



URGENT BUSINESS AND SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

Council

19 October 2020

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If you need any further information about the meeting please contact Natasha Clark, Democratic and Elections democracy@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk, 01295 221589

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Council Minute Book

Monday 19 October 2020

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No Lead Member decisions

Accounts Audit and Risk Committee

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Cherwell District Council

Executive

Minutes of a meeting of the Executive held at Virtual meeting, on 20 August 2020 at 6.30 pm

Present: Councillor Barry Wood (Chairman), Leader of the Council
Councillor George Reynolds (Vice-Chairman), Deputy Leader of the Council

Councillor Colin Clarke, Lead Member for Planning
Councillor Ian Corkin, Lead Member for Customers and Transformation
Councillor John Donaldson, Lead Member for Housing
Councillor Tony Ilott, Lead Member for Financial Management and Governance
Councillor Andrew McHugh, Lead Member for Wellbeing
Councillor Richard Mould, Lead Member for Performance
Councillor Lynn Pratt, Lead Member for Economy, Regeneration and Transformation
Councillor Dan Sames, Lead Member for Clean and Green

Also Present: Councillor Sean Woodcock, Leader of the Labour Group

Officers: Yvonne Rees, Chief Executive
Ansaf Azhar, Corporate Director of Public Health & Wellbeing
Stephen Chandler, Corporate Director Adults & Housing Services
Steve Jordan, Corporate Director Commercial Development, Assets & Investment & (Interim) Monitoring Officer
Paul Feehily, Executive Director: Place and Growth (Interim)
Claire Taylor, Corporate Director Customers and Organisational Development
Lorna Baxter, Director of Finance & Section 151 Officer
Louise Tustian, Head of Insight and Corporate Programmes
Sukdave Ghuman, Head of Legal Services
Natasha Clark, Governance and Elections Manager

34 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

35 Petitions and Requests to Address the Meeting

There were no petitions or requests to address the meeting.

36 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 July 2020 were agreed as a correct record and to be signed by the Chairman in due course.

37 **Chairman's Announcements**

There were no Chairman's announcements.

38 **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

39 **Revised Budget 2020/2021**

The Director of Finance submitted a report which proposed a revised budget for 2020/21 to reflect the financial impact of Covid 19 and includes proposed savings required in order to achieve a balanced budget.

In introducing the report, the Lead Member for Financial Management and Governance commended all staff for their hard work in continuing to deliver services and support residents during the height of the Covid 19 pandemic and as restrictions were being eased.

The Lead Member for Financial Management and Governance explained that whilst the council was doing all it could to address the financial impact of Covid 19, the on-going lobbying of Government by Local Authority Leaders, the Local Government Association and District Councils Network for additional funding for local Government was supported.

The Chairman referred to the comments submitted to Executive following the Budget Planning Committee's scrutiny of the proposals at the Committee's meeting of 18 August 2020 and thanked the Committee for their in-depth review and comments.

In response to a question from the Leader of the Labour Group seeking clarity with regards the vacant Community Warden post, the Lead Member for Wellbeing clarified that there were currently three Community Wardens. The one vacant post would not be recruited to this financial year to help achieve the required in-year savings.

Resolved

- (1) That Council be recommended to approve the savings as set out in the Annex to the Minutes (as set out in the Minute Book).
- (2) That Full Council be recommended to a £1.2m use of the reserves as set out in the Annex to the Minutes (as set out in the Minute Book).

- (3) That Full Council be recommended to approve the revised budget as set out in the Annex to the Minutes (as set out in the Minute Book).
- (4) That the revised fees and charges relating to Building Control Fees from 1 October 2020 as set out in the Annex to the Minutes (as set out in the Minute Book).
- (5) That authority be delegated to the Director of Finance, in conjunction with the Finance Portfolio Holder, to carry out further virements between service budgets, Government grant income and reserves when actual sales, fees and charges income losses are known and when actual leisure costs are known.

Reasons

It is recommended that the Executive approves an revised budget for 2020/21 in order to address the net increase in costs the Council faces as a result of Covid-19. Formalising the net forecast underspend the Council has identified within its "Business as Usual" spend as well as further savings plus reflecting additional costs related to Covid-19 will ensure that service managers know the budget within which they are operating. This will help the Council to control its costs for the remainder of the year.

Alternative options

Option 1: Do nothing

The Council has the option to do nothing and not introduce a revised budget. However, this would mean that services are operating with budgets which do not reflect service delivery and would make it more difficult for services to control costs.

40 **Quarterly Performance, Risk and Finance Monitoring Report - Quarter 1 2020/2021**

The Director of Finance and the Head of Insight and Corporate Programmes submitted a report which summarised the Council's Performance, Risk and Finance monitoring position as at the end of the first quarter of 2020/2021.

In introducing the report, the Lead Member for Performance explained that the Council reported on performance against 41 Business Plan Measures monthly, with 22 Programme Measures and 19 Key Performance Indicators (KPI). Due to the Covid-19 lockdown measures, it had not been possible to report on 2 KPI measures. Whilst Covid-19 had impacted on some indicators, service delivery had adapted in various areas and 61% of programme measures and key performance indicators were reporting in target at the end of Quarter 1.

The Lead Member for Performance and the Chairman confirmed that despite the challenges of Covid-19, performance measures would not be amended. Continuing to measure against existing KPIs would demonstrate the impact of Covid-19.

Lead Members commended all staff and paid particular tribute to the staff within their portfolio for their hard work during the Covid-19 lockdown to ensure ongoing service delivery, adapted where necessary, and support for residents.

Resolved

- (1) That the 2020/2021/ quarter 1 Performance, Risk and Finance Monitoring Report be noted.

Reasons

The Council is committed to performance, risk and budget management and reviews progress against its corporate priorities on a monthly basis. Due to the current unprecedented situation, the present report reviews Quarter 1 performance measures for 2020-21, from July onwards monthly reporting will be resumed.

This report provides an update on progress made so far in 2020-21 to deliver the Council's priorities through reporting on Performance, the Leadership Risk Register and providing an update on the financial position.

Alternative options

Option 1: This report illustrates the Council's performance against the 2020-21 business plan. As this is a monitoring report, no further options have been considered. However, members may wish to request that officers provide additional information.

The meeting ended at 7.15 pm

Chairman:

Date:

Cherwell District Council

Executive

Minutes of a meeting of the Executive held as a virtual meeting, on 7 September 2020 at 5.30 pm

Present: Councillor Barry Wood (Chairman), Leader of the Council
Councillor George Reynolds (Vice-Chairman), Deputy Leader of the Council

Councillor Colin Clarke, Lead Member for Planning
Councillor Ian Corkin, Lead Member for Customers and Transformation
Councillor John Donaldson, Lead Member for Housing
Councillor Tony Ilott, Lead Member for Financial Management and Governance
Councillor Andrew McHugh, Lead Member for Health and Wellbeing
Councillor Richard Mould, Lead Member for Performance
Councillor Lynn Pratt, Lead Member for Economy, Regeneration and Property
Councillor Dan Sames, Lead Member for Clean and Green

Also Present: Councillor Sean Woodcock, Leader of the Labour Group

Officers: Yvonne Rees, Chief Executive
Stephen Chandler, Corporate Director Adults & Housing Services
Steve Jordan, Corporate Director Commercial Development, Assets & Investment & (Interim) Monitoring Officer
Claire Taylor, Corporate Director Customers and Organisational Development
David Peckford, Assistant Director: Planning and Development
Lorna Baxter, Director of Finance & Section 151 Officer
Maria Dopazo, Acting Planning Policy, Conservation & Design Manager
Chris Thom, Principal Planning Policy Officer
Yuen Wong, Principal Planning Policy Officer
Sharon Whiting, Principal Planning Policy Officer
Natasha Clark, Governance and Elections Manager

41 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

42 **Petitions and Requests to Address the Meeting**

There were no petitions or requests to address the meeting.

43 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 August 2020 were agreed as a correct record, to be signed by the Chairman in due course.

44 **Chairman's Announcements**

There were
no Chairman's announcements.

45 **Monthly Performance, Finance and Risk Monitoring Report - July 2020**

The Director of Finance and Head of Insight and Corporate Programmes submitted a report which summarised the Council's Performance, Risk and Finance monitoring position as at the end of the first quarter.

Resolved

- (1) That the Performance, Risk and Finance Monitoring report at July 2020 be noted.

Reasons

The Council is committed to performance, risk and budget management and reviews progress against its corporate priorities on a monthly basis.

This report provides an update on progress made during July 2020 to deliver the Council's priorities through reporting on Performance, the Leadership Risk Register and providing an update on the financial position.

Alternative options

Option 1: This report illustrates the Council's performance against the 2020-21 business plan. As this is a monitoring report, no further options have been considered. However, members may wish to request that officers provide additional information.

46 **Partial Review of the Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 - Oxford's Unmet Housing Need: Inspector's Report and Plan Adoption**

The Assistant Director - Planning and Development submitted a report to consider the Inspector's Report on the Examination of the Partial Review of the Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 - Oxford's Unmet Housing Need (the Partial Review Plan) and to make recommendations to Council on the adoption of the Plan.

In introducing the report the Lead Member for Planning commended and thanked the Assistant Director Planning and Development, the Acting Manager Planning Policy, Conservation and Design and the Planning Policy Team for their hard work on the Cherwell Local Plan and partial review.

Resolved

- (1) That the conclusions of the Inspector's Report be noted and the Inspector's recommended Main Modifications be endorsed (Annex to the Minutes as set out in the Minute Book).
- (2) That the incorporation of the minor modifications as set out in the Annex to the Minutes (as set out in the Minute Book) be endorsed.
- (3) That the necessary changes to the Housing Trajectory and Infrastructure Schedule (Annexes to the Minutes as set out in the Minute Book) arising from the Inspector's recommendations and Main Modifications be noted.
- (4) That the Equalities Impact Assessment (Annex to the Minutes as set out in the Minute Book) be noted.
- (5) That the final Policies Maps (Annex to the Minutes as set out in the Minute Book) be noted.
- (6) That Full Council be recommended to adopt the Partial Review of the Cherwell Local Plan (Annex to the Minutes as set out in the Minute Book).
- (7) That Full Council be recommended to delegate to the Assistant Director – Planning and Development the publication of an updated Adopted Policies Map to illustrate graphically the application of policies contained in the adopted development plan.
- (8) That Full Council be recommended to delegate to the Assistant Director – Planning and Development, the correction of minor spelling, grammatical or typographical errors and any minor improvements from a presentational perspective prior to the publication of the Local Plan.
- (9) That Full Council be recommended to authorise the Assistant Director – Planning and Development to publish the Sustainability Appraisal Adoption Statement and Local Plan Adoption Statement (Annexes to the Minutes as set out in the Minute Book).

Reasons

The Partial Review of the Local Plan is an important part of the Council's Local Development Scheme. Its completion would enable the Council to fulfil its commitment in paragraph B.95 of the adopted Cherwell Local Plan (2015). It would draw to a conclusion a significant period of concerted, cooperative work and provide certainty for the affected communities, notwithstanding the concerns of many who have objected to the development proposals.

Those objections have been considered by the Planning Inspector. He has considered why and how the Plan has been prepared, its proposals and its likely effects. He has considered the case against the Plan, including through public hearings.

The purpose of the Plan is clear - to provide housing to meet identified need. The plan would provide 4,400 homes including 2200 homes as affordable housing. It would ensure that this happens in the area of the district most suitable for responding to the source of that need. Completion of the Plan would provide certainty of supply. The Plan is supported by significant proposals for sustainable transport, the delivery of green infrastructure and net gains in biodiversity. It seeks to provide the opportunity for distinctive place-shaping.

It has now been clearly stated by the appointed Planning Inspector that, with Main Modifications (as proposed by the Council), the Plan is sound. It has been prepared in accordance with necessary regulatory, procedural and national policy requirements. It had been informed by cooperation and engagement with prescribed bodies and a process of sustainability appraisal. An evidenced led process has been followed.

It is therefore the view of officers that the Partial Review of the Local Plan, incorporating Main and Minor Modifications, would appropriately and sustainably deliver on the Council's commitment.

Officers advise that the Inspector's recommendations should be accepted, that the Main and Minor Modifications be endorsed, and that the Plan proceeds to Council for adoption.

Alternative options

Option 1: To proceed to adoption of the Local Plan with the Inspector's Main Modifications only.

This option was rejected as this would fail to address minor matters of clarification, updating and corrections, which together do not materially affect the policies but without which the Plan would be of lesser quality.

Option 2: Reject the Inspector's Main Modifications and not proceed to adoption of the Plan.

This option was rejected as the Inspector has recommended all of the Main Modifications proposed by the Council.

Plan making is a crucial part of the planning process and the Secretary of State may direct a local authority to make a plan to ensure that the planning process in any area is properly administered (Section 27, Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 as amended).

Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

Executive - 7 September 2020

The meeting ended at 6.05pm

Chairman:

Date:

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Cherwell District Council

Executive

Minutes of a meeting of the Executive held at Virtual meeting, on 5 October 2020 at 6.30 pm

Present:

Councillor Barry Wood (Chairman), Leader of the Council
Councillor George Reynolds (Vice-Chairman), Deputy Leader and Lead Member for Leisure and Sport
Councillor Colin Clarke, Lead Member for Planning
Councillor Ian Corkin, Lead Member for Customers and Transformation
Councillor John Donaldson, Lead Member for Housing
Councillor Tony Ilott, Lead Member for Financial Management and Governance
Councillor Andrew McHugh, Lead Member for Health and Wellbeing
Councillor Richard Mould, Lead Member for Performance
Councillor Lynn Pratt, Lead Member for Economy, Regeneration and Property
Councillor Dan Sames, Lead Member for Clean and Green

Also Present:

Councillor Sean Woodcock, Leader of the Labour Group

Officers:

Yvonne Rees, Chief Executive
Stephen Chandler, Corporate Director Adults & Housing Services
Paul Feehily, Executive Director: Place and Growth (Interim)
Steve Jordan, Corporate Director Commercial Development, Assets & Investment & (Interim) Monitoring Officer
Lorna Baxter, Director of Finance & Section 151 Officer
Ed Potter, Assistant Director: Environmental Services
Louise Tustian, Head of Insight and Corporate Programmes
Sam Thomas, Sustainability Project Officer
Natasha Clark, Governance and Elections Manager

48 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

49 **Petitions and Requests to Address the Meeting**

There were no petitions or requests to address the meeting.

50 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 September 2020 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

51 **Chairman's Announcements**

There were no Chairman's announcements.

52 **Budget and Business Planning Process 2021/22 - 2025/26**

The Director Of Finance submitted a report to inform the Executive of the proposed approach to the 2021/22 Budget and Business Planning Process. The report also provided context and background information on the existing Medium Term Financial Strategy and information on latest government announcements relevant to the Strategy.

Resolved

- (1) That the Budget and Business Planning Process for 2021/22 be approved.
- (2) That a five-year period for the Medium-Term Financial Strategy to 2025/26 and three-year period for the Capital Programme to 2023/24 be approved.

Reasons

The Council has a legal obligation to set a balanced budget and ensure it maintains a suitable level of reserves each year. The process laid out in this report will allow CDC to develop budget proposals that will allow it to meet these legal obligations.

Alternative options

The Council has a legal obligation to set a balanced budget and evaluate its level of reserves to ensure they are held at a suitable level. Therefore; there are no alternative options other than to carry out a budget process that reviews the levels of reserves and identifies a budget proposal that can be delivered within the overall level of resources available to the Council.

53 **Monthly Performance, Finance and Risk Monitoring Report**

The Director Of Finance and Head of Insight and Corporate Programmes submitted a report which summarised the Council's Performance, Risk and Finance monitoring position as at the end of August 2020.

Resolved

- (1) That the monthly performance, finance and risk monitoring report be noted.

Reasons

The Council is committed to performance, risk and budget management and reviews progress against its corporate priorities on a monthly basis.

Alternative options

Option 1: This report illustrates the Council's performance against the 2020-21 business plan. As this is a monitoring report, no further options have been considered. However, members may wish to request that officers provide additional information.

54

Cherwell District Council Climate Action Framework

The Executive Director Place and Growth submitted a report to note progress made and seek approval for the Climate Action Framework as a basis to frame action against our Climate Emergency motions.

Executive thanked and commended officers for their work in producing the action plan and commented on the importance of having a framework as meaningful change was needed. The council has great ambition and targets and would need to work with partners to bring to fruition.

Resolved

- (1) That the progress made be noted.
- (2) That the Climate Action Framework document (Annex to the Minutes as set out in the Minute Book) be approved.

Reasons

In order to reach the 2030 target and aspiration a step change in activity is needed to make it reachable. The Climate Action Framework and mobilisation phase seek to embed a consideration for the Climate Emergency and associated 2030 targets in all aspects of the Council's services and activities. This important stage will guide key work areas and enable coordination of activities.

Alternative options

Option 1: Members advise officers to take a different approach to that outlined in the report.

The framework sets out a structure to enable comprehensive climate action, embedding change in all aspects of the councils services and activities. A different approach without this structure runs the risk of not fully embedding

this priority and subsequently increasing the risk of failing to meet the 2030 target.

Option 2: Members advise officers to undertake no further work on this agenda.

This approach has been identified as missing the councils 2030 targets by a considerable margin.

55 **Transfer of Delegated Power to New Post Holder**

The Monitoring Officer submitted a report to transfer a power delegated to the former post of Corporate Director: Communities to the post of Corporate Director: Place and Growth.

Resolved

- (1) That it be agreed to transfer from the former post of Corporate Director: Communities to the current post of Corporate Director: Place and Growth the power (delegated to the Corporate Director: Communities by the Executive at its meeting on 2 March 2020) to determine whether to support the funding of Bicester Vision for a three year term, in the sum of £15,000 per annum, in consultation with the S.151 officer and the Leader of the Council.

Reasons

The post of Corporate Director Communities no longer exists, and so the power delegated by the Executive at its meeting on 2 March needed to be transferred to a new postholder in order that the relevant recommendation could be effectively discharged.

Alternative options

There are no alternative options - the delegated power can now most effectively be discharged by the current postholder of Corporate Director: Place and Growth, who has oversight of the work of the Growth and Economy generally and the Bicester Vision project specifically.

56 **Urgent Business - The Musketeer, Banbury - Emergency Accommodation Lease Agreement**

The Chairman advised the meeting that he had agreed to add one item of urgent business to the agenda relating to an emergency accommodation lease agreement with The Musketeer, Banbury. The matter had arisen after agenda publication and a decision was required before the next scheduled meeting due to the end date of the current agreement.

The Assistant Director Property Investment and Contract Management and Assistant Director Housing and Social Care Commissioning submitted an urgent report which set out that the Housing Team would like to enter into a private sector lease agreement with the Musketeer Motel in Banbury, a

property which had been used for emergency accommodation for vulnerable households for several years in the form of a licence agreement. The lease-in value (£124.1k pa) was outside the delegated powers (£100k pa) of the Assistant Director Property Investment and Contract Management, therefore the approval of Executive was required.

Resolved

- (1) That the entering into a lease agreement with the owners of The Musketeer in Banbury be approved.
- (2) That it be agreed to proceed and enter into the lease on the agreed terms.

Reasons

The Council has been occupying the facility in the form of a licence agreement for the purpose of emergency accommodation since 1 October 2016. It is now felt that legally the arrangement fits better as a lease arrangement, given that the renting of the accommodation units is the majority of the value. This will secure sole use of the property for the council in discharging statutory duties to homeless households and avoid any possibility that parts of the property could be let independently to individuals who would not be placed by CDC.

The negotiations for a new lease agreement with the owners of The Musketeer achieved similar terms to the existing license agreement.

Alternative options

The Housing Team could not identify similar style and quality potential emergency accommodation immediately available in Banbury.

The meeting ended at 7.10 pm

Chairman:

Date:

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Cherwell District Council

Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee held at Virtual meeting, on 29 July 2020 at 6.30 pm

- Present: Councillor Mike Kerford-Byrnes (Chairman)
Councillor Hugo Brown (Vice-Chairman)
- Councillor Hannah Banfield
Councillor Nathan Bignell
Councillor Conrad Copeland
Councillor Nicholas Mawer
Councillor Tom Wallis
- Substitute
Members: Councillor Barry Richards
Mark Watkins, Head of Internal Audit – CW Audit Services
Maria Grindley, Associate Partner, Ernst & Young (external audit)
Sue Gill, Ernst & Young (external audit)
- Also
Present: Councillor Barry Wood, Leader of the Council
- Apologies
for
absence: Councillor Sean Woodcock
- Officers: Lorna Baxter, Director of Finance & Section 151 Officer
Michael Furness, Assistant Director Finance
Dominic Oakeshott, Assistant Director (Interim) - Finance
Louise Tustian, Head of Insight and Corporate Programmes
Sarah Cox, Chief Internal Auditor
David Spilsbury, Systems Support and Development Officer
Celia Prado-Teeling, Performance Team Leader
Shaista Moughal, Strategic Business Partner
Sharon Hickson, Democratic and Elections Officer
Natasha Clark, Governance and Elections Manager

1 Welcome

The Chairman welcomed Members, officers and external guests to the first virtual meeting of the Committee, in particular welcoming Councillor Copeland, the Assistant Director Finance, Chief Internal Auditor and Performance Team Leader to their first meeting of the Committee.

The Chairman reminded Members of the virtual meeting etiquette.

2 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

3 **Petitions and Requests to Address the Meeting**

There were no petitions or requests to address the meeting.

4 **Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 22 January 2020 were confirmed as a correct record, to be signed by the Chairman in due course.

5 **Chairman's Announcements**

The Chairman made two announcements:

1. The Housing Benefit Subsidy Report originally on the March meeting agenda would now be presented at the September meeting of the committee.
2. An additional informal committee meeting would be arranged for August to discuss the Accounts in more detail.

6 **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

7 **Monthly Performance, Risk and Finance Monitoring Report - Quarter 4 / March 2020**

The Assistant Director of Finance and Head of Insight and Corporate Programmes, presented a report which summarised the Council's Performance, Risk and Finance monitoring position as at the end of each month.

In presenting the report the Head of Insight and Corporate Programmes explained how the Risk Management Strategy linked in and worked alongside the Business Plan. The Head of Insight and Corporate Programmes highlighted score changes in the Leadership Risk Register including : L10, Safeguarding the vulnerable, which had increased from 8 to 12 due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic but had now returned back to a score of 8; L17, Separation, had increased and L20, Covid19 Business Continuity, had decreased in June from 20 to 16.

The Applications and Web Team Manager gave a short presentation on Cyber Security. The Committee was advised of the steps IT had taken to ensure increased home working was as secure as possible, including a two factor authentication used to login remotely. The Committee was advised, that a Cyber Security Officer had recently been appointed. This was a new joint post in the IT Team working across both Cherwell District Council and Oxfordshire County Council and would enable each authority to be more proactive in Cyber security.

The Applications and Web Team Manager informed the members that an Internal Audit was carried out on Cyber Security earlier in the year and no high risks were identified. An action plan had been developed to respond to the recommendations from the audit.

Resolved

- (1) That the monthly Performance, Risk and Finance Monitoring Report be noted.

8 Internal Audit Annual Report and Opinion 2019/20

The Director of Finance submitted the Internal Audit Annual Report, which provided the Head of Internal Audit's opinion and summarised the activities of Internal Audit for the period 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020.

In presenting the report the Head of Internal Audit – CW Audit Services confirmed that his overall opinion was that significant assurance could be given that there was a generally sound system of internal control, designed to meet the organisation's objectives and that controls were generally being applied consistently.

The Head of Internal Audit – CW Audit Services advised the Committee that reported that due to the significant impact on workload within CSN Resources due to the Covid-19 Pandemic they were unable to complete an audit of the systems in this area and this work would therefore be undertaken in 2020/21. The Chairman advised the Committee that this is the last meeting that CW Audit would be attending as the council's internal auditor. Members thanked CW Audit for the internal audit work they had carried out.

Resolved

- (1) That the Head of Internal Audit's Annual Report and opinion (annex to the Minutes as set out in the Minute Book), be noted

9 Internal Audit Strategy and Plan 2020/21

The Director of Finance submitted a report which presented the Internal Audit Strategy and Plan for 2020/21.

The Chairman welcomed the Chief Internal Auditor to her first meeting of the Committee, who explained that from 1 April 2020 the Internal Audit team had commenced a joint working approach providing the internal audit services across both Cherwell District Council and Oxfordshire County Council

In presenting the report, the Chief Internal Auditor informed Members that the audit planning process for 2020/21 had been completed and a draft annual plan produced and presented to the senior leadership team. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic and additional workloads in areas such as Small Business Grants, the plan had been reviewed and the workplan for quarter 1 re-prioritised.

Resolved

(1) That, having given due consideration the Internal Audit Strategy and Plan for 2020/21 be noted.

10 **Internal Audit Charter 2020/21**

The Director of Finance submitted a report which presented the Internal Audit Charter and Internal Audit Quality Assurance Programme for 2020/21.

The Chief Internal Auditor advised of a typographical error in the Internal Audit Charter under the heading Authority. The text "All employees are requested to assist" should read "All employees are required to assist".

Resolved

(1) That, having given due consideration the Internal Audit Charter (annex to the Minutes as set out in the Minute Book), be approved.

(2) That the Quality Assurance and Improvement Programme be noted.

11 **Counter Fraud Progress Update**

The Director of Finance submitted a report which provided an update of the activity being undertaken to prevent and counter fraud across the Council's services, along with seeking approval of three related and updated policy statements.

The Senior Investigation Officer reported that the Whistle Blowing Policy, Money Laundering Policy and Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy had been revised and the policies were aligned with the Oxfordshire County Council policies.

Resolved

(1) That the progress of the work of the Corporate Fraud team be noted.

(2) That the future work plans and arrangements during 2020/21 and beyond be noted

- (3) That, having given due consideration the updated Whistle Blowing Policy, Money Laundering Policy and Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy (annexes to the Minutes as set out in the Minute Book), be approved.

12

Accounts and External Audit Update including Audit Fees 2019/20 (Verbal Update_

The Associate Partner - Ernst & Young gave a verbal update on the accounts and external audit work, advising the committee that due to the Covid-19 Pandemic the plan presented to the Committee in March 2020 had been revised.

The Associate Partner - Ernst & Young informed the Committee that the audit of the accounts had not been completed and new dates had been agreed.

The Director of Finance reported on the revised timeline for the accounts explaining that the Finance Team would prepare the accounts for the external auditor by the end August 2020. The audit completion date would now be 30 November 2020.

The Director of Finance explained that whilst the deadline for the preparation of the accounts was the end of August, the Finance Team would prepare them by the end of July to allow internal, including Member , review.

In response to Members' questions to the delay and potential costs incurred around the revision of the timeline, the Director of Finance and the Associate Partner - Ernst & Young explained that the accounts were close to being completed on time but due to the significant amount of additional work in relation to Covid-19, it had been agreed to set a revised audit completion date.

The Associate Partner - Ernst & Young informed the Committee that additional abortive costs would be incurred in relation to the work and time Ernst & Young had spent working on the Accounts audit which had now been rescheduled. A full breakdown of these fees would be produced.

Committee members commented that it was unfortunate the way the matter had been handled and that additional costs had been incurred.

Resolved

- (1) That the verbal update be noted.

13

2019/20 Treasury Management Annual Report

The Director of Finance submitted a report which provided an update on treasury management performance and compliance with treasury management policy during 2019/20 as required by the Treasury Management Code of Practice.

In response to Members' questions regarding non-treasury investments and if the risk levels would be changed due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Director of Finance and Assistant Director Finance explained that it was not expected that the risk levels would change.

Resolved

- (1) That the contents of the report in line with the Treasury Management Strategy be noted.

14 **Work Programme**

As reported under the Chairman's announcements, the Housing Benefit Subsidy would be submitted to the September meeting and an informal briefing would be arranged in August as a workshop on the Accounts for committee members.

Resolved

- (1) That, subject to the addition of Housing Benefit Subsidy report being added to the September agenda and an informal briefing on the Statement of Accounts in August, the work programme be noted.

15 **Assistant Director Finance (Interim)**

The Chairman advised the Committee that this was the last meeting the Assistant Director Finance (interim), Dominic Oakeshott, would be attending as a permanent appointment to the post had been made. On behalf of the Committee, the Chairman thanked the Assistant Director Finance (Interim) for his hard work and support to the Committee and wished him well in the future.

The Chairman of the Budget Planning Committee, Councillor Mawer, echoed the comments and thanked the Assistant Director of Finance (Interim) for his hard work and support for the Budget Planning Committee and wished him well for the future.

The meeting ended at 7.45 pm

Chairman:

Date:

Cherwell District Council

Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee held at Virtual meeting, on 23 September 2020 at 6.30 pm

Present:

Councillor Mike Kerford-Byrnes (Chairman)
Councillor Hugo Brown (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Hannah Banfield
Councillor Conrad Copeland
Councillor Nicholas Mawer
Councillor Tom Wallis
Councillor Sean Woodcock

Also Present:

Councillor Tony Ilott
Councillor Barry Wood; Leader of the Council
Maria Grindley, Associate Partner, Ernst & Young (external audit)

Apologies for absence:

Councillor Nathan Bignell

Officers:

Lorna Baxter, Director of Finance & Section 151 Officer
Michael Furness, Assistant Director Finance
Belinda Green, Operations Director - CSN Resources
Sarah Cox, Chief Internal Auditor
Shaista Moughal, Strategic Business Partner
Tracey Holland, Team Leader - Systems, Performance and Subsidy (CSN)
Natasha Clark, Governance and Elections Manager
Sharon Hickson, Democratic and Elections Officer

16 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

17 **Petitions and Requests to Address the Meeting**

There were no petitions or requests to address the meeting.

18 **Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 29 July 2020 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

19 **Chairman's Announcements**

The were no Chairman's announcements.

20 **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

21 **Housing Benefit Subsidy**

The Director of Finance submitted a report which provided the committee with an update on the Housing Benefit subsidy claim audit for the financial year 2018-2019.

The Operations Director – CSN Resources explained that this report had been due to be submitted to the March 2020 committee meeting but due to the Covid-19 Pandemic had been delayed and therefore was being presented later than in previous years. The subsidy claim for 2019-2020 had been submitted in April 2020 and the auditors would undertake a detailed audit in Autumn 2020.

Resolved

(1) That the contents of the report be noted.

22 **Internal Audit Progress Report 2020/21**

The Director of Finance submitted a report which presented the Internal Audit progress for 2020/21.

The Chief Internal Auditor updated members on resources confirming that appointments had now been made to the positions of Senior Auditor and Assistant Auditor Trainee.

Resolved

(1) That the progress of the 20/21 Internal Audit Plan and the outcome of the completed audits be noted.

23 **Treasury Management Report - Q1 2020-21**

The Director of Finance submitted a report which provided information on treasury management performance and compliance with treasury management policy for 2020-21 as required by the Treasury Management Code of Practice.

Resolved

- (1) That the contents of the June 2020 Treasury Management Report be noted.

24 **2019/20 Accounts Update (Verbal)**

The Director of Finance and Associate Partner Ernst & Young, the council's external auditor, confirmed that the council had submitted the 2019/20 accounts on time. Ernst & Young began sampling work this week, in preparation for on-site work on 5 October.

Resolved

- (1) That the verbal update be noted.

25 **Work Programme**

The Committee considered its work programmes. The Director of Finance advised the Committee that a report on the Outcome of the Redmond consultation would be added to the November meeting

Resolved

- (1) That, subject to the addition of Outcome to the Redmond consultation report being added to the November agenda, the work programme be noted.

26 **Exclusion of Press and Public**

Resolved

That under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following item(s) of business on the grounds that, if the public and press were present, it would be likely that exempt information falling under the provisions of Schedule 12A, Part I, Paragraph 3 would be disclosed to them, and that in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

27

Treasury Management Appendix 1 EXEMPT

Resolved

- (1) That the exempt appendix be noted.

The meeting ended at 7.10 pm

Chairman:

Date:

Cherwell District Council

Budget Planning Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Budget Planning Committee held as a Virtual meeting, on 21 July 2020 at 6.00 pm

Present: Councillor Nicholas Mawer (Chairman)
Councillor Carmen Griffiths (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Nathan Bignell
Councillor Phil Chapman
Councillor Conrad Copeland
Councillor Andrew McHugh
Councillor Barry Richards
Councillor Douglas Webb
Councillor Fraser Webster
Councillor Lucinda Wing
Councillor Sean Woodcock

Also Present: Councillor Tony Ilott - Lead Member for Financial Management and Governance
Councillor Barry Wood – Leader of the Council

Apologies for absence: Councillor David Hughes

Officers: Steve Jorden, Corporate Director Commercial Development, Assets & Investment & (Interim) Monitoring Officer
Lorna Baxter, Director of Finance & Section 151 Officer
Michael Furness, Assistant Director Finance
Dominic Oakeshott, Assistant Director (Interim) - Finance
Belinda Green, Operations Director - CSN Resources
Tracey Holland, Team Leader - Systems, Performance and Subsidy (CSN)
Natasha Clark, Governance and Elections Manager
Emma Faulkner, Democratic and Elections Officer

1 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

2 **Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 28 January 2020 were confirmed as a correct record, to be signed by the Chairman in due course.

3 **Chairman's Announcements**

The Chairman reminded the Committee of the all Member briefing taking place after the meeting.

4 **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

5 **Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2021-2022**

The Committee considered a report from the Operations Director CSN Resources regarding the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2021-2022.

The Operations Director explained that the current scheme was based on a banding system, with support varying dependent on the level of household income. The Council could choose to retain the existing scheme, increase or decrease the level of support provided. If any changes were proposed, a consultation period would need to be held.

In response to questions from the Committee the Operations Director confirmed that a fund had been set up for the 2020-2021 financial year to help households who may need additional support following a reduction in benefit, but no applications for assistance had been made to date.

With regard to possible savings to the Council if the level of support the scheme provided was reduced, the Operations Director explained that the cost of officer time and carrying out a consultation exercise would need to be factored in against any savings.

It was proposed by Councillor Sean Woodcock and seconded by Councillor Barry Richards that Option 1 – Retain the current banded scheme with only minor changes to government uprating figures – be recommended to Executive as the Council Tax Scheme for 2021-2022.

Resolved

- (1) That the report and financial implications for the Council be noted
- (2) That Option 1 – Retain the current banded scheme with only minor changes to government uprating figures – be recommended to Executive as the Council Tax Scheme for 2021-2022
- (3) That no consultation take place, due to the recommendation to retain the current scheme

6 **Review of Committee Work Plan**

The Chairman advised the Committee that an additional meeting was required, and following discussion with officers it had been scheduled for 18 August 2020.

Resolved

- (1) That an additional meeting be scheduled for 18 August 2020

The meeting ended at 6.25 pm

Chairman:

Date:

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Cherwell District Council

Budget Planning Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Budget Planning Committee held as a Virtual meeting, on 18 August 2020 at 6.30 pm

Present:

Councillor Nicholas Mawer (Chairman)
Councillor Carmen Griffiths (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Phil Chapman
Councillor Conrad Copeland
Councillor David Hughes
Councillor Andrew McHugh
Councillor Barry Richards
Councillor Douglas Webb
Councillor Lucinda Wing
Councillor Sean Woodcock

Also Present:

Councillor Barry Wood – Leader of the Council
Councillor George Reynolds - Deputy Leader of the Council and Lead Member for Leisure and Sport
Councillor Colin Clarke - Lead Member for Planning
Councillor Ian Corkin - Lead Member for Customers and Transformation
Councillor Tony Ilott - Lead Member for Financial Management and Governance
Councillor Lynn Pratt - Lead Member for Economy, Regeneration and Property

Apologies for absence:

Councillor Nathan Bignell
Councillor Fraser Webster

Officers:

Yvonne Rees, Chief Executive
Claire Taylor, Corporate Director Customers and Organisational Development
Lorna Baxter, Director of Finance & Section 151 Officer
Ansaf Azhar, Corporate Director of Public Health & Wellbeing
Stephen Chandler, Corporate Director Adults & Housing Services
Paul Feehily, Executive Director: Place and Growth (Interim)
Jason Russell, Director Community Operations
Natasha Clark, Governance and Elections Manager
Emma Faulkner, Democratic and Elections Officer

7 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

8 **Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 21 July 2020 were confirmed as a correct record, to be signed by the Chairman in due course.

9 **Chairman's Announcements**

There were no announcements.

10 **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

11 **Revised Budget 2020/21**

The Committee considered a report from the Director of Finance that detailed a revised budget for the 2020-21 financial year.

The report explained that in-year savings were required as a result of the financial impact of Covid-19.

Alongside the report the Committee received a detailed presentation regarding the proposals. Corporate Directors and Lead Members summarised the proposed savings for each directorate, and answered questions from the Committee.

Having conducted a detailed scrutiny of the proposals, it was proposed by Councillor Nick Mawer and seconded by Councillor Phil Chapman that the 2020/21 in-year savings proposals be endorsed, and recommended the Executive recommend to Full Council that they be adopted at the Special Council on 7 September 2020. The Committee made the following detailed comments:

Revised Building Control Fee Schedule

- Clarity was provided that the 5% increase referred to the overall across the board increase and some individual fees were increased by a higher percentage.
- It was noted that the proposed fees were bringing Cherwell District Council to the average level for comparable neighbouring local authorities but Members queried if they were comparative to independent building control inspectors. Approved Inspectors were not

required to publish their fees as we in the public sector are required to. CDC Building Control's market share is currently at around 70% and increasing which would indicate it is competitive.

- In response to questions regarding a behavioural impact assessment, it was confirmed that this had not been undertaken as there would be additional cost top carrying out such an assessment. It was standard Cherwell DC practice, as for other Building Control services in neighbouring areas, for comparisons to be made between Authorities in the Oxfordshire/Warwickshire cluster group and fees adjusted accordingly. The exercise requires proposed fee increases to be balanced against the risk of under-recovery of costs and therefore set an appropriate level. Experience has shown that customers of CDC Building Control service are more interested in service than cost, noting that the cost of a Building Control application is very small compared with the construction cost of a development.

Delayed Recruitment to Vacant Posts due to Covid-19

- Noted that delayed recruitment was not impacting service delivery due to reallocating work and new ways of working.
- Kidlington Co-ordinator (Growth and Economy): Assurance was given that recruitment to the post was delayed and as a new post, there had been no impact on service provision.
- 5 Wellbeing part time posts: the work these discretionary posts would have undertaken would not have been possible with the covid restrictions
- Community Warden: Noted that three Community Warden posts were filled and there was one vacancy for which recruitment was being paused for in-year savings. Along with all other options, the post would be reviewed as part of the 2021/22 budget setting process.

Deletion of Vacant Posts

- Assurance was provided that deleting two vacant Planning posts and two Growth Deal workstream posts would not impact service delivery. The Growth Deal posts had been planned to be created as part of last years' growth bid to support the Growth Deal, however this work had been delayed due to Covid-19 and the removal of the posts would not affect the council's Growth Deal work.

Housing Services: Reduction in Shared Ownership Scheme Contribution

- In response to queries from Members of the Committee regarding if there would be any impact on affordable housing, advised that it was difficult to quantify the number of houses affected and a response would be provided to Members outside of the meeting. The reduction was a proportion of the total budget and Housing Officers would continue to work with applicants for Homes England funding.

LED Project (replacement lighting at Bodicote House)

- In response to queries as to why the project had been deleted and not delayed, the Committee was advised that the long term future of all estates would be considered as there would not be a return to the office as it was pre-covid
- It was confirmed that no other projects responding to climate emergency had been proposed to be paused or cancelled

Increase in Bulky Collections Fees

- The Committee recommended that fly tipping levels were monitored to assess if there was an impact of the increased fees on incidences of fly tipping

Treasury Management

- Clarity was provided that the savings were due to reduced costs of borrowing with better interest rates for new borrowing and replacement borrowing.

Use of Ear-marked Reserves

- Clarification given that the reserves which would be used towards balancing the budget were General Balances which were held for general purposes and the Commercial Reserve, which was earmarked towards commercial property income losses

Senior Pay

- In response to a question from a Committee member regarding whether reductions in Executive salary had been considered, the Committee was advised that for in-year savings reductions in pay and/or changes in terms and conditions had not been proposed. It was noted that changes to contractual pay and terms require formal consultation with staff affected and unions and should be considered as part of a wider view of senior management costs and structures, with a focus on the full costs of management rather than just the pay of certain roles.
- The Committee was advised that as part of work considering the budget for 2021/22 a view will be taken with regards to these matters in the context of the joint working relationship with Oxfordshire County Council (many senior staff cover roles at both the County and Cherwell District Council) and the more significant budget pressures facing the council in 2021/22. The Committee was given assurance that the work undertaken would be evidence-based, for example comparisons with national pay across the sector, and where necessary seek objective and specialist advice, for example the regional employers associations.

- The Committee was reminded that matters regarding structures, pay, terms and conditions are considered by the Council's formally constituted cross party Personnel Committee. This Committee was generally held in confidential session, to protect the identity of individuals affected by any proposals considered and to comply with the formal consultation processes and engagement with our recognised Unions in line with the Council's HR policies and employment law.

Lobbying of Government regarding funding

- The Committee noted and supported the on-going lobbying of Government by Local Authority Leaders, the Local Government Association and District Councils Network for additional funding for local Government.

Resolved

- (1) That the 2020/21 in-year savings proposals be endorsed, and recommended the Executive recommend to Full Council that they be adopted at the Special Council on 7 September 2020

The meeting ended at 8.30 pm

Chairman:

Date:

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Cherwell District Council

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held as a Virtual meeting, on 1 September 2020 at 6.30 pm

Present:

Councillor Lucinda Wing (Chairman)
Councillor Phil Chapman
Councillor Chris Heath
Councillor Shaida Hussain
Councillor Tony Mepham
Councillor Ian Middleton
Councillor Perran Moon
Councillor Les Sibley

Also Present:

Councillor Barry Wood, Leader of the Council
Councillor Tony Ilott, Lead Member for Financial Management and Governance

Apologies for absence:

Councillor Tom Wallis
Councillor Mike Bishop
Councillor Douglas Webb
Councillor Bryn Williams

Officers:

Yvonne Rees, Chief Executive
Steve Jorden, Corporate Director Commercial Development, Assets & Investment & (Interim) Monitoring Officer
Ansaf Azhar, Corporate Director of Public Health & Wellbeing
Rob MacDougall, Chief Fire Officer
Paul Feehily, Executive Director: Place and Growth (Interim)
Jason Russell, Director Community Operations
Belinda Green, Operations Director - CSN Resources
Richard Webb, Assistant Director: Regulatory Services and Community Safety
Robert Jolley, Assistant Director: Growth & Economy
Ed Potter, Assistant Director: Environmental Services
Sam Thomas, Sustainability Project Officer
Sandra Fisher-Martins, Climate Action Mobilisation Manager
Richard Hawtin, Team Leader Property & Contracts
Natasha Clark, Governance and Elections Manager
Emma Faulkner, Democratic and Elections Officer
Lesley Farrell, Democratic and Elections Officer

10 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

11 **Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 14 July 2020 were confirmed as a correct record, to be signed by the Chairman in due course.

12 **Chairman's Announcements**

There were no Chairman's announcements.

13 **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

14 **Covid-19 Update**

The Committee received a comprehensive presentation from the Chief Executive and Directors, detailing the Council's response to the Covid-19 pandemic across the district.

Introducing the presentation, the Leader of the Council explained to the Committee that he was very proud of the way the Council and its officers had dealt with the covid-19 situation, particularly in light of the fast-changing processes around benefits, business rate changes and housing requirements.

The presentation covered the arrangements in Oxfordshire for managing and dealing with the pandemic, the number of cases across Oxfordshire, the Local Outbreak Control Plan, Environmental Health, reducing the risk of local outbreaks, support to local businesses, supporting economic recovery and council tax support for residents. Each director explained the challenges that had arisen in light of the pandemic within their service areas, and the actions that had been taken to address them. All of the directors reported that joint working between Cherwell District and Oxfordshire County Council staff had been used in some situations, and all officers had worked very well together.

In response to questions from the Committee, Chief Fire Officer Rob MacDougall confirmed that a number of debriefs had already taken place, and agreed to circulate the debrief notes to the members of the Committee.

With regard to the communication process that would be undertaken in the event of a local lockdown due to an increase of cases, the Chief Executive and Director of Public Health advised that the local outbreak plan was publicly

available, and each business in the district had been written to with contact details that should be used in the event of queries or concerns regarding a local outbreak. It was agreed that the information be circulated to Members for information.

In concluding the presentation and discussion the Chief Executive explained that work was ongoing in relation to the pandemic and its effects on the district, and staff would continue the hard work that had been undertaken so far.

The Committee echoed the comments of the Leader of the Council regarding the response of officers to the pandemic, and requested a further update in relation to the situation after Christmas.

Resolved

- (1) That the presentation be noted

15 **Update on Climate Change**

The Committee considered a presentation from the Assistant Director Environmental Services and the Sustainability Project Officer which gave an update on work underway in relation to Climate Change.

The Assistant Director Environmental Services explained that a number of workshops had been held with Members and officers, and the information gathered had helped to inform an action framework which it was anticipated would be presented to Executive in October 2020.

Other work completed so far included the formation of a combined team with colleagues from Oxfordshire County Council, and a Climate Change Champions Group that had been set up to look at car park charging points.

The Assistant Director Environmental Services reported on the Climate Change progress made in relation to the vehicle fleet used by the Environmental Services team.

A number of smaller electric vehicles were already in use at the waste services depot, but the technology was not yet available for larger refuse collection vehicles. Cost models currently estimated that an electric refuse vehicle would cost around £400,000, compared to the current £175,000 for a diesel vehicle.

As well as the initial cost of the vehicles, charging capability and the relevant upgrading of equipment and increase in electrical capacity would need to be factored in to cost modelling.

In response to queries from the Committee regarding the car park charging points project, the Assistant Director Environmental Services clarified that overnight charging points were being considered, not so called 'destination'

charging points that were available in some town and city centre car parks across the country.

The Committee thanked the officers for the presentation, and requested a further update early in 2021.

Resolved

- (1) That the presentation be noted

16 **Work Programme 2020/2021**

Democratic and Elections Officers updated the Committee regarding the status of the topic list and indicative work programme.

With regard to the Cherwell Industrial Strategy, officers advised the Committee that the Assistant Director – Growth and Economy had committed to providing a written update to the December 2020 or January 2021 meeting. The update would cover both the Industrial Strategy and the digital connectivity, due to the two streams of work being interlinked.

In response to a query from the Chairman relating to the fur free markets, the Assistant Director Environmental Services confirmed that an additional clause would be added to stallholder agreements as they were renewed.

Resolved

- (1) That subject to additional updates relating to Covid-19 and Climate Change being scheduled for early 2021, the work programme be noted

The meeting ended at 9.05 pm

Chairman:

Date:

Cherwell District Council

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held as a Virtual meeting, on 14 July 2020 at 6.30 pm

Present: Councillor Lucinda Wing (Chairman)
Councillor Tom Wallis (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Mike Bishop
Councillor Phil Chapman
Councillor Chris Heath
Councillor Shaida Hussain
Councillor Tony Mepham
Councillor Ian Middleton
Councillor Perran Moon
Councillor Les Sibley
Councillor Douglas Webb
Councillor Bryn Williams

Also Present: Councillor Ian Corkin - Lead Member for Customers and Transformation
Councillor Barry Wood – Leader of the Council

Officers: Gillian Douglas, Assistant Director: Social Care Commissioning and Housing
Louise Tustian, Head of Insight and Corporate Programmes
Celia Prado-Teeling, Performance Team Leader
Steven Newman, Senior Economic Growth Officer
Emma Faulkner, Democratic and Elections Officer
Lesley Farrell, Democratic and Elections Officer
Natasha Clark, Governance and Elections Manager

1 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

2 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 30 January 2020 were confirmed as a correct record, to be signed by the Chairman in due course.

3 Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman welcomed Members and officers to the first virtual meeting of the Committee, and reminded all attendees of the virtual meeting etiquette.

4 Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

5 **Digital Connectivity in Cherwell**

The Chairman welcomed Steven Newman, Senior Economic Growth Officer at Cherwell District Council, and Craig Bower, Digital Programme Manager at Oxfordshire County Council, to the meeting to give an update on Digital Connectivity in Cherwell.

The Digital Programme Manager explained that superfast coverage, defined as speeds above 30 megabits per second, across Cherwell had increased from 66% in 2013 to 98% in 2020.

With regard to future plans, universal coverage of full fibre fixed broadband was targeted for 2033, with near full availability of 5G for mobile connectivity by 2033. Recent central Government announcements had suggested that the full fibre target could be brought forward to 2025.

The Digital Programme Manager clarified that the rollout of the 5G network was critically dependent on the fibre network, it was not a case of one being developed over the other.

In response to questions from the Committee, the Digital Programme Manager confirmed that it would be possible to reverse engineer the superfast coverage map to show the 2% of the district that was not yet connected.

The Committee commented that there was a clear link between the future rollout of fixed fibre and its importance to the Cherwell Industrial Strategy. They requested that a further update regarding digital connectivity and the Industrial Strategy be arranged for approximately 6 months.

Resolved

(1) That the presentation be noted

6 **Monthly Performance, Risk and Finance Monitoring Report - Quarter 4 / March 2020**

The Committee considered a report from the Director of Finance and the Head of Insight and Corporate Programmes that detailed the Council's Performance, Risk and Finance Monitoring as at the end of Quarter 4, March 2020.

The Head of Insight and Corporate Programmes explained that the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown had impacted on the end of year position for some indicators.

With regards to the risk register, the Head of Insight and Corporate Programmes advised the Committee that in light of the pandemic an additional risk had been added, relating to business continuity.

In response to questions from the Committee, the Head of Insight and Corporate Programmes advised that she would liaise with relevant officers and provide responses with regards to the long term plan for business rates; the implications in relation to rental income for Castle Quay; and whether or not the Council would be required to contribute towards costs for a Covid-19 vaccine.

The Committee congratulated the homelessness team for their work to date on housing homeless and rough sleepers during the pandemic.

Resolved

- (1) That the monthly Performance, Risk and Finance Monitoring report be noted

7 Housing Strategy Progress Report

The Committee considered a report from the Assistant Director – Housing and Social Care Commissioning that provided an update on the implementation of the Council’s Housing Strategy.

The Committee had considered the Housing Strategy at draft stage, and had requested an update be provided to them after 12 months.

With regard to the current situation concerning homeless residents, the Assistant Director – Housing and Social Care Commissioning advised the Committee that 66 people had been housed during the pandemic, and of those 30 still required assistance. A number of local hotels had been used as temporary accommodation, and Councillor John Donaldson as Lead Member for Housing had written to each establishment to thank them for their assistance.

In response to questions from the Committee, the Assistant Director – Housing and Social Care Commissioning advised that approximately £180,000 had been spent on emergency accommodation.

Resolved

- (1) That the report be noted

8 Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2019/20

The Committee considered the draft Overview and Scrutiny Committee Annual Report for 2019/20.

The report summarised the work that had been completed by the Committee over the year, as well as detailing the officers and external guests who had attended meetings.

Resolved

- (1) That the draft Overview and Scrutiny Committee Annual Report 2019/20 be approved
- (2) That authority be delegated to the Monitoring Officer (Interim), in consultation with the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, to finalise the areas highlighted in the report, prior to its consideration by Council

9

Work Programme 2020/2021

The Democratic and Elections Officers gave an update on the status of topics suggested for Scrutiny, and the indicative Committee work programme.

Following the presentation given earlier in the meeting relating to digital connectivity, the Committee requested that an update on the Cherwell Industrial Strategy be scheduled for October 2020.

The Committee also requested that an update be given regarding the council's response to the coronavirus pandemic, covering a review of Emergency Planning, what went well and what would be done differently and the economic impact on the district.

In response to a query raised relating to the possible sale of animal fur at council run markets, the Chairman of the Committee agreed to gather some additional information to enable a more detailed discussion at the September 2020 meeting.

Following a report in December 2019 to full Council regarding changes to the Constitution, it was suggested that a Constitutional Working Group be established to consider any proposed changes to the constitution prior to reports being submitted to full Council. In response to the request, the Governance and Elections Manager advised that she would advise the interim Monitoring Officer of the suggestion, and added that recruitment was currently underway for a permanent Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer who would be able to review the suggestion.

Resolved

- (1) That the work programme be noted

The meeting ended at 8.25 pm

Chairman:

Date: