

# Minutes

OF A MEETING OF THE

## Cabinet



Listening Learning Leading

**HELD ON THURSDAY 6 OCTOBER 2016 AT 6.00 PM  
MEETING ROOM 1, 135 EASTERN AVENUE, MILTON PARK, MILTON,  
OX14 4SB**

### **Present:**

John Cotton (Chairman), Anna Badcock, Elizabeth Gillespie, Will Hall, Lynn Lloyd, Jane Murphy and Robert Simister

### **Apologies:**

Tony Harbour tendered apologies.

### **Officers:**

Gerry Brough, Steve Culliford, Adrian Duffield, Clare Golden, David Hill, Alice Lynch, Margaret Reed and Sally Truman

### **Also present:**

Simon Hewings (Capita)

## **59 Declaration of disclosable pecuniary interest**

None

## **60 Minutes**

**RESOLVED:** to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 7 April 2016 as a correct record and agree that the Chairman sign them as such.

## **61 Public participation**

Democratic Services read out the following question on behalf of Helena Whall of Need not Greed Oxfordshire:

"Need not Greed Oxfordshire notes and supports the findings of the Scrutiny Committee, which proposed deferral of a formal response to the SEP [Strategic Economic Plan] refresh pending consideration by Council. In addition to the Committee's concerns about infrastructure, lack of business endorsement and the overly narrow spatial focus of the SEP, we believe there are broader issues that should also be raised. These include failure to consider the implications of Brexit, a lack of consideration given to the overall social and environmental impacts and the need to re-consider priorities for action – i.e. how to provide affordable housing for existing local residents, rather than seeking to attract ever more people into the area

making the jobs versus housing balance worse. These are significant issues which deserve serious consideration by all our elected representatives. Will Cabinet therefore support the findings of the Scrutiny Committee and refer the SEP Refresh to Council?"

This matter was discussed under the next item, minute 62 refers.

## **62 Oxfordshire Strategic Economic Plan**

Cabinet considered the report of the interim head of development, regeneration and housing. This summarised the revised draft Oxfordshire Strategic Economic Plan, which the council had been asked to comment on by its author, the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership. The report highlighted the key points in the document, outlined issues that had already been raised during the formal consultation that had not been fully addressed in the revised draft, and recommended a response to the Local Enterprise Partnership. The Joint Scrutiny Committee had also considered the revised draft plan and suggested a number of improvements. The committee had also recommended that Cabinet referred the plan to the Council for debate.

Cabinet concurred with the suggestions that the revised draft plan should be subject to a Council debate before the leader submitted his formal response to the consultation. Cabinet suggested that the chief executive of the Local Enterprise Partnership should be invited to address Council to answer some of the key points made in the report.

**RECOMMENDED** to Council to endorse the decision of Cabinet to:

- (i) welcome some of the changes made to the Oxfordshire Strategic Economic Plan which seek to make it "shorter and clearer", and acknowledges that this has largely been achieved;
- (ii) support the broad thrust of the Oxfordshire Strategic Economic Plan document in terms of the stated vision, identified strengths weaknesses, opportunities and threats, and proposed actions; and
- (iii) believe the document would be more robust if it:
  - more fully addressed the issues highlighted in the body of the Cabinet report,
  - more clearly linked actions to identified issues, and confirmed where responsibility lies for implementing these various actions,

and to note that the Leader will take account of points raised at Council in responding to the consultation.

## **63 Allocation of Didcot Garden Town Grant**

Cabinet considered the report of the interim head of development, regeneration and housing. This suggested how the £1.02 million Department of Communities and Local Government section 31 grant should be spent to realise the vision of the Didcot Garden Town project.

Cabinet supported the proposed budget allocation appended to the report, and noted that this would be subject to audit and close scrutiny both within the council and by the government department.

**RESOLVED:** to authorise the Head of Development, Regeneration and Housing, in consultation with the head of legal and democratic services, if necessary as an

exception to contract procedure rules, to use the £1.02m to establish budgets, employ staff and commission and pay for works necessary to deliver the core objectives of the “Didcot Garden Town” project – in accordance with the proposed budget allocation set out in Appendix 1a to the report to Cabinet on 6 October 2016.

## **64 Future maintenance of open space at Great Western Park, Didcot**

Cabinet considered the report of the interim head of development, regeneration and housing. This set out a proposal from The Land Trust to manage the public open space at Great Western Park, Didcot.

The Cabinet member reported that this was the best option financially to manage these open spaces and would provide cost-effective long term maintenance compared to the in-house or contracted out management options. Cabinet considered The Land Trust was experienced in managing open spaces.

### **RESOLVED: to**

- (a) support implementation of the proposed management and maintenance arrangement for open spaces at Great Western Park, Didcot, as outlined in Option 2 of The Land Trust’s proposal (attached as Appendix 1 to the report to Cabinet on 6 October 2016); and
- (b) authorise the Head of Development, Regeneration in consultation with the relevant Cabinet members to take whatever action is required, to expedite this proposal as soon as practically possible and to negotiate terms for the disposal of the land and enter into all necessary documents.

## **65 Devolution**

Cabinet considered the report of the chief executive, updating on the development of a devolution deal following an independent study into the options for local authority reform in Oxfordshire, conducted by PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC).

Cabinet noted that the government was looking for consensus between councils on the future of local government in Oxfordshire. Although consensus had not been reached, leaders of the districts, city, and county councils had agreed to focus on identifying areas for collaborative working and the reshaping of a devolution deal that did not incorporate proposals for the reform of local government within Oxfordshire at this time. Cabinet considered that the commissioning of the study had proved valuable in that it had identified areas for collaborative working and potential significant savings.

Cabinet noted that the leaders of the five Oxfordshire districts were due to issue a letter to explain their position. Cabinet asked that this was sent to all parish councils, with a copy sent to all councillors first.

### **RESOLVED: to**

- (a) receive the independent study of PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) into options for local government reform in Oxfordshire, including the proposition of the

district and city council leaders' in respect of their preferred model arising from that study; and

- (b) note that following discussions with the Department of Communities and Local Government, the leaders of the districts, city, and county councils have agreed to focus on identifying areas for collaborative working and the reshaping of a devolution deal that does not incorporate proposals for the reform of local government within Oxfordshire at this time.

## **66 Design guide**

Cabinet considered the head of planning's report that proposed a new design guide to replace the 2008 guide. The report set out the draft design guide and its technical documents, a summary of the consultation responses and showed how the council had responded to these. Cabinet was asked to approve the new guide as a supplementary planning document.

The Cabinet member for development management welcomed the new guide and thanked the officers for their work on it. It was noted that officers would edit the document under delegated authority to include better illustrative photographs. Cabinet supported the guide's adoption but asked that the 'character areas' section included a reference to the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

**RESOLVED:** to adopt the new South Oxfordshire Design Guide 2016 (set out in Appendix A to the report to Cabinet on 6 October 2016) as a Supplementary Planning Document to the adopted South Oxfordshire Core Strategy 2012, with effect from 1 November 2016.

## **67 Sonning Common Neighbourhood Plan**

Cabinet considered the head of planning's report on the Sonning Common Neighbourhood Plan. The plan had been subject to a referendum on 29 September 2016, when the majority supported it.

Cabinet noted that the council had a duty to make the neighbourhood plan part of the development plan unless the making of the plan would breach, or would otherwise be incompatible with, any EU obligation or any of the Convention rights (within the meaning of the Human Rights Act 1998). Officers reported that the neighbourhood plan was compatible with the current EU obligations and recommended that the council 'make' the neighbourhood plan part of the council's development plan. Cabinet also supported the neighbourhood plan.

**RECOMMENDED:** to Council to make the Sonning Common Neighbourhood Plan part of the development plan for South Oxfordshire.

## **68 Treasury management outturn 2015/16**

Cabinet considered the head of finance's report on the outturn of the council's treasury management activity in 2015/16.

The Cabinet member for finance reported that the Joint Audit and Governance Committee had considered the same report and concluded that it was satisfied that the treasury activities in 2015/16 had been carried out in accordance with the

treasury management strategy and policy. The performance during the year had exceeded the target but the Cabinet member expressed caution for the current year in the light of any consequences from the EU Referendum result.

**RECOMMENDED:** to Council to:

- (a) approve the 2015/16 treasury management outturn report to Cabinet on 6 October 2016; and
- (b) approve the actual 2015/16 prudential indicators within the report.

The meeting closed at 7.02 pm

Chairman

Date