

# Minutes

of a meeting of the

## Cabinet

held at 2.00pm on Friday 10 February 2012  
at The Abbey House, Abingdon, OX14 3JE



**Open to the public, including the press**

### Present:

Members: Councillors Matthew Barber (Chairman), Roger Cox (Vice-Chairman), Yvonne Constance, Reg Waite and Elaine Ware

Non-participating members: Councillors Jim Halliday and Dudley Hoddinott

Officers: John Backley, Steve Bishop, David Buckle, Steve Culliford, William Jacobs, Ian Matten, Matt Prosser, Margaret Reed, Anna Robinson, Sally Truman, and Bob Watson

Number of members of the public: 1

### **Ca.42 Apologies for absence**

None

### **Ca.43 Minutes**

**RESOLVED:** To adopt the Cabinet minutes of the meeting held on 9 December 2011 and agree that the chairman signs them.

### **Ca.44 Declarations of interest**

None

### **Ca.45 Urgent business and chairman's announcements**

None

### **Ca.46 Statements, petitions, and questions relating to matters affecting the Cabinet**

No members of the public had requested to address Cabinet but Councillors Jim Halliday and Dudley Hoddinott had requested to ask questions. The chairman agreed to take these later in the meeting under the relevant items.

## **Ca.47 Budget virement requests**

Cabinet considered two budget virement requests totalling £25,690.

### **RESOLVED**

To approve the budget virement requests set out in table 1 of the agenda report.

## **Ca.48 Budget monitoring quarter 3**

Cabinet considered report 68/11 of the head of finance, which monitored the revenue and capital budget expenditure during the third quarter 2011/12 and against the year-end target.

Cabinet noted that the heads of service had predicted a revenue underspend at the end of the financial year of £ 432,000, whereas capital expenditure was within budget. Cabinet thanked the officers for this.

**RESOLVED:** To note the current budget monitoring position and the forecast of year-end outturn by the services.

## **Ca.49 Treasury management strategy - half-year review 2011/12**

Cabinet considered report 62/11 of the head of finance, which set out the 2011/12 mid-year position of the council's treasury management activities. This report had also been considered by the Audit and Governance Committee, which advised that the council had carried out its treasury management activities within its strategy and policy.

Cabinet considered that the performance of the council's in-house team and the external investment fund manager, Investec, were as good as they could be in the current economic climate. In answer to questions from councillors, the officers reported that the council had received no payment in compensation for the loss of investment in Landsbanki but the first payment was expected shortly. The officers also agreed to investigate the possibility of investment in Handelsbanken.

**RESOLVED:** to

- (a) note the treasury management mid-year monitoring report 2011/12: and
- (b) note that the treasury management activities are being carried out in accordance with the treasury management strategy and policy.

## **Ca.50 Treasury management and investment strategy 2012/13 to 2014/15**

Cabinet considered report 63/11 of the head of finance. This reviewed the treasury management and investment strategy and sought approval of the draft strategy for 2012/13 to 2014/15 for recommendation to Council. The Audit and Governance Committee had also considered this report and had recommended the strategy's adoption.

Cabinet considered that the strategy should be recommended to Council for adoption but that the officers should consider ways to maximise investment returns between property and financial investments.

**RECOMMEND** to Council to approve each of the following key elements of report 63/11:

- (i) The Treasury Management Strategy 2012/13 to 2014/15 and the treasury Prudential Indicators contained within Appendix A to report 63/11 (paragraph 31);
- (ii) The Authorised Limit Prudential Indicator as shown in paragraph 6 of the strategy; and
- (iii) The Investment Strategy 2012/13 contained in the treasury management strategy (Appendix A), and the detailed criteria included in Annex A1.

## **Ca.51 Budget 2012/13**

Cabinet considered report 69/11 of the head of finance. This contained the draft revenue budget for 2012/13, the medium term financial plan, the capital programme to 2016/17, and the amended version of the chief finance officer's report on the robustness of the estimates and the adequacy of the council's financial reserves. The Cabinet was asked to consider the report and recommend the budget to Council.

The chairman invited Councillor Jim Halliday to ask his question. Councillor Halliday asked if the chairman was content with the level of response to the budget consultation, and if not, would he consider changing the procedure? Councillor Halliday also asked which parts of the budget had been amended following the budget consultation.

The chairman reported that a wider engagement on the budget proposals might be desirable and he would keep this under review. He was pleased with the budget proposal. This froze council tax, protected services, and made savings. More money was available for the information advice centres in Abingdon and Wantage, there was an increase in the community grants fund, and there were funds available to assist open market homebuyers. As for the new homes bonus, in 2012/13 this would be allocated to reserves and might be used to support two-hours' free car parking from 2014/15 only. Later in 2012, Cabinet would consider a policy on the use of the new homes bonus. Finally, the chairman welcomed the county council's decision to take over the management of the dial-a-ride scheme. This had saved this council £30,000, which was allocated to grants.

**RECOMMEND** to Council to:

- (a) approve the medium term financial plan to 2016/17 as set out in appendix A to report 69/11;
- (b) set the revenue budget for 2012/13 at £10,744,216, as set out in appendix A1 to report 69/11;
- (c) approve the capital programme for 2012/13 to 2016/17 set out in appendix E and the capital growth bids as set out in appendix F, both to report 69/11;
- (d) set the council's prudential limits as listed in appendix G to report 69/11; and

## **RESOLVED**

- (e) to authorise the cabinet member for finance to make minor adjustments to the budget report to Council and the prudential indicators, in conjunction with the head of finance, should they prove necessary prior to its submission to Council on 22 February 2012.

### **Ca.52 Corporate plan 2012-2016**

Cabinet considered report 70/11 of the head of corporate strategy, which sought agreement to the draft corporate plan 2012 to 2016.

The chairman invited Councillor Dudley Hoddinott to ask his question. The corporate plan referred to increasing the internet speeds across the district. Councillor Hoddinott asked how the council would measure the success of faster broadband internet access in rural areas, since their service was already poorer than the towns? The chairman reported that the council was working with partners in the private sector and internet service providers to introduce faster broadband technology. Some connection exchanges would be upgraded this year.

Cabinet thanked the officers involved in preparing the corporate plan for 2012 to 2016. Councillors believed that the consultation had proved useful and thanked the public respondents for their feedback and the Scrutiny Committee for its contribution.

In relation to the delivery of services section, to ensure the council took residents' and stakeholders' views into account, Cabinet agreed to amend the draft plan to measure success by looking at the percentage of people who felt they could inform decisions affecting their local area.

## **RESOLVED: To**

- (a) agree the proposed changes to the draft 2012-2016 corporate plan, set out in report 70/11;
- (b) authorise the Head of Corporate Strategy to make any further minor editorial changes required in consultation with the Leader of the Council prior to final approval by Council; and

## **RECOMMEND to Council to:**

- (c) adopt the 2012 – 2016 corporate plan contained in Appendix B to report 70/11, with the addition of the following:
- In the section on the delivery of services, to ensure the council takes residents' and stakeholders' views into account, success will be measured by looking at the percentage of people who feel they can inform decisions affecting their local area.

### **Ca.53 Review of waste policy**

Cabinet considered report 71/11 of the head of corporate strategy, which sought approval to a revised wheeled bin policy. The officers had redrafted the policy with South Oxfordshire District Council.

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The chairman invited Councillor Dudley Hoddinott to ask his question. He requested Cabinet to amend the policy to describe what was meant by 'contamination', which bins might be contaminated and how could the contamination be removed? Cabinet agreed that this should be clarified.

The cabinet member responsible for waste recommended adoption of the revised policy, believing it would allow sufficient flexibility to adapt to differing circumstances.

**RESOLVED: To**

- (a) approve the revised wheeled bin policy, set out in appendix 1 to report 71/11, subject to clarifying the term 'contamination'; and
- (b) authorise the head of corporate strategy, in consultation with the relevant Cabinet member, to approve requests from residents for a change to their normal bin provision where such requests are justified.

**Ca.54 Accept agency powers from South Oxfordshire District Council for the operation of Rye Farm and Hales Meadow car parks**

Cabinet considered report 72/11 of the head of economy, leisure, and property. This sought support for accepting agency and other powers from South Oxfordshire District Council to continue provision of car parks at Rye Farm and Hales Meadow, Abingdon. This would allow the council to continue operating these car parks.

Councillor Dudley Hoddinott was invited to ask his question: was it correct that South Oxfordshire leases the car parks from this council? The head of legal and democratic services reported that this council owned the car parks and currently leased them to South Oxfordshire. However, the council needed to form new agency arrangements with South Oxfordshire. This would allow this council to accept the agency agreement and start the formal process of putting a new car park order in place. Cabinet believed that this was the best option and noted that either council could review this arrangement after three years.

**RECOMMEND** to Council to:

- (a) accept agency and all other necessary powers from South Oxfordshire District Council to operate Rye Farm and Hales Meadow car parks at Abingdon and to authorise the head of legal and democratic services to complete the appropriate agreements;

**RESOLVED:**

- (b) Subject to Council adopting (a) above, to:
  - (i) authorise the head of legal and democratic services to prepare and publish a draft car park order under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and carry out the necessary consultations in accordance with the requirements of the Act and the Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996 and to report back to Cabinet on the responses received after the end of the consultation period; and

- (ii) agree that the fees and charges for Rye Farm and Hales Meadow car parks are as set out in appendix 1 of report 71/11 of the head of economy, leisure and property to Cabinet on 10 February 2012.

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

None

The meeting closed at 2.30pm