

# Minutes

OF A MEETING OF THE

# Cabinet

HELD ON THURSDAY 31 JANUARY 2019 AT 6.00 PM

MEETING ROOM 1, 135 EASTERN AVENUE, MILTON PARK, OX14 4SB

## Present:

Cabinet members: Councillors Jane Murphy (Chairman), Felix Bloomfield (Vice-Chairman), Kevin Bulmer, David Dodds, Paul Harrison and Bill Service

Officers: Steve Culliford, Andrew Down, Philip Ealey, Liz Hayden, Simon Hewings, William Jacobs, Holly Jones, Suzanne Malcolm, Margaret Reed, Melanie Smans, Richard Spraggett, Mark Stone, and Shona Ware

## Also present:

Councillor David Turner

## 60 Apologies for absence

Councillors Anna Badcock, Lynn Lloyd and Caroline Newton had sent their apologies for absence.

## 61 Minutes

**RESOLVED:** to approve the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 18 December 2018 as a correct record and agree that the Chairman signs them as such.

## 62 Declaration of disclosable pecuniary interest

Councillor Jane Murphy declared a pecuniary interest in the grant application from the South Moreton Community Benefit Society Limited as she was a shareholder (minute 65 below refers).

## 63 Urgent business and chairman's announcements

None



Listening Learning Leading

## 64 Public participation

Cabinet received a statement from Stuart Scott-Ely, on behalf of Berinsfield Parish Council, expressing concern at the lack of progress on the Berinsfield community investment project. Referring to the report before Cabinet, he urged councillors to adopt option B: for the district council to invest considerable additional resources, staff and financial, to acquire land and deliver the new development and associated community infrastructure as a developer.

## 65 Community grants

Councillor Jane Murphy declared a pecuniary interest in the grant application from the South Moreton Community Benefit Society Limited, as she was a shareholder, and left the room during consideration of this item. Councillor Felix Bloomfield took the chair.

Cabinet considered the head of community services' report, which set out details of seven community grant applications. The applications were considered by the Community Grants Panel on 21 January 2019, which recommended Cabinet to award a grant in each case.

Cabinet concurred with the panel's recommendations.

**RESOLVED:** to

- (a) award a total of £117,590 in capital grants to the organisations listed below, including any specified non-standard conditions;

Applicant	Project	Grant awarded	Non-standard conditions
Warborough Parish Council	Play area relocation and improvement, and a new outdoor gym	£25,000	A satisfactory play inspection is carried out before the final grant payment is released.
Goring Village Hall	Improvements to the hall stage area (lighting, sounds, curtains)	£9,999	None
Little Milton Village Shop Limited	Flooring improvements and a patio area	£2,820	The applicant to work with the council's Economic Development team and/or the CFO community business advisor to develop a new business plan before the final grant payment is made.
Woodcote Village Hall	Lighting/electrical improvements and a projector for the main hall	£6,200	None
South Moreton Community Benefit Society Limited	Renovations to the community-owned pub to bring it back into use	£50,315	None

Applicant	Project	Grant awarded	Non-standard conditions
Sonning Common Parish Council	Village hall flat roof replacement and insulation	£13,444	None
Woodcote Parish Council	Pathway running from zebra crossing to school behind the village hall	£9,812	None

- (b) transfer £117,590 from the remaining £145,779 provisional 2018/19 capital grant budget to the approved 2018/19 capital grant budget (cost centre A308) to fund these grants.

## 66 Oxfordshire Plan 2050

Cabinet considered the head of planning's report on the Oxfordshire Plan 2050, formerly known as the Joint Statutory Spatial Plan. The report sought approval to progress the production of the plan through adopting the Statement of Community Involvement, approving an amendment to the Local Development Scheme, and approving the Regulation 18 (Part 1) document for consultation.

David Turner addressed Cabinet, welcoming the plan. The Joint Scrutiny Committee had debated the plan and made several suggestions, including the need to engage more with young people during the consultation, the need to consider climate change implications, and expressing a concern at the overlap with the consultation timetable for South Oxfordshire's Local Plan.

Cabinet welcomed the draft plan and noted the intention to engage young people as part of the consultation. Cabinet asked that the suggestions made by the Joint Scrutiny Committee were considered by the head of planning in agreement with the other councils' equivalents, and to make any necessary minor amendments and presentational changes to the documents prior to publishing the plan for consultation.

### **RESOLVED:** to

- (a) adopt the Statement of Community Involvement as amended following the close of consultation, as attached at Appendix 1 to the head of planning's report to Cabinet on 31 January 2019;
- (b) approve the amendment to Table 16 of the Local Development Scheme as set out at paragraph 22 of the head of planning's report;
- (c) approve the Regulation 18 (Part 1) Issues consultation document for public consultation, as attached at Appendix 2 of the head of planning's report; and
- (d) authorise the head of planning, in agreement with the other councils' equivalent, to make any necessary editorial corrections, minor amendments and presentational changes to the documents, and to agree the final publication for consultation version.

## 67 Housing allocations policy

Cabinet considered the head of housing and environment's report on the review of the housing allocations policy.

David Turner addressed Cabinet and praised the officers' work on the policy review.

Cabinet supported the revised policy, noting that it was a joint policy with Vale of White Horse District Council.

**RESOLVED:** to

- (a) adopt the Housing Allocations Policy, as appended to the head of housing and environment's report to Cabinet on 31 January 2019; and
- (b) authorise the head of housing and environment to make minor editorial changes to the policy.

## 68 Treasury management mid-year monitoring

Cabinet considered the head of finance's mid-year monitoring report of the treasury management service in 2018/19. This covered the period from 1 April to 30 September 2018.

Cabinet noted that the investment income received was below the budget target due to lower than expected interest rates during the period. The Joint Audit and Governance Committee had also considered the report and was satisfied that the treasury management activities had been carried out in accordance with the treasury management strategy and policy. Cabinet concurred.

**RECOMMENDED:** to Council to approve the head of finance's 2018/19 treasury management mid-year monitoring report to Cabinet on 31 January 2019.

## 69 Treasury management and investment strategy 2019/20

Cabinet considered the head of finance's report on the draft treasury management and investment strategy for 2019/20. This set out how the council's treasury service supported the financing of capital investment decisions, and how treasury management operated day to day. It set out the limitations on treasury management activity informed by the prudential indicators, within which the council's treasury function must operate. The strategy included the three elements, required by legislation:

- The prudential indicators required by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Prudential Code 2017 for Capital Finance in Local Authorities and the CIPFA Treasury Management Code of Practice 2017;
- The annual investment strategy, which set out the council's criteria for selecting counterparties and limiting exposure to the risk of loss on its investments; and
- A statutory duty for Council to approve a minimum revenue provision policy statement.

Cabinet noted that the Joint Audit and Governance Committee had considered the draft strategy on 28 January and had agreed the recommendations. Cabinet supported the

proposed strategy, including the proposed changes to counterparty limits and the wider choice of investment types permitted.

**RECOMMENDED** to Council to:

- (a) approve the treasury management strategy 2019/20, set out in appendix A to the head of finance's report to Cabinet on 31 January 2019;
- (b) approve the prudential indicators and limits for 2019/20 to 2021/22, as set out in appendix A to the head of finance's report; and
- (c) approve the annual investment strategy 2019/20, set out in appendix A (paragraphs 40 to 81) to the head of finance's report, and the lending criteria detailed in table 5 to that report.

## **70 Capital strategy 2019/20 to 2028/29**

Cabinet considered the head of finance's report on a capital strategy for the period 2019/20 to 2028/29.

The Cabinet member for finance reported that the preparation of a capital strategy was a new requirement of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA). The strategy demonstrated that capital expenditure and investment decisions were taken in line with service objectives and took account of stewardship, value for money, prudence, sustainability and affordability. The strategy was underpinned by an asset management strategy and maintenance plan, which was being developed, by medium term financial planning, and through consistent management of projects and programmes.

Cabinet supported the strategy.

**RECOMMENDED:** to Council to approve the capital strategy 2019/20 to 2028/29, which is contained in appendix one of the report of the head of finance to Cabinet on 31 January 2019.

## **71 Revenue Budget 2019/20 and Capital Programme to 2023/24**

Cabinet considered the head of finance's report on the revenue budget 2019/20, and the capital programme to 2023/24.

David Turner addressed Cabinet, expressing concern at the loss of New Homes Bonus funding and hoped that solutions could be found for the future of the council.

The Cabinet member for finance introduced the report, and thanked officers for preparing the budget. The budget included some revenue growth proposals, set out the medium term financial plan, and proposed a council tax increase of £5 for Band D properties. Car parking charges might be reviewed mid-year, as would the councillor grants scheme; £0.5 million had been allocated to grants for 2019/20.

**RECOMMENDED** to Council to:

- (a) set the revenue budget for 2019/20 as set out in appendix A.1 to the head of finance's report to Cabinet on 31 January 2019;
- (b) approve the capital programme for 2019/20 to 2023/24 as set out in appendix D.1 to the report, together with the capital programme changes as set out in appendix D.2 of the report;
- (c) set the council's prudential limits as listed in appendix E to the report;
- (d) approve the medium term financial plan to 2023/24 as set out in appendix F to the report;
- (e) allocate £500,000 to fund the Communities Capital and Revenue grant scheme; and
- (f) ask officers to review the Medium Term Financial Strategy following the 2019 spending review and Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government announcements of changes to the council's future funding streams.

**RESOLVED** to:

- (g) agree that the cabinet member for finance, in conjunction with the head of finance, may make minor adjustments to the head of finance's report and the prudential indicators, should they prove necessary prior to its submission to Council on 14 February 2019; and
- (h) agree to maintain car park fees and charges at current levels.

## **72 Berinsfield community investment scheme**

Councillors Felix Bloomfield and Bill Service left the meeting during the consideration of this item to allow them to determine and future planning policy matters for Berinsfield.

Cabinet considered the head of development and regeneration's report on the Berinsfield community investment scheme. This updated Cabinet on progress with the scheme and sought approval for the way forward.

The report set out the background to the Berinsfield project, provided options for the level of control that the council might wish to retain, and sought approval in principle for initial work to be carried out before a formal proposal was submitted to Cabinet in 2019, including actions for strengthened partnership working and clarification of roles and responsibilities. The report also sought a delegation to procure consultancy advice, and updated Cabinet on the Berinsfield community services grants programme.

The options set out in the report were:

- A. The council retained some element of control over the project while ensuring it did not take on too much responsibility and associated risk.
- B. The council invested considerable additional resources, staff and financial, to acquire the land (either alone or in partnership with other stakeholders) and deliver the new development and associated community infrastructure as a developer.

- C. The council retained only the level of control available through the planning process and, once the Local Plan had set the strategic framework, the major development site and infill sites in the existing village might be delivered by the private sector.

Cabinet considered that the aim was to improve Berinsfield for its local residents. To make this deliverable, the council had to manage the risks to the project's success. Options B and C were therefore rejected as they did not provide this control. Cabinet preferred option A, to retain some element of control over the project while ensuring the council did not take on too much responsibility and associated risk. The council would work with the Mount Farm landowner, with Oxfordshire County Council, Soha Housing, and Homes England in a partnership approach.

Cabinet noted, but did not debate, the confidential appendix.

**RESOLVED:** to

- (a) approve that the project becomes the phased but comprehensive enhancement and expansion of Berinsfield;
- (b) support the concept of Garden Village status and pursue this if it is demonstrated that this could enhance the ability to deliver the project;
- (c) define the council's desired roles and responsibilities through initial joint progression with the main landowners, to set in motion collaborative working agreements, clarifying roles and responsibilities, with Oxfordshire County Council, the Mount Farm landowner and Soha Housing, and to explore the potential advantages and disadvantages of upfront investment from Homes England, all with a view to bringing a formal proposal to Cabinet later in 2019;
- (d) approve the principle of retaining some element of control over the Berinsfield project, while ensuring that the council does not take on too much responsibility and associated risk;
- (e) authorise the head of development and regeneration, in consultation with the Cabinet member for development and regeneration, to procure any required professional and consultancy advice on the Berinsfield project, in accordance with the council's financial rules; and
- (f) undertake a review of the position in relation to land ownership in Berinsfield.

### **73 Exclusion of the Public**

**RESOLVED:** to exclude members of the press and public from the meeting for the following items 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. they involve 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.

**74 Berinsfield community investment scheme - exempt appendix**

Cabinet received and noted the exempt information contained in the appendix to the head of development and regeneration's report on the Berinsfield community investment scheme.

**75 Science Vale UK marketing**

Cabinet considered a report on the Science Vale UK marketing campaign and agreed to terminate the marketing contract.