

Minutes

OF A MEETING OF THE

Cabinet



Listening Learning Leading

**HELD ON THURSDAY 5 MARCH 2020 AT 9.30 AM
MEETING ROOM 1, 135 EASTERN AVENUE, MILTON PARK, OX14 4SB**

Present:

Cabinet members: Councillors Sue Cooper (Chair), David Turner, Robin Bennett, Maggie Filipova-Rivers, Andrea Powell, Leigh Rawlins and David Rouane

Officers: Emma Baker, Steve Culliford, Adrian Duffield, Kim Hall, Simon Hewings, Suzanne Malcolm, Ian Price, Margaret Reed, Mark Stone and Shona Ware

Apologies:

Pieter-Paul Barker tendered apologies.

Also present:

Councillors Elizabeth Gillespie, Jane Murphy and Caroline Newton

66 Declaration of disclosable pecuniary interest

Councillor Robin Bennett declared a non-pecuniary interest in the agenda item on SO Charitable Lottery Fund.

67 Urgent business and chairman's announcements

None

68 Public participation

Giles Cattermole addressed Cabinet on the climate emergency, urging the council to take all action it could to tackle the emergency and work with other councils to find the best solutions. The council should encourage property owners to improve the energy efficiency of their homes and demand the highest standards in new homes.

69 Local Plan

Cabinet received a verbal update from the chief executive on the Local Plan. The council had received a letter from the Secretary of State on 3 March 2020 setting out a binding direction to the council to progress the submitted Local Plan 2034 to adoption by

December 2020. Cabinet was therefore no longer able to consider the head of planning's report or the option to withdraw the plan.

The Leader invited the members of the public that had registered to speak at the meeting to address Cabinet.

- (1) Ian Hudspeth, Leader of Oxfordshire County Council and chair of the Didcot Garden Town Advisory Board, welcomed the government's direction spoke in support of the council progressing the submitted Local Plan through to its adoption by December 2020.
- (2) Neville Harris spoke in favour of an eco-friendly Local Plan, the need for affordable housing, and measures to tackle the climate emergency.
- (3) Adrian Townsend urged Cabinet to seek a judicial review of the Secretary of State's direction and withdraw support for the Oxfordshire Growth Board and the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal.
- (4) Caroline Baird urged Cabinet to protect residents, protect Culham from housing development, tackle the climate emergency, and seek changes to the Local Plan before it was adopted.
- (5) Richard Harding, on behalf of the Campaign to Protect Rural England, believed that the Local Plan was flawed, and urged Cabinet to oppose the Secretary of State's direction and develop a new plan to protect the district.
- (6) Mark Stevenson believed that today's knowledge of the climate emergency overrode the Local Plan. He urged Cabinet to challenge the Secretary of State's direction.

The Leader thanked the speakers for their comments.

The Cabinet member for planning believed that the concerns expressed presented genuine challenges that needed to be addressed, including the housing numbers required, Green Belt issues, climate change, and the need to reduce commuting. However, he believed that the council must move forward, recognise the direction of the Secretary of State and make the necessary recommendation to Council to allow the submitted Local Plan 2034 to progress and request officers to ensure that happened. He acknowledged continued support for infrastructure funding. He also asked officers to explore all opportunities to address through the local planning process the climate emergency, enhanced policies for environmental standards to achieve high quality sustainable settlements, and the early delivery of appropriate regeneration and housing delivery to meet local needs.

Cabinet supported the proposal, believing that the council must move forward, work with other councils, and focus on what was achievable. The council had a duty to its residents to ensure it had a seat at the table in the future and therefore it must accept the Secretary of State's direction and move on.

RECOMMENDED to Council to:

- (a) note the terms of the direction to the council from the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government;

- (b) acknowledge the decision of the Secretary of State to allow South Oxfordshire District Council to progress the submitted Local Plan 2034;
- (c) request the head of planning to prepare a timetable and ensure that adequate staff resources are in place in order to meet the requirements of the direction;
- (d) continue to acknowledge the critical importance of long-overdue infrastructure to support housing already delivered and to be delivered through the Local Plan and request the Secretary of State to confirm his commitment to the funding provided through the Oxfordshire Growth Deal and the Didcot Garden Town Housing Infrastructure Fund;
- (e) ask the chief executive to ensure that sufficient budget provision and staff resource is made available to fully explore all opportunities to address through the local planning process and any other means the council's concerns including but not limited to:
 - (i) addressing the council's declared climate emergency;
 - (ii) enhancing planning policies for environmental standards, including improved site master-planning to achieve high quality sustainable settlements; and
 - (iii) early delivery of appropriate regeneration and housing delivery activity to meet local needs.

70 Community grants

Cabinet considered the report of the head of corporate services, which set out the recommendations of the Community Grants Panel, following its meeting on 18 February 2020.

The Leader invited a member of the public, who had registered to speak on this item, to address Cabinet.

Mr Bradshaw spoke on behalf of Warborough Parish Council, urging Cabinet to override the Community Grants Panel's recommendation, and increase the matrix scoring for his council's grant application, thereby resulting in a grant being offered to the parish council. He also urged Cabinet to review its grants policy and criteria.

Councillor Caroline Newton also addressed Cabinet asking for a review of the grants policy and criteria.

The Cabinet member for community services reported that this year, the level of grants applied for exceeded the amount of budget available. Therefore, this was a competitive process. The Community Grants Panel was praised for correctly conducting the process, following the current policy, and scoring each application against the criteria. However, it was accepted that there should be a review of the policy and criteria. It was suggested that the Scrutiny Committee should be asked for its views.

Cabinet agreed with the recommendations of the Community Grants Panel and asked officers to commence a grants policy and criteria review and consult Scrutiny Committee as part of that review.

RESOLVED to:

- (a) award a total of £319,317 in capital grants to the 11 organisations listed in appendix one of the head of corporate services' report and apply any specified non-standard conditions; and
- (b) transfer £319,317 from the provisional 2019/20 capital grant budget to the approved 2019/20 capital grant budget (cost centre A319) to fund these awards.

71 SO Charitable Lottery fund

Councillor Robin Bennett left the meeting room, declaring a non-pecuniary interest in this item as he was involved in an organisation which might apply for an award under the proposed new scheme.

Cabinet considered the head of corporate services' report, which sought approval to use the funds the council receives from the SO Charitable Lottery community fund to launch a new award scheme, and fund future voluntary and community sector conferences.

Cabinet supported the proposals, noting that the detail of the scheme would now be prepared.

RESOLVED to:

- (a) agree to use the funds the council receives from its community lottery scheme, SO Charitable, to establish a new award scheme, which will be open to all voluntary and community organisations in South Oxfordshire; and
- (b) agree that the costs for holding an annual Voluntary and Community Sector Conference should be met from the general income received.

72 Budget monitoring

Cabinet considered the interim head of finance's budget monitoring report covering the period April to November 2019. This showed that there had been a net revenue overspend of £217,000, after carry-forwards from 2018/19. Cabinet noted that, based on current projections, there was likely to be a capital underspend at the financial year end.

Cabinet welcomed the report.

RESOLVED to note the head of finance's report.