

Minutes

OF A MEETING OF THE



Listening Learning Leading

Cabinet

HELD ON THURSDAY 30 SEPTEMBER 2021 AT 6.00 PM
FIRST FLOOR MEETING SPACE, 135 EASTERN AVENUE, MILTON PARK,
OX14 4SB

Present in the meeting room:

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

Officers: Steve Culliford and Mark Stone

Guest: Councillor Ken Arlett

Remote attendance:

Cabinet member: Councillor Maggie Filipova-Rivers

Officers: Patrick Arran, Harry Barrington-Mountford, Jayne Bolton, Pat Connell, Simon Hewings, Jeremy Lloyd, Suzanne Malcolm, Catrin Mathias, Adrianna Partridge, Chris Traill and Eliot Ward

Guest: Councillor Sam Casey-Rerhaye

23 Minutes

RESOLVED: to approve the minutes of the Cabinet meetings held on 22 July and 5 August 2021 as correct records and agree that the Chair signs them as such.

24 Declaration of disclosable pecuniary interest

None

25 Urgent business and chair's announcements

None

26 Public participation

Linda Collison of the Henley and District Housing Trust made a statement in support of the trust's application for funding towards an affordable housing scheme.

27 Recommendations and updates from other committees

Cabinet received a paper, also published to the council's website, updating on matters discussed at other committees. This also set out recommendations where appropriate. Cabinet noted these.

Councillor Sam Casey-Rerhaye, the chair of the Climate and Ecological Emergencies Advisory Committee, updated Cabinet further on the work of the committee.

28 Strategic property review

Cabinet considered the interim head of development and regeneration's report on the strategic property review. This provided an overview of all council assets and the alignment of council business, capital and property asset strategies to ensure that property assets were optimised to meet the council's corporate plan objectives. Underpinning the delivery of the review outcomes was a land and property asset disposal policy to provide a documented process to allow the council to effectively manage its land and property assets.

Cabinet noted that the Joint Scrutiny Committee had considered the strategic property review and highly commended the report and its recommendations to Cabinet.

The Cabinet member reported that the aim of the review was to find the best use for each property owned by the council. The objectives of the corporate plan would influence decisions on the future uses of property the council wished to retain. The disposals policy would provide a transparent process for the asset management group to assess whether the council should sell any property. This would allow the council to maximise property receipts and minimise risk. It would also allow the council to undertake community asset transfers. The report also set out the proposed approach to the transfer of assets from developers to the council, which the Cabinet member supported.

Cabinet welcomed the strategic property review and recognised the volume of work undertaken. The in-sourcing of the property function had allowed the council to take full control of its portfolio and introduce better property asset management processes. It was hoped that the council could also play a role in mediating when assets were transferred from developers to parish councils.

RESOLVED: to

- (a) notes the update on the strategic property review;
- (b) approves the Land and Property Asset Disposal policy;
- (c) approves the council approach to transfer of assets from developers; and
- (d) notes that in line with proposed processes set out in the Land and Property Asset Disposal Policy, an asset management group (an advisory non-decision making group) will be set up to review, check and challenge the recommendations from the strategic property review prior to formal decision being taken on disposals of assets.

29 Tree planting policy

Cabinet considered the interim head of policy and programmes' report on a policy for planting trees on council land. The joint policy outlined how South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils would protect, plant and manage trees on the land they owned, and how the community would be supported with their tree planting initiatives.

The councils had previously sought to increase tree cover and to protect trees on their land and help to achieve their respective carbon neutral targets. The policy set out principles to protect, plant and manage trees on council owned land; these were: planting, caring and maintenance, supporting biodiversity, planning and development, and community. The policy also set out how community groups could apply to plant trees on council land.

The Climate and Ecological Emergencies Advisory Committee had welcomed the new policy.

Cabinet supported the policy and hoped that the council could provide advice to community groups on the most suitable species to plant and on after care. Cabinet asked that a press release was issued to publicise this policy and that all councillors were informed.

RESOLVED: to approve the policy for planting trees on council land.

30 Procurement strategy

Cabinet considered the head of finance's report, which proposed a new procurement strategy. This set out guidance on how the council should procure goods and services, whilst at the same time supported the council's priorities and strategic themes.

The Cabinet member for finance reported that the council had not had a procurement policy to date. The key to the strategy was that it would ensure compliance with the council's contract procedure rules and with the corporate plan objectives. The strategy also included an ethical procurement statement setting out the standards the council would require of contractors and suppliers. This also supported the council's community wealth building policy.

Cabinet welcomed the new strategy and its ethical procurement statement, noting that these documents could be reviewed and updated in future.

RESOLVED: to

- (a) approve the joint procurement strategy and the actions within it, as set out in Appendix 1 to the head of finance's report to Cabinet on 30 September 2021;
- (b) approve the procurement action plan and the actions within it, as set out in Appendix 2 to the report; and
- (c) approve the ethical procurement statement and the actions within it, as set out in Appendix 3 to the report.

31 Quarter 1 Performance Report 2021

Cabinet considered the interim head of policy and programmes' report, which set out the first quarterly performance report for the Corporate Plan 2020-2024. The report demonstrated the progress made in the reporting period against the corporate aims as set out in the Corporate Plan.

The Cabinet member reported that following Cabinet's approval of the performance management framework, this was the first quarterly report. Scrutiny Committee had reviewed it and had made suggestions for improvements, which the Cabinet member had accepted were necessary, such as the need for more quantitative metrics. The report would be adapted over time and would include Cabinet members' input. It was also hoped that in future, the quarterly reports could be published earlier, within six weeks of the end of each quarter.

Cabinet thanked officers for their work in producing the first quarterly report. Cabinet recognised that the report publicised the extent of the work carried out by the council. It also demonstrated leadership and raised the council's profile.

RESOLVED: to approve the performance report for quarter 1 of 2021.

32 Treasury outturn 2020/21

Cabinet considered the head of finance's report on the treasury management activities in 2020/21.

The Cabinet member for finance reported that the Joint Audit and Governance Committee was content with the report and was satisfied that the treasury activities had been carried out in accordance with the treasury management strategy and policy. The Cabinet member concurred. During the year, the council's performance had exceeded most benchmarks and almost achieved its budget target in what was a difficult year during the Covid-19 pandemic. Cabinet agreed and thanked officers for their work.

RECOMMENDED to Council to:

- (a) approve the treasury management outturn report for 2020/21; and
- (b) approve the actual 2020/21 prudential indicators within the report.

33 Leader of the council

Councillor Sue Cooper made a statement to report that with effect from the Council meeting on 7 October 2021, she would stand down as leader of the council. Councillor Cooper thanked her fellow Cabinet members and officers for their support.

In response, Cabinet members thanked Councillor Cooper for leading the council for the two and a half years since the district council elections in May 2019.

34 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.

35 Affordable housing project - Henley and District Housing Trust

Cabinet offered a grant to the Henley and District Housing Trust for funding towards the cost of an affordable housing scheme.

36 Inter-authority agreement

Cabinet agreed in principle to enter into an inter-authority agreement with Vale of White Horse District Council to share occupation of the intended council space in the proposed new office building.

37 Office accommodation concept design

Cabinet approved the concept design of the council's new office accommodation at Didcot Gateway and recommended Council to amend the budget accordingly.

38 Revised capital programme 2021/22 to 2025/26

Cabinet made a recommendation to Council to approve a revised capital programme.

39 Berinsfield Garden Village

Cabinet supported a revised community investment scheme at Berinsfield Garden Village.

40 Development at 116-120 Broadway, Didcot - phase one budget setting

Cabinet made a recommendation to Council to allocate section 106 funds toward the development of 116-120 Broadway, Didcot.