

Minutes

OF A MEETING OF THE



Listening Learning Leading

Cabinet

Held on Thursday 29 September 2022 at 6.00 pm
at 135 Eastern Avenue, Milton Park, OX14 4SB

Present in the meeting room:

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

Officers: Steve Culliford (Democratic Services) and Mark Stone (Chief Executive)

Remote attendance:

Officers: Samantha Allen (Conservation Officer), Patrick Arran (Head of Legal and Democratic), John Backley (Technical Services Manager), Harry Barrington-Mountford (Head of Policy and Programmes), Laura Driscoll (Licensing Team Leader), Adrian Duffield (Head of Planning), Paul Fielding (Head of Housing and Environment), Diane Foster (Licensing and Community Safety Manager), Simon Hewings (Head of Finance), Mark Minion (Head of Corporate Services), Adrianna Partridge (Deputy Chief Executive – Transformation and Operations), Bertie Smith (Broadcasting Officer), and David Wilde (Technology Consultant)

21 Minutes

RESOLVED: to approve the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 11 August 2022 as a correct record and agree that the Chair signs them as such.

22 Declaration of interests

None

23 Urgent business and chair's announcements

None

24 Public participation

Cabinet received statements from the following members of the public.

- (1) Raleigh Hullock made a statement on behalf of the South and Vale Taxi Drivers' Association, objecting to the proposal to introduce maximum hackney carriage fares in South Oxfordshire district and asked that the council consulted with the Association to find a more workable solution.
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- (2) Jason Atherton made a statement objecting to the introduction of maximum hackney carriage fares as these would not cover the business costs, and the public had a right to choose the level of fares.
- (3) Karen Barlow made a statement on behalf of the National Private Hire and Taxi Association objecting to the introduction of maximum hackney carriage fares as this could threaten the local taxi industry.

The chair thanked the speakers for their contributions.

25 Recommendations and updates from other committees

Cabinet noted updates from the Scrutiny Committee and Joint Audit and Governance Committee. The latter had made a recommendation to Cabinet on the treasury outturn 2021/22 report, which was considered later in the meeting (minute 33 refers).

26 Hackney carriage fares

Cabinet considered the head of legal and democratic's report on a proposal to introduce maximum hackney carriage fares. The proposal had been subject to consultation during the summer; the report set out the consultation results.

Cabinet recalled that in June 2021, the council had adopted a new Joint Taxi Licensing Policy with Vale of White Horse District Council, which included setting a maximum tariff for journeys carried out by South Oxfordshire licensed hackney carriages within South Oxfordshire district. The aim of the policy was to protect the public, reduce the risk of fraudulent fares, and ensure consistency, whilst still allowing for competition between taxi companies. Journeys outside of the district would not be affected by the maximum fares.

Cabinet considered the advantages and disadvantages of introducing maximum fares. Only six councils in the country did not have a maximum tariff; South Oxfordshire being one of them. On balance, Cabinet considered that it had to consider the needs of the taxi trade alongside the need to protect the public. Cabinet members considered that the council should adopt the maximum fare tariff as set out in Appendix C to the report. The proposed maximum sat within the upper range adopted by other councils; members considered that this was reasonable. However, members also considered that this tariff should be reviewed within one year, and hoped that the council could work with the South and Vale Taxi Drivers' Association.

RESOLVED: to

- (a) note the results of the consultation, set out in Appendix B to the head of legal and democratic's report to Cabinet on 29 September 2022;
 - (b) adopt the proposed maximum hackney carriage fares, set out in Appendix C to the report, with effect from 1 October 2022; and
 - (c) undertake a review of the hackney carriage fares within one year.
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27 Henley on Thames Conservation Area Appraisal and Boundary Review Adoption

Cabinet considered the head of planning's report on the draft Henley-on-Thames Conservation Area appraisal and boundary reviews. The review had been subject to consultation in the summer; the results of which were set out in the report.

The Cabinet member for planning reported that the review had included the three conservation areas in Henley; boundary changes were proposed to two of those areas. The review had been carried out at Henley Town Council's request and the proposals had received its support.

Cabinet welcomed the review proposals and praised officers' work with the town council.

RESOLVED to:

- (a) adopt the Henley-on-Thames Conservation Area boundaries as per the proposed revisions shown at Appendix 1 to the head of planning's report to Cabinet on 29 September 2022;
- (b) adopt the Henley-on-Thames Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan as amended; and
- (c) authorise the head of planning, in consultation with the relevant Cabinet member, to make minor changes, typographical corrections or non-material amendments to the Henley-on-Thames Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan document prior to formal publication and statutory notification requirements.

28 Update on the Corporate Transformation Programme, and the Technology and Customer Workstreams

Cabinet considered the report of the deputy chief executive – transformation and operations. This updated Cabinet on progress in implementing the council's transformation programme, including the proposed structure of the transformation team, and the further development of transformation outcomes.

The Cabinet member reported that good progress had been made on the transformation programme, which aimed to improve the council's interaction with the public and customers. The aim was to deliver even higher standards of service and more value for money. There would be continuous review of progress against the programme. Officers were thanked for their work to date.

RESOLVED: to note the update on the transformation programme and progress to date on the technology and customer workstreams.

29 Business case for Transforming IT and Systems of Planning and Regulatory Services

Cabinet considered the report of the deputy chief executive – transformation and operations. This set out a business case for the transformation of IT and systems for the council's planning, environmental protection, food safety, community safety, waste and

licencing services. The transformation would be enabled by procurement of new IT solutions.

The report included an appendix containing exempt information about the business case; Cabinet noted its contents.

The report set out two options:

- Option 1 – full public procurement for new IT solutions through open market tenders
- Option 2 – procurement of fit for purpose IT solutions through the GCloud 12 Framework Agreement

The Cabinet member recommended option 2, as this would mitigate the risk of procuring an unproven solution. The option 2 process would also be quicker than option 1, which might require external support. Cabinet concurred, believing that it was important to replace the aging IT systems.

RESOLVED: to

- (a) approve the business case and recommended procurement option for the replacement of the Planning and Regulatory Services IT systems as an Invest to Save initiative; and
- (b) authorise the deputy chief executive - transformation and operations, in consultation with the head of finance, to approve contracts subject to costs being within the business case.

30 Corporate Performance Report - Quarter 1, 2022-23

Cabinet considered the Corporate Performance Report for quarter 1 of 2022/23, covering the period 1 April to 30 June 2022.

The Cabinet member was pleased with the highlights page and the historic data for quarter 1 and asked that this information was signposted to stakeholders.

Cabinet welcomed the report, noting the improvements in presentation of the performance reports over the past year. The report also highlighted the amount of work carried out by the council against its corporate plan priorities. Cabinet urged the public to read it.

RESOLVED: to note the Corporate Performance Report, Quarter 1, 2022/23.

31 Climate Action Plan Performance Report - Quarter 1, 2022-23

Cabinet considered the Climate Action Plan Performance Report for quarter 1, 2022/23. This formed part of the Corporate Performance Report but was published separately for the first time.

Cabinet welcomed the publication of this report, which showed the progress the council had made in tackling its climate emergency objectives. It also showed where further work was needed. The Climate and Ecological Emergency Advisory Committee and the Scrutiny Committee would be given the opportunity to review this report also.

RESOLVED: to note the Climate Action Plan Performance Report, Quarter 1, 2022/23.

32 Budget monitoring - quarter 1, 2022/23

Cabinet considered the head of finance's budget monitoring report for quarter 1, 2022/23.

The Cabinet member for finance reported that increases in inflation and interest rates were having an impact on the council's budget. The report showed a forecasted revenue overspend at the 2022/23 financial year-end due to increasing costs. The opposite impact was being seen on the council's investments with rising interest rates bringing increased returns. In terms of the capital programme, projects would be reviewed and reprofiled where necessary due to the inflationary impact.

Officers would continue to monitor the budget closely.

RESOLVED: to note the Budget Monitoring Report, Quarter 1, 2022/23.

33 Treasury outturn 2021/22

Cabinet considered the head of finance's report on the treasury outturn for the 2021/22 financial year.

The Joint Audit and Governance Committee had considered the report and had recommended to Cabinet that the treasury activities in 2021/22 had been carried out in accordance with the council's treasury management strategy and policy.

The Cabinet member for finance reported that rising interest rates had increased investment income towards the end of the financial year. Treasury management performance had exceeded internal benchmarks, while performance was slightly below market benchmarks. There had been no breaches of the counterparty limits or prudential indicators during the year.

Cabinet welcomed the report and thanked the Joint Audit and Governance Committee and officers for their work.

RESOLVED to:

- (a) note that Joint Audit and Governance Committee is satisfied that the treasury activities are carried out in accordance with the treasury management strategy and policy;

RECOMMENDED to Council to:

- (b) approve the treasury management outturn report for 2021/22;
- (c) approve the actual 2021/22 prudential indicators within the report.

34 Adoption of powers from Oxfordshire County Council under Land Drainage Act

Cabinet considered the report of the head of development and regeneration. This set out a request from Oxfordshire County Council for the South Oxfordshire District Council to act as an agent of the county council to operate and manage the responsibilities of the lead

local flood authority in South Oxfordshire district. The functions of the Land Drainage Act that the county council was looking to discharge were:

- local flood investigations
- the determination of applications for consent to alter a watercourse
- investigation of any nuisance caused by erecting or altering an obstruction or culvert in a watercourse
- enforcement action to comply with county council policy for watercourse/ditch clearing enforcement

The Cabinet member reported that this work was already being carried out by this council; the proposal was to regularise this arrangement. The work would be carried out within existing staff resources and would be fully funded by the county council.

Cabinet was content with the proposal.

RESOLVED to:

- (a) support the request from Oxfordshire County Council for South Oxfordshire to adopt powers under the Land Drainage Act, as set out in paragraph 8 of the head of development and corporate landlord's report to Cabinet on 29 September 2022;
- (b) subject to Council approving the adoption of powers in (c) below, that Cabinet authorises the head of development and corporate landlord, in consultation with the head of legal and democratic, to negotiate and finalise the agreement with Oxfordshire County Council and enter into agreement to adopt the powers from Oxfordshire County Council; and

RECOMMENDED to Council to:

- (c) approve the adoption of powers under an agency agreement with Oxfordshire County Council.

35 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 paragraph 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.

36 Business case for Transforming IT and Systems of Planning and Regulatory Services

Cabinet noted the confidential appendix to the report of the deputy chief executive – transformation and operations.

37 Application for Grant Funding by Soha Ltd - Cullum House, Wheatley

Cabinet recommended Council to approve funding to award a grant for an affordable housing project.