

Cherwell District Council

Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board

Minutes of a meeting of the Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board held at Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury, OX15 4AA, on 11 December 2012 at 7.30 pm

Present: Councillor Nicholas Mawer (Chairman)
Councillor Douglas Webb (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Alyas Ahmed
Councillor Maurice Billington
Councillor Margaret Cullip
Councillor Neil Prestidge
Councillor Nigel Randall
Councillor Lawrie Stratford
Councillor Douglas Williamson
Councillor Sean Woodcock

Substitute Members: Councillor Andrew Beere (In place of Councillor Patrick Cartledge)

Apologies for absence: Councillor Patrick Cartledge
Councillor Jon O'Neill

Officers: Karen Curtin, Head of Finance and Procurement
Nicola Jackson, Corporate Finance Manager
Beth Baines, Strategic Finance Accountant
Natasha Clark, Team Leader, Democratic and Elections
Sharon Hickson, Assistant Democratic and Elections Officer

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Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

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Urgent Business

There was no urgent business.

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Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 16 October 2012 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Budget Scrutiny 2013/14

The Chairman welcomed the Head of Finance and Procurement, the Corporate Finance Manager and the Strategic Finance Accountant to the meeting and explained that this would be an opportunity for Members to review the recommendations agreed at the October meeting of the Board and agree any additional recommendations related to the 2013/2014 budget, in particular in relation to capital bids whereby additional information had been requested. An informal budget scrutiny meeting had been held prior to the Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board meeting at which Members had considered in depth supplementary information pertaining to capital bids.

The Board's recommendations would be submitted to the Executive for consideration in January 2013. The final budget would be presented to the Council for consideration on 25 February 2013.

Capital Bids

At the Board's October meeting, Members had agreed that recommendations on the following capital bids be deferred:

- i. Replacement Air Conditioning Plant to Main Chamber, Bodicote House
- ii. Highfield Depot – Proposed Redevelopment of Office and Welfare Facilities
- iii. Planning and Building Control replacement of ICLIPSE (Northgate)
- iv. Corporate – Electronic Document and Records Management System (EDRMS)
- v. Joint Intranet (CDC and SNC)
- vi. Thorpe Lane Hard Standing Depot

Replacement Air Conditioning Plant to Main Chamber, Bodicote House

The Head of Finance and Procurement confirmed that this bid was not part of the capital bid for works associated with the findings of the conditions survey rather it was a separate bid to undertake work that had previously been identified. Members were satisfied that as the work was essential and there were also potential cost and environmental benefits the bid should be recommended for inclusion in the capital programme 2013/14.

Notwithstanding their support for the bid, Members raised concerns as to why the work had not been undertaken previously.

Highfield Depot – Proposed Redevelopment of Office and Welfare Facilities

(Highfield Depot Relocation Feasibility – resubmitted Highfield Depot – Proposed Redevelopment of Office and Welfare Facilities bid): Following initial consideration of this bid, it had been resubmitted as a bid for capital funding to undertake a full technical redevelopment assessment and valuation of the Highfield Depot site. The Board agreed that this bid should be recommended for inclusion in the 2013/14 capital programme up to a value of £65k as it represented the only way forward as it was essential to have all relevant information to enable a plan to be developed about the future of the site. Members recognised that the procurement exercise to appoint a consultant to carry out the feasibility study could result in a lesser cost.

Corporate – Electronic Document and Records Management System (EDRMS) and Planning and Building Control replacement of ICLIPSE (Northgate)

The Board was advised that the Planning and Building Control replacement of ICLIPSE (Northgate) bid had been incorporated in the EDRMS bid. Following the receipt of supplementary information and consideration of a draft business case Members agreed to recommend that the Executive earmark reserve capital receipts to a maximum of £700k for the implementation of EDRMS, subject to:

- A full business case being brought forward
- Site visits being made available for Members to see and hear about actual benefits realised in other councils, and the systems used
- If the subsequent business case is approved, which delivers this significant business change in stages in the way that best enables and supports delivery of strategic priorities
- South Northamptonshire Council Cabinet taking a similar decision

The Board stressed that the detailed business case should cover how the change would be managed; the migration of other systems and the arrangements to be put in place to backfill officers as required; cashable and non-cashable savings.

The Board recommended that the capital receipts should be earmarked to ensure capital funding would be available should the detailed business case be supported and not allocated to other projects.

As the bid was for a joint project with South Northamptonshire Council, Members requested that officers provide feedback following consideration of the bid by SNC Members.

Joint Intranet (CDC and SNC)

Following consideration of supplementary information, the Board agreed that this bid should not be recommended for inclusion in the capital programme 2013/14 as Members felt that it was not a priority at the current time

Thorpe Lane Hard Standing Depot

Following consideration of supplementary information relating to this bid, Members agreed that it was essential that the bid be recommended for inclusion in the 2013/14 capital programme to address and potential health and safety issues before they arise.

Concessions Policy

As part of a previous budget scrutiny process, Members had identified the need for a consistent approach to concessions across the authority. As part of the 2013/14 budget scrutiny process nominated Board Members had met with Finance Officers to reviews the concessions currently offered by the council and third parties. It had been noted that there were discrepancies and focus should be on developing overarching principles taking into consideration services CDC delivers, services externally delivered and which groups were currently in receipt of concessions.

The Board noted that the concessions review could only give guidance for services delivered by CDC and guide through Service Level Agreements for

third party providers. It was further noted that an equality impact assessment would be need to be undertaken. It was agreed that work on concessions principles would be ongoing with a view to a policy being implemented with effect from April 2013.

Recommendations to Executive

The Board endorsed the remainder of the recommendations to Executive that had been agreed at their October meeting and noted that they, together with the additional recommendations agreed earlier during the agenda item, would be submitted to the 7 January 2013 meeting of Executive for consideration as part of draft one of the 2013/14 budget.

Budget Context and Budget Scrutiny 2013/14 ~ Future Items

The Head of Finance and Procurement advised the Board that the council was still awaiting the Government settlement and until this was received, the draft budget could not be completed. It was anticipated that the settlement announcement would be on 19 December.

The Chairman advised the Board that Members would have the opportunity to review draft one of the 2013/14 budget at their January meeting. In addition, Members would receive an update on progress against recommendations from previous budget scrutiny reviews.

Resolved

- (1) That the recommendations, conclusions and comments relating to the Capital Programme 2013/14, the Environmental Services and Homelessness budgets and Concessions Policy as set out at appendix 1 to these minutes be submitted to the Executive for consideration as part of draft 1 of the 2013/14 budget.

44 Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board Work Programme 2012/13

The Board considered a report of Head of Law and Governance which presented the Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board work programme 2012/13 for consideration.

Resolved

- (1) That the Resources & Performance Scrutiny Board work programme 2012/13 be noted.

The meeting ended at 8.10 pm

Chairman:

Date: