

# Minutes

of a meeting of the

## Cabinet

held on Friday 7 October 2016 at 10.30 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, Mike Murray, Robert Sharp and Elaine Ware

Officers: Gerry Brough, Steven Corrigan, Steve Culliford, Matthew Gaskin, David Hill, William Jacobs and Sally Truman

Also present: Councillor Yvonne Constance and Councillor Sandy Lovatt

Number of members of the public: None

#### **Ca.59 Apologies for absence**

None

#### **Ca.60 Minutes**

**RESOLVED:** to approve the Cabinet minutes from the meeting held on 12 August 2016 as a correct record and agree that the chairman signs them as such.

#### **Ca.61 Declarations of interest**

None

#### **Ca.62 Urgent business and chairman's announcements**

None

#### **Ca.63 Statements, petitions, and questions relating to matters affecting the Cabinet**

Cabinet received two requests to address the meeting as follows. As neither speakers was able to attend the meeting Cabinet considered their questions in their absence.

- (1) Question from Helena Whall on behalf of Need not Greed Oxfordshire regarding the Oxfordshire Strategic Economic Plan:

"Need not Greed Oxfordshire notes and supports the findings of the Scrutiny Committee, which proposed deferral of a formal response to the SEP Refresh pending consideration by Council. In addition to the Committee's concerns about infrastructure, lack of business endorsement and the overly narrow spatial focus of the SEP, we believe there are broader issues that should also be raised. These include failure to consider the implications of Brexit, a lack of consideration given to the overall social and environmental impacts and the need to re-consider priorities for action – i.e. how to provide affordable housing for existing local residents, rather than seeking to attract ever more people into the area making the jobs versus housing balance worse. These are significant issues which deserve serious consideration by all our elected representatives. Will Cabinet therefore support the findings of the Scrutiny Committee and refer the SEP Refresh to Council?"

Cabinet considered this under minute Ca.65 below.

- (2) Questions from Councillor Debby Hallett (regarding Devolution minute Ca.64 below):
- (i) In the report, there appears to be contradictory information as to whether the county council are on board with this decision to work towards a change that does not include local government restructuring. Paras 26-28 explain how the county council has recently committed to pursuing what they call Option 6, which is a restructuring. Option 6 is not the same as the district council's intention as expressed in this report. However, paragraph 36 concludes that all councils, district city and county, are now working together to explore paths to devolution that do not include local government restructure. So, which is it?
  - (ii) How well does the districts' new objective (to change how services are provided without making changes in local government structure) meet whatever criteria the government have to ensure we get that jackpot of infrastructure financing we were after?
  - (iii) The two consultants' reports provided the evidence for the two models being considered: one unitary or many. Now the districts are abandoning both of those approaches and trying a new, third way. So how will the evidence for this approach be brought together, and when will you consult with the public over these ideas where the outcome affects hundreds of thousands of people?

The Leader agreed to reply to Councillor Hallett in writing after the meeting.

## **Ca.64 Devolution**

Cabinet considered the report of the chief executive, updating on the development of a devolution deal following an independent study into the options for local authority reform in Oxfordshire, conducted by PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC).

Cabinet noted that the government was looking for consensus between councils on the future of local government in Oxfordshire. Although consensus had not been reached, leaders of the districts, city, and county councils had agreed to focus on identifying areas for collaborative working and the reshaping of a devolution deal that did not incorporate proposals for the reform of local government within Oxfordshire. A working group of the leaders and chief executives was looking at practical steps that could be taken, including

discussions on a combined authority with Thames Valley Police and the Clinical Commissioning Group.

**RESOLVED:** to

- (a) receive the independent study of PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) into options for local government reform in Oxfordshire, including the proposition of the district and city council leaders' in respect of their preferred model arising from that study; and
- (b) note that following discussions with the Department of Communities and Local Government, the leaders of the districts, city and county councils have agreed to focus on identifying areas for collaborative working and the reshaping of a devolution deal that does not incorporate proposals for the reform of local government within Oxfordshire.

## **Ca.65 Oxfordshire Strategic Economic Plan**

Cabinet considered the report of the interim head of development, regeneration and housing. This summarised the revised draft Oxfordshire Strategic Economic Plan, which the council had been asked to comment on by its author, the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership. The report highlighted the key points in the document, outlined issues that had already been raised during the formal consultation that had not been fully addressed in the revised draft, and recommended a response to the Local Enterprise Partnership. The Joint Scrutiny Committee had also considered the revised draft plan and suggested a number of improvements. The committee had also recommended that Cabinet referred the plan to Council for debate.

Cabinet concurred with the suggestions that the revised draft plan should be subject to a Council debate before the leader submitted his formal response to the consultation.

**RECOMMENDED** to Council to endorse the decision of Cabinet to:

- (i) Welcome some of the changes made to the Oxfordshire Strategic Economic Plan which seek to make it "shorter and clearer", and acknowledges that this has largely been achieved;
- (ii) Support the broad thrust of the Oxfordshire Strategic Economic Plan document in terms of the stated vision, identified strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, and proposed actions; and
- (iii) Believe the document would be more robust if it:
  - more fully addressed the issues highlighted in the body of the Cabinet report,
  - more clearly linked actions to identified issues, and confirmed where responsibility lies for implementing these various actions,and to note that the Leader will take account of points raised at Council in responding to the consultation.

## **Ca.66 Future maintenance of open space at Great Western Park, Didcot**

Cabinet considered the report of the interim head of development, regeneration and housing. This set out a proposal from The Land Trust to manage the public open space at Great Western Park, Didcot.

The Cabinet member reported that The Land Trust was experienced in managing open spaces and working with voluntary organisations. This was the best option financially to manage these open spaces and would provide cost-effective long term maintenance compared to the in-house or contracted out management options. Cabinet noted that if this arrangement failed, the responsibility to manage the open spaces would revert back to the council.

**RESOLVED:** to

- (a) support implementation of the proposed management and maintenance arrangement for open spaces at Great Western Park, Didcot, as outlined in option 2 of The Land Trust's proposal (attached as Appendix 1 to the report to Cabinet on 7 October 2016); and
- (b) authorise the Head of Development, Regeneration in consultation with the Cabinet member responsible for property to take whatever action is required, to expedite this proposal as soon as practically possible and to negotiate terms for the disposal of the land and enter into all necessary documents.

## **Ca.67 Longworth Neighbourhood Plan**

Cabinet considered the head of planning's report on the Longworth Neighbourhood Plan. The plan had been subject to a referendum on 18 August 2016, when the majority supported it.

Cabinet noted that the council had a duty to make the neighbourhood plan part of the development plan unless the making of the plan would breach, or would otherwise be incompatible with, any EU obligation or any of the Convention rights (within the meaning of the Human Rights Act 1998). Officers reported that the neighbourhood plan was compatible with the current EU obligations and recommended that the council 'make' the neighbourhood plan part of the council's development plan.

**RECOMMENDED:** to Council to make the Longworth Neighbourhood Plan part of the development plan for Vale of White Horse.

The meeting closed at 10.48am