

Cherwell District Council

Budget Planning Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Budget Planning Committee held at Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury, OX15 4AA, on 24 July 2018 at 6.30 pm

Present: Councillor Nicholas Mawer (Chairman)
Councillor Carmen Griffiths (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor David Hughes
Councillor Andrew McHugh
Councillor Tony Mepham
Councillor Barry Richards
Councillor Alaric Rose
Councillor Tom Wallis
Councillor Douglas Webb
Councillor Lucinda Wing
Councillor Sean Woodcock

Apologies for absence: Councillor Phil Chapman

Officers: Adele Taylor, Interim Executive Director: Finance and Governance
Kelly Watson, Assistant Director: Finance and Procurement
Belinda Green, Operations Director - CSN Resources
Mandy Emery, Joint Benefits Team Leader
Emma Faulkner, Democratic and Elections Officer

3 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

4 Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

5 Minutes

The minutes of the meetings of the Committee held on 27 February and 15 May 2018 were confirmed as correct records and signed by the Chairman.

6 Chairman's Announcements

There were no Chairman's announcements.

7 **2017-2018 Outturn Report CDC**

The Committee considered a report from the Assistant Director – Finance and Procurement which detailed the Revenue and Capital Outturn for the 2017-2018 financial year.

The Assistant Director – Finance and Procurement explained that the report was the culmination of the last financial year, and future reports would be more timely.

The Chairman of the Committee explained that he had been speaking with the Interim Executive Director – Finance and Governance regarding an additional meeting of the Committee, to go through the capital schemes which had been subject to slippage. A number of projects had appeared on the slippage list for more than one financial year, and the Chairman felt it would be appropriate for more detailed questions to be asked of relevant officers before the next budget setting process for the next financial year.

Resolved

- (1) That the outturn figures for the General Fund and the Capital Programme 2017/18 be noted
- (2) That the approved items of capital re-profiling (annexe 1 to the Minutes as set out in the Minute book), that had been approved under financial procedure rule 2.4.6 (b) be noted
- (3) That the reserves position (annexe 2 to the Minutes as set out in the Minute book) be noted

8 **Performance Finance and Risk Report - May 2018 (CDC)**

The Committee considered a report from the Assistant Director Finance and Procurement that detailed the Council's performance, risk and monitoring position as at the end of May 2018.

The Assistant Director Finance and Procurement explained that performance information was now being submitted to Executive monthly, in order to give a more timely report of performance across the Council. This meant that other Committees considering the information would also receive it more quickly than in previous years.

In response to questions from the Committee regarding the current overspend in relation to interim staff, the Assistant Director – Finance and Procurement explained that the use of interim staff had been a short term measure for immediate cover before permanent staff were recruited. However, the change in shared working arrangements with South Northamptonshire Council had meant that some arrangements would be for a longer period.

With regard to the below target performance of business rates collection, with 92.31% collected against a 98.5% target, the Operations Director – CSN resources explained that a combination of factors including a system change

and last minute schedules from the Valuation Office Agency meant it had been a challenging 12 months. Collection rates for 2018-2019 were currently on track and it was also hoped that some of the deficit could be collected.

In response to questions regarding the increase in unemployment rates and the actual numbers involved, the Interim Executive Director Finance and Governance agreed to forward the question to the relevant Assistant Director for a response.

Resolved

- (1) That the report be noted

9 Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2019-2020

The Committee considered a report from the Interim Executive Director Finance and Governance which provided options for consideration for the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2019-2020.

The Operations Director – CSN Resources explained that advice had been taken from the legal team, and in the event that the Council wished to propose no change to the existing scheme, no consultation would be required.

It was proposed by Councillor Barry Richards and seconded by Councillor Andrew McHugh that Option 1 – no change to the current local Council Tax Reduction scheme or Council Tax discounts and uprating the Council Tax Regulations in line with Department for Work and Pensions annual uprating be recommended to Executive for consideration for the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2019-2020.

Resolved

- (1) That the contents of the report and the financial implications for the Council be noted
- (2) That Option 1 – no change to the current local Council Tax Reduction scheme or Council Tax discounts and uprating the Council Tax Regulations in line with Department for Work and Pensions annual uprating be recommended to Executive for consideration for the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2019-2020
- (3) That Executive be recommended not to undertake consultation, in light of there being no proposed change to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2019-2020

10 Review of Committee Work Plan

The Committee considered the draft work programme for 2018-2019.

As had been discussed earlier in the meeting, an additional informal meeting of the Committee would be arranged during October, to allow for updates to

be given in relation to the capital programme items, before the new capital bids were considered later in the year.

With regard to the recent loan to Silverstone Heritage, the Interim Executive Director – Finance and Governance agreed to the Committee's request to add monitoring of the loan to the work programme.

Resolved

- (1) That subject to inclusion of monitoring of the loan to Silverstone Heritage, and an informal update meeting relating to Capital projects, the work programme for 2018/19 be approved

11 **Exclusion of Press and public**

Resolved

- (1) 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 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.

12 **Medium Term Financial Strategy Presentation**

The Interim Executive Director Finance and Governance gave an exempt presentation regarding the Medium Term Finance Strategy.

The presentation covered the different aspects of the budget, and the proposed timescale for setting the 2019-2020 budget.

The Committee asked detailed questions on all aspects of the budget, which were duly answered by officers.

Resolved

- (1) That the exempt presentation be noted

The meeting ended at 8.35 pm

Chairman:

Date: