

Minutes

of a meeting of the

Cabinet



held on Tuesday 19 December 2023 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), Mark Coleman (Vice-Chair), Sue Caul, Debra Dewhurst, Lucy Edwards, Andy Foulsham, Diana Lugova and Helen Pighills

Officers: Steve Culliford (Democratic Services Team Leader) and Simon Hewings (Head of Finance)

Remote attendance:

Officers: Jeremy Lloyd (Broadcasting Officer), Suzanne Malcolm (Deputy Chief Executive – Place), Mark Minion (Head of Corporate Services), Tim Oruye (Head of Policy and Programmes) and Adrienne Partridge (Deputy Chief Executive – Transformation and Operations)

Guests: Councillor Hayleigh Gascoigne

55. Apologies for absence

Councillors Andy Crawford and Neil Fawcett had sent their apologies for absence.

56. Minutes

RESOLVED: to adopt as a correct record the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 10 November 2023 and agree that the chair signs them as such.

57. Declarations of interests

None

58. Urgent business and chair's announcements

None

59. Public participation

None

60. Recommendations and updates from other committees

Cabinet noted updates from the Scrutiny Committee, the Joint Scrutiny Committee, and the Climate Emergency Advisory Committee.

Councillor Hayleigh Gascoigne, chair of the Climate Emergency Advisory Committee, asked if the Cabinet member for environmental services and waste could provide an update after the Cabinet meeting on the previously proposed maintenance depot at Great Western Park and if there were any plans going forward. The committee was unable to make a recommendation to Cabinet without the facts.

61. Corporate Performance Report and the Climate Action Plan Performance Report - Quarter 2, 2023/24

Cabinet considered the corporate performance report and climate action plan performance report for quarter 2, 2023/24.

Cabinet welcomed the reports, which highlighted the council's achievements and the matters where further work was required. This provided evidence of the council's work. Overall, the council was ahead of schedule against its corporate plan objectives; members were proud of this. Officers were thanked for their work in compiling the reports. Members and officers were working on the next corporate plan to set more measurable targets and to introduce shorter performance reports.

RESOLVED: to note the Corporate Performance Report and Climate Action Plan Performance Report for quarter 2, 2023/24.

62. Budget Monitoring - quarter 2 2023/24

Cabinet considered the head of finance's report, being the budget monitoring report for April to September 2023.

Cabinet noted that there was a forecasted overspend at the financial year end of £1.2 million, but estimated increases in treasury income should largely offset this. This showed that the council's finances were stable.

RESOLVED to note the Budget Monitoring Report for April to September 2023.

63. Budget setting 2024/25

Cabinet considered the head of finance's report, being the budget setting update report for 2024/25.

The report set out the starting position for the council to set its 2024/25 budget. There would be inflationary pressures but there was likely to be treasury income from high interest rates. The government had published its draft settlement figure for the Vale at an increase of 3.81 per cent, although there was no clarity for later years. This left uncertainty in compiling the medium term financial plan, which covered the next five years. A revenue and capital budget challenge was underway, to analyse the draft figures in detail before Cabinet would be required to recommend its draft budget to Council in February 2024.

Cabinet noted that the council would be limited to increasing its council tax by £5 per Band D property in 2024/25; any further increase would require a referendum. As for business rates, the council could only retain a small proportion of the total collected, the remainder being retained by the government and distributed to other councils. Members asked that the mechanics of business rates' retention was more widely publicised.

Members also asked that the council's low cost per resident was more widely communicated. The council was efficient in providing its services for low cost compared to some other councils.

Members thanked the officer for his report.

RESOLVED to note the budget setting report 2024/25.

The meeting closed at 11.45 am

Chair:

Date: