



Listening Learning Leading

Minutes

OF A MEETING OF THE

Cabinet

HELD ON THURSDAY 4 FEBRUARY 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: John Backley, Emily Cockle, Steve Culliford, Liz Hayden, Simon Hewings, Jeremy Lloyd, Adrianna Partridge, Margaret Reed and Mark Stone

58 Minutes

RESOLVED: to approve the minutes of the Cabinet meetings held on 3 and 8 December 2020 as correct records and agree that the chair signs them as such.

59 Declaration of disclosable pecuniary interest

None

60 Urgent business and chair's announcements

None

61 Public participation

None

62 Recommendations from other committees

Cabinet noted that the Scrutiny Committee had commented on the draft car park order; its suggestions were set out in the report.

Cabinet also noted that the Joint Audit and Governance Committee had met on 26 January 2021 to discuss the treasury management and investment strategy for 2021/22. The committee recommended to Cabinet that it in turn recommended to Council to approve the strategy, the prudential indicators and limits, and the annual investment

strategy. These recommendations were set out in the interim head of finance's report to Cabinet.

Scrutiny Committee would discuss Cabinet's budget proposals on 9 February 2021.

63 Car park order 2021 - consultation results

Cabinet considered the head of housing and environment's report on the consultation results of the draft car park order.

Cabinet considered that it had to increase car parking charges; this would be the first time in twelve years. Scrutiny Committee had supported this and the options proposed in the consultation.

Cabinet reviewed the consultation responses and concluded that:

- charges should be aligned across all car park, with the exception of the Goldsmiths Lane car park in Wallingford where there was a local agreement
- there should be a charge for using car parks on Sundays, from 10am, again with the exception of Goldsmiths Lane car park
- there should be a limited waiting period in Chinnor High Street car park
- there should be enforcement for parking in spaces for charging electric vehicles

Cabinet believed that the changes to the charging structure were modest and the fees and charges could be reviewed again after one year.

RESOLVED: to

- (a) note the comments received on the proposed South Oxfordshire District Council car parking order 2021 and agree to make the following changes:
 - Align all charging car parks in the centre of market towns of Didcot, Henley, Wallingford and Thame, as well as Goring, to all have up to one hour of free parking between the charging hours, and to amend charging hours to 9am to 5pm Monday to Saturday in all car parks where a charge is made (including introducing free parking for up to one hour in Kings Road and Greys Road car parks, Henley), with the exception of Goldsmiths Lane car park in Wallingford which has up to two hours no charge, and to carry out annual usage surveys;
 - Change the current Mondays to Saturdays permitted parking period to charge on Sundays from 10am to 5pm in all car parks, including one hour free, with the exception of Goldsmiths Lane car park in Wallingford;
 - Introduce half priced parking permits for electric vehicles only, in line with those vehicles eligible for a discount from the London Congestion Charge (with the exception of Goldsmiths Lane car park in Wallingford);
 - Introduce limited waiting in High Street car park, Chinnor;
 - Introduce enforcement at charging points for electric vehicles;
- (b) authorise the head of legal and democratic to make the new order and to determine the date it comes into effect.

64 Treasury management and investment strategy 2021/22

Cabinet considered the interim head of finance's report on the treasury management and investment strategy for 2021/22.

The report had been considered by the Joint Audit and Governance Committee on 26 January 2021. The committee supported the recommendations to approve the strategy, the prudential indicators and limits, and the annual investment strategy, and recommended this to Cabinet.

Cabinet agreed, noting that the strategy set boundaries for the council's borrowing, investments and exposure to loss, as well as setting the prudential indicators. The strategy prioritised security, then liquidity and finally yield. There were no significant changes to the strategy. However, as income was likely to fall due to low interest rates, the council would be looking to progress a more proactive treasury management strategy during the coming year, working together with the capital strategy and the investment strategy.

RECOMMENDED to Council on 11 February 2021: to

- (a) approve the treasury management strategy 2021/22, as set out in appendix A to the interim head of finance's report to Cabinet on 4 February 2021;
- (b) approve the prudential indicators and limits for 2021/22 to 2023/24 as set out in appendix A to that report; and
- (c) approve the annual investment strategy 2021/22 set out in appendix A, and the lending criteria detailed in table 6 to that report.

65 Budget 2021/22

Cabinet considered the interim head of finance's report on the budget for 2021/22. The report set out the revenue budget for 2021/22, and the capital programme to 2025/26. Cabinet was asked to recommend the budget to Council at its meeting on 11 February. The budget would also be considered by the Scrutiny Committee on 9 February.

The report recommended an increase in council tax of £5 for a Band D property for 2021/22. This was the maximum increase allowed under the draft referendum rules outlined in the government's provisional settlement.

Coronavirus had played a central part in the budget. The council would continue to see additional costs and income losses in the new financial year. The figures included in the budget for these were estimates only, as no-one could predict the future course of the Covid-19 pandemic. The government had provided some support but the council was likely to see reduced income.

The prioritisation of staff resources had meant that the budget did not include any additional budget proposals that supported the council's priorities in its new corporate plan. However, the report identified where existing budgets could fund corporate plan delivery activity. Deliverability of those activities would be dependent on council resources being available to progress them. Given the uncertainty surrounding the budget, it might be necessary to revisit the budget during the year.

The budget also included the medium-term financial plan for the next five years. This showed an increasing draw on reserves over the five year period, based on current estimates of future local government funding. The increasing use of reserves was unsustainable in the medium to long term. Cabinet would continue to review budgets in the context of the corporate plan priorities to identify ways to improve the council's financial position.

Cabinet supported the budget proposal and thanked the Cabinet member for finance and all officers involved in producing the budget.

RECOMMENDED: to

(a) to Council on 11 February 2021 that it:

- (i) sets the revenue budget for 2021/22, as set out in appendix A.1 to the interim head of finance's report to Cabinet on 4 February 2021;
- (ii) approves the capital programme for 2021/22 to 2025/26 as set out in appendix D.1 to that report, together with the capital programme changes as set out in appendix D.2 to that report;
- (iii) sets the council's prudential limits, as listed in appendix E to that report;
- (iv) approves the medium-term financial plan to 2025/26 as set out in appendix F to that report;
- (v) allocates £500,000 to fund the Communities Capital and Revenue grant scheme;
- (vi) asks officers to review the Medium-Term Financial Strategy following the 2021 spending review and Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government announcements of changes to the council's future funding streams.

RESOLVED: to

- (b) agree that the Cabinet member for finance, in conjunction with the interim head of finance, may make minor adjustments to the interim head of finance's report and the prudential indicators, should they prove necessary prior to its submission to Council on 11 February 2021.

66 Capital strategy 2021/22 to 2030/31

Cabinet considered the interim head of finance's report on the capital strategy for 2021/22 to 2030/31. This outlined the council's approach to capital spending, based on the council's corporate strategy, and was linked to the council's corporate objectives, medium term financial strategy, and management of projects and programmes. The strategy determined how capital schemes could be progressed from initial idea through to conclusion.

The Cabinet member for finance reported that there were a number of key building blocks that were essential to underpin the strategy that were currently being developed. These included an asset management strategy and maintenance plan, and medium-term service planning. The capital strategy would be a key document for the council going forward. It would provide a high-level overview of how capital expenditure; capital financing and treasury management activity contributed to the provision of services. It would also provide an overview of how associated risk was managed and the implications for future

financial sustainability. It would increase transparency in the planning, approval and monitoring of capital expenditure.

Cabinet noted that this year the strategy included within it a strategy for the flexible use of capital receipts. This identified revenue activity which, under guidance issued by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government in 2016, was eligible to be funded using capital receipts rather than revenue resources.

Cabinet welcomed the capital strategy and recommended its adoption to Council. It was noted that work was underway on a procurement strategy, which would be brought forward in the next few months.

RECOMMENDED to Council on 11 February 2021 to approve the capital strategy 2021/22 to 2030/31, contained in appendix one of the interim head of finance's report to Cabinet on 4 February 2021.

67 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.

68 Budget 2021/22

Cabinet noted the exempt appendix A.6 of the interim head of finance's report on the budget for 2021/22.

The meeting closed at 7.20 pm

Chair

Date