

Minutes

of a meeting of the

Cabinet



held on Friday 9 April 2021 at 10.30 am
This was a virtual, online meeting.

Open to the public, including the press

Present:

Members: Councillors Emily Smith (Chair), , Andrew Crawford, Neil Fawcett, Helen Pighills, Judy Roberts, Bethia Thomas and Catherine Webber

Officers: Steve Culliford, Andrew Down, Simon Hewings, Candida Mckelvey, Adrianna Partridge, Margaret Reed and Mark Stone

Ca.97 Apologies for absence

Councillor Debby Hallett had sent apologies for absence.

Ca.98 Declarations of interest

None

Ca.99 Urgent business and chair's announcements

None

Ca.100 Public participation

None

Ca.101 Recommendations from other committees

None

Ca.102 Strategic vision for Oxfordshire

Cabinet considered the report of the acting deputy chief executive – partnerships. This set out a strategic vision for Oxfordshire.

Cabinet recalled that in December 2020 it had received a report detailing the Oxfordshire Growth Board's ambition to develop a strategic vision for Oxfordshire. This provided an overarching framework for the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 but also provided a wider remit and

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served as an overarching 'umbrella' under which both the Growth Board and its partners could develop the future plans and strategies.

Consultation on the draft strategic vision took place in December 2020. Overall, the results of the consultation were supportive. The vision had been developed further, following the public consultation exercise. The overall balance of the document remained unaltered, but it now highlighted the importance of the need to address inequalities, the role of Oxfordshire and its place as a national and international centre of excellence. Issues such as the need for inclusive growth had also been strengthened and changes had been made to make the document more Oxfordshire specific, such as references to the rural landscape, the countryside, and the importance of the rural economy. The Growth Board had also commissioned consultants to reflect upon the draft vision and offer informal sustainability advice, specifically whether the vision was consistent, both within the document and when compared to the Oxfordshire Plan 2050, and whether there were any gaps in the sustainability issues identified. This commission had been completed and changes had been made to the final version of the vision, as appended to the report before Cabinet.

Cabinet noted that there had been a positive shift in emphasis in the Growth Bard. For example, this strategic vision had been improved. Cabinet believed that communications could be improved further with a one-page summary, as the current document was too long. Cabinet supported the general approach of the vision. However, measuring progress and setting delivery targets was key.

The consultation feedback from young people had been encouraging. The environment and sustainability were the big issues they identified. Cabinet considered that the method used to reach younger people should be replicated in future consultations conducted by the council.

RESOLVED: to

- (a) agree the Strategic Vision for Oxfordshire; and
- (b) ask that officers consider how to embed the Vision's ambitions for Oxfordshire in future plans and strategies of the council.

Ca.103 Oxfordshire Growth Board Environment Advisory Group

Cabinet considered the report of the acting deputy chief executive – partnerships. This set out a proposal for an Oxfordshire Growth Board Environment Advisory Group.

The Growth Board's review of its own operating arrangements in 2020 had concluded that its work would benefit from a greater consideration of environmental issues. This could be achieved by strengthening the Board's structure and networks through an environmental work stream. The proposal also supported the environmental aims of the strategic vision for Oxfordshire.

Cabinet welcomed the proposal, seeing it as an opportunity to strengthen Oxfordshire's partnership working, to provide a member-led arena to discuss areas of common ground, and to provide a formal mechanism on countywide environmental matters. The chair and membership would be appointed after the forthcoming local elections.

As part of the environment work stream, work was proceeding on establishing a local nature partnership. It was hoped that this would be formally operational by the autumn.

Cabinet also endorsed the Oxford to Cambridge Arc Environment Principles and supported the development of an Arc environment strategy.

Some disappointment was expressed that it was not clear whether all principal councils in Oxfordshire had declared a climate emergency. It was hoped that this would be changed after the local elections. The Leader reported that she would seek clarification of the county council's position.

RESOLVED: to

- (a) support the establishment of a Growth Board environment advisory group;
- (b) endorse the Oxford to Cambridge Arc Environment Principles, as set out at Appendix 3 of the acting deputy chief executive's report to Cabinet on 9 April 2021, recognising that this statement of ambition applies to a diverse range of urban and rural communities, and that further evidentiary work will be required at a local level to understand their longer-term implications; and
- (c) support the development of an Arc environment strategy, which will provide for how the principles can be delivered.

Ca.104 Oxfordshire Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy

Cabinet considered the report of the acting deputy chief executive – transformation and operations. This set out a draft strategy to provide the infrastructure for electric vehicles to 2025. This was an Oxfordshire-wide strategy that was being presented to all principal councils for adoption.

The strategy's objectives were to:

- enable and deliver public electric vehicle charging strategically across Oxfordshire
- adopt a common approach to managing electric vehicle charging in the council's car parks
- enable residents without access to private off-road parking to access a range of options for electric vehicle charging
- encourage new developments to install high quality electric vehicle charging infrastructure
- set standards for the quality of public electric vehicle charging in Oxfordshire, which support the development of a network, which was high quality, open, accessible and future-proofed
- work with partners to encourage other landowners to install electric vehicle charging infrastructure for businesses, residents and other users.

The options open to Cabinet were to either adopt or not adopt the strategy. Cabinet believed that if it did not adopt the strategy the council would have the ability to develop its own, alternative strategy that addressed the needs of the Vale. However, this was not a Vale-only issue. Cabinet considered that there were greater benefits of adopting a county-wide strategy, such as sharing of expertise and learning in introducing an electric vehicle infrastructure, greater access to external funding opportunities, economies of scale in working with others, and increased viability to engage with the private sector.

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Adopting the strategy also supported the council's corporate objective to tackle the climate emergency. It would support the transition to decarbonising transport. Several changes had been made to the strategy following this council's input. Emphasis had been improved to give equal access to electric vehicle infrastructure in all parts of Oxfordshire, not just in urban areas. The council had pushed for equal access to rural areas, remote locations, and those living in areas of deprivation, based on need.

Some concern was expressed at the strategy's reliance on electric vehicles as being the answer to combat climate change. Cabinet had concerns over the environmental impacts of the underwater mining of materials used in the manufacture of electric vehicle batteries. Cabinet supported measures to reduce the negative environmental impacts of electric vehicle battery production, through for example, responding to any relevant government consultations and backing research and innovation in new technologies.

Cabinet recognised that the strategy was a step in the right direction, encouraging the use of electric vehicles over those powered by fossil fuels. However, Cabinet considered that the strategy must evolve, and work towards greener public transport and active travel, with less reliance on private cars. Cabinet added a third resolution, requesting that the Members' Steering Board reviewed the strategy annually to ensure that it remained complimentary to emerging strategies and changing technology.

In answer to a question from a Cabinet member, the chief executive undertook to determine whether the council could require electric vehicle charging infrastructure on new development.

RESOLVED: to

- (a) adopt the recommended policies and key actions for the Oxfordshire Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy (2020-2025);
- (b) support measures to reduce the negative environmental impacts of electric vehicle battery production, through for example, responding to any relevant government consultations and backing research and innovation in new technologies; and
- (c) request that the Members' Steering Board reviews the strategy annually to ensure that it remains complementary to emerging strategies to increase the use of active travel, public transport and to reduce the number of journeys by private car across the county.

The meeting closed at 11.15 am

Chair:

Date: