

# Minutes

## of a meeting of the

# Cabinet



held on Friday 2 December 2022 at 2.00 pm  
in the Meeting Room 1, Abbey House, Abbey Close, Abingdon, OX14 3JE

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

### **Present in the meeting room:**

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

### **Remote attendance:**

Cabinet member: Councillor Debby Hallett  
Officers: Patrick Arran (Head of Legal and Democratic), Emma Baker (Planning Policy Team Leader), Harry Barrington-Mountford (Head of Policy and Programmes), Andrew Down (Deputy Chief Executive – Partnerships), Simon Hewings (Head of Finance), Jeremy Lloyd (Broadcasting Officer), Suzanne Malcolm (Deputy Chief Executive – Place), Mark Minion (Head of Corporate Services), and Lucy Murfett (Policy Manager)

## **43. Apologies for absence**

Councillor Sally Povolotsky had sent her apologies for absence.

## **44. Minutes**

**RESOLVED:** to adopt as a correct record the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 11 November 2022 and agree that the chair signs them as such.

## **45. Declarations of interests**

Councillor Emily Smith declared interests in items 11 and 12 on the agenda. Her interest in item 11, Oxfordshire Food Strategy, related to accepting an offer of employment in a food charity that might be involved in the strategy's action planning. Her interest in item 12, Didcot Growth Accelerator Enterprise Zone Memorandum of Understanding, related to her being a non-executive director of the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Zone, with which the council was negotiating a revised memorandum of understanding.

## **46. Urgent business and chair's announcements**

Councillor Emily Smith announced that this would be her last meeting as both the chair of Cabinet and a Cabinet member as she was stepping down from her position as leader of

the council on 7 December 2022. She thanked officers and fellow Cabinet members for their support.

#### **47. Public participation**

None

#### **48. Recommendations and updates from other committees**

Cabinet noted updates from the Joint Audit and Governance Committee and the Scrutiny Committee. The committees made no recommendations to Cabinet.

#### **49. Diversity and inclusion strategy**

Cabinet considered the head of corporate services' report on a proposal to adopt a diversity and inclusion strategy. The Corporate Plan included an aspiration for the council to work in an open and inclusive way. The council had also approved a motion relating to diversity and inclusion, and had published a diversity and social campaign calendar on its website. The diversity and inclusion strategy continued this work.

Cabinet noted that the Joint Scrutiny Committee had welcomed the strategy and had suggested improvements. The public consultation response had been strong also. Suggestions had been taken into account in the strategy presented to Cabinet.

The Cabinet member for community engagement reported that it was important for the council to increase inclusivity and make the council's services easier to access. The strategy had been developed to do this by creating an environment where everybody felt that they belonged, that their voice would be heard, and their differences recognised and accepted. The strategy would drive improvements in the council's services to make it easier for everyone to use them.

Cabinet welcomed the strategy, noting that an action plan would be developed to implement it. It was important to review service provision to ensure that services were easily accessible by everyone.

#### **RESOLVED to:**

- (a) note the consultation responses received, including comments from Joint Scrutiny Committee; and
- (b) adopt the Joint Diversity and Inclusion Strategy for South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse district councils, as set out at Appendix 1 to the head of corporate services' report to Cabinet on 2 December 2022.

#### **50. Council tax base 2023/24**

Cabinet considered the head of finance's report on the need to set the council tax base for 2023/24. This was required to calculate the amount of taxable resources to allow Council to set its council tax in February 2023. Oxfordshire County Council, Thames Valley Police and all parish councils within the district would also be informed of the tax base relevant to them.

Cabinet noted that this year a new parish had been created, that of Harwell East, covering the part of Great Western Park within the Vale. This had caused additional work; staff were thanked for this.

**RECOMMENDED** to Council to:

- (a) approve the report of the head of finance for the calculation of the council's tax base and the calculation of the tax base for each parish area for 2023/24;
- (b) agree that, in accordance with The Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012, the amount calculated by Vale of White Horse District Council as its council tax base for the year 2023/24 is 56,664.9; and
- (c) agree that, in accordance with The Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012, the amount calculated by Vale of White Horse District Council as the council tax base for the year 2023/24 for each parish be the amount shown against the name of that parish in Appendix A of the report of the head of finance to Cabinet on 2 December 2022.

## **51. Oxfordshire Plan 2050 ceasing production and implications for the Joint Local Plan and Local Development Scheme**

Cabinet considered the head of policy and programmes' report. This reported that work had ended on the Oxfordshire Plan 2050. The report also considered the implications for the Joint Local Plan and the Local Development Scheme.

Cabinet recalled that in February 2018, the council had agreed to participate in developing a strategic plan with the other Oxfordshire authorities. Later that year, Cabinet approved the timetable for an Oxfordshire plan. However, during the summer 2022, the leaders of the five Oxfordshire local planning authorities announced that they were unable to reach agreement on the approach to planning for future housing needs and ended work on the Oxfordshire Plan 2050. Instead, the councils agreed to tackle these issues through their own local plans, in the Vale's case through a joint local plan with South Oxfordshire District Council, recognising the wider duty to co-operate.

The report presented the next steps and sought approval of an amended timetable for the Joint Local Plan in an updated Local Development Scheme. The report proposed that the timetable for progressing the Joint Local Plan to adoption stage should be extended by 11 months. This would allow time to fill gaps in the evidence base and avoid holding public consultations during a pre-election period. Recognising that the timetable might need to change again, the report sought delegated authority to make further updates.

Cabinet noted the end of work on the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 and welcomed the revised Local Development Scheme and its amended timetable for the Joint Local Plan. Cabinet agreed to add a further resolution to note that the Joint Local Plan was progressing well, recognising the wider duty to co-operate with other councils.

**RESOLVED:** to

- (a) formally note the cessation of work on the Oxfordshire Plan 2050;

- (b) note that Vale of White Horse and South Oxfordshire councils have committed to develop a Joint Local Plan and work is progressing well to the delivery of that outcome, recognising the wider duty to co-operate;
- (c) approve the updated Joint Local Development Scheme (December 2022), attached at Appendix 1 to the head of policy and programmes' report to Cabinet on 2 December 2022; and
- (d) authorise the head of policy and programmes, in consultation with the Cabinet member for corporate services and transformation, to make any updates to the Joint Local Development Scheme.

## **52. Corporate Plan and Climate Action Plan performance reports - quarter 2, 2022/23**

Cabinet considered the head of policy and programmes' report on 2022/23 quarter 2 performance monitoring on progress against the Corporate Plan and the Climate Action Plan. This covered the period 1 July to 30 September 2022.

Cabinet welcomed the performance reports and noted that the Climate Action Plan report would be considered by the Climate Emergency Advisory Committee.

**RESOLVED:** to note the Corporate Plan and Climate Action Plan Performance Reports for Quarter 2, 2022/23.

## **53. Oxfordshire Food Strategy**

The chair, Councillor Emily Smith, declared an interest in this item and left the meeting during its consideration. Councillor Bethia Thomas, vice-chair, took the chair.

Cabinet considered the head of policy and programmes' report on the Oxfordshire Food Strategy. Oxfordshire County Council had commissioned Good Food Oxfordshire to produce a food strategy. Cabinet was asked to endorse the strategy and agree to develop a local action plan to implement it. Funding would be available from the county council to help deliver the action plan.

The strategy's main aims were to ensure:

- healthy and sustainable food was affordable and accessible to everyone
- a sustainable food economy where local food businesses flourished
- more locally produced, sustainable food was bought and consumed locally
- that food production, consumption and waste had a less negative impact on the planet

The Cabinet member for healthy communities reported that the strategy largely reflected the council's corporate priorities. Joint Scrutiny Committee had welcomed it also. However, the opportunity for the council to influence how the strategy was implemented was welcomed. To this end, a local action plan would be developed and considered by Cabinet in 2023.

Cabinet agreed, supporting the strategy and welcoming the opportunity to develop a local action plan. This would allow the council to put its own identity on the implementation of the strategy.

**RESOLVED to:**

- (a) endorse the Oxfordshire Food Strategy (Part One) principles and framework for delivery, attached at Appendix 1 to the head of policy and programmes' report to Cabinet of 2 December 2022'; and
- (b) ask officers to work with relevant partners to develop a detailed local food strategy action plan (Part Two).

**54. Didcot Growth Accelerator Enterprise Zone - Memorandum of Understanding**

The chair, Councillor Emily Smith, had declared an interest in this item and left the meeting during its consideration. Councillor Bethia Thomas, vice-chair, took the chair.

Cabinet considered the report of the deputy chief executive – partnerships. This outlined work undertaken to draft a new memorandum of understanding that would set out how local business rates were spent.

The spending of the retained business rates in the Enterprise Zone area was the responsibility of the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership. The money was spent on infrastructure projects in Oxfordshire but not necessarily in the area from which they were collected. The aim was for the revised memorandum of understanding to confirm the prioritisation of business rates spending on projects in the Didcot Growth Accelerator Enterprise Zone (EZ2) or its surrounding area. Officers would also propose projects that supported the council's corporate objectives.

Cabinet welcomed the council entering into a revised memorandum of understanding on this basis. Cabinet also supported the council being formally confirmed as the accountable body, as the majority of the enterprise zone was within its district.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) that Vale of White Horse District council should enter into a new memorandum of understanding with the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership, South Oxfordshire District Council and Oxfordshire County Council, for the retention and distribution of business rates growth income from the Didcot Growth Accelerator Enterprise Zone, agreeing the roles of each party and specifically that Vale of White Horse District Council becomes sole Accountable Body; and
- (b) to authorise the deputy chief executive – partnerships, in consultation with the Cabinet member for strategic partnerships and place, to finalise terms of the new memorandum of understanding, including non-material amendments, and to enter into it.

The meeting closed at 2.35 pm

Chair:

Date: