

Cherwell District Council

Executive

Minutes of a meeting of the Executive held at Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury, Oxon OX15 4AA, on 8 January 2024 at 6.30 pm

Present:

Councillor Barry Wood (Leader and Portfolio Holder for Policy and Strategy) (Chairman)
Councillor Adam Nell (Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Finance) (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Phil Chapman, Portfolio Holder for Healthy and Safe Communities
Councillor Donna Ford, Portfolio Holder for Regeneration
Councillor Nicholas Mawer, Portfolio Holder for Housing
Councillor Andrew McHugh, Portfolio Holder for Cleaner and Greener Communities
Councillor Eddie Reeves, Portfolio Holder for Property
Councillor Nigel Simpson, Portfolio Holder for Sport and Leisure

Apologies for absence:

Councillor Sandy Dallimore, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services
Councillor Dan Sames, Portfolio Holder for Planning and Development

Also Present Virtually:

Councillor David Hingley, Leader of the Opposition, Progressive Oxfordshire Group
Councillor Sean Woodcock, Leader of the Labour Group
Councillor John Broad, Chairman, Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Officers:

Gordon Stewart, Chief Executive
Ian Boll, Corporate Director Communities
Stephen Hinds, Corporate Director Resources
Michael Furness, Assistant Director Finance & S151 Officer
Shiraz Sheikh, Assistant Director Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer
Shona Ware, Assistant Director Customer Focus
Natasha Clark, Governance and Elections Manager

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

79 **Welcome to Chief Executive**

On behalf of Executive, the Chairman welcomed the new Chief Executive to his first Executive meeting on his first day at the council.

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

There were no petitions or requests to address the meeting.

The Chairman welcomed Councillor Hingley, Leader of the Opposition Group (Progressive Oxfordshire), Councillor Woodcock, Leader of the Labour Group and Councillor Broad, Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to the meeting.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee had considered item 6, the performance aspects of the Performance, Finance and Risk Monitoring Report November 2023 but made no specific recommendations to Executive.

81 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 4 December 2023 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

82 **Chairman's Announcements**

The Chairman invited the Corporate Director Communities to give an update on the recent flooding.

On behalf of Executive, the Chairman thanked officers, highlighting the Duty Director, David Peckford, for their hard work and keeping Members updated.

83 **Performance, Risk and Finance Monitoring Report November 2023**

The Assistant Director of Finance and Assistant Director – Customer Focus submitted a report to update Executive on how well the council was performing in delivering its priorities, managing potential risks, and balancing its finances during November 2023.

Resolved

- (1) That the Council's Performance, Risk and Financial report for the month of November 2023 be noted.
- (2) That the following reserve request be approved:
 - Directorate: Resources
 - Type: Earmarked
 - Description: Market Risk Reserve

- Reason: Over-recovery of Treasury Income
 - Amount £m: (0.130)
 - Total Earmarked Reserves £m: (0.13)
- (3) That the addition of £1.6m capital spend in relation to Grant agreements that have been concluded with two registered providers of social housing, Sanctuary Housing and South Oxfordshire Housing Association (SOHA) to bring homes forward under the central government resettlement scheme Local Authority Housing Fund Round 2 allocation received by Cherwell be approved.
- (4) That authority be delegated to Assistant Director Wellbeing and Housing to award grants from the Local Authority Housing Fund Round 2 allocation, in consultation with the Monitoring Officer and s151 Officer, to secure additional social housing in the district with the intention that first let is to refugee families.

Reasons

This report provides an update on progress made during November, to deliver the council's priorities, manage potential risks and remain within the agreed budget

Alternative options

This report summarises the council's performance, risk, and financial positions for November, therefore there are no alternative options to consider. However, members may wish to request further information from officers for inclusion.

Council Tax Support Fund Payment Policy 2023/2024

The Assistant Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer submitted a report to consider and approve the Council Tax Support fund payments policy. The policy covered the mandatory payments made to Local Council Tax Support (LCTS) customers of £25.00 or less and the additional discretionary amount of £25.00 also paid to LCTS customers with the eligibility criteria mirroring the Government's scheme.

A one off discretionary payment of £85.00 would also be made to those customers in receipt of LCTS on 16 November 2023 this would be credited to the customers 2023 -24 council tax account.

Resolved

- (1) That the Council Tax Support Fund Payment Policy 2023/2024 for distributing the Council Tax Support fund received from Department for Levelling Up and the additional funds to be paid from Oxfordshire County Council be approved.

- (2) That it be noted that a one off discretionary payment of £85.00 will also be made to those customers in receipt of Local Council Tax Support on 16 November 2023.

Reasons

This scheme is recommended as it will ensure the majority of the funds are dispersed quickly to the council tax accounts of those households that are vulnerable whilst also maximising the allocations therefore reducing any unspent funding.

Alternative options

Option 1: Invite applications for the funds based a means tested application regarding income and expenditure. This option has discounted due to the additional work this would add and also delay in dispersing the funds.

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Council Tax Base 2024-2025

The Assistant Director of Finance and S151 Officer submitted a report to provide the Council Tax Base for 2024-2025.

Resolved

- (1) That the report of the Assistant Director of Finance for the calculation of the Council's Tax Base for 2024-2025 be approved.
- (2) That it be agreed that, in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012, the amount calculated by Cherwell District Council as its Council Tax Base for the year 2024-2025 shall be **59,027.2**.
- (3) That it be agreed that for the parishes which form part of its area shown in the Annex to the Minutes (as set out in the Minute Book), the amount calculated as the Council Tax Base for the year 2024-2025 in respect of special items shall be as indicated in the column titled Tax Base 2024-2025.
- (4) That it be agreed that for the Flood Defence Areas which form part of its area, the amount calculated as the Council Tax Base for the year 2024-2025 for the purposes of levies on Oxfordshire County Council by River Authorities, shall be:

Thames Flood Defence Area	56,667.7
Anglian (Great Ouse) Flood Defence Area	1,913.9
Severn Regional Flood Defence Area	445.6
TOTAL	59,027.2

Reasons

The Council must legally set a tax base for the following year by 31 January. This will allow the Council to notify its preceptors of the taxbase in order for them (and the Council) to set their budgets for 2024/25.

Alternative options

There are no alternative options. The Council has to set a tax base in order to set its council tax for 2024-2025.

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Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

The meeting ended at 6.53 pm

Chairman:

Date: