

Additional Recommendations to Budget Report to be presented to CEB on 12 February 2019

1) Seacourt Park and Ride extension

The approved budget (2018/19) for this scheme is £4.211 million and additional budget provision is required in the sum of £945k which if approved would take the total scheme envelope to £5.156 million. There are a number of reasons for this increase in cost of which the most significant is the substantial increase in building cost inflation since the setting of this budget several years ago; additional factors include adverse title issues requiring minor changes to the scheme, additional ground investigation works and additional costs arising from the impact of the Oxford Flood Alleviation Scheme (OFAS). The revised business case shows that with no increases in car-parking fees the payback period would be up to 30 years, but it is unlikely that charges will remain the same for that time period, and it is realistic to assume therefore that the payback period would be significantly less. This therefore still represents a sound investment for the City Council and also aligns with the Council's objective of seeking to promote Park and Ride usage as an alternative to driving into the city centre. The revised figure derives from an independent, expert assessment of the current likely costs of the extension.

Recommendation: That the City Executive Board resolves to:

Agree that the Capital Budget for the Seacourt Park and Ride Extension scheme is increased by £945k in 2019-20, to be funded from Community Infrastructure Levy where available funds permit, with any balance to come from the Council capital financing reserve.

2) Business Rates Retail Discount Scheme

In the Chancellor's Autumn Statement in October 2018, an announcement was made regarding a Business Rates Retail Discount Scheme. Reference was made to this in the Council's Consultation Budget published in December 2018.

The scheme announced by the Government provides for a discount to be allowed on business rate charges for occupied retail properties with a rateable value of less than £51,000 in each of the years 2019-20 and 2020-21. The value of discount should be one third of the bill, and must be applied after mandatory reliefs and other discretionary reliefs funded by section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003 grants have been applied. Where an authority applies a locally funded relief, for instance a hardship fund, under section 49 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 this must be applied after the Retail Discount. Central government will fully reimburse local authorities for the local share of the discretionary relief (using a grant under section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003).

Recommendation: That the City Executive Board resolves to:

Recommend that Council formally adopts the Business Rates Retail Discount Scheme and applies the scheme in accordance with the guidance issued.

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