

Minutes

of a meeting of the

Cabinet

held on Friday 15 April 2016 at 10.00 am

in the Meeting Room 1, 135 Eastern Avenue, Milton Park, Milton, OX14 4SB

Open to the public, including the press

Present:

Members: Councillors Matthew Barber (Chairman), Roger Cox (Vice-Chairman), Eric Batts, Charlotte Dickson, Mohinder Kainth, Sandy Lovatt, Mike Murray and Elaine Ware

Officers: Steve Culliford, William Jacobs, Margaret Reed and Sally Truman

Number of members of the public: Nil

Ca.46 Apologies for absence

None

Ca.47 Minutes

RESOLVED: to approve the minutes of the Cabinet meetings held on 28 January, including its appendix, and 5 February 2016 as correct records and agree that the chairman signs them as such.

Ca.48 Declarations of interest

None

Ca.49 Urgent business and chairman's announcements

None

Ca.50 Statements, petitions, and questions relating to matters affecting the Cabinet

Naomi Richardson, an Abingdon resident, had submitted questions to Cabinet regarding the Abbey Meadows' improvements in Abingdon. In her absence, these were put to the meeting:

"1. How will the pool be a viable business if it has nice changing rooms, but if the actual swimming pool is cold, has a leaky liner, has an outdated and expensive heating system, many broken surfaces leading to hazards and is currently unsuitable for use by small children? In other words, what is the business plan for the investment as it looks like a

Vale of White Horse District Council – Cabinet minutes

Friday, 15 April 2016

waste of money to fix changing rooms and not the actual pool? How much ROI will changing room enhancements have if there are no pool enhancements?

2. How does a tunnel enhance the entrance to Abbey Meadows when these usually become covered in graffiti, smell of wee and are a trap for litter?

3. Why has the 10+ play area been crammed into the crazy golf area right next to the play area for little kids (this is a problem with larger kids running around the toddlers), when there is a whole field of pitch and putt in which a fantastic adventure playground could be sited? NB: Kilkenny country park in Carterton is the best park in the entire county and cost £192k and there is more than enough room for something at least as good in Abbey Meadows. Many people I know drive all the way over to Carterton regularly to access this park. If you really want to enhance Abbey Meadows, this is the way to go.

4. Why has a multi-sports area been proposed when this is inappropriate for a busy playground? Small groups of kids 'claim' the area for their use and keep other kids out; I've seen this in the Southern park and Peachcroft; this does not enhance the atmosphere of community, but causes conflict and stress and a gang mentality.

5. Can the council ensure that new seating does not impede line of sight for the area around the splash park to the splashers as this would make it even more difficult to keep tabs on kids?"

The leader of the council reported that the Cabinet member responsible for property would provide a written response to these questions and asked that the replies be appended to these minutes.

Ca.51 Corporate plan review

Cabinet considered the head of corporate strategy's report, which proposed a new corporate plan to cover the period 2016 to 2020. This identified the council's strategic objectives and priorities, and would help guide decisions on the allocation of resources. The corporate plan, if adopted by Council, would replace the priorities set out in the corporate plan that ended in 2016.

The Cabinet member responsible for the corporate plan reported that he had attended the Scrutiny Committee meeting on 14 April, which suggested several amendments and he agreed to take these into consideration before a final version was submitted to Council on 11 May. The changes included:

- Several typographical amendments
- In the section titled 'housing and infrastructure' amend the sixth bullet point to read 'work with developers and other partners to develop a protocol that will ensure high quality, sympathetic designs across all different areas of the district'
- In the section on tackling infrastructure challenges, add a reference to the Oxford and Abingdon flood alleviation scheme
- In the section on tackling infrastructure challenges, add a reference to health, education and other infrastructure
- In the section titled 'sustainable communities and wellbeing' amend the fourth bullet point to read 'continuous improvement programmes to allow better access to our leisure centres, schemes and facilities'

- In the section titled 'sustainable communities and wellbeing' amend the ninth bullet point to read 'carrying out district-wide deep cleans of streets, pavements, public footpaths and to remove graffiti'
- Add a bullet point in the same section to deliver the council's community safety partnership objectives as set out in the partnership's plan
- In the section titled 'building an even stronger economy', amend the eighth bullet point to read 'working with developers to introduce local apprenticeship and local workforce schemes that benefit all residents'
- In the section titled 'running an efficient council', amend the first bullet point to read 'keeping district council tax low'
- In the section titled 'running an efficient council', amend the second bullet point to read 'continuing to work in partnership with South Oxfordshire District Council and others to develop new ideas for improving service delivery, including moving to a unitary council covering southern Oxfordshire'
- Amend the last bullet point in the draft corporate plan to read 'seek to improve access to major new developments and town centres for people with disabilities, carers and older people'

RECOMMENDED: to Council to adopt the Corporate Plan 2016 – 2020, subject to changes to be agreed with the Cabinet member responsible for the corporate plan and the Cabinet member for community safety.

Exempt information under section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972

None

The meeting closed at 10.11am

WRITTEN RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FROM NAOMI RICHARDSON TO CABINET – 15 APRIL 2016

1. How will to pool be a viable business if it has nice changing rooms, but if the actual swimming pool is cold, has a leaky liner, has an outdated and expensive heating system, many broken surfaces leading to hazards and is currently unsuitable for use by small children? In other words, what is the business plan for the investment as it looks like a waste of money to fix changing rooms and not the actual pool? How much ROI will changing room enhancements have if there are no pool enhancements?

The pool's clearly important to residents, which is why we've committed to keeping it open. We have an ongoing maintenance and repair budget to keep the pool in service and ensure that it meets the standards required.

We have worked with GLL over the winter to resolve the heating issue so this should no longer be a problem.

We also ensure that any issues with the hazard surfaces are dealt with as quickly as possible to ensure all pool users have a safe environment.

The changing rooms are an integral part of the pool complex and therefore need to meet health and safety standards. As the changing rooms are often the first area that people use and last area they leave it's vital that they provide a pleasant environment. It will also provide a much more attractive approach to the complex which in turn will enhance the whole area.

We're now looking to see what grants are available to help us raise money for even more improvements and this could include further work to the pool if we can source sufficient funds.

2. How does a tunnel enhance the entrance to Abbey Meadows when these usually become covered in graffiti, smell of wee and are a trap for litter?

The proposed walkway is not a tunnel – the concept proposal is that it will be a covered link between the two changing rooms and the new public toilets. It will also create a view of the river. If we choose to move forward with this concept then we will involve community safety and the police to ensure it meets Secured by Design standards. Our aim is for this area to look welcoming and be well looked after – areas that achieve this tend to put off potential vandals in the first place.

3. Why has the 10+ play area been crammed into the crazy golf area right next to the play area for little kids (this is a problem with larger kids running around the toddlers), when there is a whole field of pitch and putt in which a fantastic adventure playground could be sited? NB: Kilkenny country park in Carterton is the best park in the entire county

and cost £192k and there is more than enough room for something at least as good in Abbey Meadows. Many people I know drive all the way over to Carterton regularly to access this park. If you really want to enhance Abbey Meadows, this is the way to go.

These are just concept designs at present. The intention is to develop the brief with stakeholders . We intend to hold a design competition with equipment suppliers for them to demonstrate how to create a safe and fun experience.

The crazy golf is currently used by limited numbers. Freeing up space means we can expand the play area and create a new area for older children. This will mean it gets used all year round and by more people. The pitch and putt will remain available for those wishing to play golf.

The new adventure play area will not be crammed into the crazy golf area, our aim is to expand entire site where the existing play area and crazy golf currently sit with the adventure play area for older children separated appropriately from the young children's area and complementing the pitch and putt. This will create much more play space for both younger and older children.

4. Why has a multi-sports area been proposed when this is inappropriate for a busy playground? Small groups of kids 'claim' the area for their use and keep other kids out; I've seen this in the Southern park and Peachcroft; this does not enhance the atmosphere of community, but causes conflict and stress and a gang mentality.

It has been suggested that a multi-use games area is inappropriate for a busy playground. Experience of MUGAs used in other areas of the Vale suggest otherwise.

The tennis court also only has limited use and we want more people to be able to use this space, and throughout the year.

By turning it in a multi-use area it means people can also use it for many different sports such as football and basketball.

Our aspiration is to create a facility which allows a range of age groups visit the Meadow. We intend to hold a design competition for tenders to demonstrate how to create a safe and fun experience. Again we will look for guidance from the community safety and police on the design.

5. Can the council ensure that new seating does not impede line of sight for the area around the splash park to the splashers as this would make it even more difficult to keep tabs on kids?

The new picnic tables will be carefully positioned on the outer edges of the pad area to ensure that children are visible at all times.