

Cherwell District Council

Executive

Minutes of a meeting of the Executive held at Virtual meeting, on 20 August 2020 at 6.30 pm

Present: Councillor Barry Wood (Chairman), Leader of the Council
Councillor George Reynolds (Vice-Chairman), Deputy Leader of the Council

Councillor Colin Clarke, Lead Member for Planning
Councillor Ian Corkin, Lead Member for Customers and Transformation
Councillor John Donaldson, Lead Member for Housing
Councillor Tony Ilott, Lead Member for Financial Management and Governance
Councillor Andrew McHugh, Lead Member for Wellbeing
Councillor Richard Mould, Lead Member for Performance
Councillor Lynn Pratt, Lead Member for Economy, Regeneration and Transformation
Councillor Dan Sames, Lead Member for Clean and Green

Also Present: Councillor Sean Woodcock, Leader of the Labour Group

Officers: Yvonne Rees, Chief Executive
Ansaf Azhar, Corporate Director of Public Health & Wellbeing
Stephen Chandler, Corporate Director Adults & Housing Services
Steve Jordan, Corporate Director Commercial Development, Assets & Investment & (Interim) Monitoring Officer
Paul Feehily, Executive Director: Place and Growth (Interim)
Claire Taylor, Corporate Director Customers and Organisational Development
Lorna Baxter, Director of Finance & Section 151 Officer
Louise Tustian, Head of Insight and Corporate Programmes
Sukdave Ghuman, Head of Legal Services
Natasha Clark, Governance and Elections Manager

34 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

35 Petitions and Requests to Address the Meeting

There were no petitions or requests to address the meeting.

36 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 July 2020 were agreed as a correct record and to be signed by the Chairman in due course.

37 **Chairman's Announcements**

There were no Chairman's announcements.

38 **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

39 **Revised Budget 2020/2021**

The Director of Finance submitted a report which proposed a revised budget for 2020/21 to reflect the financial impact of Covid 19 and includes proposed savings required in order to achieve a balanced budget.

In introducing the report, the Lead Member for Financial Management and Governance commended all staff for their hard work in continuing to deliver services and support residents during the height of the Covid 19 pandemic and as restrictions were being eased.

The Lead Member for Financial Management and Governance explained that whilst the council was doing all it could to address the financial impact of Covid 19, the on-going lobbying of Government by Local Authority Leaders, the Local Government Association and District Councils Network for additional funding for local Government was supported.

The Chairman referred to the comments submitted to Executive following the Budget Planning Committee's scrutiny of the proposals at the Committee's meeting of 18 August 2020 and thanked the Committee for their in-depth review and comments.

In response to a question from the Leader of the Labour Group seeking clarity with regards the vacant Community Warden post, the Lead Member for Wellbeing clarified that there were currently three Community Wardens. The one vacant post would not be recruited to this financial year to help achieve the required in-year savings.

Resolved

- (1) That Council be recommended to approve the savings as set out in the Annex to the Minutes (as set out in the Minute Book).
- (2) That Full Council be recommended to a £1.2m use of the reserves as set out in the Annex to the Minutes (as set out in the Minute Book).

- (3) That Full Council be recommended to approve the revised budget as set out in the Annex to the Minutes (as set out in the Minute Book).
- (4) That the revised fees and charges relating to Building Control Fees from 1 October 2020 as set out in the Annex to the Minutes (as set out in the Minute Book).
- (5) That authority be delegated to the Director of Finance, in conjunction with the Finance Portfolio Holder, to carry out further virements between service budgets, Government grant income and reserves when actual sales, fees and charges income losses are known and when actual leisure costs are known.

Reasons

It is recommended that the Executive approves an revised budget for 2020/21 in order to address the net increase in costs the Council faces as a result of Covid-19. Formalising the net forecast underspend the Council has identified within its "Business as Usual" spend as well as further savings plus reflecting additional costs related to Covid-19 will ensure that service managers know the budget within which they are operating. This will help the Council to control its costs for the remainder of the year.

Alternative options

Option 1: Do nothing

The Council has the option to do nothing and not introduce a revised budget. However, this would mean that services are operating with budgets which do not reflect service delivery and would make it more difficult for services to control costs.

40 Quarterly Performance, Risk and Finance Monitoring Report - Quarter 1 2020/2021

The Director of Finance and the Head of Insight and Corporate Programmes submitted a report which summarised the Council's Performance, Risk and Finance monitoring position as at the end of the first quarter of 2020/2021.

In introducing the report, the Lead Member for Performance explained that the Council reported on performance against 41 Business Plan Measures monthly, with 22 Programme Measures and 19 Key Performance Indicators (KPI). Due to the Covid-19 lockdown measures, it had not been possible to report on 2 KPI measures. Whilst Covid-19 had impacted on some indicators, service delivery had adapted in various areas and 61% of programme measures and key performance indicators were reporting in target at the end of Quarter 1.

The Lead Member for Performance and the Chairman confirmed that despite the challenges of Covid-19, performance measures would not be amended. Continuing to measure against existing KPIs would demonstrate the impact of Covid-19.

Lead Members commended all staff and paid particular tribute to the staff within their portfolio for their hard work during the Covid-19 lockdown to ensure ongoing service delivery, adapted where necessary, and support for residents.

Resolved

- (1) That the 2020/2021/ quarter 1 Performance, Risk and Finance Monitoring Report be noted.

Reasons

The Council is committed to performance, risk and budget management and reviews progress against its corporate priorities on a monthly basis. Due to the current unprecedented situation, the present report reviews Quarter 1 performance measures for 2020-21, from July onwards monthly reporting will be resumed.

This report provides an update on progress made so far in 2020-21 to deliver the Council's priorities through reporting on Performance, the Leadership Risk Register and providing an update on the financial position.

Alternative options

Option 1: This report illustrates the Council's performance against the 2020-21 business plan. As this is a monitoring report, no further options have been considered. However, members may wish to request that officers provide additional information.

The meeting ended at 7.15 pm

Chairman:

Date: