

Cherwell District Council

Budget Planning Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Budget Planning Committee held at Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury, OX15 4AA, on 21 January 2014 at 6.30 pm

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

Councillor Ken Atack
Councillor Andrew Beere
Councillor Maurice Billington
Councillor Tim Emptage
Councillor Neil Prestidge
Councillor Nigel Randall
Councillor Barry Wood

Apologies for absence: Councillor Margaret Cullip
Councillor Russell Hurle
Councillor Lawrie Stratford

Officers: Tim Madden, Interim Head of Finance and Procurement
Jo Pitman, Head of Transformation
Nicola Jackson, Corporate Finance Manager
Rakesh Kumar, GIS Manager
Dave Parry, Democratic and Elections Officer

40 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

41 Urgent Business

The Chairman reported that he had agreed to accept one item of urgent business, Review of Capital Process, as a decision was required by the Committee before their next meeting on a matter that had arisen since publication of the agenda. The item would be taken after agenda item 7.

42 Minutes

The Minutes of the meetings of the Committee held on 26 November and 2 December 2013 were agreed as correct records and signed by the Chairman.

43 **Chairman's Announcements**

The Chairman had no announcements.

44 **Review of IT Capital Bids**

The Committee considered a number of IT Capital Bids and noted that, irrespective of any harmonisation benefits that might accrue in the event of a possible future joint IT team between Cherwell District Council, South Northamptonshire Council and Stratford District Council, these were all considered essential to current business requirements.

The Committee noted that the Transformation Working Group had identified the need for an IT Strategy and that this would be progressed and considered by members in due course.

Members suggested that when future projects were submitted for consideration, reports and bid document contain details of the key reasons why the project might fail and the measures in place or to be taken to prevent this.

Resolved

- (1) That the five IT Capital Bids (Citrix – Expansion to Support Agile Working (CDC); Electronic Document and Records Management Pilot jointly with SNC; Aerial Imagery; Microsoft Hyper – V, and VMware virtual centre site recovery software) be recommended to Executive for approval.

45 **2014/15 Base Budget, including Capital Bids**

The Committee considered a report of the Interim Head of Finance and Procurement detailing the latest position for the 2014-15 General Fund Budget.

The Committee that there would be further financial challenges in 2015/16 and acknowledged that the Council's policy of moving away from reliance on the Revenue Support Grant was prudent. The interim Head of Finance and Procurement advised Members that the Joint Management Team continued to investigate every possibility for achieving further efficiency savings.

Resolved

- (1) That the report be noted.

46 **Review of Capital Process**

The Committee considered a report of the Interim Head of Finance and Procurement reviewing the process used by the Committee to score capital bids, and considering ways in which the process could be improved.

Member supported the various measures detailed in the report and suggested several further measures regarding the explanation of savings or earnings; use of language; the separation of bids relating to joint arrangements or that were needed for health and safety reasons, or if borrowing was to be required.

Resolved

- (1) That the refinements detailed in the report be applied to the 2015/16 capital bid process.
- (2) That consideration also be given to incorporating the following additional refinements:
 - Revenue savings or earnings to be better explained – particularly whether one-off or on-going.
 - Consistency of language and terminology.
 - Separating bids that involve joint arrangements with other bodies or that are necessary to address Health and Safety requirements.
 - If borrowing required, and the costs involved.

The meeting ended at 7.30 pm

Chairman:

Date: