

Minutes

of a meeting of the

Cabinet



held on Friday 30 September 2022 at 10.30 am
at 135 Eastern Avenue, Milton Park, OX14 4SB

Open to the public, including the press

Present in the meeting room:

Cabinet members: Councillors Emily Smith (Chair), Bethia Thomas (Vice-Chair), Andy Crawford, Helen Pighills, Sally Povolotsky and Judy Roberts
Officers: Steve Culliford (Democratic Services Team Leader) and Mark Stone (Chief Executive)

Remote attendance:

Cabinet members: Councillor Debby Hallett
Officers: Samantha Allen (Conservation Officer), Patrick Arran (Head of Legal and Democratic), John Backley (Technical Services Manager), Harry Barrington-Mountford (Head of Policy and Programmes), Laura Driscoll (Licensing Team Leader), Adrian Duffield (Head of Planning), Diane Foster (Licensing and Community Safety Manager), Simon Hewings (Head of Finance), Suzanne Malcolm (Deputy Chief Executive – Place), Candida Mckelvey (Broadcasting Officer), Mark Minion (Head of Corporate Services), Adrianna Partridge (Deputy Chief Executive – Transformation and Operations), Richard Spraggett (Strategic Finance Officer), and David Wilde (Technology Consultant)

18. Apologies for absence

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Neil Fawcett.

19. Minutes

RESOLVED: to approve the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 22 July 2022 as a correct record and agree that the Chair signs them as such.

20. Declarations of interests

None

21. Urgent business and chair's announcements

None

22. Public participation

Cabinet received statements from members of the public as follows:

- (1) Jason Atherton made a statement objecting to the introduction of maximum hackney carriage fares as these would not cover business costs.
- (2) Raleigh Hullock made a statement on behalf of the South and Vale Taxi Drivers' Association, objecting to the proposal to introduce maximum hackney carriage fares in South Oxfordshire district and asked that the council consulted with the Association to find a workable solution.
- (3) David Lawrie made a statement on behalf of the National Private Hire and Taxi Association objecting to the introduction of maximum hackney carriage fares as this could threaten the local taxi industry.

The chair thanked the speakers for their contributions.

23. Recommendations and updates from other committees

Cabinet noted updates from the Scrutiny Committee and Joint Audit and Governance Committee. The latter had made a recommendation to Cabinet on the treasury outturn 2021/22 report, which was considered later in the meeting (minute 32 refers).

24. Hackney carriage fares

Cabinet considered the head of legal and democratic's report on a proposal to introduce maximum hackney carriage fares. The report set out the results of a consultation exercise on the proposals.

The report explained that in June 2021, the council had adopted a new joint taxi licensing policy with South Oxfordshire District Council. This included the intention to set a maximum tariff for journeys carried out by hackney carriages licensed within the Vale district. Journeys outside of the district would not be affected by the maximum fares.

The Cabinet member responsible for the licensing service reported that the aim of the policy was to protect the public, reduce the risk of fraudulent fares, and ensure consistency, whilst allowing for competition between taxi companies. The council must balance the needs of the local taxi trade with the need to protect the public. The council had to be mindful of the increasing cost of living. There had been increases in the charge for carrying more than four people on one journey, and for the soiling charge. The recommended tariff had taken these points into consideration and would be more in line with other councils. However, the maximum fares were not set in perpetuity; the Cabinet member recommended that the tariff was kept under review.

Other Cabinet members agreed and considered that the council should adopt the maximum fare tariff as set out in Appendix C to the report. These were uncertain economic times and the tariff proposed should be reviewed regularly. In doing so, officers were asked to find a method of consulting the public and taxi users. Officers were also asked to work with the South and Vale Taxi Drivers' Association as part of the review. The review should be undertaken as soon as practicable.

RESOLVED: to

- (a) note the results of the consultation at Appendix B to the head of legal and democratic's report to Cabinet on 30 September 2022;

- (b) adopt the proposed maximum hackney carriage fares at Appendix C with effect from 1 October 2022; and
- (c) agree to review the hackney carriages fares as soon as practicable.

25. Adoption of powers from Oxfordshire County Council under Land Drainage Act

Cabinet considered the report of the head of development and regeneration. This set out a request from Oxfordshire County Council for Vale of White Horse District Council to act as its agent to operate and manage the responsibilities of the lead local flood authority within the Vale district. The functions the county council was looking to discharge were:

- local flood investigations
- the determination of applications for consent to alter a watercourse
- investigation of any nuisance caused by erecting or altering an obstruction or culvert in a watercourse
- enforcement action to comply with county council policy for watercourse/ditch clearing enforcement

The Cabinet member reported that this work was already being carried out by this council's staff. The proposal was to regularise this arrangement. The work would be fully funded by the county council. Cabinet members supported the proposal.

RESOLVED: to

- (a) support the request from Oxfordshire County Council for Vale of White Horse District Council to adopt powers under the Land Drainage Act, as set out in paragraph 8 of the head of development and corporate landlord's report to Cabinet on 30 September 2022;
- (b) subject to Council approving the adoption of powers in (c) below, that Cabinet authorises the head of development and corporate landlord, in consultation with the head of legal and democratic, to negotiate and finalise the agreement with Oxfordshire County Council and enter into agreement to adopt the powers from Oxfordshire County Council;

RECOMMENDED to Council to:

- (c) to approve the adoption of powers under an agency agreement with Oxfordshire County Council.

26. Great Coxwell Conservation Area Appraisal and Boundary Review Adoption

Cabinet considered the head of planning's report on the draft Great Coxwell Conservation Area appraisal and boundary reviews. The review had been subject to public consultation, the results of which were set out in the report.

The Cabinet member reported that the review had been carried out at the neighbourhood plan steering group's request. The review had recommended an extension to the conservation area boundary.

The proposals had received local support. Cabinet welcomed the review proposals also.

RESOLVED to:

- (a) adopt the Great Coxwell Conservation Area boundary, as per the proposed revisions shown at Appendix 1 to the head of planning's report to Cabinet on 30 September 2022;
- (b) adopt the Great Coxwell Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan as amended; and
- (c) authorise the head of planning, in consultation with the relevant Cabinet member, to make minor changes, typographical corrections or non-material amendments to the Great Coxwell Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan document prior to formal publication and statutory notification requirements.

27. Update on the Corporate Transformation Programme, and the Technology and Customer Workstreams

Cabinet considered the report of the deputy chief executive – transformation and operations. The report set out the progress made in implementing the council's transformation programme. This included the proposed structure of the transformation team, and the further development of transformation outcomes.

The Cabinet welcomed the progress made on the transformation programme to date. The programme would improve the council's interaction with the public and customers, deliver even higher standards of service and increased efficiencies, and provide greater value for money. Cabinet noted that officers would be involved in the design and build stages of any transformation, and there would be continuous review of progress against the programme.

RESOLVED: to note the update on the transformation programme and progress to date on the technology and customer workstreams.

28. Business case for Transforming IT and Systems of Planning and Regulatory Services

Cabinet considered the report of the deputy chief executive – transformation and operations. This set out a business case for the transformation of IT and systems for the council's regulatory services, including planning, environmental protection, food safety, community safety, waste, and licencing services. The transformation would be enabled by the procurement of new IT solutions.

The report set out two options:

- Option 1 – full public procurement for new IT solutions through open market tenders
- Option 2 – procurement of fit for purpose IT solutions through the GCloud 12 Framework Agreement

Cabinet supported option 2, as this would mitigate the risk of procuring an unproven solution and provide a quicker result. Whereas option 1, which might require external support, was likely to take more time to achieve the desired outcomes. Cabinet also

supported the business case for the replacement of IT systems as an 'invest to save' initiative. Cabinet also noted the confidential appendix containing exempt information.

RESOLVED: to

- (a) approve the business case and recommended procurement option for the replacement of the Planning and Regulatory Services IT systems as an Invest to Save initiative; and
- (b) authorise the deputy chief executive - transformation and operations, in consultation with the head of finance, to approve contracts subject to costs being within the business case.

29. Corporate Performance Report - Quarter 1, 2022/23

Cabinet considered the Corporate Performance Report for quarter 1 in 2022/23. This covered the period 1 April to 30 June 2022.

The Cabinet member welcomed the improvements in the quality of the document and was open to any suggestions to improve it further.

Cabinet welcomed the report; it showed good progress against the corporate objectives. Cabinet suggested that members should share the report with their local residents and parish councils.

RESOLVED: to note the Corporate Performance Report, Quarter 1, 2022/23.

30. Climate Action Plan Performance Report - Quarter 1, 2022-23

Cabinet considered the Climate Action Plan Performance Report for quarter 1, 2022/23. This formed part of the Corporate Performance Report but had been separated out to produce a report concentrating solely on the council's performance in tackling the climate emergency through its corporate objectives.

Cabinet welcomed the production of this separate report and thanked officers and the Climate Emergency Advisory Committee for their work to date. Performance had been strong, but the report showed some areas where further work was needed. It was noted that the Climate Emergency Advisory Committee and the Scrutiny Committee would both be considering this report shortly.

RESOLVED: to note the Climate Action Plan Performance Report, Quarter 1, 2022/23.

31. Budget monitoring - quarter 1, 2022/23

Cabinet considered the head of finance's budget monitoring report for quarter 1, 2022/23.

The Cabinet member reported that, as at 30 June 2022, there was a predicted revenue overspend at the financial year-end, being 31 March 2023. The council had experienced rising costs from inflationary increases. In terms of the capital programme, only a small proportion had been spent but the programme would be re-profiled accordingly. Increases in interest rates were expected to bring higher returns on the council's treasury investments during the year. Officers would closely monitor the effect of the economic downturn on the council's budgets.

Cabinet welcomed the report.

RESOLVED: to note the Budget Monitoring Report, Quarter 1, 2022/23.

32. Treasury outturn 2021/22

Cabinet considered the head of finance's report, which showed the treasury outturn for the 2021/22 financial year. The report had been considered by the Joint Audit and Governance Committee, which recommended to Cabinet to note that the committee was satisfied that the council's treasury activities in 2021/22 had been carried out in accordance with the treasury management strategy and policy.

Cabinet noted that towards the end of the 2021/22 financial year, interest rates had begun to rise, resulting in increased income on the council's financial investments. As such, the budget target income had been exceeded. Performance of the in-house managed portfolio exceeded benchmarks. Externally managed performance was modestly below benchmarks. There had been no breaches of the counterparty limits or prudential indicators during the year.

Cabinet welcomed the report and thanked the Joint Audit and Governance Committee and officers for their work.

RESOLVED to:

- (a) note that Joint Audit and Governance Committee is satisfied that the treasury activities are carried out in accordance with the treasury management strategy and policy;

RECOMMENDED to Council to:

- (b) approve the treasury management outturn report for 2021/22; and
- (c) approve the actual 2021/22 prudential indicators within the report.

The meeting closed at 12.00 noon

Chair:

Date: