

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 January 2019 at 6.30 pm

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

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

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

Apologies for absence: Councillor Phil Chapman
Councillor Alaric Rose

Officers: Adele Taylor, Executive Director: Finance and Governance (Interim) & Section 151 Officer
Kelly Watson, Deputy Section 151 Officer
Emma Faulkner, Democratic and Elections Officer
Richard Woods, Assistant Democratic and Elections Officer

48 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

49 **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

50 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 27 November 2018 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

51 **Chairman's Announcements**

There were no Chairman's announcements.

52 **Monthly Performance, Risk and Finance Monitoring Report - October 2018**

The Committee considered a report from the Deputy Section 151 Officer and the Assistant Director – Performance and Transformation, which summarised the Council's Performance, Risk and Finance Monitoring position at the end of October 2018.

The Deputy Section 151 Officer advised the Committee that there had been an improvement in the Council's financial position, as a result of efficiencies in Treasury Management activities and existing overspends having begun to be offset by underspends across some departments.

Resolved

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

53 **Business Plan 2019/20 and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2019/20 - 2023/24**

The Committee considered a report from the Interim Executive Director – Finance and Governance, which detailed the Business Plan 2019/20 and the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for 2019/20 to 2023/24 prior to final approval by full Council in February 2019.

In introducing the report, The Interim Executive Director – Finance and Governance advised that it was important to ensure that the sustainable management of resources continued, in order to plan for and adequately manage risks.

Following questions from the Committee regarding the replacement of the HR and Payroll systems, the Deputy Section 151 Officer reassured Members that this was not related to the ongoing separation with South Northamptonshire Council. The contract for one system was due to expire in April 2020, and it was common practice to start procurement for a replacement system 18 months in advance, and issues had occurred with the other system which meant a new solution would need to be put in place.

In response to questions from Members regarding the Capital Bid for costs for a new air handling unit at Banbury Museum, the Interim Executive Director – Finance and Governance explained that as a result of the project having previously been given Heritage Lottery Funding, there were conditions attached which meant Cherwell District Council were financially responsible for a period of time. The cost of upgrading the unit would help to ensure the museum could become self-sufficient in the future.

Resolved

- (1) That having reviewed the Business Plan it be recommended to Executive and then Full Council for approval.
- (2) That, having given due consideration, the Risk Register be noted.
- (3) That the increase in the level of Council Tax for Cherwell District Council of £5 for 2019/20 be recommended to Executive and then Full Council.
- (4) That the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), Revenue Budget 2019/20 and Capital Programme including the growth and savings proposals be recommended to Executive and then Full Council for approval.
- (5) That, having given due consideration, the minimum level of General Fund reserves of £2m be recommended to Executive and then Full Council.
- (6) That Executive be recommended to agree and recommend to Full Council that authority be delegated to the Chief Finance Officer in consultation with the Lead Member for Finance & Governance, and where appropriate the relevant Director and Lead Member to:
 - Transfer monies from/to earmarked reserves should that become necessary during the financial year.
 - Update prudential indicators in both the Prudential Indicators Report and Treasury Management Strategy Report to Council, for any Budget changes that impact on these.
- (7) That, having given due consideration, the Fees & Charges be recommended to Executive and then Full Council for approval.
- (8) That Executive be recommended to agree and recommend to Full Council that authority be delegated to the Chief Finance Officer to make any technical changes necessary to the papers for the Council meeting of 25 February 2019, including changes related to the finalisation of the national Finance Settlement and any associated changes to Parish Precepts and Council resulting from those changes.
- (9) That the contents of the Section 25 report from the Chief Finance Officer in relation to the robustness of estimates and adequacy of reserves be noted.

Review of Committee Work Plan

The Committee considered its Work Plan.

The Committee requested that a report be submitted to a future meeting regarding a review of reserves.

Resolved

- (1) That the Committee Work Plan be noted, subject to the inclusion of an additional item relating to a review of reserves following the publication of the draft Statement of Accounts in May 2019.

The meeting ended at 8.04 pm

Chairman:

Date: