

Cherwell District Council

Budget Planning Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Budget Planning Committee held at Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury, Oxon OX15 4AA, on 13 July 2021 at 6.30 pm

Present:

Councillor Nicholas Mawer (Chairman)

Councillor Phil Chapman
Councillor Conrad Copeland
Councillor John Donaldson
Councillor Shaida Hussain
Councillor Andrew McHugh
Councillor Douglas Webb
Councillor Fraser Webster
Councillor Sean Woodcock

Also Present:

Councillor Barry Wood – Leader of the Council.

Apologies for absence:

Councillor Carmen Griffiths
Councillor David Hughes
Councillor Lucinda Wing

Officers:

Michael Furness, Assistant Director Finance
Kerry MacDermott, Interim Assistant Director for Revenues and Benefits Services
Anita Bradley, Director Law and Governance & Monitoring Officer
Natasha Clark, Governance and Elections Manager
Lesley Farrell, Democratic and Elections Officer

1 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

2 Minutes

The minutes of the meetings of the Committee on 9 March 2021 and 19 May 2021 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

3 **Chairman's Announcements**

There were no Chairman's announcements.

4 **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

5 **Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2022-23**

The Director of Finance submitted a report which enabled members to consider the current banded scheme for Council Tax Reduction.

In response to questions from the Committee the Interim Assistant Director for Revenues and Benefits Services explained that the hardship fund would still be available in 2022-23. A proactive view had been taken in 2020-2021 and maximum grants were applied where applicable and this approach would continue.

In response to comments regarding the extent of advertising the hardship fund, the Interim Assistant Director for Revenues and Benefits Services undertook to advise Committee Members outside of the meeting with details of where information was made available.

Resolved

- (1) That the contents of the report and any financial implications to the Council be noted.
- (2) That it be recommended to Executive that the current Council Tax Reduction Scheme be retained for 2022-2023.
- (3) That no consultation take place, due to the recommendation to retain the current scheme.

6 **Monthly Finance Monitoring Report – Quarter 4 2020-21**

The Director of Finance submitted a report which summarised Cherwell District Council's revenue and capital outturn position for 2020/21.

Resolved

- (1) That the finance elements of the report be noted.

7 **Review of the 2021-22 Budget Process**

The Director of Finance submitted a report which provided the Budget Planning Committee with a review of the 2021/22 Budget Process.

In considering the report, some Members commented on the timing of the Committee's review of Capital Bids. Members requested that they should be considered earlier in the process alongside Revenue Proposals. Members also suggested that consideration should be given to a mechanism to enable urgent items to be considered outside the normal budget planning process.

In response to questions from the Committee the Assistant Director of Finance explained that the residents survey on the Council's priorities and services was in the planning stage and was expected to be carried out during the summer.

Resolved

- (1) That the review of the 2021-2022 Budget and Business Planning Process be noted.
- (2) That Executive be recommended to incorporate the following proposed improvements into the 2022-2023 Budget and Business Planning Process;
 - Review how the Council allocates its resources to ensure they are aligned with the Council's priorities;
 - Carry out additional engagement with residents on the Council's priorities and services it provides to inform savings proposals;
 - Look to ensure that the Capital Budget proposals are developed to the same timeline as the revenue budget proposals and that these are considered earlier in the financial year;
- (3) That it be recommended to Executive that a process be introduced for urgent Capital Bids to be considered outside of the normal budget planning process.

8 **Review of Committee Work Plan**

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

In response to questions from the Committee, the Chairman advised that items to be considered for the workplan should be emailed to the Chairman and the Director of Finance.

Resolved

- (1) That the verbal update be noted.

The meeting ended at 7.10 pm

Chairman:

Date: