

Cherwell District Council

Budget Planning Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Budget Planning Committee held at Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury, OX15 4AA, on 29 November 2016 at 6.30 pm

Present: Councillor Nicholas Mawer (Chairman)
Councillor Douglas Webb (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Ken Atack
Councillor Hugo Brown
Councillor Ian Corkin
Councillor Alan MacKenzie-Wintle
Councillor Andrew McHugh
Councillor Barry Richards
Councillor Tom Wallis
Councillor Sean Woodcock

Also Present:: Councillor John Donaldson
Councillor D M Pickford
Councillor Lynn Pratt
Councillor G A Reynolds - Deputy Leader of the Council
Jan Ponsford, Director, Virtus Consult

Apologies for absence: Councillor David Anderson
Councillor Carmen Griffiths

Officers: Karen Curtin, Commercial Director
Paul Sutton, Chief Finance Officer / Section 151 Officer
Sharon Bolton, Shared Leisure Facilities and Projects Manager
Louisa Butters, Property and Facilities Manager
George Hill, Corporate Finance Manager
Chris Stratford, Head of Regeneration and Housing
Lesley Farrell, Democratic and Elections Officer
Joel Bliss, Assistant Democratic and Elections Officer

51 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

52 Urgent Business

There was no urgent business.

53 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 1 November 2016 were agreed a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

54 **Chairman's Announcements**

There were no Chairman's Announcements.

55 **Solihull Partnership**

The Commercial Director gave a verbal update on the progress of the Solihull Partnership.

Due to the problems experienced with the Solihull Partnership the Commercial Director had commissioned a report by Virus Consult to understand what had gone wrong and what could be done to rectify the problems going forward.

The Director of Virtus Consult gave a presentation to the Committee on his findings. Thirty one of the thirty five projects given to the Solihull Partnership, which were due to be completed by June 2016, were still outstanding. There appeared to be a lack of governance, leadership and ownership of projects with insufficient workforce and no contract in place to motivate completion.

The Head of Housing and Regeneration explained that the immediate aim was to get back on track with the Solihull Partnership and it was envisaged that 30% of the programme would be completed by March 2017.

The Committee expressed disapproval at the Solihull Partnership's lack of progress and their prioritisation of other projects over those which have been agreed upon with Cherwell District Council and raised concerns over delivery of projects going forward.

As the Committee would not meet again until 27 January 2017, Members requested that an update be circulated via email before the next meeting. The Committee also requested that an account be kept of the costs.

In response to Members' comments, the Commercial Director explained that a Steering Group would be set up and would meet fortnightly to monitor the Solihull Partnership's progress. A progress report would be emailed to all members of the Budget Planning Committee. The Committee requested that a member of the Budget Planning Committee join the Steering Group and it was agreed that Councillor Barry Richards should attend the Steering Group and feed back to the Committee.

56 **Fees and Charges 2017/18 - Update**

The Chief Finance Officer submitted a report on Fees and Charges which provided members of the Budget Planning Committee with an update on the Council's proposed fees and charges for 2017/18.

In presenting the report the Corporate Finance Manager explained that the fees and charges were currently being reviewed and that the council only had control over the discretionary fees and charges. They would be brought back to the Committee for consideration when finalised.

Resolved

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

57 **Review of Capital 2016/17 & Capital Bids 2017/18**

The Chief Finance Officer submitted a report which reviewed current expenditure for projects in 2016/17 and the Capital Bids for 2017/18.

The Committee reviewed the Capital programme and requested that the original date of the Capital Bids be put on the report as this would make it easier to determine how long they had been outstanding. The items were reviewed and the Committee requested more details of the payments to East West Rail.

In response to Members' comments on Capital Bid 006 for a replacement Bookings Solution, the Deputy Leader of the Council explained that the system purchased 4 years ago had proved difficult to use and that the new system would be a joint purchase with South Northamptonshire Council.

The Committee raised concerns over Capital Bid 002, Cooper School Performance Hall roof, regarding the frequency of the required maintenance. The Committee also raised concerns that Capital Bid 008, Thorpe Way Industrial Estate roof and roof light replacement would not be delivered considering the problems encountered previously with roof repairs.

In response to Members' concerns, the Head of Regeneration and Housing assured the Committee that he was confident that these projects would be delivered now there was a new project manager in place.

The Committee welcomed bid 007, Banbury Health Centre and suggested that with the improvement works being done, a rent review should be considered.

Resolved

(1) That the contents of the report relating to 2016/17 expenditure be noted.

(2) That the Executive be recommended to approve the capital bids and the proposed capital programme as part of the budget for 2017/18.

58 **Review of Committee Work Plan**

The Committee considered its work programme. Members' requested that the Solihull Partnership and the Solihull Partnership Steering Committee Group should be added to the Committee work plan.

Resolved

- (1) That the Solihull Partnership be added to the meeting of 17 January 2017.
- (2) That the Solihull Partnership Steering Committee Group report be added to the work plan until all issues are resolved.
- (3) That subject to resolutions (1) and (2) above, the contents of the Committee Work Plan be noted.

59 **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 of business on the ground that, if the public and press were present, it would be likely that exempt information falling under the provisions of Schedule 12A, Part 1, 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.

60 **Medium Term Revenue Plan - 2017/18 to 2021/22**

The Chief Finance Officer submitted an exempt report on the Council's Medium Term Revenue Plan for 2017/18 to 2021/22

In response to Members' questions, the Chief Finance Officer confirmed that the Efficiency Plan had been accepted by the Government but confirmation had not yet been received of the New Homes Bonus scheme.

Resolved

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

The meeting ended at 8.35 pm

Chairman:

Date: