

COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL

COUNCIL MEETING

26 FEBRUARY 2020

Present:

Councillor Nigel Robbins - Chair
Councillor Dilys Neill - Vice-Chair

Councillors -

Stephen Andrews	Roly Hughes
Claire Bloomer	Sue Jepson
Tony Berry	Julia Judd
Patrick Coleman	Richard Keeling
Rachel Coxcoon	Juliet Layton
Tony Dale	Andrew Maclean
Andrew Doherty	Nick Maunder
Mike Evey	Richard Morgan
Jenny Forde	Richard Norris
Joe Harris	Gary Selwyn
Mark Harris	Lisa Spivey
Nikki Ind	Steve Trotter
Stephen Hirst	Clive Webster

Apologies:

Mark Annett	Ray Brassington
Julian Beale	Robin Hughes
Gina Blomefield	Ray Theodoulou

CL.79 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest by Members.

The Head of Paid Service highlighted that there had been a change in the legislation in relation to disclosable pecuniary interests in specific areas set out in the note, which could affect Members taking part in and voting on the budget setting and council tax setting. The Monitoring Officer had granted a general dispensation to all Members to enable them to take part in and vote on the budget and council tax setting.

There were no declarations of interest by Officers.

CL.80 MINUTES

Members questioned the limit which was placed on asking supplementary questions at the meeting on 22 January 2010, this was done by the questioners themselves..

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 22 January 2020 be approved as a correct record:-

Record of Voting - for 28, against 0, abstentions 0, absent 6.**CL.81 ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHAIR, LEADER OR HEAD OF PAID SERVICE**

- (i) Chair's Announcements - Filming/Recording of Proceedings - the Chair stated that an audio recording would be taken of the proceedings.
- (ii) Leader's Announcements - None
- (iii) Head of Paid Service Announcement - None

CL.82 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 10, questions had been submitted as follows. However, given the timing of submission of the questions, written responses would be provided after the Meeting.

- (1) Question from Mr David Fowles of Poulton to Councillor Mark Harris, Cabinet Member for Car Parks and Town and Parish Councils I

'I have been following the plans for improving Cirencester's car parking under your Chairmanship with interest for a few years now.

I would like to ask you to answer the following:

Until recently residents and local businesses were told by both the Leader and you that the Waterloo multi-storey car park plan was well advanced, that there had been detailed discussions with stakeholders and that a design consultation exercise to look at alternative designs had taken place with over 800 responses giving a clear winner.

As you know the local community has expressed major concerns about the proposed car park as being far too big, over dominant in the townscape, in the wrong place and environmentally unfriendly particularly at a time when the CDC has declared a climate emergency.

Could you confirm whether these plans are now going ahead or whether the rumours that a smaller car park with less storeys is now the way forward?

At the same time your administration is proposing today to put up car parking charges across the District by over 20% generating a further £435,000 on top of the £1m already generated.

Since all your plans for car parking appear to be Cirencester based, what plans if any do you have to spend this money to improve car parking elsewhere in the District in the other market towns where you will be putting up charges?

The Cabinet Member for Car Parks and Town and Parish Councils replied to the question, thanking Mr. Fowles for showing an interest in the issue. He explained that 1198 responses had been received from the car park survey, and when residents living close to the proposed Waterloo car park responded to the proposed plans, 83% were in favour and 17% were against the plans. In response to the declaration of the Climate Emergency, the plans were being reviewed. Car Parking charges had not been put up for 11 years and an idea of pay on exit in car parks would remove the cost of enforcement. The offer of 20 minutes free and 'free after three' would remain. Every town within the district would have to consider the issue of climate emergency and accommodate the modal shift towards cleaner transport.

Mr Fowles asked a supplementary question in relation to reviewing the Waterloo Car Park and would the existing design remain the same. The question would be responded to within the set timeframe.

(2) Question from Mr David Fowles of Poulton to To Councillor Tony Dale, Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Skills and Young People

‘At a recent budget consultation meeting held in this Chamber, with the Cirencester Chamber of Commerce of which I am Vice President, I sat next to you as Cllr Joe Harris spoke in glowing terms about your business experience and the exciting plans you have to support the economic development in the Cotswold District.

I was very surprised that you attended the meeting but were not invited to speak to the 35 local businesses who had come to be consulted!

Forgive my ignorance but given you have held your Cabinet post for nearly a year, I am very interested to know what initiatives you have put in place since coming to power in the Cotswolds generally and Cirencester specifically.

Secondly, could you give me your thoughts on how CDC proposes to help the Cotswolds economy over the three years you have left in your administration?

The Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Skills and Young People would respond to the question in writing.

CL.83 PETITIONS

No petitions had been received.

CL.84 REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS/PLACES

The Head of Paid of Service apologised to Members for bringing this item to the meeting, as it was a budget meeting. He explained that the changes would need to be implemented in time for the Police and Crime Commissioner election in May 2020. Extensive consultation had taken place, which was suspended during the election, in relation to keeping polling stations local, a good response was received and four changes were being proposed to stations in Baunton, Birdlip, Leighterton and Mickleton.

The Leader proposed these changes and thanked the Head of Paid Service and Elections Team for their hard work on all the elections which took place in 2019. He explained that this would be an ongoing review improving polling stations wherever possible.

Councillor Hirst seconded the Leader’s proposal and reiterated the thanks to the Head of Paid Service and Elections Team.

The Ward Member for Watermoor highlighted that his ward had grown and 45% of residents in his ward did not own cars, an additional polling station south of the Cirencester bypass would be helpful.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) the changes recommended in paragraph 3.3 of the report in relation to Baunton, Birdlip, Leighterton and Mickleton, the existing polling districts and polling places/stations be retained and approved;**

- 2) **pending any further formal review, delegated authority be given to the Returning Officer to make any further polling place and/or polling station changes as is necessary to enable the efficient and effective conduct of elections;**
- 3) **the Electoral Registration Officer be authorised to make any changes as are necessary to the Register of Electors.**

Record of Voting - for 28, against 0, abstentions 0, absent 6.

CL.85 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY AND BUDGET 2020/21

The Deputy Leader introduced this item, explaining that it was an honour to propose the first budget of the new administration, which would help rebuild the Council and would enable priorities to be delivered, such as; the climate emergency, affordable housing, waste and recycling provision, increasing transparency of the Council with webcasting meetings, the local plan being 'green to the core', investment for car parks in order for towns to sustain their viability, explore opportunities for grant funding, moving to green energy supply, funding the full cost of elections. The budget included savings of £1.1m, a provision of £2m for the Waste and Recycling service to include replacement vehicles when required, £350,000 to develop and maximise income; £850,000 to review the Local Plan.

With regards to Council Tax a proposal in the budget was to increase this by £5 per year, this would result in £100,000 of savings for the Council

The budget was ambitious but deliverable, prudent and brought to life the aims of the new administration.

The Deputy Lead stated that the Council should investigate borrowing, as funds received from the transfer of housing stock to Fosseyway Housing Association had now been fully spent or committed. Officers were asked to review the Council's investment policies to ensure they were consistent with the Council's new priorities.

Councillor Maunder seconded the proposals and reiterated that the Deputy Leader had laid out in great clarity the financial situation and ambitions of the Council. He highlighted that the debate should hinge on two questions; does the budget address the right priorities and is it proportionate and sustainable. He commended the budget and explained that residents were looking to the Council to proactively respond to the needs of the district, such as the affordability of housing and the climate emergency which were critical issues. The MTFs and Budget had been developed and scrutinised as required by Law, including scrutiny by the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Audit Committee, the papers included recommendations made by the Audit Committee.

The Leader of the opposition, Councillor Morgan responded to the proposals, questioning the need for money to be spent on items such as, webcasting, one off communications projects, commercialisation strategy, funding for consultants, the amount of money in the budget for the review of the Local Plan, he also queried the need for the increase of Members in the Cabinet and the expenses and allowances which this allowed.

He questioned the borrowing of £30m for social housing reiterating that there was no plan on how this money would be spent, and how unclear the developments were for Chesterton in relation to social housing.

He highlighted that efficiency savings could be found by working with Publica, and acknowledged that changes were being made to the benefit of the district residents, but

wanted to know where the plans were for all the proposals. He urged Members to reject the budget putting forward amendments relating to funding for car parking, a new support procedure for the council tax support scheme, community grant scheme, community defibrillators scheme.

The Leader, Councillor Joe Harris proposed an adjournment to discuss the amendments. Prior to the adjournment other Members were asked to speak to the proposals.

Councillor Berry seconded the proposals set out by Councillor Morgan. He reiterated that whilst the Conservatives had been in administration for 16 years, the Council had been in a strong position financially and he was concerned about the spending which was proposed in the budget, which would still be being paid back over many years. He acknowledged that some issues in the budget needed to be addressed such as social housing, but could not support the proposals.

Councillor Maclean, a non-aligned Member, spoke and congratulated the Deputy Leader and Officers on producing such a well-planned budget. He welcomed provision to combat climate change and for a change in the local plan, social housing, as part of which he considered small housing for young people should be provided. He expressed his opinion that borrowing for investment was prudent. He was opposed to car parking, but recognised the dependency on cars in a district which was so rural.

Councillor Ind, a non-aligned Member, spoke saying she was proud to be in the chamber, people had voted for change, asking the Council to look at issues differently. She considered that social housing, or any other project, should be spread throughout the district, not just in Cirencester.

The meeting adjourned for consideration of the amendments.

Upon reconvening, Councillor Berry proposed the first amendment in relation to the budget proposal for car parking, particularly the proposed decked car park at the Waterloo Car Park. He highlighted that the project was too big and it should not be going ahead. Councillor Judd seconded the amendment explaining that the project was too big, questioning whether it would be used sufficiently and how the business plan would be developed.

The Deputy Leader asked Members to reject this amendment, he recognised that a review would take place to understand the space required, the budget proposal should not change. This would be debated in future meetings of the Council.

On being put to the vote, the first amendment was LOST.

Note:

In accordance with legislative requirements, a recorded vote was taken in respect of the first amendment. The record of voting was as follows:-

For: Councillors Andrews, Berry, Hirst, Jepson, Judd, Keeling, Maclean, Morgan, Norris, Trotter - Total: 10;

Against: Councillors Bloomer, Coleman, Coxcoon, Dale, Doherty, Every, Forde, J Harris, M Harris, Roly Hughes, Ind, Layton, Maunder, Neill, Robbins, Selwyn, Spivey, Webster - Total: 18;

Abstentions: Total: 0;

Absent: Councillors Annett, Beale, Blomefield, Brassington, Robin Hughes, Theodoulou. -
Total: 6.

Councillor Hirst then proposed the second amendment relating to the Council Tax Support scheme. He requested that the funding of £20,000 for the new audio visual equipment be used to support a new procedure, with associated marketing materials, to simplify the Council Tax Support scheme application process for older and most vulnerable residents, with pensioners getting the council tax relief they are entitled to. Councillor Jepson seconded the amendment, reiterating that money should go to help residents, not updating the equipment in the council chamber.

Members commented upon the importance of helping vulnerable residents with their applications for council tax relief, although it was considered that Officers do this as part of their roles to help residents of the district.

The Deputy Leader considered that this was an amendment to stop the introduction of webcasting, but there was a need for the Council to be more transparent, recognising the a piece of work could be carried out to look at how people are entitled to benefits, but urged Members to reject this amendment.

On being put to the vote, the second amendment was LOST.

Note:

In accordance with legislative requirements, a recorded vote was taken in respect of the second amendment. The record of voting was as follows:-

For: Councillors Andrews, Berry, Hirst, Jepson, Judd, Keeling, Morgan, Norris, Trotter -
Total: 9;

Against: Councillors Bloomer, Coleman, Coxcoon, Dale, Doherty, Evemy, Forde, J Harris, M Harris, Roly Hughes, Ind, Layton, Maclean, Maunder, Neill, Robbins, Selwyn, Spivey, Webster - Total: 19;

Abstentions: Total: 0;

Absent: Councillors Annett, Beale, Blomefield, Brassington, Robin Hughes, Theodoulou. -
Total: 6.

Councillor Andrews then proposed the third amendment relating to the Community Organisation Grants Scheme, explaining that applications should be assessed on a corporate centralised basis, supporting communities to develop their plans and applications. Councillor Morgan seconded this amendment, explaining that he was disappointed with the awards of grants and he considered there was a political element to the award of some of the grants. He hoped that party politics was not part of this scheme, and urged all Members to work cross party to help communities.

The Deputy Leader, who as portfolio holder, had chaired three decision making meetings reassured Members that Officers provided the paperwork and advised him on the applications before those meetings, the decisions were not party political. He explained that he had requested Officers prepare a new scheme, which needed to be clear to enable communities to understand and apply for funding, the current scheme was based on a ward allocation system. A new scheme will be presented to the Cabinet and Members would have the opportunity to comment.

On being put to the vote, the third amendment was LOST.

Note:

In accordance with legislative requirements, a recorded vote was taken in respect of the third amendment. The record of voting was as follows:-

For: Councillors Andrews, Berry, Hirst, Jepson, Judd, Keeling, Morgan, Norris, Trotter - Total: 9;

Against: Councillors Bloomer, Coleman, Coxcoon, Dale, Doherty, Evemy, Forde, J Harris, M Harris, Roly Hughes, Ind, Layton, Maclean, Maunder, Neill, Robbins, Selwyn, Spivey, Webster - Total: 19;

Abstentions: Total: 0;

Absent: Councillors Annett, Beale, Blomefield, Brassington, Robin Hughes, Theodoulou. - Total: 6.

Councillor Andrews then proposed the fourth amendment, relating to Community Defibrillators Scheme. He recognised that defibrillators are not always successful but wanted the scheme to continue throughout the district, to ensure the funds are available to facilitate this. Councillor Hirst seconded this amendment, explaining that the scheme and equipment saves lives, as some areas have to wait a long time for medical professionals to arrive at the scene. He urged Members to support this amendment for the sake of communities.

The Leader explained that the money for this scheme would be in the budget and asked Councillor Andrews to withdraw his amendment, in order for the policy to be reviewed, with cross party input, which would be presented to the May Cabinet meeting.

The Chief Finance Officer reassured Members that this money was in an earmarked reserve and would be rolled forward into the next financial year.

Councillor Andrews responded that communities have difficulties getting match funding, although some equipment is sponsored by companies. He withdrew the amendment on the basis that the money would be in the budget and welcomed the opportunity to explore this in more detail.

The Chair then returned to the proposed Medium Term Financial Strategy and Budget 2020/21.

Members were concerned at the amount of borrowing, although realised that this was available to Councils and this Council should be prepared to borrow for projects. Concern was also expressed that this Council was investing in retail properties.

A Member commented that the corporate strategy consisted of bullet points and there was no substance as to how the budget would be spent. It was explained that a full Corporate Strategy would be presented to Council in May.

The Leader then thanked the Deputy Leader and the Chief Finance Officer for all the work on the budget highlighted that this had been a massive job and the Chief Finance Officer had also been working on West Oxfordshire District Council budget at the same time. The Council had the opportunity to tackle the climate emergency; social housing; delivering social rented homes; economic development with high quality sustainable jobs. This was a budget for the whole of the Cotswolds from Mickleton to Didmarton.

The Deputy Leader responded that there was an affordable housing crisis in the Cotswolds and people need homes. He reiterated that they would be working with Publica to ensure the best service to the Council. The rise in Council Tax would be 10p a week to a Band D property. There was a need for plans and strategies to be put in place in order to work out how to deliver these projects and commended the budget to the Council.

The Council then took one vote on all the recommendations. The Head of Paid Service explained that if Members did this and voted against the recommendations, they would also be voting against the Pay Policy Statement and Strategies. This was acceptable to all Members.

On being put to the vote, the proposal was CARRIED.

Note:

In accordance with legislative requirements, a recorded vote was taken. The record of voting was as follows:-

For: Councillors Bloomer, Coleman, Coxcoon, Dale, Doherty, Evemy, Forde, J Harris, M Harris, Roly Hughes, Ind, Layton, Maclean, Maunder, Neill, Robbins, Selwyn, Spivey, Webster - Total: 19;

Against: Councillors Andrews, Berry, Jepson, Judd, Keeling, Morgan, Norris, Trotter - Total: 8;

Abstentions: Total: Hirst – Total: 1;

Absent: Councillors Annett, Beale, Blomefield, Brassington, Robin Hughes, Theodoulou. - Total: 6.

RESOLVED that Council approves:

- 1) **the Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2020/21 to 2029/30, attached at Annex 'A' to this report;**
- 2) **the Net Budget Requirement for 2020/21, detailed at paragraph 3.3 of this report, and the Detailed Budget attached at Annex 'B';**
- 3) **the Capital Programme for 2020/21 to 2029/30, as detailed in sections 2.38 to 2.44 of this report, and in 'Annex A3';**
- 4) **the Pay Policy Statement for 2020/21, attached at Annex 'D' to this report;**
- 5) **the Capital Strategy 2020/21, attached at Annex 'E' to this report;**
- 6) **the Investment Strategy 2020/21, attached at Annex 'F' to this report;**
- 7) **the Treasury Management Strategy 2020/21, attached at Annex 'G' to this report.**

CL.86 COUNCIL TAX 2020/21

The Deputy Leader highlighted the amendments presented to Members prior to the meeting, reiterating that the amendments did not change the amounts of Council Tax payable and proposed the recommendations, this was seconded by Councillor Joe Harris.

On being put to the vote, the proposal was CARRIED.

Note:

In accordance with legislative requirements, a recorded vote was taken. The record of voting was as follows:-

For: Councillors Bloomer, Coleman, Coxcoon, Dale, Doherty, Evemy, Forde, J Harris, M Harris, Roly Hughes, Ind, Layton, Maclean, Maunder, Neill, Robbins, Selwyn, Spivey, Webster - Total: 19;

Against: Councillors Andrews, Berry, Hirst, Jepson, Judd, Keeling, Morgan, Norris, Trotter - Total: 9;

Abstentions: Total: 0;

Absent: Councillors Annett, Beale, Blomefield, Brassington, Robin Hughes, Theodoulou. - Total: 6.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) **for the purposes of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 Section 35(2), there are no special expenses for the District Council in 2020/21.**
- 2) **it be noted that, using her delegated authority, the Chief Finance Officer calculated the Council Tax Base for 2020/21:**
 - (a) **for the whole Council area as 41,817.64 [item T in the formula in Section 31B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended (the "Act")]; and**
 - (b) **for dwellings in those parts of its area to which a Parish Precept relates as in the attached Schedule 1.**
- 3) **the Council Tax requirement for the Council's own purposes for 2020/21 (excluding Parish Precepts) is £133.93.**
- 4) **the following amounts be calculated for the year 2020/21 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Act:**
 - (a) **£42,730,388 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A (2) of the Act, taking into account all precepts issued to it by Parish Councils and any additional special expenses.**
 - (b) **£33,755,152 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A (3) of the Act.**
 - (c) **£8,975,235 being the amount by which the aggregate at 4(a) above exceeds the aggregate at 4(b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act, as its Council Tax requirement for the year (Item R in the formula in Section 31B of the Act).**
 - (d) **£214.63 being the amount at 4(c) above (Item R), all divided by Item T (1(a) above), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31B**

of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year (including Parish Precepts and Special Expenses);

- (e) £3,374,599 being the aggregate amount of all special items (Parish Precepts and Special Expenses) referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act as per the attached Schedule 2.
 - (f) £133.93 being the amount at 4(d) above less the result given by dividing the amount at 4(e) above by Item T(2(a) above), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no Parish Precept or special item relates;
 - (g) the amounts shown in Schedule 2 being the amounts given by adding to the amount at 4(f) above, the amounts of the special item or items relating to dwellings in those parts of the Council's area shown in Schedule 2 divided in each case by the amount at 2(b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(3) of the Act, as the basic amounts of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which one or more special items relate.
 - (h) the amounts shown in Schedule 3 being the amounts given by multiplying the amounts at 4(f) and 4(g) above by the number which, in the proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band divided by the number which in that proportion is applicable to dwellings listed in valuation Band D, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 36(1) of the Act, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands.
- 5) it be noted that for the year 2020/21 the Gloucestershire County Council and the Police & Crime Commissioner for Gloucestershire have issued precepts to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for each category of dwellings in the Council's area as indicated below:

Valuation Band	Gloucestershire County Council	Police and Crime Commissioner
	£	£
A	896.88	171.50
B	1,046.36	200.08
C	1,195.84	228.67
D	1,345.32	257.25
E	1,644.28	314.42
F	1,943.24	371.58
G	2,242.20	428.75
H	2,690.64	514.50

the Council, in accordance with Sections 30 and 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the aggregate amounts shown in Schedule 4 as the amounts of Council Tax for the year 2020/21 for each part of its area and for each of the categories of dwellings.

- 7) the Council's basic amount of Council Tax for 2020/21 is not excessive in accordance with principles approved under Section 52ZB Local Government Finance Act 1992.

- 8) **the following Council/Publica Officers - Chief Finance Officer, Group Manager - Resident Services, Legal Services Manager, Legal Executive, Business Manager - Operational Support, Revenues Manager, Revenues Lead and Court Officer - be authorised to:**
- (a) **collect and recover any National Non-Domestic Rates and Council Tax; and**
 - (b) **prosecute or defend on the Council's behalf or to appear on its behalf in proceedings before a magistrate's court in respect of unpaid National Non-Domestic Rates and Council Tax.**

CL.87 NOTICE OF MOTIONS

There were no motions.

CL.88 SEALING OF DOCUMENTS

RESOLVED that the Common Seal of the Council be affixed to all contracts, conveyances and any other documents necessary for carrying into effect all resolutions passed by the Council.

Record of Voting - for 28, against 0, abstentions 0, absent 6.

The Meeting commenced at 6.00 pm, adjourned between 6.50 pm, and 7.10 pm and closed at 8.55 pm.

Chair

(END)