

Minutes

OF A MEETING OF THE

Cabinet

HELD ON THURSDAY 10 JUNE 2021 AT 6.00 PM

AT 135 EASTERN AVENUE, MILTON PARK, MILTON, OX14 4SB

Present in the meeting room:

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

Officers: Steve Culliford and Mark Stone

Remote attendance:

Non-Cabinet members: Sam Casey-Rerhaye and Caroline Newton

Officers: Harry Barrington-Mountford, Jayne Bolton, James Carpenter, Pat Connell, Simon Hewings, Jeremy Lloyd, Adrianna Partridge, Andy Roberts, Chris Traill, and Shona Ware

1 Apologies for absence

None

2 Minutes

RESOLVED: to approve the minutes of the Cabinet meetings held on 18 March and 8 April 2021 as correct records and agree that the Chair signs them as such.

3 Declaration of disclosable pecuniary interest

None

4 Urgent business and chair's announcements

None

5 Public participation

Cabinet received statements from the following.



Listening Learning Leading

(1) The Land Trust – Mr Euan Hall, chief executive

Mr Hall made a statement on the role The Land Trust could have in managing open space at Great Western Park, Didcot. Using the section 106 commuted sum from the developer of the site, the Trust could manage the open spaces on the council's behalf. It would do this by investing the sum and using the return on that investment to fund the maintenance of open spaces in perpetuity. It would work with the local community to achieve this.

Cabinet asked questions of clarification and thanked the Trust for its statement.

(2) Councillor Caroline Newton

Councillor Newton addressed Cabinet on the proposed policy on the council's support for socially important topics and campaigns. Councillor Newton believed that it was unclear who decided which topic or campaign to support and considered that by supporting some, others would be left out, and urged Cabinet to consider this carefully. She suggested some events that Cabinet could support, which were not listed in the appendix to the report.

6 Recommendations and updates from other committees

Cabinet received updates from other committees as follows.

(1) Scrutiny Committee

An informal meeting of the Scrutiny Committee members was held on 24 May 2021 at which the performance management framework and year 1 corporate delivery plan were discussed. The meeting asked questions of the Cabinet member but made no suggestions to change the documents. The meeting was in favour of the proposed approach and praised the report and appendices, believing them to be well-written and accessible.

(2) Climate and Ecological Emergency Advisory Committee

Cabinet received the notes from an informal meeting of members of the Climate and Ecological Emergencies Advisory Committee, which was held on 7 June 2021. The chair of that meeting, Councillor Sam Casey-Rerhaye, addressed Cabinet to provide an update.

The meeting had discussed the role of the committee and the work of its task and finish groups, a presentation by the Chilterns Conservation Board, an update from the River Thames champion, and the progress made on a tree policy for planting on council land. Cabinet thanked the committee members for their work and supported the direction taken. Cabinet thanked Councillor Casey-Rerhaye for her report and attendance.

7 Performance management framework

Cabinet considered the report of the interim head of policy and programmes. This proposed a performance management framework and a year one corporate delivery plan.

The Cabinet member for corporate services reported that the performance management framework highlighted how Cabinet intended to measure performance against the council's priorities in the corporate plan, together with providing opportunities for regular scrutiny.

The framework provided the structure to monitor progress against priorities. There would be quarterly and annual strategic reviews. These would highlight where progress had been made, where there were challenges, areas where more emphasis was needed, and where priorities needed to change. The framework would improve how individuals and teams worked together towards shared goals. The focus would be on the highest priorities.

The Cabinet member recommended the approval of the framework and the delivery plan, as set out in the report. The Cabinet member added a further recommendation to authorise the correction of any typographical and formatting errors, and non-material changes to improve the presentation.

Cabinet noted that an informal meeting of Scrutiny Committee members had made no suggestions to change the documents. The meeting was in favour of the proposed approach and praised the report and appendices, believing them to be well-written and accessible.

Cabinet supported the Cabinet member's recommendations, believing that this provided a strong framework, which could be kept under review and adjusted as necessary.

RESOLVED: to

- (a) approve the performance management framework;
- (b) approve the year 1 corporate delivery plan; and
- (c) authorise the interim head of policy and programmes, in consultation with the Cabinet member for corporate services, to make non-material changes, such as the correction of any spelling, grammatical, typographical or factual errors, together with any improvements from a presentational perspective, to the performance management framework and the year 1 corporate delivery plan.

8 Councillor community grant scheme

Cabinet considered the interim head of corporate services' report, which sought approval of a revised councillor community grants scheme. This introduced a ward-based approach to funding projects that met the needs of the council and organisations seeking funding, along with addressing issues encountered previously.

Following a review of the scheme, the Cabinet member reported that the revised policy included several improvements:

- moving to a ward-based approach for determining applications for funding where applicants would submit a single application for the relevant ward councillors to consider
 - opening the scheme from June to February to avoid local elections
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- running two rounds of funding instead of one, to support easier and earlier decision making
- allowing town and parish councils to apply for funding on behalf of un-constituted groups
- allowing not for profit pre-schools and parent teacher associations for local authority run schools or academies to apply for non-statutory elements of the education programme
- allowing applications for one-off salary costs for pilot projects
- introducing a minimum threshold of £150 above which the council would request any unspent funding back
- other changes to provide more clarity on the process or eligibility

Cabinet welcomed the changes to the scheme but asked for one amendment. Cabinet asked that the third bullet point in the basic rules of the scheme should be amended to read: 'For wards with multiple councillors, applications may be considered by all ward members together to determine funding'.

Cabinet noted that the operation of the scheme would be kept under review.

RESOLVED: to approve the revised policy for adopting a ward-based approach for awarding councillor grants, as attached at appendix one to the interim head of corporate services' report to Cabinet on 10 June 2021, subject to the third bullet point in appendix one being amended to read 'for wards with multiple councillors, applications may be considered by all ward members together to determine funding'.

9 Capital grants

Cabinet considered the interim head of corporate services' report, which sought approval to revise the capital grants policy, adopting a thematic approach to awarding grants to improve outcomes for communities.

The report set out four options:

- A. Move to a thematic focus for the existing capital grant scheme that better supports communities' needs
- B. Keep existing capital grant scheme policy, including minor alternations
- C. Establish a new capital grant scheme, prioritising carbon reduction projects
- D. Reduce budget or withdraw funding for a capital grants scheme

Cabinet considered that the capital grants scheme was important and should be retained. Cabinet preferred option A, which refocused the current scheme by delivering the promises made in the Corporate Plan 2020 to 2024, supporting all the outward facing themes to protect and restore our natural world, tackle the climate emergency, improve economic and community well-being, and provide homes and infrastructure that met local needs. It would also offer greater support to projects aimed at improving community well-being and resilience to recover from the Coronavirus pandemic, as well as providing new activities or facilities.

RESOLVED: to

- (a) approve changes to the revised capital grants policy, adopting a thematic approach to improve outcomes for communities, as attached at appendix one to the interim head of corporate services' report to Cabinet on 10 June 2021; and
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- (b) authorise the interim head of corporate services, in consultation with the Cabinet member for community wellbeing, to make amendments to the current scoring criteria.

10 Policy on the council's public support for socially important topics and campaigns

Cabinet considered the interim head of corporate services' report on the creation and adoption of a new policy that set out how and why the council supported certain socially important events and campaigns.

The Cabinet member for corporate services reported that the proposed policy would provide a basis for the council to publicly support a wide range of events, religious festivals and social issues, in a way that was sensitive to its residents' beliefs and opinions, and in a way that was proportionate to the rest of the council's external communications. The policy would help to ensure the council was focusing its support on the events and issues most aligned to the council's adopted priorities. It would also help to explain why the council had chosen to promote one issue but not another. The Cabinet member welcomed Councillor Newton's feedback and considered that all councillors should be given the opportunity to make suggestions.

Cabinet supported the proposed policy and the systematic approach to ensuring that the events the council supported were aligned with the council's corporate priorities. The council needed to accept, tolerate and recognise differences. Cabinet preferred having one calendar to support the policy. The policy was also open to review and adjustment as necessary. For example, different days could be recognised and supported in different years.

RESOLVED: to

- (a) adopt the policy on the council's support for socially important topics and campaigns, as set out in the interim head of corporate services' report to Cabinet on 10 June 2021;
- (b) agree to incorporate dates relating to diversity and inclusion into a broader calendar of events to accompany this policy, as set out in option 3 in the interim head of corporate services' report; and
- (c) authorise the relevant head of service, currently the interim head of corporate services, in consultation with the Cabinet member for corporate services, to finalise the draft list of dates, subject to any final amendments in consultation with other Cabinet members.

The meeting closed at 7.25 pm

Chair

Date
