

# Minutes

## of a meeting of the

# Cabinet



held on Friday, 18 October 2024 at 10.30 am  
in 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 Bethia Thomas (Chair), Andy Crawford, Neil Fawcett, Andy Foulsham, Diana Lugova and Helen Pighills

Officers: Mark Minion (Head of Corporate Services), Paul Fielding (Head of Housing and Environment), John Backley (Technical Services Manager), Candida Basilio (Democratic Services Officer)

#### Remote attendance:

Cabinet members: Councillor Mark Coleman (Vice-chair), Councillor Sue Caul

Officers: Nick Bennett (Head of Legal and Democratic Services), Andrew Busby (Head of Development and Corporate Landlord), Simon Hewings (Head of Finance), Adrianna Partridge (Deputy Chief Executive – Transformation and Operations), Tim Oruye (Head of Policy and Programmes), Scott Williams (Environmental Services Manager)

Guests: Councillors Katherine Foxhall and Viral Patel

### 57. Chair's announcements

The chair opened the meeting, welcoming all. There was a brief run through of housekeeping matters.

### 58. Apologies for absence

It was noted that Councillors Mark Coleman and Sue Caul were present online, so could take part but not vote on any items.

### 59. Minutes

#### Resolved:

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 September 2024 were agreed as a correct record, and the chair will sign them as such.

### 60. Declarations of interests

None.

### 61. Urgent business

None.

## **62. Public participation**

Dr Camilla Ryan, an Abingdon resident, asked Cabinet, “Abbey Meadow Outdoor Pool is there, no need for more cement. It sits there unused for too long each year. In the short-term can you extend and maximise the season for this open-air pool?” The chair thanked the speaker for her question, and it was confirmed that relevant members had been in ongoing correspondence.

Councillor Katherine Foxhall registered to speak on Scrutiny Committee recommendations, so the chair agreed that Councillor Foxhall should speak under that agenda item (see 63).

Councillor Viral Patel spoke to the following agenda items.

1. Future Delivery of Household Waste and Street Cleaning Services: He raised the issue of uncertainty over costs of going out to tender and suggested exploring LATCos further.
  2. Budget Scene Setting: In relation to increasing costs and reduced funding. It was felt that there should be increased staff capacity for revenue generation.
  3. Car Park Options Appraisal: Extending felt like the most viable option and he did not think it was currently feasible to bring the service in-house but suggested working with Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) in future and looking at increased street enforcement.
- Councillor Patel expressed that the officer recommendations for the items were the most viable at this time but encouraged working with LATCos and OCC in future.

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

Councillor Foxhall in her capacity as co-chair of Joint Scrutiny drew attention to the discussion Joint Scrutiny had on the Future of Waste Services report. Some scrutiny members felt that the consultants’ report did not serve officers and Cabinet well enough to aid decision-making. Joint Scrutiny made a point about keeping options open for exploration.

On Vale Scrutiny discussions, Councillor Foxhall mentioned paragraph 20 in the scrutiny report on budget outturn – Vale Scrutiny wanted to follow up on this and this could be a Joint Audit and Governance Committee item. Councillor Foxhall as chair of Vale Scrutiny was discussing options with the Head of Finance.

## **64. Future Delivery of Household Waste and Street Cleansing Services**

The report was introduced by the Cabinet member for Environmental Services and Waste. Officers present were the Head of Housing and Environment and the Environmental Services Manager. The options were reviewed by officers, and they concluded that Option one, to procure a new joint contract, was the best option for service continuity, and to build in more flexibility into a new contract. The new contract provider would support achieving delivery of the new Waste Resources and Street Cleaning Strategy.

A Cabinet member felt this was a very good service and that the report was well argued that option one was the best route. Members felt that we had outperformed LATCos but felt that the flexibility would not exclude LATCos from bidding for the option one route, noting Councillor Patel’s comments. Members noted the many years of good service and the work of previous Cabinet member, Councillor Jenny Hannaby.

A view was expressed that the priority was to meet our statutory duty to deliver this service, as well as being mindful of minimising risks particularly around multiple contract end dates the councils have coming forward. Cabinet member for Environmental Services and Waste encouraged members to read about the waste hierarchy to reduce waste, reuse and recycle. Members overall accepted, with consideration of the comments of Joint Scrutiny, that other options were still open via option one.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) Cabinet reviewed the options available for the future household waste and street cleansing service provision from June 2026, as set out in this report.
- (b) Subject to this review, agreed to progress Option 1 and delegate to the Head of Housing and Environment, in consultation with the responsible cabinet member, to undertake a joint procurement exercise between South Oxfordshire District Council and Vale of White Horse District Council to let a new joint contract for Household Waste Collection and Street Cleansing Services from 29 June 2026.

## **65. Budget Scene Setting**

The report was introduced by the Cabinet member for Finance and Property. The Head of Finance was present online to assist with questions for the financial reports (see 65 – 67). In response to Councillor Patel, the Cabinet member for Finance and Property Assets explained that options will remain on the table and ideas were welcomed on spending to save money or to create revenue. The Cabinet member expressed thanks to the finance team and individual service managers taking responsibility for their budgets. The level of uncertainty on aspects out of our control, for example, direction from central government, was the main issue faced.

**RESOLVED:** Cabinet noted the contents of the report.

## **66. Quarter 1 Budget Monitoring Report 2024/25**

The Cabinet member for Finance and Property introduced the budget monitoring report.

**RESOLVED:** Cabinet noted the contents of the report

## **67. Treasury Management Outturn 2023/24**

The Cabinet member for Finance and Property introduced the budget monitoring report.

**RESOLVED**

- (a) to note the treasury management outturn report 2023/24
- (b) That Cabinet is satisfied that the treasury activities are carried out in accordance with the treasury management strategy and policy, and

Cabinet recommends Council to

- (c) approve the treasury management outturn report 2023/24; and
- (b) approve the actual 2023/24 prudential indicators within the report

## **68. Corporate Plan annual performance report**

The Cabinet member for Policy and Programmes introduced the annual performance report for the Corporate Plan. He discussed progress of items to green ratings and gave thanks to

the officer team who present the report. Changes to keep improving accessibility will continue, along with improvements to make it easier for officers to update the performance reports.

Chair thanked everyone who has been involved in the progress made and other members agreed.

**RESOLVED**

Cabinet noted the annual report.

## **69. Car park options appraisal**

The Cabinet member for Environmental Services and Waste introduced the report, supported by the Head of Development and Corporate Landlord and the Technical Services Manager. The report provided options for providing the car park service as of October 2025, jointly with South Oxfordshire District Council.

The four options for consideration all rely on shared service delivery with South Oxfordshire District Council and were:

- 1) In-house: day-to-day delivery is entirely delivered within the councils by directly employed staff.
- 2) Contract extension: day-to-day operation is entirely delivered by extending the existing contract with Saba.
- 3) Retendering the contract: day-to-day delivery is entirely delivered by a contractor (which may be Saba) following a competitive procurement exercise.
- 4) Third Party Agreement: whereby another organisation, for example a neighbouring council such as Oxfordshire County Council, is engaged to carry out parking management and enforcement on behalf of the council.

Option two was recommended by officers and the Cabinet member. The Cabinet member explained that in-house could be marginally cheaper, however staff did not have the employee and pension liability information to assess this. It was explained that extending by two years would give time for a strategic review of car parks and help the council to navigate a period with multiple council contract end activities. Saba performance had recently been assessed as excellent, supporting contract extension.

The Cabinet member added that Saba had offered to pay the Real Living Wage for the first year of the contract extension and then review this in the second year. It was explained that the council needed to agree to the same terms as their neighbouring council, South Oxfordshire (SODC) for a joint contract, to avoid significant risks. SODC agreed option two at their Cabinet meeting on 17 October 2024. Cabinet member commended the staff involved in producing this report.

There was a discussion about the contract options after the proposed two-year extension. A member wanted certainty over assessment of in-house options, and it was confirmed that the officer team were prepared to review all options ahead of the expiry of the proposed extension, should it be agreed. All options were still open for assessment. Cabinet agreed an additional recommendation (d) to acknowledge the discussion and for officers to consider. Cabinet voted in favour for the following recommendations.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) Cabinet considered the options to provide the parking service starting from 1 October 2025
- (b) Cabinet recommends option two to Full Council, which involves extending the current contract with Saba Park Services UK Limited (Saba) for two years until 30 September 2027 as a shared service with South Oxfordshire District Council.

- (c) Cabinet recommends to the Full Council that responsibility be delegated to the Head of Development and Corporate Landlord, in consultation with the Cabinet member for Finance and Property, to finalise and sign the contractual arrangements.
- (d) Should recommendations (b) and (c) be agreed, Cabinet request that officers continue to consider all options for the future of car park management.

## **70. Exclusion of the Public**

Not required

## **71. Future Delivery of Household Waste and Street Cleansing Services**

Not required

## **72. Car Park Options Appraisal**

Not required

The meeting closed at 11.53 am

Chair:

Date: