

Cherwell District Council

Budget Planning Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Budget Planning Committee held at Virtual meeting, on 5 January 2021 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 Lucinda Wing
Councillor Sean Woodcock

Substitute Members:

Councillor Les Sibley (In place of Councillor Fraser Webster)

Also Present:

Councillor Barry Wood - Leader of the Council
Councillor George Reynolds - Deputy Leader of the Council and Lead Member for Leisure and Sport
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

Apologies for absence:

Councillor Nathan Bignell
Councillor Douglas Webb
Councillor Fraser Webster

Officers:

Yvonne Rees, Chief Executive
Ansaf Azhar, Corporate Director of Public Health & Wellbeing
Stephen Chandler, Corporate Director Adults & Housing Services
Steve Jorden, Corporate Director Commercial Development, Assets & Investment
Jason Russell, Corporate Director Communities
Claire Taylor, Corporate Director Customers and Organisational Development
Lorna Baxter, Director of Finance & Section 151 Officer
Anita Bradley, Director Law and Governance & Monitoring Officer
Michael Furness, Assistant Director Finance

Nicola Riley, Assistant Director: Wellbeing
Paul Nicol, New Business & Systems Implementation Manager
Natasha Clark, Governance and Elections Manager
Emma Faulkner, Democratic and Elections Officer

32 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

33 **Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 15 December 2020 were confirmed as a correct record, to be signed by the Chairman in due course.

34 **Chairman's Announcements**

The Chairman welcomed Anita Bradley, Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer, to her first meeting of the Committee.

35 **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

36 **2021/22 Capital Bids**

The Committee considered a report from the Director of Finance which detailed proposed Capital Bids for 2021/22, and those schemes which had been planned for 2020/21 which would be delayed until 2021/22 (slippage).

The Assistant Director – Finance explained that if all bids and slippage were approved, the Capital programme for 2021/22 would total £22.8 million.

The Committee then heard more details from each Director regarding bids and slippage in their directorates.

In response to questions regarding bid reference CAP2115 – IT Shared Services, the Business and Systems Implementation Manager explained that the bid would cover a mixture of service implementation, costs of third party providers, a small amount of hardware and cloud based technology.

In connection with bid reference CAP2116 – new chargeable garden & food waste, the Corporate Director - Communities explained that work was ongoing regarding the proposal to introduce food waste collection, but the bid had been included to ensure funding was available to implement the service if the proposal was approved.

In response to questions from the Committee regarding new refuse collections vehicles, the Corporate Director - Communities explained that the policy of the Council was to purchase vehicles rather than lease them, as they were maintained by an in-house Fleet Management team. Electric vehicles were being considered as an alternative to diesel vehicles, however choices were limited as larger capacity vehicles were not yet readily available as electric.

The Committee requested that Executive give consideration to running a pilot food waste collection scheme, to ascertain the level of interest from residents and also any impact on the level of green waste collected.

In relation to the compost resulting from the green waste collections, the Committee asked if consideration could be given to using smaller filters, to give an improved quality of compost that could potentially be used in the domestic market.

With regard to slippage of the vehicle replacement programme, the Committee asked that consideration be given to hydrogen powered vehicles as well as electric vehicles.

In connection with the slippage of the on street recycling bins scheme, the Committee requested that discussions take place with Town/Parish Councils regarding the possibility of siting additional recycling bins across the district, as there were some high usage areas public areas that currently did not have recycling bins.

With regard to bid reference CAP2105 - Bicester Dovecote, the Leader of the Council clarified that the site had come in to the ownership of Cherwell District Council as a result of the transfer of the old library site in Bicester. The Committee felt that as an historical asset Bicester Town Council may wish to take ownership of the Dovecote, and requested that relevant discussions take place.

In relation to bid reference TBC – solar panels at Castle Quay, the Corporate Director – Commercial Development, Assets & Investment explained that the scheme would be funded via an external grant so there would be no cost to the council. The bid did however need to be included on the Capital programme.

Regarding the slippage of the Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) scheme, the Corporate Director – Adults & Housing Services advised the Committee that a delay of three months was anticipated. This was as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic and the first national lockdown in March 2020 when work on all schemes had stopped. There were also ongoing issues with the supply chain as a result of the pandemic.

The Committee having considered the Capital bids and slippage, the Assistant Director – Finance presented the draft Capital Strategy for 2021/22. It was a requirement of the Prudential Code for Capital Finance for the Council to have a strategy, that gave an overview of the capital programme,

how it would be financed and the overall levels of debt the Council would have.

Resolved

- (1) That the Capital Bids for the 2021/22 Budget, and the schemes that have not been completed or started in 2020/21 and are proposed to be taken into 2021/22, be noted.
- (2) That the Executive be provided with the following feedback in relation to the Capital Bids and 2020/21 schemes not yet started (slippage):
 - Bid CAP2116 – New Chargeable Garden & Food Waste - That consideration be given to a pilot for food waste collections
 - Bid CAP2116 – New Chargeable Garden & Food Waste - The use of smaller filters be considered in relation to compost recycling, to allow use of the compost in the domestic market as well as agriculture
 - On street Recycling Bins (slippage) - That discussions take place with Town/Parish Councils regarding the possibility of siting additional recycling bins across the district
 - Vehicle Replacement Programme (slippage) - That consideration be given to hydrogen powered replacement vehicles, as well as electric vehicles
 - Bid CAP2105 Bicester Dovecote - That discussions take place with Bicester Town Council regarding ownership of the Dovecote
 - Bid TBC – Solar Panels at Castle Quay - Acknowledgement that the proposed solar panels will be externally funded but the item needs to remain on the Capital programme
- (3) That the proposed Capital Strategy for 2021/22 be noted.

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Review of Committee Work Plan

The Assistant Director – Finance gave a verbal update regarding the work plan.

It was anticipated that the following items would be considered at the next meeting of the Committee on 19 January 2021:

- Review of Reserves
- Fees and Charges
- Financial Management Code and Self-Assessment
- Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement

Resolved

- (1) That the verbal update be noted.

The meeting ended at 7.57 pm

Chairman:

Date: