

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 16 July 2024 at 6.30 pm

Present: Councillor Edward Fraser Reeves (Chairman)
Councillor Matt Hodgson (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Gordon Blakeway
Councillor Andrew Crichton
Councillor Rob Parkinson
Councillor Rob Pattenden
Councillor David Rogers
Councillor Les Sibley
Councillor Dom Vaitkus

Apologies for absence: Councillor Tom Beckett
Councillor Frank Ideh
Councillor Kieron Mallon

Also Present: Councillor Lesley McLean, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources

Officers: Joanne Kaye, Head of Finance and Deputy Section 151 Officer
Jacey Scott, Head of Revenues and Benefits
Leanne Lock, Strategic Business Partner - Business Partnering & Controls
Sandra Ganpot, Benefits Services and Performance Manager
Natasha Clark, Governance and Elections Manager

3 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

4 Minutes

The minutes of the meetings held on 5 March 2024 and 22 May 2024 were agreed as correct records and signed by the Chairman.

5 Chairman's Announcements

There were no Chairman's announcements.

6 **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

7 **Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2025 - 26**

The Assistant Director of Finance submitted a report to enable Members to consider the proposed banded scheme for Council Tax Reduction (CTR) for 2025/26.

In response to questions from the Committee regarding promotion and awareness of the scheme, the Head of Revenues and Benefit Services and Benefit Services and Performance Manager explained that information was available online on the council website, leaflets were included in council tax bills and the Department for Work and Pensions, and the council's Customer Services team signposted and promoted the scheme. Customer Services advisors also assisted residents to fill in the application.

In response to Members' questions regarding how the scheme was funded, the Head of Revenues and Benefit Services advised that the scheme was not funded, rather there was less council tax income. The in-year Council Tax collection rate for the 2023/24 financial year was 98.02%, which was the highest rate within the Oxfordshire authorities.

Resolved

- (1) That the contents of the report and any financial implications for the council be noted.
- (2) That Executive be recommended to agree to retain the current scheme for 2025/26.

8 **Finance Monitoring Report End of Year 2023 - 2024**

The Assistant Director of Finance (Section 151 Officer) submitted a report on the council's financial position at the end of the financial year 2023-2024.

In response to Members' comments regarding reliance on agency staff resulting in overspends, the Strategic Business Partner – Business Partnering and Controls explained that there was an ongoing recruitment drive.

Resolved

- (1) That, having given due consideration, the contents of the council's outturn for the financial year ended 31 March 2024 report be noted.
- (2) That the use of reserve requests be noted.
- (3) That the reserves movements made under the Section 151 Officer's delegated powers as part of the audit of prior years' statement of accounts be noted.

- (4) That the reprofiled capital budget, including corresponding financing from capital reserves, and adjustments to the 2024/25 capital programme accordingly be noted.
- (5) That outturn for 2023/2024, which is a balanced position after a contribution to reserves of £4.461m, be noted.
- (6) That the use of £0.285m of the Commercial Risk element of Policy Contingency to mitigate the delay in forecast lettings for some properties within 2023/24 be noted.

9 **Review of Committee Work Plan**

The Head of Finance updated the Committee on the work plan.

Resolved

- (1) That the work plan update be noted.

The meeting ended at 6.50 pm

Chairman:

Date: