



Minutes

OF A MEETING OF THE

Cabinet

HELD ON THURSDAY 5 DECEMBER 2019 AT 6.00 PM

FOUNTAIN CONFERENCE CENTRE, HOWBERY PARK, CROWMARSH
GIFFORD, WALLINGFORD, OX10 8BA

Present:

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

Officers: Steve Culliford, Simon Hewings, Margaret Reed, Robyn Tobutt and Mark Stone

36 Apologies for absence

Councillor Pieter-Paul Barker had sent his apologies for absence.

37 Minutes

RESOLVED: to approve the minutes of the Cabinet meetings held on 3, 8 and 25 October 2019 as correct records, including the exempt minutes of 8 October 2019, and agree that the Chairman signs them as such.

38 Declaration of interests

None

39 Urgent business and chairman's announcements

None

40 Public participation

None

41 Budget monitoring

Cabinet considered the head of finance's report on revenue and capital budget monitoring for the period April to August 2019, the first five months of the financial year. This showed a projected revenue overspend of £481,000 at the year-end (31 March 2020), and a projected capital underspend of £186,000.

The Cabinet member for finance reported on the financial constraints the council faced, such as the unknown level of future government funding and the limitation on council tax increases. Work had begun to assess budgetary performance at the end of November 2019. Officers and Cabinet members were working to ensure there was no overspend at the end of the current financial year to avoid impacting on next year's budget.

Cabinet members noted that some elements of the budget were outside of the council's control, such as income from planning fees (the council could not control the number of planning applications it received), and housing benefit (primarily due to a reduction in the net income for housing benefits overpayments as more people now claimed Universal Credit). Both of these could have a significant impact on the final outturn.

Cabinet asked if future budget monitoring reports could show both income and expenditure figures rather than just net income. Officers agreed to explore this for next year's reports.

Cabinet also asked officers to consider providing basic training to all councillors on the budget preparation process and on the Medium Term Financial Plan. Cabinet asked officers to present a simpler version of the Medium Term Financial Plan to the councillor training session, to clearly show how the bottom line was calculated.

RESOLVED: to note the budget monitoring report for the period April to August 2019.

42 Berrick Salome Neighbourhood Plan

Cabinet considered the head of planning's report on the Berrick Salome Neighbourhood Plan. The report sought Cabinet's recommendation to Council to make the plan part of the council's development plan.

The Cabinet member for planning reported that the plan did not contain any new housing sites but did include a policy to allow infill development within the settlement boundary. The plan's main emphasis was on safeguarding the character of the village.

Cabinet noted that the plan was compatible with the European Union obligations and complied with the Habitats Regulations Assessment. The independent planning inspector had supported the plan and agreed that it should proceed to referendum.

The referendum, held on 24 October 2019, had resulted in 94.3 per cent support for the plan. Therefore, the Cabinet member for planning recommended that Cabinet supported a recommendation to Council to make the plan part of the council's development plan. Cabinet welcomed the plan and supported the recommendation.

RECOMMENDED to Council to:

- (a) make the Berrick Salome Neighbourhood Development Plan so that it continues to be part of the council's development plan; and
- (b) authorise the head of planning, in consultation with the Cabinet member for planning, and in agreement with the Qualifying Body, to correct any spelling, grammatical, typographical or factual errors together with any improvements from a presentational perspective.

43 Treasury management outturn 2018/19

Cabinet considered the head of finance's report on the treasury outturn in 2018/19. The report had been considered by the Joint Audit and Governance Committee, which was satisfied that the treasury activities had been carried out in accordance with the treasury management strategy and policy.

Cabinet noted that performance had missed the budgeted target during the year due to interest rates being lower than expected when the budget had been set.

RECOMMENDED to Council to:

- (a) approve the treasury management outturn report 2018/19; and
- (b) approve the actual 2018/19 prudential indicators within the report.

44 Council tax base 2020/21

Cabinet considered the head of finance's report regarding the setting of the council tax base for 2020/21. Before the council tax could be set by Council, a calculation had to be made of the council tax base: an estimate of the taxable resources for the whole district and for each parish.

Cabinet noted how the council tax base was calculated and noted the assumptions made as part of that calculation. Cabinet was asked to recommend the council tax base to Council. Once set by Council in December, the council tax base would be notified to Oxfordshire County Council, the Police and Crime Commissioner, and each parish and town council to allow them to set their budgets for 2020/21.

Cabinet supported the recommendations.

RECOMMENDED to Council:

- (a) that the report of the head of finance to Cabinet on 5 December 2019 for the calculation of the council's tax base and the calculation of the tax base for each parish area for 2020/21 be approved;
- (b) that, in accordance with The Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012, the amount calculated by South Oxfordshire District Council as its council tax base for the year 2020/21 be 57,848.5; and
- (c) that, in accordance with The Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012, the amount calculated by South Oxfordshire District Council as the council tax base for the year 2020/21 for each parish be the amount shown against the name of that parish in Appendix 1 of the report of the head of finance to Cabinet on 5 December 2019.

The meeting closed at 7.12 pm

Chairman

Date