

# Minutes

of a meeting of the

# Cabinet

held on Friday 7 April 2017 at 10.30 am

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



## Open to the public, including the press

### Present:

Members: Councillors Roger Cox (Vice-Chairman - in the chair), Eric Batts, Charlotte Dickson, Robert Sharp and Elaine Ware

Officers: Gerry Brough, Steve Culliford, David Hill, William Jacobs and Helen Novelle

Also present: Councillors Yvonne Constance, Sandy Lovatt and Reg Waite

Number of members of the public: Nil

### **Ca.92 Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Matthew Barber and Mike Murray.

### **Ca.93 Minutes**

**RESOLVED:** to approve the minutes of the meetings held on 2 February and 6 March 2017 as correct records and agree that the Chairman signs them as such.

### **Ca.94 Declarations of interest**

None

### **Ca.95 Urgent business and chairman's announcements**

None

### **Ca.96 Public participation**

None

## **Ca.97 Referral from scrutiny committees**

### **(1) Five Councils' Partnership**

Following the meeting of the Joint Scrutiny Committee held on 30 January 2017, the following questions were put to Cabinet on 3 February 2017. Cabinet deferred consideration until this meeting.

- How are we monitoring the impact on retained staff of the Five Council's Partnership?
- What is the plan if one of the contractors was to fail as a company?

Cabinet noted that Councillor Robert Sharp, the Cabinet member with responsibility for the Five Councils' Partnership, would provide a written response to the questions above.

### **(2) Grants and area committees**

On 28 July 2016 Scrutiny Committee recommended to Cabinet that, in order to simplify the process, authority to award community grants should be delegated to a single council-wide committee or panel from a single fund. At its meeting on 12 August 2016, Cabinet deferred consideration of Scrutiny Committee's recommendation.

Cabinet weighed up the merits of a single council-wide grants committee or panel against the existing area committee system. Cabinet concluded that the area committee system should be retained as it reflected localism in decision-making, local councillors had greater knowledge of projects that local people considered important and should be supported, and it allowed all councillors an opportunity to get involved in decision-making.

**RESOLVED:** to confirm that the area committees will continue to consider and determine grant applications on behalf of Cabinet, in accordance with the council's grant schemes.

## **Ca.98 Commuted sums and affordable housing**

Cabinet considered the report of the interim head of development, regeneration and housing. The report set out an approach to use commuted sums from developers to provide affordable housing.

On rare occasions, it was not possible for developers to provide affordable housing on their site. If the council believed that this was for good reasons, and that viability was not the issue, it could require the developer to pay the council a commuted sum that could be used to provide affordable housing on any other appropriate site in the vicinity of the original development site.

Cabinet considered the options to use commuted sums:

1. To meet a shortfall in the delivery of rented accommodation or to increase the range of affordable tenures.
2. To provide new affordable housing that meets specialist needs.
3. To provide new affordable housing for people with a strong local connection.

The use of commuted sum payments to assist in the delivery of new affordable housing could be in the form of a direct grant to a registered provider. However in some cases, depending on viability, it might be appropriate to provide commuted sums as a reimbursable investment, so the council received a return on the invested commuted sums.

Cabinet considered that there was a need to approve an approach for the spending of commuted sums, which allowed for the use of these payments to provide primarily new-build affordable housing. Cabinet supported the approach and the use of the three options as appropriate.

**RESOLVED:** to use commuted sums primarily for the purpose of encouraging the delivery of new-build affordable housing to:

- (i) meet a shortfall in the delivery of rented accommodation, or increase the range of affordable tenures; or
- (ii) provide new affordable housing that meets specialist needs; or
- (iii) provide new affordable housing for people with a strong local connection.

The meeting closed at 10.40 am