

Minutes

OF A MEETING OF THE

Cabinet

HELD ON THURSDAY 18 MARCH 2021 AT 6.00 PM

THIS WAS A VIRTUAL, ONLINE MEETING.

Present:

Cabinet members: Councillors Sue Cooper (Chair), Robin Bennett, Maggie Filipova-Rivers, Pieter-Paul Barker, Andrea Powell, Leigh Rawlins, David Rouane and Anne-Marie Simpson

Officers: Pat Connell, Steve Culliford, Adrian Duffield, Mark Hower, Simon Hewings, Jeremy Lloyd, Suzanne Malcolm, Lucy Murfett, Margaret Reed, Melanie Smans, and Mark Stone

Also in attendance: Councillors Mocky Khan and David Turner

69 Minutes

RESOLVED: to approve the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 4 February 2021 as a correct record and agree that the Chair signs them as such.

70 Declaration of disclosable pecuniary interest

Councillor Leigh Rawlins declared a personal interest in the item on the section 106 funding request from Sonning Common Parish Council (minute 76 refers).

71 Urgent business and chair's announcements

None

72 Public participation

Cassie Pinnells made a statement on behalf of Thame Town Council, in support of its application for section 106 funding towards a floodlit 3G artificial sports pitch.

73 Recommendations from other committees

Cabinet noted that the Scrutiny Committee had met on 1 and 8 March 2021 and made the following recommendations to Cabinet:

- support for Cabinet's decision on car parking fees and charges



Listening Learning Leading

- support for a joint local plan with Vale of White Horse District Council
- support for the recommendations in the exempt report on the Covid-19 leisure support package

74 Budget monitoring

Cabinet considered the interim head of finance's budget monitoring report. This looked at the council's budget position for the period April 2020 to January 2021. This showed a revenue underspend and capital programme underspend, as detailed in the report's public and exempt appendices. During the period, the council's main priority was to provide a strong local response to the Covid-19 pandemic. This had resulted in the diversion of resources and the consequent reduction in work on other priorities. Cabinet thanked officers for their work during these unprecedented times.

RESOLVED: to note the contents of the interim head of finance's report to Cabinet on 18 March 2021.

75 A joint local plan

Cabinet considered the head of planning's report on a joint local plan. This proposed the development of a joint local plan with Vale of White Horse District Council, rather than the two councils working on separate plans.

The Cabinet member for planning saw many advantages to the proposal. It would allow the councils to work more closely together, share policies where appropriate, and share resources. Both councils' geography was similar, with rural areas and market towns, and a joint plan would allow for better planning of Didcot Garden Town. Both councils' corporate ambitions were similar; both had declared climate emergencies. A joint local plan would also save costs as the councils had a shared planning policy team, and could share the costs of evidence gathering and the public examination.

Cabinet agreed, believing that there were sound planning and practical reasons to develop a joint local plan. Cabinet was reassured that, if necessary, local policies could be included in a joint plan to reflect local needs. This would overcome the disadvantage of a joint plan covering a wider area and being less local. Cabinet also noted that the current, adopted local plan would remain in place until a new joint local plan was adopted.

Legislation allowed the councils to prepare a joint plan. Cabinet discussed the two methods of doing this:

- Section 28 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 allowed two or more local planning authorities (district councils) to prepare a joint local plan. The county council in two-tier areas, such as Oxfordshire, could be part of the plan-preparation process but could not be part of the formal decision-making, as this remained the responsibility of the district councils. Under Section 28, the final, formal decisions at key local plan stages (consultations, publication, submission, adoption) were made either separately by each council or via a voluntary joint committee.
- Section 29 of the 2004 Act enabled the county council to continue to have a strategic planning role working with district councils. This allowed for the decision-making on a joint local plan to be conferred on a joint committee. Under

section 29, the county council would be a formal partner in the joint committee and therefore would have equal membership on that committee.

Given the context of development plan making across Oxfordshire, with a strategic plan (the Oxfordshire 2050 Plan) already underway, and a shared management and policy team already in place for South Oxfordshire and the Vale, Cabinet considered that a joint local plan should be prepared in accordance with section 28 of the Act. Scrutiny Committee had preferred the section 28 option also. Cabinet considered that officers should be authorised to prepare the detailed arrangements and hoped that all members could be involved in the plan preparation at relevant stages, through feedback sessions. Cabinet members asked officers to manage the risks by identifying them in the risk register, and by preparing contingencies and mitigations should the risks materialise.

RECOMMENDED to Council on 25 March 2021 to:

- (a) agree, subject to the agreement of Vale of White Horse District Council, the preparation and production of a Joint Local Plan with Vale of White Horse District Council;
- (b) approve the Joint Local Development Scheme (March 2021) attached at appendix 1 to the head of planning's report to Cabinet on 18 March 2021, and authorise the head of planning in consultation with the Cabinet member for planning, to make any updates;
- (c) agree the principle of governance to prepare and produce a Joint Local Plan under Section 28 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, and authorise the head of legal and democratic, in consultation with the head of planning, the Leader and Deputy Leaders, and the Cabinet members for planning and legal and democratic, to agree the detailed arrangements; and
- (d) if recommendation (a) above is not supported, to agree the preparation and production of a South Oxfordshire Local Plan and to authorise the head of planning, in consultation with the Cabinet member for planning, to publish a Local Development Scheme and agree any updates to it.

76 Section 106 request - Sonning Common Parish Council

Councillor Leigh Rawlins declared a personal interest in this item as he was a member of Sonning Common Parish Council, and left the meeting during its consideration.

Cabinet considered the report of the acting deputy chief executive – place. This set out a request from Sonning Common Parish Council for section 106 funding towards ground levelling works, creating public access, and the installation of a fence along the western boundary at the Memorial Hall Field, Reade's Lane, Sonning Common. The project had the support of the parish council and the neighbourhood plan.

Cabinet supported the proposal.

RECOMMENDED: to Council on 25 March 2021 to

- (a) create a budget of £267,671 in the approved capital programme for the Memorial Hall Field project (ground levelling and access works and installation of fence along the

western boundary) in Sonning Common, to be funded by the section 106 contributions set out in the report of the acting deputy chief executive – place to Cabinet on 18 March 2021;

RESOLVED: subject to Council agreeing recommendation (a) above, to:

- (b) approve funding to Sonning Common Parish Council of £267,670.53, towards the Memorial Hall Field project in Sonning Common as detailed in the parish council's application;
- (c) authorise the acting deputy chief executive – place, in consultation with the head of legal and democratic to:
 - (i) agree a funding agreement with Sonning Common Parish Council regarding the terms of use of the section 106 funding; the instalments in which the funding is paid; the timing of instalments; the conditions subject to which instalments are paid; and to otherwise protect the interests of South Oxfordshire District Council as the provider of the funding; and
 - (ii) approve the payment to Sonning Common Parish Council of £267,670.53 towards the Memorial Hall Field project, subject to and in accordance with the funding agreement.

77 Section 106 request - Thame Town Council

Cabinet considered the report of the acting deputy chief executive – place. This set out a request from Thame Town Council for section 106 funding towards a new floodlit, 3G artificial turf sports pitch at the ASM Stadium, Meadow View Park, Thame.

Cabinet noted that this would provide a high standard sports pitch that could be used by multiple teams each week, even in the wettest parts of winter. This project had achieved widespread support in Thame, driven by the town council, local sports clubs and the local community. Cabinet supported the proposal.

RECOMMENDED: to Council on 25 March 2021 to

- (a) create a budget of £340,000 in the approved capital programme for a 3G Artificial Floodlit full-size football pitch project in Thame, to be funded by the section 106 contributions set out in the report of the acting deputy chief executive – place to Cabinet on 18 March 2021;

RESOLVED: subject to Council agreeing recommendation (a) above, to:

- (b) approve funding to Thame Town Council up to a maximum of £340,000, towards the installation of a new 3G artificial floodlit football pitch;
- (c) authorise the acting deputy chief executive – place, in consultation with the head of legal and democratic to:
 - agree a funding agreement with Thame Town Council regarding the terms of use of the section 106 funding; the instalments in which the funding is paid; the timing of instalments; the conditions subject to which instalments are paid; and to otherwise protect the interests of South Oxfordshire District Council as the provider of the funding; and

- approve the payment to Thame Town Council of up to £340,000 towards the installation of a new 3G artificial floodlit football pitch, subject to and in accordance with the funding agreement.

78 Exclusion of the Public

RESOLVED: to exclude members of the press and public from the meeting for the following item 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) it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1,2 and 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.

79 Covid-19 leisure support package

Cabinet made a recommendation to Council to approve a package of Covid-19 leisure support.

80 Budget monitoring

Cabinet noted the exempt appendices to the interim head of finance's budget monitoring report.