

Minutes

OF A MEETING OF THE



Listening Learning Leading

Cabinet

Held on Thursday 30 November 2023 at 6.00 pm
Meeting Room 1, Abbey House, Abbey Close, Abingdon, OX14 3JE

Present in the meeting room:

Cabinet members: Councillors David Rouane (Chair), Pieter-Paul Barker, Sue Cooper, Andrea Powell and Anne-Marie Simpson

Officers: John Backley (Technical Services Manager), Steve Culliford (Democratic Services Team Leader), and Mark Stone (Chief Executive)

Remote attendance:

Cabinet members: Councillors Robin Bennett and Maggie Filipova-Rivers

Officers: Andrew Busby (Head of Development and Corporate Landlord), Trevor Gaffney (Revenues and Benefits Manager), Simon Hewings (Head of Finance), Andrew Lane (Planning Policy Team Leader), Jeremy Lloyd (Broadcasting Officer), Suzanne Malcolm (Deputy Chief Executive - Place), Mark Minion (Head of Corporate Services), Lucy Murfett (Policy Manager), Tim Oruye (Head of Policy and Programmes), Tom Rice (Planning Policy Officer) and Vivien Williams (Head of Legal and Democratic - Interim)

44 Declaration of interests

None

45 Urgent business and chair's announcements

The chair read a statement in memory of two members of staff, Patrick Arran and Louise Franklin, who had passed away. Cabinet paused for a moment of silence.

46 Public participation

Two members of the public addressed Cabinet.

- (1) Dr Sue Roberts made a statement in support of the draft Joint Local Plan. However, she made suggestions to reduce the number homes built, and to protect the natural environment.
 - (2) Professor Richard Harding, chairman of CPRE Oxfordshire and a local resident, welcoming the local plan policies that protected and enhanced the countryside. He asked that policy CE5 was amended to strengthened to encourage rooftop solar on
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all new buildings. He asked when the policy map would be updated to show areas suitable for solar farms and called for a land-use framework for Oxfordshire.

47 Recommendations and updates from other committees

Cabinet noted that there were no recommendations or updates from other committees.

48 Joint Local Plan 2041 - Approval of Preferred Options Document for Public Consultation

Cabinet considered the head of policy and programmes' report on the Joint Local Plan. The report summarised the work that had taken place to prepare the draft local plan, the first joint local plan with Vale of White Horse District Council. The report also sought Cabinet's approval to progress the plan to the next stage, the Regulation 18 preferred options stage for public consultation in 2024.

The Cabinet member for planning welcomed the draft joint local plan, which would replace the two councils' adopted local plans. The draft plan set out the preferred options and policies, including new policies on net zero carbon, biodiversity net-gain, water efficiency, and dark skies. Due to the large amount of development already included in the existing adopted local plans, in this local plan there was no need to allocate new strategic greenfield housing sites or new employment sites, beyond those already planned. The draft plan proposed just two new housing allocations, both brownfield sites, with just one in South Oxfordshire, being the site of the former council offices at Crowmarsh Gifford.

The Cabinet member highlighted the innovative consultation methods proposed for this stage. The consultation would be more engaging and accessible to reach as many people as possible. An example was the Local Plan in a Nutshell, which would contain the headlines of the plan to allow the public to give their views quickly, without going into the detail. There was also an interactive policies map to make it easier for everyone to find out which policies applied to any site.

Cabinet noted that the Joint Scrutiny Committee had been due to consider the Joint Local Plan on 27 November but this meeting had been postponed due to the passing away of a senior officer. The committee would meet on 7 December instead. To allow the committee's comments to be considered before commencing the consultation on the draft local plan, the Cabinet member proposed an amended recommendation (b), in addition to recommendation (a) as set out in the report. Cabinet supported this amendment.

Cabinet welcomed the draft joint local plan and the proposed consultation arrangements. Consultation was due to commence in January 2024 and run for six weeks into February. Cabinet looked forward to receiving the consultation responses. Cabinet also thanked officers for their work on preparing the plan for consultation.

RESOLVED to:

- (a) approve the Preferred Options version of the South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse Joint Local Plan 2041 and supporting documents for a six-week period of public consultation in accordance with Regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012; and
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- (b) authorise the head of policy and programmes, in consultation with the South Cabinet member for planning and the Vale Cabinet member for corporate services, policy and programmes, to make any necessary amendments, updates or corrections to the Joint Local Plan and supporting documents, mapping and appendices, including to consider any comments or suggestions from the Joint Scrutiny Committee, prior to commencement of the consultation period.

49 Car park fees and charges

Cabinet considered the head of development and corporate landlord's report on the annual review of the council's car parking fees. Cabinet noted that the council's car parking function should be self-financing, with the aim for income to meet costs. Any surplus could be spent on car park resurfacing, the provision and maintenance of toilets in the car parks, and related infrastructure, such as cycle racks.

The report set out the following options:

- Option A – no change to the current car parking fees;
- Option B – provide permits of residents local to Church Road car park in Wheatley at £70 per annum (limited to one permit per property);
- Option C – a new simplified parking fee structure, as set out in table 4 in the report; and
- Option D – remove half price permits for electric vehicles.

Cabinet considered the options and concluded that the council should increase car parking fees to allow the expected increase in costs to be met. This removed option A.

The Cabinet member for the environment proposed options B and C and added that permits should be available for all council owned car parks where there was currently no charge. The Cabinet member also proposed that officers should write to Wallingford Town Council and the other private landowner to seek their endorsement to align the parking fees structure at Goldsmith's Lane car park in Wallingford to bring the fees into line with the Cattlemarket car park.

Cabinet supported these proposals but rejected a further proposal for option D, as Cabinet believed that removing the half price permits for electric vehicles would send the wrong message at this stage.

RESOLVED:

- (a) to agree the car parking fees for the financial year 2024-25, including:
- (i) providing permits for residents local to Church Road car park, Wheatley at a cost of £70 per year (one permit per property);
 - (ii) providing permits for other car parks where there is currently no charge, at a cost of £70 per year;
 - (iii) a new simplified parking fee structure, as set out at table 4 in the head of development and corporate landlord's report to Cabinet on 30 November 2023;
- (b) in relation to (a)(i) and (ii) above, to authorise the head of legal and democratic to prepare and publish a draft order under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984;
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- (c) in relation to (a)(iii) above, to authorise the head of legal and democratic to prepare a Notice of Variation under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 for publishing in the local newspaper and all affected car parks;
- (d) to request the head of development and corporate landlord to write to Wallingford Town Council and the private landowner to seek their endorsement to align the parking fees structure at Goldsmith's Lane car park, Wallingford to bring the fees into line with the Cattlemarket car park in Wallingford; and
- (e) to authorise the head of development and corporate landlord to oversee necessary communications and consultations and report back to Cabinet.

50 Council tax base

Cabinet considered the head of finance's report on setting the council tax base for 2024/25. Each year an estimate was made of the taxable resources for the district as a whole and for each parish area. This was then recommended by Cabinet to full Council for approval. The council tax base for the district would then be notified to Oxfordshire County Council and the Police and Crime Commissioner for Thames Valley, plus each parish and town council.

Cabinet welcomed the report and the detail it provided for each parish.

RECOMMENDED to Council to:

- (a) approve the report of the head of finance for the calculation of the council's tax base and the calculation of the tax base for each parish area for 2024/2025;
- (b) agree 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 2024/25 be 62,683.2; and
- (c) agree 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 2024/25 for each parish be the amount shown against the name of that parish in Appendix A of the report of the head of finance to Cabinet on 30 November 2023.

51 Council tax reduction scheme

Cabinet considered the head of finance's report on a review of the council tax reduction scheme.

Following a change in practices by the Department of Work and Pensions, the report proposed a change to the council's scheme to require individuals to demonstrate that they had notified the government Department when they had a change in their circumstances.

Cabinet supported the proposed change for recommendation on to Council.

RECOMMENDED to Council:

- (a) that for the 2024/25 financial year onwards the council continues to adopt the previous 2023/24 Council Tax Reduction Scheme but with the following amendment:

“Where the council has identified that a taxpayer has failed to notify the Department of Work and Pensions of a relevant change in circumstances, affecting their legacy benefit or Universal Credit, then (where necessary) their entitlement to council tax reduction will be stopped, until that notification has taken place and revised Department of Work and Pensions benefit entitlement known.”

- (b) that the above change to be incorporated into its Council Tax Reduction Scheme for the oncoming 2024/25 financial year onwards.

The meeting closed at 7.06 pm

Chair

Date