

Cherwell District Council

Budget Planning Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Budget Planning Committee held at Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury, OX15 4AA, on 1 November 2016 at 6.30 pm

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

Councillor David Anderson
Councillor Ken Atack
Councillor Ian Corkin
Councillor Alan MacKenzie-Wintle
Councillor Andrew McHugh
Councillor Barry Richards
Councillor Tom Wallis
Councillor Sean Woodcock

Substitute Members: Councillor Sean Gaul (In place of Councillor Hugo Brown)

Also Present: Councillor George Reynolds, Deputy Leader of the Council
(Agenda items 6 and 7)

Apologies for absence: Councillor Hugo Brown
Councillor Carmen Griffiths

Officers: Paul Sutton, Chief Finance Officer / Section 151 Officer
George Hill, Corporate Finance Manager
Belinda Green, Joint Revenues and Benefits Manager
Geni Hotchkiss, Business Support Unit Manager
Richard Stirling, Corporate Procurement Manager
Mandy Emery, Joint Benefits Team Leader
Lesley Farrell, Democratic and Elections Officer
Joel Bliss, Assistant Democratic and Elections Officer

40 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

41 **Urgent Business**

There was no urgent business.

42 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 27 September 2016 were agreed a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

43 **Chairman's Announcements**

There were no Chairman's Announcements.

44 **Review of Procurement Strategy Progress**

The Chief Finance Officer submitted a report on the Council's Procurement Strategy progress which informed the Committee of the Procurement Team's progress in their implementation of the Council's procurement strategy for 2016-2017.

In considering the report Members commented that the figures given in the report were speculative because the savings revolved around hypothetical costs, which was misleading such as the figure presented for the Woodgreen Leisure Centre management project: an eighteen year saving was presented as a Quarter 2 saving. Members agreed that due to the nature of procurement, the reports did not need to revolve primarily around savings made, but around the quality of service provided.

Resolved

- (1) That the progress made in implementing the Council's Procurement Strategy during Q2 2016-17 be noted.

45 **Quarter 2 2016-17 - Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring Report**

The Chief Finance Officer presented a report on the Council's Quarter 2 2016-17 Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring.

In introducing the report, the Chief Finance Officer explained that Agency staff accounted for a significant overspend in Housing due to issues recruiting permanent staff. This figure would be mitigated by Quarter 3 if possible.

The Committee was advised that a review of each service would be carried out examining the quantities of capital sitting in reserve.

Resolved

- (1) That the projected revenue and capital position at the end of September 2016 be noted.
- (2) That the use and position of reserves at the end of September 2016 be noted.
- (3) That the position on Capital at the end of September 2016 be noted.

46 **Business Rates Monitoring 2016-2017**

The Head of Strategic Planning and the Economy submitted a report which provided an update on the business rates position as at the end of Quarter 2 of the 2016-2017 financial year.

In introducing the report, the Business Support Unit Manager explained that whilst the report showed a significant reduction in rateable value for Quarter 2, the primary cause of the deficit would be accounted for when the new Tesco building was added to the Rating List and backdated to the date of its entry in the Rating List. The Committee was advised by the Business Support Unit Manager that the council had no influence on the time the Valuation Office Agency took to assess properties, though the addition of the Tesco building was expected for Quarter 3.

The Business Support Unit Manager advised the Committee that there was now an interface with the planning department and new properties subject to council tax/business rate were being picked up. The Business Support Unit is now also consulted in certain planning applications.

In 2017 Business Rates would be reviewed by statute which would reset the rateable values. It was anticipated that there would be an overall increase in Business Rates as a result of the review; however, some of the gains would be mitigated by a central Transitional Relief Scheme to lessen the impact on ratepayers.

Resolved

(1) That the report be noted.

47 **Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2017-2018**

The Chief Finance Officer presented a report provided members with an update on the consultation process that had taken place on the proposals for the Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS) 2017-2018.

In considering the report, Members commented on the low response rate (54 responses received out of 750 targeted households 7.2%) and that it was difficult to base a policy on such a low return rate and small cross-section of the community. The Chief Finance Officer explained that while the return rate was low, that could be put down to the fact that the survey's main objective was one of confirmation rather than the offering of new ideas, so there was little incentive to respond.

The Committee agreed to recommend to Executive to agree that there be no change from the current Council Tax Reduction scheme in 2017-2018.

Resolved

(1) That the report and the financial implications of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2017-2018 be noted.

- (2) That the Executive be recommended to approve the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2017-2018 as part of the budget setting process.

48 **Review of Committee Work Plan**

The Committee Work Plan 2016-17 was reviewed and adjusted to reflect the priorities of the Committee.

Members requested that the Solihull Partnership be invited to the Committee's next meeting to discuss progress and that 'Discounts and Exemptions Review' be removed from the agenda of the next meeting.

Resolved

- (1) That the Solihull Partnership be invited to the next meeting of the Budget Planning Committee.
- (2) That the item, 'Discounts and Exemptions Review' be removed from the next meeting of the Committee.
- (3) That subject to resolutions (1) and (2) above, the contents of the Committee Work Plan be noted.

49 **Exclusion of Press and Public**

Resolved

That under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the ground that, if the public and press were present, it would be likely that exempt information falling under the provisions of Schedule 12A, Part 1, Paragraph 3 would be disclosed to them, and that in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

50 **Medium Term Revenue Plan - 2017/18 to 2021/22**

The Chief Finance Officer submitted an exempt report on the Council's Medium Term Revenue Plan for 2017-18.

In response to Members' questions, the Chief Finance Officer explained that confirmation had not yet been received of the New Housing Bonus scheme.

Resolved

- (1) That the report be noted.

The meeting ended at 8.25 pm

Chairman:

Date: