

Cherwell District Council

Budget Planning Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Budget Planning Committee held at Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury, OX15 4AA, on 11 March 2014 at 6.30 pm

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

Councillor Ken Atack
Councillor Andrew Beere
Councillor Tim Emptage
Councillor Russell Hurle
Councillor Nigel Randall
Councillor Lawrie Stratford
Councillor Barry Wood

Substitute Members: Councillor Rose Stratford (In place of Councillor Margaret Cullip)

Also Present::

Apologies for absence: Councillor Maurice Billington
Councillor Margaret Cullip
Councillor Neil Prestidge

Officers: Tim Madden, Interim Head of Finance and Procurement
Nicola Jackson, Corporate Finance Manager
Dave Parry, Democratic and Elections Officer

47 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

48 **Urgent Business**

There was no urgent business.

49 **Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 15 January, 2014 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

50 **Chairman's Announcements**

The Chairman had no announcements.

51 **Capital Programme 2013-14**

The Committee considered a report of Interim Head of Finance and Procurement which provided a summary update on the Council's current capital programme.

In considering the report, Members noted the level of slippage and commented that it appeared some projects required a longer period to achieve completion than had been originally anticipated, which may have been due to some bids being a little ambitious. The Committee agreed that consideration should be to some form of Member review process that would allow closer scrutiny of progress throughout the year.

The Committee requested that further information should be submitted in respect of the following projects: Football Development Plan in Banbury; Car Park Refurbishments; Energy Efficiency Projects; Recycling Bins: Access to Highfield Depot / Highfield Depot – develop office & welfare facilities; Land at Claypits Lane, Bicester.

Resolved

- (1) That the report be noted.
- (2) That officers be requested to submit a report to the next meeting detailing further information in respect of the schemes: Football Development Plan in Banbury; Car Park Refurbishments; Energy Efficiency Projects; Recycling Bins: Access to Highfield Depot / Highfield Depot – develop office & welfare facilities; Land at Claypits Lane, Bicester.

52 **Quarter 3 Financial Performance**

The Committee considered a report of the Interim Head of Finance and Procurement (previously presented to Executive on 3 March 2014) which summarised the Council's Revenue and Capital performance for the first nine months of the financial year 2013-14, and providing projections for the full 2013-14 period.

The report also detailed treasury management performance, and compliance with treasury management policy during 2013-14 as required by the Treasury Management Code of Practice.

In considering the report, the Committee acknowledged the impact of the Sainsbury's development in Bicester on the reduction in car parking income, and requested that further information be submitted in due course.

In response to Members' queries regarding monies the Council still held in Icelandic investments, the Committee was advised that, whilst these were currently held in an escrow account, the interest rate received was favourable, and the Council remained fully engaged with the Local Government Associations negotiations to receive eventual full repayment.

Resolved

- (1) That the recommendations detailed below, made to Executive on 3 March, 2014 be noted:
 - To note the projected revenue and capital position at December 2013.
 - To note the quarter 3 (Q3) performance against the 2013-14 investment strategy and the financial returns from the two funds.
 - To note the contents and the progress against the Corporate Procurement Action Plan (detailed in Appendix 1) and the procurement savings achieved at December 2013 (detailed in Appendix 2).

53

Review of Reserves

The Committee considered a report of Interim Head of Finance and Procurement which detailed a review of earmarked reserves for 2014-15.

In considering the report, Members commented that two schemes ('Brighter Futures' and 'Brighter Futures Reserve Account') appeared to be the same and requested further information, including whether the two items should be consolidated into one.

The Committee queried the income received from Section 106 Planning Agreements by both the Council and the Oxfordshire County Council, and whether the District Council could be left with any funding gaps once the monies were exhausted.

Resolved

- (1) That the review of earmarked reserves 2014-15 be noted.
- (2) That further information be provided in respect of the schemes 'Brighter Futures' and 'Brighter Futures Reserve Account', including whether the two items should be consolidated.
- (3) That a report be submitted to a future meeting regarding Section 106 Agreement income.

54

Fees and Charges Review 2014-15

The Committee considered a report of the Interim Head of Finance and Procurement which summarised the fees and charges that had been built into the 2014-15 revenue budget for council products and services.

The Committee noted that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had previously undertaken a review regarding the introduction of a policy in respect of concessions, and queried whether the report should make some reference to this. The Interim Head of Finance and Procurement undertook to investigate the matter.

In considering the report, the Committee discussed the charge applied regarding requests to investigate high hedges and raised concern that a person suffering as a result of a high hedge was further penalised by having to meet the fee. Members suggest that consideration should be given to the principle of making a charge.

The Committee requested that future reports should include additional information on rental/lease income and how frequently reviews were undertaken; that increases should be expressed both in percentage terms and in the actual monetary amount, and that it be identified where fees levels were set by statute.

Resolved

- (1) That the contents of the report be noted.
- (2) That officers be requested to ensure future reports include information on rental / lease income and how frequently reviews are undertaken; that increases be expressed both in percentage terms and in the actual monetary amount, and it be identified where fees levels were set by statute.

55

Work Programme

The Committee reviewed the Work Programme 2013/14.

Resolved

- (1) That, subject to the addition of items relating to Capital Programme update; Earmarked Reserves: 'Brighter Futures' and 'Brighter Futures Reserve Account', and Section 106 Agreement income, the work programme be noted.

The meeting ended at 7.52 pm

Chairman:

Date: