

Minutes

of a meeting of the

Cabinet

held on Friday 9 February 2018 at 2.00 pm
135 Eastern Avenue, Milton Park, OX14 4SB



Open to the public, including the press

Present:

Members: Councillors Matthew Barber (Chairman), Eric Batts, Ed Blagrove, Charlotte Dickson, Mike Murray, Robert Sharp and Elaine Ware

Officers: Steve Culliford, Andrew Down, Dylan Evans, Simon Hewings, Margaret Reed and Mark Stone

Also present: Councillors Yvonne Constance, Debby Hallett, Judy Roberts and Emily Smith; and Richard Spraggett (Capita Accountancy)

Number of members of the public: 3

Ca.53 Apologies for absence

Councillor Roger Cox had submitted an apology for absence.

Ca.54 Minutes

RESOLVED: to approve the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 8 December 2017 as a correct record and agree that the chairman signs them as such.

Ca.55 Declarations of interest

None

Ca.56 Urgent business and chairman's announcements

None

Ca.57 Public participation

Cabinet received a statement from Naomi Richardson regarding the proposed refurbishment of the public toilets at the Abbey Meadows in Abingdon. She believed that the refurbished toilets would not allow access by disabled children nor wheelchair users. There needed to be more room to allow improved access and the council should provide

sufficient toilets for peak times during the summer. Ms Richardson called for an inclusive design incorporating a changing places design and stall toilets, not cubicles.

Cabinet also received a statement from Councillor Emily Smith in support of the petition for a changing places toilet at the Abbey Meadows, Abingdon. A changing places toilet being provided at the Guildhall should be in addition to, not be instead of, providing one at the Abbey Meadows. Councillor Smith asked how much budget was available to pay for this and had Cabinet sought funding from alternative sources to assist?

The leader of the Council, Councillor Matthew Barber responded to these points under the next minute item on the Abbey Meadows petition (minute Ca.58 refers).

Ca.58 Petition - Abbey Meadows, Abingdon

At its meeting on 11 October 2017 the Council had received a petition regarding the public toilets at Abbey Meadows, Abingdon. The petition called for “excellent, accessible loos at Abbey Meadows”. In accordance with the council’s petition scheme, the Council considered the petition at its meeting on 13 December 2017 and agreed to refer it to Cabinet for consideration.

In response to the petition and the public participation (minute Ca.57 refers), the Leader of the Council reported that Cabinet had taken on board some of the suggestions raised and had amended the design accordingly. The toilets at the Abbey Meadows would be accessible, have wider doors, and provide two accessible cubicles. He asked officers to share the amended design details with the speakers. However, the provision of a changing places toilet had proved to be beyond the budget available but the council would explore opportunities with other parties for a changing places toilet elsewhere in Abingdon.

Ca.59 Didcot Garden Town - heat mapping and master-planning

Cabinet considered the head of corporate services’ report on the initial study results of the Didcot Garden Town heat mapping and master-planning project. This sought approval to spend £90,000, jointly with South Oxfordshire District Council, on a feasibility study for a district heat network of pipes in north Didcot to use waste heat from Didcot Power Station. Cabinet noted that £60,000 of the cost would be sought from the government; the remaining £30,000 was being sought from existing resources in the Didcot Garden Town and Energy budgets, split 50:50 with South Oxfordshire.

Cabinet considered three options:

1. Present the feasibility study findings to key stakeholders and rely on other parties to initiate and develop the heat network, with the council promoting and offering advice
2. Present the study findings to key stakeholders and the council takes the lead, in partnership with others, in pursuing more detailed feasibility work on the technical and commercial viability of the project
3. To not participate in the development of a heat network

The report recommended that the council led the work on a heat network for north Didcot and the South Gateway area in Didcot (option 2) but relied on other parties to lead on similar projects at Harwell Campus and Culham Science Centre (option 1). The projects could reduce emissions of greenhouse gases and other pollutants, improve air quality, and improve the affordability of fuel supply, thereby reducing fuel poverty. It could also

contribute to the council's aspirations for regeneration, inward investment, local jobs and growth.

Cabinet agreed to the report recommendations with the council taking the lead on carrying out more detailed feasibility work on the technical and commercial viability of a heat network for north Didcot and the South Gateway area.

The Cabinet member for development and regeneration reported that he had no personal or pecuniary interest in AECOM, the company recommended to undertake the feasibility work.

RESOLVED: to

- (a) approve an application to Government for £60,000 match funding for a detailed feasibility study into the technical and commercial viability of a north Didcot district heat network using waste heat from Didcot Power Station;
- (b) approve the allocation of £15,000 from existing resources in the Didcot Garden Town and Energy budgets, to fund this council's share of this work; and
- (c) subject to the above government grant funding being approved and received, to agree that the Cabinet member for development and regeneration can approve the implementation of the proposed project and authorise the head of development and regeneration to finalise terms of, and enter into, a drawdown contract for the appointment of AECOM to deliver the feasibility study under the Places for People Placemaking Hub framework, approved at the Cabinet meeting on 6 October 2017, as permitted under the framework.

Ca.60 Housing and growth deal for Oxfordshire

Cabinet considered the report of the head of partnership and insight. This recommended that the council signed up to the Housing and Growth Deal for Oxfordshire and approved the submission of the Housing and Growth Deal Delivery Plan to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.

The deal involved all six principal councils in Oxfordshire working together to provide up to 100,000 new homes across the county up to 2031 through a joint statutory spatial plan and local plans. In return, the government had offered Oxfordshire £150 million infrastructure funding, £60 million for affordable housing, and a further £5 million capacity funding. The ministry had also offered planning freedoms and flexibilities for a limited period, such as a reduced housing land supply requirement of three years rather than the current five years, and a housing delivery test based on objectively-assessed housing need figures rather than the strategic housing market assessment figures.

Cabinet considered the council's options:

1. agree to the deal as offered
2. agree the deal subject to conditions
3. reject the deal

Cabinet considered that the council could agree to sign the deal but first the following conditions would have to be met:

- The scope of the joint statutory spatial plan must be agreed by Cabinet and full Council.
- Substantive work on the joint statutory spatial plan (such as the commissioning of evidence) must not begin until the government finalised the new National Planning Policy Framework and published a written ministerial statement establishing Oxfordshire's planning freedoms and flexibilities.
- The joint statutory spatial plan must not allocate housing sites.
- Annual housing targets, trajectories and objectively assessed housing need must not be increased for any year in the life of the current local plan (to 2031); nor must land supply and housing delivery calculations be based on higher baselines than those already built into the adopted local plan.
- The council will only accept liability for any claw-back of funds arising from mismanagement by the Vale of White Horse District Council.

Cabinet considered that the deal was better than no deal but preferred option 2 so that commencement of work to support and deliver the joint statutory spatial plan was subject to the conditions above. These conditions would form appendix 4 to the report to the Council at its meeting on 14 February 2018. The appendix also contained a list of matters where clarification would be sought.

Cabinet concluded that the housing and growth deal would help provide much needed transport infrastructure across Oxfordshire, from which Vale residents would benefit. Cabinet recognised that the sum offered would not fund every project; these would have to be prioritised by collective agreement with the other Oxfordshire councils. Signing the deal could also help other infrastructure funding bids submitted to the ministry. The deal would also give the council some security of a lower housing land supply requirement until after the joint statutory spatial plan had been adopted.

Cabinet thanked the officers for their work on this project.

RECOMMENDED: to Council to

- agree to the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal (the Deal) (attached as Appendix 1 to the report of the Head of Partnership and Insight to Cabinet on 9 February 2018);
- agree the Delivery Plan (attached as Appendix 2 to the report of the Head of Partnership and Insight to Cabinet on 9 February 2018) as the basis for the Deal; noting that elements will be updated as detailed work programmes develop;
- delegate authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader and the Growth Board, to make minor changes to the Delivery Plan that may be required to secure agreement with Government;
- delegate authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Growth Board, to make non-minor changes to the Delivery Plan that may be required to secure agreement with Government, subject to the agreement of the Cabinet;
- delegate authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Growth Board, to agree the Year 1 affordable housing delivery programme, phasing and processes specified in the Delivery Plan, subject to the agreement of the Cabinet;

- (f) appoint Oxfordshire County Council as the accountable body in respect of the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal;
- (g) delegate authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Growth Board, to review the terms of reference of the Growth Board and agree any amendments and any appropriate inter-authority agreements required to support the delivery of the Housing and Growth Deal, subject to the agreement of the Cabinet;
- (h) agree that the Cabinet will take any other executive decisions arising from agreement to the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal, until the revised terms of reference of the Growth Board are in place;
- (i) agree to participate in the preparation of a Joint Statutory Spatial Plan (JSSP) for Oxfordshire in accordance with the timescales set out in the Delivery Plan and in accordance with Section 28 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the milestones for progressing the JSSP being contingent on Government delivering the Planning Freedoms and Flexibilities as described in the Delivery Plan; and
- (j) agree that commencement of work to support and deliver the JSSP is subject to Cabinet being satisfied that the conditions set out at Appendix 4 of the report of the Head of Partnership and Insight to Cabinet on 9 February 2018 have been met.

Ca.61 Treasury management mid-year monitoring 2017/18

Cabinet considered the head of finance's mid-year monitoring report on the council's treasury management function. This covered the period from 1 April to 30 September 2017.

Cabinet noted that the investment income received was above the budget target. The Joint Audit and Governance Committee had also considered the report and was satisfied that the treasury management activities had been carried out in accordance with the treasury management strategy and policy. Cabinet concurred.

RECOMMENDED: to Council to approve the head of finance's treasury management mid-year monitoring report 2017/18 to Cabinet on 9 February 2018.

Ca.62 Treasury management and investment strategy 2018/19

Cabinet considered the report of the head of finance, which recommended adoption of the treasury management and investment strategy 2018/19. The council was required to adopt a strategy each year, setting out how the treasury service would operate and how it would support the council's capital investment decisions. It also set limitations on treasury management activity governed by the prudential indicators. The strategy proposed the following changes:

Counterparty limits to be amended to:

- raise the investment limit with building societies with assets over £1 billion to £4 million from £3 million
- raise the investment limit with building societies with assets over £3 billion to £5 million from £3.5 million
- raise the investment limit with building societies with assets over £5 billion to £7 million from £5 million

- raise the investment limit with institutions with a minimum F1 rating to £10 million from £7.5 million

Investment type addition

Adding another investment type to allow the council wider choice of investment in the future as the pool of low risk counterparties reduced.

- To add Non-UCITS Retail Schemes (NURS) to the strategy with a limit of £3 million

The Joint Audit and Governance Committee had considered the report and recommended that the head of finance should consult the co-chair of Joint Audit and Governance Committee before investing in any Non-UCITS Retail Scheme. Cabinet supported the proposed strategy and the amendments as well as the recommendation of the Joint Audit and Governance Committee.

RECOMMENDED: to Council to

- approve the treasury management strategy 2018/19 set out in appendix A to the head of finance's report to Cabinet on 9 February 2018;
- approve the prudential indicators and treasury limits for the period 2018/19 to 2020/21 as set out in table 2, appendix A to the head of finance's report to Cabinet on 9 February 2018; and
- approve the annual investment strategy set out in appendix A (paragraphs 18 to 59), subject to the head of finance consulting the co-chair of Joint Audit and Governance Committee before investing in any Non-UCITS Retail Scheme, and the lending criteria detailed in table 5 to the head of finance's report to Cabinet on 9 February 2018.

Ca.63 Revenue budget 2018/19 and capital programme to 2022/23

Cabinet considered the head of finance's report. This brought together all relevant information to allow Cabinet to recommend to Council a revenue budget for 2018/19 and a capital programme for 2018/19 to 2022/23. The Medium Term Financial Plan was included, which provided details of the forward budget model for the next five years. The report also recommended the prudential indicators to be set by the Council in accordance with 'the Prudential Code', introduced as part of the Local Government Act 2003.

Scrutiny Committee had considered the budget at its meeting on 8 February but had made no recommendations.

Cabinet supported the budget proposals and thanked the officers for their work on the budget's preparation.

RECOMMENDED: to Council to

- set the revenue budget for 2018/19 as set out in appendix A.1 to the head of finance's report to Cabinet on 9 February 2018;

- (b) approve the capital programme for 2018/19 to 2022/23 as set out in appendix D.1 to the head of finance's report to Cabinet on 9 February 2018, together with the capital growth bids set out in appendix D.2 of the report;
- (c) set the council's prudential limits as listed in appendix E to the head of finance's report to Cabinet on 9 February 2018,
- (d) approve the medium term financial plan to 2022/23 as set out in appendix F.1 to the head of finance's report to Cabinet on 9 February 2018;

RESOLVED: to

- (e) maintain car park fees and charges at current levels; and
- (f) agree that the Cabinet member for finance may make minor adjustments to the budget report and the prudential indicators, in conjunction with the head of finance, should they prove necessary following the publication of the final Local Government settlement and prior to its submission to Council on 14 February 2018.

The meeting closed at 2.40 pm