



Council Minute Book

Monday 14 December 2020

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Cherwell District Council

Executive

Minutes of a meeting of the Executive held as a virtual meeting, on 2 November 2020 at 6.30 pm

Present:

Councillor Barry Wood (Chairman), Leader of the Council
Councillor George Reynolds (Vice-Chairman), Deputy Leader of the Council and Lead Member for Leisure Sport
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 Transformation
Councillor Lynn Pratt, Lead Member for Economy, Regeneration and Property
Councillor Dan Sames, Lead Member for Clean and Green

Also Present:

Councillor Sean Woodcock, Leader of the Labour Group

Officers:

Yvonne Rees, Chief Executive
Paul Feehily, Executive Director: Place and Growth (Interim)
Steve Jordan, Corporate Director Commercial Development, Assets & Investment & (Interim) Monitoring Officer
Jason Russell, Director Community Operations
Claire Taylor, Corporate Director Customers and Organisational Development
Lorna Baxter, Director of Finance & Section 151 Officer
David Peckford, Assistant Director: Planning and Development
Ed Potter, Assistant Director: Environmental Services
Sukdave Ghuman, Head of Legal Services
Robin Rogers, Head of Strategy
Sam Shepher, Policy Team Leader
Rebekah Morgan, Principal Planning Officer
Sam Thomas, Sustainability Project Officer
Natasha Clark, Governance and Elections Manager

57 **Declarations of Interest**

9. Amendments to the Graven Hill Phase 1 Local Development Order (Second Revision) 2017.

Councillor Dan Sames, Non Statutory Interest, as a CDC appointed non-Executive Director on Graven Hill Management Company and Graven Hill Development Company and would leave the meeting for the duration of the item.

Councillor Ian Corkin, Non Statutory Interest, as a CDC appointed non-Executive Director on Graven Hill Management Company and Graven Hill Development Company and would leave the meeting for the duration of the item.

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

There were no petitions or requests to address the meeting.

59 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 October 2020 were agreed as a correct record and would be signed by the Chairman in due course.

60 **Chairman's Announcements**

The Chairman referred to the changing national position, which was a big challenge to all with detailed guidance still awaited. The Chairman offered assurance to the public that he was confident the Chief Executive, leadership team and all staff would continue to work hard supporting the district and extended his thanks to all staff for their ongoing hard work during a challenging time.

At the invitation of the Chairman, the Chief Executive addressed Executive and provided assurance that the council had a dedicated workforce and was as prepared as could be. Councillors and residents would be updated when more information was available.

61 **Including Everyone. Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion Framework**

The Corporate Director for Customers and Organisational Development submitted a report which outlined the joint approach to equalities, diversity and inclusion being taken by Cherwell District Council in partnership with Oxfordshire County Council.

On behalf of Executive, the Chairman commended the work to date and noted that this would be an ongoing piece of work.

Resolved

- (1) That the Including Everyone, Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion Framework (Annex to the Minutes as set out in the Minutes Book) be agreed.
- (2) That the initial Including Everyone, Action Plan (Annex to the Minutes as set out in the Minutes Book) be agreed.

Reasons

The updating of the council's equality policy is a statutory requirement and this update has been undertaken in partnership with Oxfordshire County Council to align approaches. This is in-line with the agreed principles of joint working. It also reflects upon the serious inequalities within our communities. The updated draft policy is named 'Including Everyone. Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion Framework'.

This policy highlights the need for change and describes what we are seeking to tackle to create a more inclusive community, services and workplace in Cherwell.

Alternative options

Option 1: Not updating the policy.

This would not ensure that we fulfil our statutory obligations to have an up-to-date equalities framework.

Option 2: Updating the policy for Cherwell District Council only.

This would not be in line with the strategic partnership arrangement with Oxfordshire County Council. A shared approach with then separate action plans appropriate for both councils maximises the use of resources and aligns direction.

62

Car Parking Strategy

The Assistant Director Environmental Services submitted a report to present the revised car parking strategy with an action plan following Public Consultation and the impact of Coronavirus

Resolved

- (1) That the results of the Public Consultation be noted.
- (2) That, having given due consideration, the revised Car Parking Strategy and Car Parking Action Plan (Annexes to the Minutes as set out in the Minute Book) following feedback from public consultation and the impact of coronavirus be approved.

Reasons

The Car Parking Strategy and the associated action plan has been developed with the input of elected members and other key stakeholders.

The proposed strategy has now been brought back to Executive following public consultation. An equalities impact assessment has also been carried out which has not identified any areas of concern. In addition, the impact of coronavirus has been considered. The Action Plan will be reviewed on a regular basis and as a minimum updated on an annual basis as part of the business planning process

Alternative options

Option 1: To adopt the Car Parking Strategy & Action Plan as the strategy & action plan provides a framework for the development of car parking.

Option 2: To reject the Strategy and ask officers to reconsider

63

Civil Parking Enforcement

The Assistant Director Environmental Services submitted a report which sought support of a proposed application to the Department for Transport (DfT) for the introduction of a Special Enforcement Area (SEA) and bus lane enforcement powers across this district, South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse to provide Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) managed by Oxfordshire County Council.

In introducing the report, the Lead Member for Clean and Green, Councillor Sames, proposed that consideration of the item be deferred to the next meeting of Executive to allow for further discussions with partners to obtain clarity on finance matters, the location of spaces and assurance that local consultation will take place before any spaces are allocated. Councillor Reynolds seconded the proposal.

Resolved

- (1) That consideration of Civil Parking Enforcement be deferred to the next meeting of Executive to allow for further discussions with partners to obtain clarity on finance matters, the location of spaces and assurance that local consultation will take place before any spaces are allocated.

64

Amendments to the Graven Hill Phase 1 Local Development Order (Second Revision) 2017

The Assistant Director Planning and Development submitted a report to inform Executive of the proposed revisions to the adopted Graven Hill Phase 1 Local Development Order (Second Revision) 2017 and to seek authorisation for the adoption of the draft Graven Hill Phase 1 Local Development Order (Third Revision) 2020 subject to consideration of consultation responses with the Lead Member for Planning.

Resolved

- (1) That the proposed revisions to the Graven Hill Phase 1 Local Development Order (Second Revision) 2017 be noted.
- (2) That the draft Graven Hill Phase 1 Local Development Order (Third Revision) 2020 (Annex to the Minutes as set out in the Minute Book) be noted.
- (3) That the consultation process undertaken in respect of the draft LDO (Third Revision) 2020 and comments raised to date be noted.
- (4) That the requirement to notify the Secretary of State of a decision to adopt a Local Development Order as soon as practicable, and no later than 28 days after the Local Planning Authority has adopted the Order be noted.
- (5) That the Council's adoption of the draft Graven Hill Phase 1 Local Development Order (Third Revision) 2020 be authorised, subject to the Assistant Director –Planning and Development being satisfied that no substantive objections have been received in consultation with the Lead Member for Planning.

Reasons

The draft Graven Hill Phase 1 Local Development Order (Third Revision) 2020, would continue to facilitate and encourage self-build and custom build housing at Graven Hill by simplifying the planning process whilst providing certainty that individuality and variety in design would be supported within the parameters set by the Masterplan and Design Code already approved under the outline planning permission. The draft LDO 2020 is considered to remain effective in facilitating the delivery of custom build and self- build development at Graven Hill.

The consultation period is yet to expire, it is therefore recommended that providing that no substantive objections are received to the revision set out in this report and within the draft LDO 2020, that the proposed revision is adopted. The Secretary of State would be notified of the Executive's decision to adopt the LDO revision in accordance with Article 38(11) of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) Order 2015.

Alternative options

Option 1: Not to adopt the revised LDO

This option would mean that the existing LDO remains in place until 15 December 2020 when it expires. After this date the development would no longer benefit from an LDO and all future plots in Phase 1 would require a reserved matters application or individual planning permissions. This could impact on the rate of delivery of custom build and self-build units at Graven Hill.

Option 2: Further revisions to the LDO

Officers consider that the proposed revisions address the changes required (subject to consideration of any substantive objections received by 12 November 2020).

65 **Monthly Performance, Risk and Finance Monitoring Report**

The Director of Finance, and Head of Insight and Corporate Programmes submitted a report which summarised the council's performance, risk and finance monitoring position as at the end of september 2020.

Resolved

- (1) That the monthly performance, finance and risk monitoring report be noted.

Reasons

The Council is committed to performance, rick and budget management and reviews progress against its corporate priorities on a monthly basis.

Alternative options

Option 1: This report illustrates the Council's performance against the 2020-21 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.

66 **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

67 **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.

68 **Park and Charge Update Report**

The Assistant Director Environmental Services submitted an exempt report, which, following the recommendations approved by the Chief Executive using urgent action on 6 April 2020, and subsequently endorsed by Executive, updated executive of progress with the park and charge project and sought approval for changes to the original approved Heads of Terms (hot's)

approved following progression of commercial negotiations with project partners.

Resolved

- (1) That the progress made be noted.
- (2) That authority be delegated to the Assistant Director Environmental Services in consultation with Assistant Director: Property, Investment and Contract Management, Director: Law and Governance and the Lead Member for Clean and Green, to conclude legal agreements with the proposed Charge Point Operator and utility companies providing electricity to charge points based in principle on the revised Heads of Terms (HoTs) set out in the exempt annex to the Minutes (as set out in the Minute Book).
- (3) As set out in the exempt minutes.

Reasons

The Park and Charge project offers the council an investment via private capital to develop needed EV charging infrastructure within our car parks for predominantly residents who have no off road parking, but also for visitors and commuters. Additionally the council is receiving a revenue contribution to fund these commercial negotiations, and involvement in a countywide EV communication and education package for residents.

Alternative options

Option 1: Do Nothing

The Council could seek to close negotiations and not pursue this opportunity. If the Council was to install EV charging in the car parks, alternative conditions are unlikely to be as favourable in terms of the length or terms of the contracts.

Option 2: Reject the proposals and seek to renegotiate conditions

The Covid-19 impact upon the timescales of the project have resulted in a challenged schedule in order to meet the required progress from the funder Innovate UK. As a result if the recommendations are not approved there is a risk that the pilot car park installation and project progression will not happen to the funders satisfaction and subsequently the project could collapse.

The meeting ended at 7.52 pm

Chairman:

Date:

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Council

Record of Lead Member Decisions for the period October to December 2020

14 December 2020

Area of Responsibility	Decision Subject Matter
Lead Member for Planning	Charging for Street Naming and Numbering - Proposal to Increase Unit Charge from £25 to £30

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Cherwell District Council

Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee held as at virtual meeting, on 18 November 2020 at 6.30 pm

Present:

Councillor Mike Kerford-Byrnes (Chairman)
Councillor Hugo Brown (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Nicholas Mawer
Councillor Sean Woodcock

Substitute Members:

Councillor Barry Wood, (in place of Councillor Nathan Bignell)

Also Present:

Councillor Tony Ilott; Lead Member for Financial Management and Governance
Maria Grindley, Associate Partner, Ernst & Young (external audit)
Sue Gill, Ernst & Young (external audit)

Apologies for absence:

Councillor Hannah Banfield
Councillor Nathan Bignell
Councillor Conrad Copeland
Councillor Tom Wallis

Officers:

Lorna Baxter, Director of Finance & Section 151 Officer
Michael Furness, Assistant Director Finance
Sarah Cox, Chief Internal Auditor
Ian Dyson, Assistant Director of Finance, Oxfordshire County Council (OCC)
Louise Tustian, Head of Insight and Corporate Programmes
Robert Ducker, Senior Investigations Officer
Claire Taylor, Corporate Director Customers and Organisational Development
Joanne Kaye, Strategic Business Partner
Shaista Moughal, Account Closure Consultant
Sharon Hickson, Democratic and Elections Officer

28

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

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

There were no petitions or requests to address the meeting.

30 **Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 20 September 2020 were agreed as a correct record, to be signed by the Chairman in due course.

31 **Chairman's Announcements**

There were no chairman's announcements

32 **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

33 **Monthly Performance, Risk and Finance Monitoring Report - Quarter 2 / September 2020**

The Director of Finance and Head of Insight and Corporate Programmes, presented a report which summarised the Council's Performance, Risk and Finance monitoring position as at the end of September 2020.

The Head of Insight and Corporate Programmes informed members there had been one risk rating score change during September; L15 – Oxfordshire Growth Deal had decreased.

Resolved

- (1) That the monthly Performance, Risk and Finance Monitoring Report be noted.

34 **Review of Those Charged with Governance**

The Director of Finance presented a report which set out the response to Ernst & Young (EY) regarding the view of management assurance.

The Director of Finance confirmed the wording in paragraph 8 in relation to significant parties, would be checked to ensure correctness.

Resolved

- (1) That the draft response relating to management assurances from Those Charged with Governance (Annex to the Minutes as set out in the Minute Book) be noted.

- (2) That it be agreed that the Director of Finance, in conjunction with the Chairman of the Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee, make any further changes to the response relating to management assurances from Those Charged with Governance (Annex to the Minutes as set out in the Minute Book) that may arise as a result of the audit.

35 **External Audit - Annual Audit Opinion 2019/20**

The Director of Finance submitted a report which set out the External Audit Opinion for 2019/20.

Resolved

- (1) That the contents of the External Audit Opinion (ISA260) for 2019/20 be noted.

36 **Statement of Accounts Update**

The Director of Finance submitted a report asking Members to consider changes to be incorporated to the draft statement of accounts.

Resolved

- (1) That subject to the changes required, agree that the Draft Statement of Accounts 2019/20 be endorsed and once the final audit opinion is received the Director of Finance (S151 Officer), in consultation with the Chair of the Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee (or Vice Chair in case the Chairman is unavailable) be authorised to sign the accounts and it be noted that if any material changes to the accounts are required, then an additional committee meeting would be convened to consider the changes.
- (2) That the Director of Finance, in consultation with the Chair of the Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee (or Vice Chair in their absence), be authorised to make any further changes to the letters of representation that may arise during completion of the audit.

37 **2018/19 Audit Fee**

The Director of Finance submitted a report that made the Committee aware of the updates in the 2018/19 Audit Fee.

Members thanked Ernst & Young for the work carried out on the audit this year.

Resolved

- (1) That the £33,977 audit fee for work over and above the 2018/19 scale fee be noted.

38 **Treasury Management Report - Q2 (September 2020)**

The Director of Finance submitted a report which provided information on treasury management performance and compliance with treasury management policy and Prudential Indicators for 2020-21 as required by the Treasury Management Code of Practice.

Resolved

- (1) That the contents of the Q2 (September 2020) Treasury Management Report be noted.

39 **Progress of Counter Fraud Service**

The Director of Finance submitted a report providing an overview of the current progress of the Authority's counter fraud response following the delegation of authority in July 2018 to Oxford City Council.

The Senior Fraud Officer advised Members that the Fraud Team had been involved in the covid support grants payments to local businesses. The Team had investigated cases which had been referred as possibly fraudulent. Of these cases, four applicants had been interviewed and would be issued warning letters, one further applicant would be interviewed once Covid-19 lockdown restrictions had been lifted.

Resolved

- (1) That the current performance of the Corporate Fraud team be noted.
- (2) That after due consideration of the future work plans and the impact that this will have on future performance and income to the authority, the report be noted.

40 **Update on Counter-Fraud Arrangements for 2021/22**

The Director of Finance submitted a report presenting the revised arrangements for Counter-Fraud, to become fully operational from April 2021/22.

The Assistant Director of Finance (OCC) updated members on the recruitment to the counter-fraud service. Two Counter Fraud Officers had been appointed and recruitment of the Intelligence & Data Officer would begin shortly. These appointments would ensure that the team was fully resourced by 1 April 2021.

Resolved

- (1) The updated arrangements for Counter-Fraud for 2021/22 be noted.

41 **Redmond Review into Local Government Audit**

The Director of Finance submitted a report updating the Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee on the outcome of the Redmond Review into Local Government Audit.

In highlighting the recommendations set out as part of the review, the Director of Finance advised members that some of the recommendations would require Acts of Parliament before they could be adopted.

Resolved

- (1) That the findings of the Redmond Review be noted

42 **Work Programme**

The Committee considered the work programme for the remainder of 2019/20.

Members thanked the Finance department for the assistance given to External Auditors on the 2019/20 Statement of Accounts.

Resolved

- (1) That the work programme be noted.

The meeting ended at 7.49 pm

Chairman:

Date:

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Cherwell District Council

Budget Planning Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Budget Planning Committee held as a Virtual meeting, on 29 September 2020 at 6.30 pm

Present:

Councillor Nicholas Mawer (Chairman)
Councillor Carmen Griffiths (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Nathan Bignell
Councillor Phil Chapman
Councillor Conrad Copeland
Councillor David Hughes
Councillor Barry Richards
Councillor Douglas Webb
Councillor Fraser Webster
Councillor Lucinda Wing
Councillor Sean Woodcock

Substitute Members:

Councillor Tony Ilott (In place of Councillor Andrew McHugh)

Also Present:

Councillor Hugo Brown
Councillor Ian Middleton

Apologies for absence:

Councillor Andrew McHugh

Officers:

Lorna Baxter, Director of Finance & Section 151 Officer
Michael Furness, Assistant Director Finance
Claire Taylor, Corporate Director Customers and Organisational Development
Steve Jordan, Corporate Director Commercial Development, Assets & Investment & (Interim) Monitoring Officer
Aaron Hetherington, Democratic and Elections Team Leader
Emma Faulkner, Democratic and Elections Officer

12

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

13 **Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 18 August 2020 were confirmed as a correct record, to be signed by the Chairman in due course.

14 **Chairman's Announcements**

There were no Chairman's announcements.

15 **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

16 **Budget and Business Planning Process 2021/22 - 2025/26**

The Committee considered a report from the Director of Finance which detailed the proposed Budget and Business Planning Process for 2021/22 – 2025/26.

The report was being considered by Executive at its meeting on 5 October and Budget Planning Committee had been asked to provide their comments.

The Director of Finance advised the Committee that since the report had been published, the Government had announced that the Autumn Budget from the Chancellor would not be taking place in November as had been scheduled.

With regards to the already delayed Government Spending Review, the Director of Finance advised that a further announcement was anticipated during November 2020. If the review were to be further delayed, a one year spending review could be announced rather than a three year review.

The Director of Finance explained that due to the current uncertainty around Government funding, and the current funding gap for 2021/22, a savings target of £9.5million pounds had been set for 2021/22. Should the Business Rates reset be delayed, the funding gap arising from this would apply to the council in the 2022/23 year rather than 2021/22 as set out in the existing Medium Term Financial Strategy.

With regards to the proposed timetable for the Budget and Business Planning Process, the Committee requested that the timetable be reviewed to see if it would be possible for Budget Planning Committee to consider the Capital Bids earlier than currently planned.

Resolved

- (1) That the Budget and Business Planning Process 2021/22 – 2025/26 Executive Report be noted

- (2) That the Capital Bids element of the timetable be reviewed to establish whether it would be possible for Budget Planning Committee to consider them earlier in the Budget Planning Process

17 **Cherwell District Council Reserves Policy**

The Committee considered a report from the Director of Finance that detailed a proposed Draft Reserves Policy, for Budget Planning Committee to comment on ahead of its consideration by Executive as part of the suite of budget papers later in the financial year.

The Assistant Director – Finance explained that there were currently around 60 different reserves held, some of which had been in place for a number of years without a specific purpose. The reserves currently in place would be reviewed with the directorates that held them, to identify if there were any that could be used for alternative purposes. Once the policy was approved an annual review would take place, as part of the Budget and Business Planning Process to ensure that reserves were being held in line with the policy.

The Chairman encouraged all Committee Members to review the list of existing reserves, and feedback to officers any information which may be useful during the review.

Resolved

- (1) That the Draft Reserves Policy be noted

18 **Review of Committee Work Plan**

The Committee considered the indicative work programme for 2020/2021.

Resolved

- (1) That the verbal update be noted

The meeting ended at 7.20 pm

Chairman:

Date:

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Cherwell District Council

Budget Planning Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Budget Planning Committee held as a Virtual meeting, on 10 November 2020 at 6.30 pm

Present:

Councillor Nicholas Mawer (Chairman)
Councillor Carmen Griffiths (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Phil Chapman
Councillor Conrad Copeland
Councillor David Hughes
Councillor Andrew McHugh
Councillor Barry Richards
Councillor Douglas Webb
Councillor Fraser Webster
Councillor Lucinda Wing

Substitute Members:

Councillor Shaida Hussain (In place of Councillor Sean Woodcock)

Also Present:

Councillor Barry Wood - Leader of the Council
Councillor Tony Ilott – Lead Member Financial Management and Governance

Apologies for absence:

Councillor Nathan Bignell
Councillor Sean Woodcock

Officers:

Lorna Baxter, Director of Finance & Section 151 Officer
Michael Furness, Assistant Director Finance
Natasha Clark, Governance and Elections Manager
Emma Faulkner, Democratic and Elections Officer

19 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

20 **Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 29 September 2020 were confirmed as a correct record, to be signed by the Chairman in due course.

21 **Chairman's Announcements**

There were no Chairman's announcements.

22 **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

23 **Monthly Performance, Finance and Risk Monitoring Report**

The Committee considered a report from the Director of Finance that summarised Cherwell District Council's forecast revenue and capital outturn position for 2020/21, as at September 2020.

The Assistant Director – Finance explained that this report was the first budget monitoring report since the in-year budget savings of £2.4 million had been agreed.

The Committee was advised that there was currently a projected underspend of £0.3 million. Although costs relating to Covid-19 had created an overspend of £3.4 million, this had been offset against a reduction in business as usual costs of £3.7 million.

In response to questions from the Committee, the Assistant Director – Finance advised that slippage for capital projects would be included as part of the out-turn report to Executive during the Financial year end process.

Resolved

- (1) That the forecast revenue and capital outturn position for 2020/21 as at September 2020 be noted.

24 **CIPFA Financial Management Code**

The Committee considered a presentation from the Director of Finance, that gave details of the recently introduced Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Management Code.

CIPFA had developed the code in order to set out standards of financial management across local government, and to make it clear to Chief Financial Officers that the responsibility for good financial management sat with the entire Leadership Team of an authority, including senior officers and elected members.

The Code had also been introduced as a result of the financial difficulties faced by Northamptonshire County Council, which had led to the reorganisation of local government in Northamptonshire.

The Assistant Director – Finance explained that the code covered six key principles, with 17 standards broken down into seven sections – the responsibilities of the chief finance officer and leadership team; governance and financial management style; long to medium-term financial management; the annual budget; stakeholder engagement and business plan; monitoring financial performance; and external financial reporting.

The code required local authorities to prepare for the code during 2020/21, with full compliance expected during 2021/22. Local authorities could decide themselves how to monitor, report and scrutinise compliance with the code.

The Assistant Director – Finance explained that an early assessment of the requirements of the code had been undertaken. One area for improvement had been identified in relation to balance sheet monitoring.

In response to questions from the Committee, the Director of Finance said that there was not currently any reference to external auditors needing to audit against the code, however that could change.

Resolved

- (1) That the presentation on the CIPFA Financial Management Code be noted

25

Review of Committee Work Plan

The Committee considered the indicative work plan for 2020/21.

With regard to the December 2020 meeting of the Committee, the Director of Finance advised that the Council would not have received final details of the settlement figure, meaning that funding gap figures included in the Revenue and Capital proposals would still be assumptions.

Resolved

- (1) That the work plan be noted.

The meeting ended at 7.18 pm

Chairman:

Date:

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Cherwell District Council

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held as a Virtual meeting, on 7 October 2020 at 6.30 pm

Present:

Councillor Lucinda Wing (Chairman)
Councillor Tom Wallis (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Mike Bishop
Councillor Phil Chapman
Councillor Chris Heath
Councillor Shaida Hussain
Councillor Ian Middleton
Councillor Perran Moon
Councillor Les Sibley
Councillor Douglas Webb
Councillor Bryn Williams

Also Present:

Councillor Barry Wood - Leader of the Council
Councillor Ian Corkin - Lead Member – Customers and Transformation

Apologies for absence:

Councillor Tony Mephram

Officers:

Steve Jorden, Corporate Director Commercial Development, Assets & Investment & (Interim) Monitoring Officer
Claire Taylor, Corporate Director Customers and Organisational Development
Louise Tustian, Head of Insight and Corporate Programmes
Celia Prado-Teeling, Performance Team Leader
Robin Rogers, Head of Strategy
Samantha Shepherd, Policy Team Leader
Glenn Watson, Principal Governance Officer
Natasha Clark, Governance and Elections Manager
Lesley Farrell, Democratic and Elections Officer
Emma Faulkner, Democratic and Elections Officer

17

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

18 **Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 1 September 2020 were confirmed as a correct record, to be signed by the Chairman in due course.

19 **Chairman's Announcements**

There were no Chairman's announcements.

20 **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

21 **Monthly Performance, Risk and Finance Monitoring report**

The Committee considered a report from the Director of Finance and the Head of Insight and Corporate Programmes which detailed the Council's Performance, Risk and Finance Monitoring position as at the end of the first quarter of 2020/2021.

The report showed that performance had maintained a relatively stable position in light of the covid-19 situation.

With regard to the four indicators reporting as red – number of affordable homes delivered; maintaining a 5-year land supply; percentage of business rates collected; and percentage of non-major applications overturned at appeal - the Head of Insight and Corporate Programmes advised the Committee that all four had improved during the course of quarter two.

Resolved

- (1) That the monthly Performance, Risk and Finance Monitoring report for July 2020 be noted

22 **Including Everyone - Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Framework**

The Committee considered a report from the Corporate Director for Customers and Organisational Development which gave details of a proposed new inclusion framework.

In introducing the report, the Lead Member for Customers and Transformation explained that a partnership approach had been undertaken with Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) to draft the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion framework 'Including Everyone'.

A number of engagement sessions had been held with staff at both Cherwell District Council (CDC) and OCC, with information gathered relating to

experiences of inequality. Further staff sessions had then been held during August, to discuss the draft framework and seek feedback, which would shape the final policy.

The policy would be accompanied by individual action plans for CDC and OCC to take account of the unique circumstances and actions needed in each council.

The Executive were due to consider the draft Framework and the associated Action Plan at their meeting in November.

The Committee congratulated officers for the work that had been undertaken, and supported the draft framework.

With regards to suggestions for the CDC action plan, the Committee commented that not all residents had access to IT equipment or the internet at home, and in some areas of Banbury Polish speaking residents accounted for a large proportion of the electorate. It was therefore requested that digital inclusivity and community integration of non-English speakers be included.

The Committee also requested that consideration be given to anonymised job applications during the recruitment process.

Resolved

- (1) That the draft policy document be noted.
- (2) That digital inclusivity and community integration of non-English speakers be included in the associated action plan, which will be considered by the Executive at their meeting of 2 November 2020.

23

Constitution Review

The Committee considered a report from the Corporate Director – Commercial Development, Assets and Investment that detailed potential 'areas for further consideration' in relation to a review of the Council's Constitution.

Feedback from members, officers and the wider review of local authority constitutions, supported by Bevan Brittan, had identified the potential for positive change in several areas. Full Council would consider the recommendations made by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, including the establishment of a cross-party Member working group, at its meeting later in October.

In considering the areas for review, Members of the Committee expressed concerns relating to the proposed review of the time limit for public addresses and the possible introduction of a limit on the total number of public speakers permitted to register per item. It was felt that these could be seen as ways of restricting public input into the democratic process.

The Corporate Director – Commercial Development, Assets and Investment assured the Committee that all areas for review would be discussed in full by the working group who would make proposals for consideration by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee before final consideration by Full Council.

Resolved

That full Council be recommended to agree:

- (1) the areas for further consideration outlined in paragraph 3 of the report (annexe to the Minutes as set out in the Minute Book).
- (2) the establishment of a politically balanced, informal cross-party working group to review proposed changes.

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Work Programme 2020/2021

The Committee considered the indicative work programme for 2020/2021.

Democratic and Elections Officers advised the Committee that an update on the Constitution Review would be scheduled for the December 2020 meeting, along with an update on the action plan relating to the Community Nature Plan.

Resolved

- (1) That, subject to the inclusion of a Constitution Review update and Community Nature Plan at the December 2020 meeting, the indicative work programme be noted

The meeting ended at 8.25 pm

Chairman:

Date: