraph 4.7 of the agenda report) were adjusted so that steps c) and d) were moved up to become the new a) and b). The Executive Member stated that the Executive agreed with the recommendation made by Overview and Scrutiny, and that the priority order would be adjusted to potential funding shortfall of up to £55,000.

At the invitation of the Leader, Councillors Michele Mead and David Melvin, attending as non-Executive Members, queried the timeline of financial contributions associated with Carterton Town Council, and sought clarification on whether Carterton would receive any additional cameras in addition to the 4 it already had, or if locations of cameras may change.

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Andy Barge, Assistant Director for Communities, stated that the Council had worked closely with the Clerk of Carterton Town Council and that an agreement was in place to reduce the in-year contribution to £5,000, and advised of a possibility that either two or three cameras may be relocated around the town to provide better surveillance coverage. The Assistant Director also stated that requests for further cameras would require agreement from Thames Valley Police in an evidence-base approach, in line with the Police and Crime Commissioner's code.

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. Endorse the continued need for public open space CCTV in Carterton and Witney and approve extending the scheme to Chipping Norton;
2. Approve use of the £255,635 in the draft capital programme Council resolved to approve in February 2024 for upgrading CCTV;
3. Note the potential funding shortfall of up to a further £55,000 and the opportunities for meeting this cost;
4. Approve joining the Thames Valley CCTV Partnership, with an associated transfer of all CCTV assets and ongoing operational responsibility to Thames Valley Police under a 'single owner' model; and a shared Oxfordshire hub, based in Abingdon, as the new monitoring control room;
5. Delegate authority to the Interim Head of Legal Services, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to execute the formal agreements needed to join the Thames Valley Police CCTV Partnership;
6. Approve the funding formula for the Thames Valley CCTV Partnership and delegate authority to the Assistant Director – Communities, in consultation with the Director of Finance and the Executive Member for Housing and Social Welfare, to agree a new funding formula with Carterton, Chipping Norton and Witney town councils, and Marriott's Walk and Woolgate shopping centres.

192 Endorsement of The Oxfordshire Councils Charter

Councillor Andy Graham, Leader of the Council, introduced the report, which sought endorsement the Oxfordshire Councils Charter.

Councillor Andy 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.

The Executive **Resolved** to:

1. Note the contents of the Oxfordshire Councils Charter;
2. Endorse the Oxfordshire Councils Charter;
3. Agree to be a signatory to the Oxfordshire Councils Charter.

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193 Annual Report of the Director of Public Health

Councillor Rizvana Poole, Executive Member for Stronger, Healthy Communities, introduced the report, which highlighted the main points from Oxfordshire County Council's Director of Public Health Annual Report on climate change and health 2023/24.

The report also called for action to ensure that collectively there is acceleration and facilitation of more positive health benefits by taking action to address our changing climate.

The Executive highlighted the importance of the report and the importance of keeping public health in mind when it came to implementing policy and new Council plans.

Councillor Rizvana Poole proposed that the Executive agree to the recommendation 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:

- I. Note the contents of the report.

194 Service Performance Report 2023-24 Quarter Four

Councillor Andy Graham, Leader of the Council, introduced the report, which provided details of the Council's operational performance at the end of 2023-24 Quarter Four (Q4).

At the invitation of the Leader, Alison Borrett, Senior Performance Analyst, gave a detailed overview of the report, stating that the Council had an overall successful quarter (January 2024 to March 2024), and highlighted notable achievements including the adoption by the Executive of an updated Carbon Action Plan, applications for development being determined ahead of agreed timescales and improved processing of new Council Tax support claims.

The Senior Performance Analyst also provided an overview of steps being taken to address a small number of improvements across the Council, including collection of Non-Domestic Rates and delivery of affordable homes across the district.

In debate, the Executive highlighted and thanked the work of Officers in bringing an improved, more detailed and comprehensive service report to the Executive, adding that the reports and detail contained within, was of a much more understandable format and easier to take heed of.

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

The Executive **Resolved** to:

- I. Note the 2023/24 Q4 Service Performance Report.

195 Salt Cross Garden Village Area Action Plan (AAP)

Councillor Andy Graham, Leader of the Council, introduced the report, which provided an update on the Salt Cross Garden Village Area Action Plan (AAP).

At the invitation of the Leader, Giles Hughes, Chief Executive, gave an overview of the report and the timeline which would allow the Council to consider and adopt the Action Plan in early 2025.

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Councillor Andy Graham proposed that the Executive agree to the recommendation 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 contents of the report.

196 **West Oxfordshire District Council Productivity Plan 2024**

Councillor Andy Graham, Leader of the Council, introduced the report, which outlined the proposed approach to adopting the Council's Productivity Plan 2024.

At the invitation of the Leader, Giles Hughes, Chief Executive, gave an overview of the report and requirements of central Government for the Council to prepare a productivity plan. The Chief Executive highlighted the rationale of recommendation 2 of the report, whereby delegated authority be given to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to adopt the Productivity Plan and submit it to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities ahead of a 19 July 2024 deadline.

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

The Executive **Resolved** to:

1. Note the requirement from the Government, outlined in the letter from the Local Government Minister at Annex A, for the Council to adopt a Productivity Plan;
2. Agree to delegate the decision to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to adopt the Productivity Plan and submit it to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities by the 19 July 2024 deadline.

197 **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 Duncan Enright, 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, with the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighing the public interest in disclosing the exempt information.

198 Letting of Unit at Marriott's Walk

Councillor Duncan Enright, Deputy Leader of the Council and Executive Member for Economic Development, introduced the report, which requested approval of the lease terms proposed for Unit 6 Marriott's Walk and requested that Council approved the allocation of capital funding for Landlord's works.

In debate, the Executive highlighted the wider, positive benefits that the letting of the unit would bring to Witney and the surrounding area, including increased social interaction, higher levels of local employment and an increased offering of apprenticeships. The Executive also highlighted the benefits of increased revenue generation for the Council, and improve overall footfall and business activity across Witney.

At the invitation of the Leader, Councillor Michele Mead, attending as a non-Executive Member, queried if the stated figure contained within the original report was a final figure the full allocation of capital funding for landlord's works, and if there were plans for the remaining empty units within Marriott's Walk.

Andrew Turner, Business Manager for Assets and Council Priorities, confirmed that the figure stated was correct, and that it contained a small amount of contingency funding for any associated works.

Councillor Duncan Enright, Deputy Leader of the Council and Executive Member for Economic Development, affirmed that negotiations were ongoing regarding every single unit within Marriott's Walk being occupied, and that a wider project was underway to ensure that empty units across the town were not empty for a moment longer than necessary.

Councillor Duncan Enright 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.

The Executive **Resolved** to:

1. Approve the terms of the lease for Unit 6 Marriott's Walk;
2. Delegate authority to the Chief Finance Officer, in consultation with the Deputy Leader and the Executive Member for Finance to approve any changes to the final terms of the lease;
3. Recommend to Council to approve the addition of the capital programme for the landlord's fitout works.

The Meeting closed at 2.45pm.

CHAIR