

Cherwell District Council

Executive

Minutes of a meeting of the Executive held at Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury, OX15 4AA, on 3 February 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 Health and 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

Officers: Yvonne Rees, Chief Executive
Nick Graham, Director of Law and Governance / Monitoring Officer
Claire Taylor, Corporate Director Customers and Organisational Development
Paul Feehily, Executive Director: Place and Growth (Interim)
Simon Furlong, Corporate Director - Communities
Belinda Green, Operations Director - CSN Resources
Robert Jolley, Assistant Director: Growth & Economy
Joanne Kaye, Strategic Business Partner
Steven Newman, Senior Economic Growth Officer
Dominic Oakeshott, Assistant Director (Interim) - Finance
Louise Tustian, Acting Assistant Director Performance and Transformation
Aaron Hetherington, Democratic and Elections Team Leader

79 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

80 Petitions and Requests to Address the Meeting

There were no petitions or requests to address the meeting.

81 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 January 2020 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

82 **Chairman's Announcements**

There were no Chairman's announcements.

83 **Budget Setting for 2020/21 and the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2020/24**

The Executive Director – Finance (Interim) submitted a report which provided information on the Council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for 2020/24 along with more detailed information on setting the Council's budget for 2020/21, which would be considered at full Council on 24 February 2020.

Resolved

- (1) That, having given due consideration, the Business Plan (annex to the Minutes as set out in the Minute Book) be recommended to Council for approval.
- (2) That the Risk Register Plan be noted.
- (3) That, having given due consideration, Council be recommended to agree an increase in the level of Council Tax for Cherwell District Council of £5 for 2020/21 on a Band D property.
- (4) That, having given due consideration, Council be recommended to approve the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), Revenue Budget 2020/21 and Capital Programme including the growth and savings proposals included in the annex to the Minutes (as set out in the Minute Book).
- (5) That, having given due consideration, Council be recommended to approve a minimum level of General Fund reserves of £2m.
- (6) That, having given due consideration, Council be recommended to delegate authority 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 to/from 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 proposed Fees & Charges schedule (annex to the Minutes as set out in the Minute Book) be recommended to Council for approval.
- (8) That, having given due consideration, Council be recommended to approve the Treasury Management Strategy, including the Prudential Indicators, Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy and Affordable Borrowing Limit for 2020/21 (annex to the Minutes as set out in the Minute Book).
- (9) That, having given due consideration, Council be recommended to delegate authority to the Chief Finance Officer to make any technical changes necessary to the papers for the Council meeting of 24 February 2020, including changes related to the finalisation of the national Finance Settlement and any associated changes to Parish Precepts and Council Tax resulting from those changes.

Reasons

It is a legal requirement to set a balanced budget and the recommendations as outlined set out a way to achieve this for 2020/2021.

This report provides information around the various building blocks that make up the proposed budget for 2020/21 and beyond, allowing members to consider and scrutinise the elements of the budget and provide advice and guidance to the Executive to help them further shape both budget setting for 2020/21 and the MTFS for 2020/24.

Alternative options

Option 1: To reject the current proposals and make alternative recommendations. Members will not be aware of the medium-term financial forecast or implications of alternatives if they choose to take this option.

84 Monthly Performance, Finance and Risk Monitoring Report - December 2019

The Executive Director: Finance (Interim) and Acting Assistant Director: Performance and Transformation submitted a report which summarised the Council's Performance, Risk and Finance monitoring position as at the end of each month.

Resolved

- (1) That the monthly 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.

This report provides an update on progress made so far in 2019-20 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 2019-20 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.

85

Local Discretionary Business Rate Relief Scheme

The Executive Director Finance (Interim) submitted a report for Members to consider the proposed Local Discretionary Relief Policy and to seek approval of the local Discretionary Business Rate Relief Scheme for 2020-2021.

Resolved

- (1) That the contents of the report and any financial implications for the Council be noted.
- (2) That Full Council be recommended to approve the adoption of the Local Discretionary Business Rate Relief Scheme for 2020-2021.

Reasons

The Government expects billing authorities to use their discretionary powers under section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act to deliver a Local Discretionary Relief scheme. Each authority is required to devise its own Discretionary Relief Scheme.

Alternative options

Option 1: Members could choose not to recommend the proposed schemes but in view of the fact that expenditure will be reimbursed the Government expects billing authorities to grant relief to all qualifying ratepayers

86

Broadband and Digital Infrastructure

The Executive Director of Place and Growth (Interim) submitted a report which reviewed the Better Broadband for Oxfordshire Programme for Cherwell District Council to now consider extending its involvement in enabling further development locally through active involvement in the emerging Digital Infrastructure Delivery Partnership for Oxfordshire.

Resolved

- (1) That the success of the Better Broadband for Oxfordshire programme in exceeding the Government's delivery target for 'Superfast' broadband availability in Cherwell and the continuing progress to

extend full fibre and mobile coverage through existing resources be noted.

- (2) That the incorporation of the Oxfordshire Digital Infrastructure Strategy and Delivery Plan alongside the Memorandum of Understanding, recognising its important contribution to the delivery of the Housing and Growth Deal, the Cherwell Industrial Strategy and the Council's other plans and policies, be supported.
- (3) That it be agreed to actively participate in the Oxfordshire Digital Infrastructure Partnership, through its proposed Board, by appointing a Councillor (supported by a senior officer) to represent the interests of the Council, with the councillor appointment delegated to the Director Law and Governance, in consultation with the Leader.

Reasons

CDC is invited to join the Oxfordshire Digital Infrastructure Delivery Partnership to facilitate actions to achieve the goals to be created through the emerging Oxfordshire Digital Infrastructure Strategy and Delivery Plan.

The Partnership will meet and liaise regularly, involving a designated representative from each partner body. This is set-out in a non-legally binding Memorandum of Understanding.

The adoption of the Oxfordshire Digital Infrastructure and Delivery Plan by the end of this financial year would ensure that the Council is prepared – alongside its partners - for the Government to announce significant further funding opportunities.

Alternative options

Option 1: To cease involvement in the partnership provision of digital infrastructure and accept that investment will be delayed (or not delivered at all) in Cherwell, especially in rural areas;

Option 2: As proposed in this paper, to continue to work jointly with Oxfordshire County Council and partners, combining resources and bringing new resources to maximise the investment in digital infrastructure locally.

87 Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

88 Exclusion of the 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.

89 **Ministry of Housing, Communities, and Local Government (MHCLG)
Garden Town Capital Funding**

The Assistant Director Growth and Economy submitted an exempt report regarding Ministry of Housing, Communities, and Local Government (MHCLG) Garden Town Capital Funding.

Resolved

- (1) As set out in the exempt minutes.
- (2) As set out in the exempt minutes.
- (3) As set out in the exempt minutes.
- (4) As set out in the exempt minutes.
- (5) As set out in the exempt minutes.

Reasons

As set out in the exempt minutes.

Alternative options

As set out in the exempt minutes.

The meeting ended at 7.12 pm

Chairman:

Date: