

Cherwell District Council

Budget Planning Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Budget Planning Committee held at Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury, OX15 4AA, on 3 November 2015 at 6.30 pm

Present: Councillor Nicholas Mawer (Chairman)
Councillor Nigel Randall (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Ken Atack
Councillor Ian Corkin
Councillor Carmen Griffiths
Councillor Russell Hurle
Councillor Mike Kerford-Byrnes
Councillor Barry Richards
Councillor Douglas Webb
Councillor Sean Woodcock

Apologies
for
absence: Councillor Colin Clarke
Councillor Barry Wood

Officers: Martin Henry, Director of Resources / Section 151 Officer
Paul Sutton, Head of Finance and Procurement
Geni Hotchkiss, Business Support Unit Manager
George Hill, Corporate Accountant
Richard Stirling, Corporate Procurement Manager
Natasha Clark, Team Leader, Democratic and Elections
Lesley Farrell, Assistant Democratic and Elections Officer

28 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

29 **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business

30 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 6 October 2015 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

31 **Chairman's Announcements**

There were no Chairman's announcements.

32 **Quarter 2 2015-16 - Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring Report**

The Head of Finance and Procurement submitted a report which summarised the Council's Revenue and Capital position as at the end of the first half of the financial year 2015-16 and projections for the full 2015-16 period.

In response to Members' comments, the Head of Finance and Procurement confirmed the agency staff were used sparingly and only where essential. The majority of vacant posts covered by agency staff were short term and the cost was covered by departmental budgets. With the current review of all services that was underway, it was anticipated that the interim use of agency staff would continue but the service reviews would address the need for the use in the longer term.

In response to the Committee's request for further information on vacant commercial units, an analysis of reasons why Bicester commercial units were more successfully let than Banbury commercial units and the work of the Town Centre Co-ordinators. The director of resources agreed to circulate this information outside of the meeting as soon as it was available

In response to Members' questions regarding recycling revenue, the Head of Finance and Procurement explained that the current contract had 18 months to run and a new contract would be procured when it came to an end.

In considering the Capital Spend and Year End Projections, the Committee raised concerns about the amount of Capital Slippage and requested more information as to when the projects were originally budgeted for and why they were not going to be completed in 2015/16. Members requested that this information be brought to the next meeting and compared alongside new Capital Bids.

The Committee requested clarification as to when Audio Visual equipment replacement had been added to the Capital Bids programme, why temporary repairs were being made to car parks when car park refurbishments had been budgeted for and clarification of the Capital Slippage of the Microsoft Licensing Agreement.

The Director of Resources agreed to collate this information and circulate to the Committee as soon as possible.

Resolved

- (1) That the projected revenue and capital position as at September 2015 be noted.

33 **Review of Procurement Strategy Progress**

The Head of Finance and Procurement submitted a report which summarised the Council's Procurement Strategy progress for q2 of the financial year 2015-16.

In considering the report, some of the Committee members raised concerns about the savings achieved and questioned if the original budgets had been realistic. The Committee requested that future reports contain details of possible savings on current shared procurement opportunities.

The Director of Resources explained that procurement opportunities varied considerably so targets were not easy to assess or measure.

Resolved

- (1) That the progress made during Quarter 2 2015/16 in implementing the Council's Procurement Strategy be noted.

34 **2015-2016 Business Rates Quarterly Monitoring Report**

The Director of Resources submitted a report which provided an update on the business rates position as at the end of Quarter 2 of the 2015-2016 financial year.

In response to comments from the Committee, the Director of Resources advised that if a significant employer went out of business, Cherwell District Council would not go below the base line to be in the pool and were not exposed because of the number and size of businesses the district covered.

Resolved

- (1) That the contents of the report be noted.

35 **Medium Term Revenue Plan - Update**

The Head of Finance and Procurement presented a report which provided members of the Budget Planning Committee with an update on the Council's Medium Term Revenue Plan.

In response to questions from the Committee, the Director of Resources confirmed that details of the New Homes Bonus allocation would be circulated to the Committee outside of the meeting.

Resolved

- (1) That the contents of the report be noted.

Review of Committee Work Plan

The Committee considered the Work Plan for 2015/16.

The Head of Finance and Procurement explained that work was still underway on the Review of Reserves as it was a major piece of work and would therefore be submitted to the Committee's December meeting.

Resolved

- (1) That subject to the addition of Review of Reserves to December, the work plan be noted

The meeting ended at 8.35 pm

Chairman:

Date: