Minutes

OF A MEETING OF THE

Cabinet

HELD AT 6.00PM ON 14 FEBRUARY 2011

AT COUNCIL OFFICES, CROWMARSH GIFFORD

Present:

Mrs E A Ducker (in the chair)

Mrs D Brown, Mr D Dodds, Mr I R Mann, Mrs J Murphy, Rev’d A Paterson,
Mr B Service

Apologies:

None

Officers:

Mr S Bishop, Mrs J Bolton, Mr D Buckle, Mrs K Fiander, Mr S Hewings, Mr W Jacobs,
Mr I Matten, Mr M Prosser, Mrs M Reed, Mrs A Robinson, Mr T Warren

36. Minutes, 19 January 2011

RESOLVED: to approve the minutes of the meeting held on
19 January 2011 as a correct record and agree that the Chairman
sign them.

37. Sponsorship of roundabouts in South Oxfordshire

Cabinet considered the report of the Head of Corporate Strategy that sought an
exception to the contract procedure rules to allow officers to enter into agreements
with Marketing Force Ltd and Oxfordshire County Council for the maintenance and
sponsorship of roundabouts in South Oxfordshire on terms and conditions negotiated
with Marketing Force Ltd and Oxfordshire County Council.

Mr M Tyce addressed Cabinet on this item. He set out why the Campaign to Protect
Rural England continued with its objection to the proposals for sponsorship of
roundabouts in South Oxfordshire. He suggested that the council stood alone in
wishing to pursue the sponsorship as there were many counterarguments to it. The
objections had included a number of parishes objecting to the proposals on amenity or
highway grounds, as did some members of the public. Mr Tyce suggested the signs were hazardous, referring to Oxfordshire County Council’s comments and RoSPA’s guidance that suggested distractions to drivers could result in accidents. Mr Tyce referred to the council’s economic strategy that set out the links between economics and the environment stating that the signs would harm the environment so economic arguments for the sponsorship were not valid. On the basis of his arguments against the sponsorship of roundabouts, he urged Cabinet to abandon the proposals.

Whilst noting the arguments against the sponsorship of roundabouts, Cabinet was required to make a decision on letting the contract and not to revisit the planning decision. Cabinet therefore agreed the recommendations to enable the successful sponsorship of roundabouts to continue whilst providing a financial benefit to the council.

RESOLVED: to

1. authorise an exception to contract procedure rules to allow the council to enter into an agreement with Marketing Force Limited for the maintenance and sponsorship of roundabouts, the detailed terms to be negotiated by the Head of Corporate Strategy;

2. recommend Council to enter into an agency agreement with Oxfordshire County Council for the maintenance and sponsorship of roundabouts, the detailed terms to be negotiated by the Head of Corporate Strategy.

38. Community investment fund process

Cabinet considered the report of the Head of Corporate Strategy that set out the outcomes of the fit for the future review of grants. The report asked Cabinet to consider changes to the community investment fund (CIF) policy and procedure rules and to consider authorising the relevant Cabinet member to award grants from £25,000 to the maximum award level under the scheme rules following consideration by the CIF Panel.

Cabinet agreed the recommendations, which would save officer and councillor time, reduce costs and benefit applicants whilst maintaining the robustness of the decision making process.

RESOLVED: to recommend Council to

1. agree the amendments to the community investment fund policy and procedure rules shown in appendix one to the report of the Head of Corporate Strategy to Cabinet on 14 February 2011;

2. agree to authorise the relevant Cabinet member to award grants between £25,000 and the maximum award level for any individual application under the community investment fund rules.
that apply at the time of the application and after consideration by the community investment fund panel. If, for any reason, the Cabinet member does not agree with the community investment fund panel then the decision will be referred to full Cabinet for consideration;

3. authorise the Head of Legal and Democratic Services to make the necessary changes to the council’s constitution.

39. Ongoing provision of concessionary fares services

Cabinet considered the report of the Head of Finance that sought approval to provide concessionary fares services on an agency basis on behalf of Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) for one year and to extend and award contracts to third-party suppliers to enable delivery of the services.

Mrs A Tomline addressed Cabinet on this item saying that she was sad at the changes to the concessionary fares service. Councillors used to hand out tokens in many areas but bus tokens were now of little use as there were no buses and would be too costly if there were. In response to Mrs Tomline’s additional comments, Mrs E A Ducker confirmed that all affected residents had received a letter about changes to the service and that information had appeared in Outlook.

Cabinet agreed to assist OCC by providing the customer element of the concessionary fares service for one year whilst full responsibility for the service passed to OCC. This would ensure that there was no service disruption for residents holding bus passes in South Oxfordshire.

RESOLVED:

1. to recommend Council to approve entering into an agency agreement on a full cost recovery basis to provide the customer element of the concessionary fares service on behalf of Oxfordshire County Council for the 2011/12 financial year;

2. to recommend Council to delegate the authority for negotiating the detail of the agency agreement to the Chief Financial Officer;

3. that subject to recommendation 1) Cabinet agrees to extend the Applied Card Technologies contract for the provision of a customer management system for a 12 month period;

4. that subject to recommendation 1) Cabinet agrees to enter into a contract with the existing supplier Euclid Limited for the manufacture and despatch of concessionary bus passes for a 12 month period.
40. Treasury management strategy 2011/12

Cabinet considered the report of the Head of Finance that asked Cabinet to fulfil three legislative requirements by recommending that Council approves the treasury management strategy, the annual investment strategy and the prudential indicators.

Cabinet agreed the recommendations to support capital investment decisions, providing the parameters within which officers will operate the council’s treasury management function.

RESOLVED: to recommend Council to

1. approve the treasury management strategy 2011/12, incorporating the annual investment strategy, which is contained within appendix A of the report of the Head of Finance to Cabinet on 14 February 2011,

2. approve the prudential indicators and limits for 2011/12 to 2014/15, which are contained within appendix A and annexe 2 of the report of the Head of Finance to Cabinet on 14 February 2011.

41. Revenue budget 2011/12 and capital programme to 2014/15

Cabinet considered the report of the Head of Finance that set out the virements between capital schemes and recommended Council to agree budgets for 2011/12. A revised appendix G (the medium term financial plan to 2015/16) was circulated at the meeting and is attached to the minute book copy of these minutes.

Mrs A Tomline addressed Cabinet on this item. Firstly, Mrs Tomline commended the council chairman for his extensive work with a variety of organisations. She asked Cabinet to take on board her comments and use any savings to support communities. In particular, Mrs Tomline commented on some aspects of the budget and suggested savings as follows:

- The council’s prudence in its budget and the joint working that should be commended. However, she questioned its carbon footprint with officers working across two sites.
- The savings on the corporate management budget, which included savings on the consultants’ budget that she was pleased to see.
- The Outlook publication, which should be reduced to two and could include details of waste collection dates;
- The council tax booklet, which was probably not read but used for reference;
- Foxhall Manor Park should continue to be maintained to a high level.
- The Quality Officer post that should remain in the budget.
- The grant to Oxfordshire Rural Housing Enabler should remain;
- People should be able to access free planning advice.
- Too many cuts would put extra strain on officers leading to mistakes.
• More consultation could prevent planning appeals and could reduce the cost of the examination into the core strategy.
• A lot of money was to be spent on Didcot.

Where possible Mr I R Mann, Cabinet member for finance, responded to Mrs Tomline’s comments. In particular, he stated that:

• The use of consultants in some situations could be an effective resource that had delivered savings.
• The number of editions of Outlook had already been reduced to three per year. Outlook had been assessed as an effective publication and the council needed to communicate. However, the publication remained under scrutiny.
• At Foxhall Manor Park, a great deal of money had been spent in previous years so necessitating lesser spend in 2011/12.
• Pre-application planning advice charges became payable only when plans were submitted. The planning team had a high level of output of high quality. This was illustrated by fewer planning appeals and the council was winning more of the appeals that did come forward.

Notwithstanding lower interest rates and income, the budget would deliver £1,000,000 of savings arising from efficiency and cost savings that would result in a nil increase in council tax. Cabinet agreed to recommend a budget to Council to enable delivery of services and provide value for money.

RESOLVED: to

1. agree the virements between capital schemes outlined in paragraph 38 of the report of the Head of Finance to Cabinet on 14 February 2011;

2. recommend to Council that it
   a. sets the revenue budget for 2011/12 at £13,066,755, as set out in appendix A1 to the report of the Head of Finance to Cabinet on 14 February 2011;
   b. agrees that the capital schemes listed in paragraph 39 in the report of the of the Head of Finance to Cabinet on 14 February 2011 remain in the capital programme;
   c. approves the capital programme for 2011/12 to 2015/16 as set out in appendix D of the report of the Head of Finance to Cabinet on 14 February 2011, together with the capital growth bids set out in appendix B2 of the report of the Head of Finance to Cabinet on 14 February 2011;
   d. sets the council’s prudential limits as listed in appendix F of the report of the Head of Finance to Cabinet on 14 February 2011;
   e. approves the medium term financial plan to 2015/16 as set out in the revised appendix G to the report of the Head of Finance to Cabinet on 14 February 2011, as circulated at the
meeting and attached to the minute book copy of these minutes;
f. allocates the interest earned on community investment balances in accordance with the proposal in paragraph 57 of the report of the Head of Finance to Cabinet on 14 February 2011;

3. authorise the Cabinet member for finance to make minor adjustments to the report of the Head of Finance to Cabinet on 14 February 2011 and the prudential indicators, in conjunction with the Head of Finance, should they prove necessary prior to its submission to Council on 24 February 2011.

The meeting closed at 6.50pm

Chairman       Date