

Minutes

of a meeting of the

Cabinet

held on Thursday 3 August 2017 at 6.00pm
at 135 Eastern Avenue, Milton Park, OX14 4SB

Present:

John Cotton (Chairman), Felix Bloomfield, Elizabeth Gillespie, Lynn Lloyd, Jane Murphy and David Nimmo-Smith

Apologies:

Tony Harbour and Robert Simister tendered apologies.

Officers:

Charlotte Colver, Steve Culliford, Philip Ealey, William Jacobs, Holly Jones, Margaret Reed, Mark Stone, Sally Truman, and Chris Webb

Also present:

Toby Newman and Richard Pullen

14 Minutes

RESOLVED: to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 15 June 2017 as a correct record and agree that the Chairman sign them as such.

15 Declaration of disclosable pecuniary interest

None

16 Urgent business and chairman's announcements

None

17 Public participation

Michael Tyce addressed Cabinet as a concerned local resident and on behalf of the Campaign to Protect Rural England. He spoke about the work being carried out by the National Infrastructure Commission to investigate potential routes for the Oxford to Cambridge expressway, a major road scheme connecting the two cities. The commission has been surveying different routes. He urged the council to back the route that approximately followed the existing A34 and therefore would provide the least disruption. He urged the council to object to more southerly routes across the South Oxfordshire countryside.



Listening Learning Leading

The chairman thanked Mr Tyce for his statement. Cabinet was unable to respond formally on behalf of the council. However, the chief executive was asked to write to the commission setting out some informal views that if the commission chose the northern route, this council was likely to support that as it would be the least disruptive option, had better major road connections and might be cheaper. If the commission chose a more southerly route then the council was more likely to have concerns and would wish to enter into dialogue.

18 Petition on Didcot Garden Town

At its meeting on 20 July 2017, the Council received the following petition signed by in excess of 2000 people:

“Please promise to protect all of Didcot’s green spaces, paths and amenities on Ladygrove from loss, shrinkage or relocation through future development”.

Council referred the petition to Cabinet for consideration when it considered the Didcot Garden Town delivery plan.

Cabinet noted receipt of the petition and asked that the project board considered the petition along with other responses to the public consultation on the delivery plan. Cabinet was due to consider a further report in the autumn.

RESOLVED: to refer the petition to the Didcot Garden Town project board for consideration along with the other consultation responses to the Didcot Garden Town delivery plan.

19 Corporate delivery plan

Cabinet considered the report of the head of HR, IT and technical services, which sought approval of the corporate delivery plan. The plan set out in detail the actions required to deliver the corporate plan 2016-2020.

Scrutiny Committee had considered the delivery plan and noted its contents.

Cabinet welcomed the delivery plan and noted that it would receive regular progress reports. Cabinet asked officers to make sure this was a live document and publicly visible on the council’s website.

RESOLVED: to approve the corporate delivery plan, as set out in the report of the head of HR, IT and technical services.

20 Neighbourhood planning district grant funding review

Cabinet considered the report of the head of planning on changes to the government’s neighbourhood planning grants. The level of government funding for each successful plan had been reduced but grants were available for reviews or modifications of neighbourhood plans until 2020. The report sought approval to extend the current support to community groups preparing revised neighbourhood plans.

Cabinet discussed the option of extending the grant scheme to community groups preparing revised neighbourhood plans. Cabinet concluded that this would be

beneficial as it would encourage neighbourhood plan reviews to keep plans up to date with the latest housing needs evidence. Cabinet asked that the neighbourhood planning grants funding was kept under review. Cabinet also asked officers to further review the level of support to neighbourhood planning groups.

RESOLVED: to

- (a) extend the current district grant support (Market Towns £15,000; Larger Villages £10,000 and Smaller Villages £5,000) to community groups preparing revised neighbourhood plans, subject to:
 - (i) the head of planning being satisfied that a review of the neighbourhood plan is necessary; and
 - (ii) the community group submitting a project plan and associated costings.
- (b) agree that these changes will take effect on 14 August 2017; and
- (c) agree that a review of the neighbourhood planning district grant funding should take place annually, which would compare expenditure forecast against actual spend, and be reported to Cabinet, starting at the end of this financial year (2017/18).

21 Berinsfield community investment scheme

Cabinet considered the report of the interim head of development, regeneration and housing. This sought authority to spend the £995,000 government grant to support the Berinsfield community investment scheme. The grant was obtained to help the council pay for:

- technical studies, including modelling, to ensure that highways and utilities would have capacity for the development proposed at Berinsfield
- design work to support a detailed planning application for phase 1 in addition to an outline planning application for the whole scheme
- major development planning fees
- the provision of additional resources to engage with local people

The report set out how the grant would be spent.

Cabinet considered the options as follows:

1. To procure the same consultancy team through a new ESPO contract. Cabinet considered this option retained the existing experience, skills and knowledge but the time taken to award a new contract could delay commencement of the work and increase the risk of the consultancy team not being able to field the same staff resources.
2. To procure a different consultancy team through a new contract. Cabinet considered that this lost the continuity of existing experience, skills and knowledge and the time taken to award a new contract would further delay commencement of the work.
3. To extend the existing consultancy team ESPO contract through variation terms, following consultation with the Cabinet member, and subject to obtaining any additional authority required. Cabinet considered that this option had the benefits of being a faster process and retaining continuity of experience, skills and knowledge.

Cabinet preferred option 3 and asked officers to provide regular updates.

RESOLVED: to authorise the interim head of development, regeneration and housing, in consultation with the Cabinet member, to

- (i) spend the £995,000 Department for Communities and Local Government's grant to support the Berinsfield community investment scheme; and
- (ii) retain the existing consultancy team through a new ESPO contract or the extension of the existing ESPO contract.

22 Temporary accommodation provision 2017-2022

Cabinet considered the report of the interim head of development, regeneration and housing. This set out an approach to provide temporary housing accommodation for the period 2017 to 2022. To meet demand, the report proposed initially purchasing two properties in Didcot.

Scrutiny Committee had welcomed the proposal.

Cabinet considered the options:

1. Meeting the temporary accommodation demand through local hotels.
2. Purchasing accommodation to meet demand, initially buying two properties in Didcot.

Officers had predicted a demand for temporary accommodation. Cabinet considered that if it did not provide for an increased demand, there was a risk that the cost of housing households in hotels would increase significantly. By purchasing some property to provide temporary accommodation, the council could save on hotel accommodation costs. These properties would also generate a rental income and could provide a return on investment as capital assets. Therefore, Cabinet preferred option 2: buying two properties in Didcot to meet temporary accommodation demand.

RESOLVED:

- (a) to approve the approach to temporary housing accommodation provision as set out in the report of the interim head of development, regeneration and housing; and

RECOMMENDED: to Council

- (b) to make a supplementary estimate of up to £1,000,000 in 2018/19 for the purchase of temporary housing accommodation and add the temporary housing accommodation scheme to the provisional capital programme.

23 Exclusion of the Public

RESOLVED: to exclude members of the press and public from the meeting for the following items of business, under Part 1 of Schedule 12A Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 and as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006, on the grounds that:

- i. they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act, and
 - ii. the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.
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24 Didcot Wave

Cabinet authorised refurbishment works at Didcot Wave.

25 Henley Leisure Centre - wet changing accommodation

Cabinet agreed to award a contract for the refurbishment works to the Henley Leisure Centre wet changing accommodation.

26 Thame Leisure Centre small pool conversion

Cabinet agreed to progress the award of a contract to convert the small pool at Thame Leisure Centre into a learner pool.
