

Minutes

OF A MEETING OF THE



Listening Learning Leading

Cabinet

**Held on Thursday 23 June 2022 at 6.00 pm
at 135 Eastern Avenue, Milton Park, OX14 4SB**

Present in the meeting room:

Cabinet members: Councillors David Rouane (Chair), Maggie Filipova-Rivers (Vice-Chair), Robin Bennett, Sue Cooper and Leigh Rawlins

Officers: Steve Culliford (Democratic Services Team Leader)

Remote attendance:

Cabinet member: Councillor Pieter-Paul Barker

Officers: Patrick Arran (Head of Legal and Democratic), Harry Barrington-Mountford (Head of Policy and Programmes), Jake Bassett (Senior Urban Design Officer), Jayne Bolton (Community Wellbeing Manager), Adrian Duffield (Head of Planning), Marta Bou Fernandez (Senior Urban Design Officer), Simon Hewings (Head of Finance), Jeremy Lloyd (Broadcasting Officer), Suzanne Malcolm (Deputy Chief Executive - Place), Steve May (Affordable Housing Team Leader), Adrianna Partridge (Deputy Chief Executive - Transformation and Operations), Lewis Pitt (Affordable Housing Officer), Mark Stone (Chief Executive) and Nicky Wyr (Didcot Garden Town Team Leader)

Guests: Debby Hallett (Vale of White Horse District Councillor and Cabinet member)

104 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Andrea Powell and Anne-Marie Simpson.

105 Minutes

RESOLVED: to approve the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 7 April 2022 as a correct record and agree that the Chair signs them as such.

106 Declaration of interests

None

107 Urgent business and chair's announcements

None

108 Public participation

One member of the public had registered to address Cabinet.

Vale of White Horse District Councillor and Cabinet member Debby Hallett spoke in support of the Joint Design Guide.

109 Recommendations and updates from other committees

Cabinet received and noted updates from other committees.

The Joint Audit and Governance Committee had approved the 2020/21 statement of accounts and annual governance statement at its meeting on 24 May 2022.

Cabinet also noted that the Joint Scrutiny Committee had met on 20 June 2022 to discuss the Joint Design Guide. The committee had welcomed the new guide and suggested some changes.

110 Didcot Garden Town - new delivery plan

Cabinet considered the head of policy and programmes' report. This set out a revised delivery plan for Didcot Garden Town. The report sought approval of a revised delivery plan and associated budget, to enable a more focused plan to bring forward community improvements, assist recovery of the garden town area following the pandemic, and to address the climate emergency.

To do this South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse district councils were working together, drawing funds from their Council-approved reserves. The initial estimate was £825,000, with £660,000 being from South Oxfordshire, and £165,000 from the Vale. Cabinet was asked to authorise the movement of the council's funds into the budget year 2022/23. Any unspent funds at the financial year end would be carried forward into following years, with agreement of the section 151 officer in consultation with the appropriate head of service.

Cabinet welcomed the new delivery plan, which was simpler and more deliverable than its predecessor, and would provide Didcot with facilities it deserved. Once the initial funding had been approved and a team established, the next step would be to timetable the delivery of the plan, working with Oxfordshire County Council on major infrastructure projects. This should help address road congestion, particularly in the town centre. There would be a walking and cycling strategy also to reduce reliance on private car journeys.

RESOLVED to:

- (a) approve the revised delivery plan for Didcot Garden Town, as shown in Appendix 2 to the head of policy and programmes' report to Cabinet on 23 June 2022; and
- (b) agree a supplementary estimate to the 2022/23 revenue budget of £660,000, fully funded from the grant monies held in the council's reserves, thereafter, to be managed by the relevant budget holder to deliver the approved delivery plan.

111 Didcot Northern Perimeter Road - Phase 3 (NPR3)

Cabinet considered the head of policy and programmes' report regarding phase 3 of the Didcot Northern Perimeter Road, one of the infrastructure projects in the Didcot Garden Town Delivery Plan approved by Cabinet earlier in the meeting (see minute 110). The road would extend the existing perimeter road, joining Abingdon Road with Hadden Hill.

In 2016 the government had provided £6.2 million to fund infrastructure works to support the delivery of Didcot Garden Town. The report sought authority to transfer funds currently held by the council to Oxfordshire County Council, the highways' authority responsible for delivery of the project.

Cabinet supported the proposal for as it would contribute to the long-term vision and masterplan for Didcot Garden Town, improving connections in the east-west traffic corridor. The project would be a catalyst for other improvements required in the town centre, which aimed to encourage a shift away from reliance on the private car and a move towards other modes of transport. The transfer of funding would enable the County Council to progress the scheme, consequently enabling the viability of other projects within the Didcot Garden Town Delivery Plan.

RESOLVED to:

- (a) authorise the section 151 officer, or in their absence, the chief executive, to agree funding agreement terms which are equal to, or greater than, those imposed by the existing grant conditions to which the council is subject, for the transfer of funds to Oxfordshire County Council to support the delivery of the Didcot Northern Perimeter Road Phase 3 (NPR3); and
- (b) agree the addition of Didcot Northern Perimeter Road Phase 3 (NPR3) (fully funded by government grant funding) to the approved capital programme, in order to facilitate the transfer of funds to Oxfordshire County Council.

112 Design guide

Cabinet considered the head of planning's report on a Joint Design Guide. Following the Council's decision to pursue a joint local plan with Vale of White Horse District Council, work had commenced on a joint design guide. If adopted, the joint design guide would become a supplementary planning document to the council's existing, adopted local plan, and also to the joint local plan once that had been adopted. It would guide the public when designing new development and would assist officers and members of the Planning Committee in determining planning applications.

A draft joint design guide had been subject to public consultation. The report set out the consultation results and proposed changes to the design guide. Cabinet was asked to adopt the Joint Design Guide.

Cabinet welcomed the new Joint Design Guide, believing that it would provide clearer guidance to all users. In particular, Cabinet was pleased that the new guide was an interactive, online publication, which could be updated quickly as planning legislation changed. Cabinet also welcomed the changes suggested following the Joint Scrutiny

Committee meeting, which had been published as a supplement alongside the Cabinet agenda.

It was further noted that the Climate and Ecological Emergencies Advisory Committee would review the new guide once adopted. Any suggested improvements could be implemented by the head of planning under delegation if they were only minor changes. In the case of major changes, these would have to be subject to the next review of the guide and be subject to public consultation. However, Cabinet noted that any such changes would require the Vale's agreement also, as it was a joint guide.

Cabinet thanked the officers and councillors involved in this project for their work.

RESOLVED to:

- (a) adopt the Joint Design Guide for South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse district councils as a supplementary planning document, subject to the changes set out in the amendment note following the Joint Scrutiny Committee on 20 June 2022; and
- (b) authorise the head of planning, in consultation with the Cabinet member for planning (South) and the Cabinet member for corporate services and transformation (Vale), to make necessary minor amendments or typographical corrections to the supplementary planning document prior to publication and undertake any factual updates thereafter (e.g. web links and live neighbourhood plan maps).

113 Corporate plan performance monitoring report quarter 4 and annual review report 2021/22

Cabinet considered the corporate plan performance monitoring report for quarter 4 2021/22, together with the annual review report for 2021/22.

Cabinet thanked officers and the Cabinet member for the reports. They showed transparency and accountability for the council's performance. The annual review showed areas where the council had achieved, such as affordable housing delivery and nature recovery work, and where further work was needed during the corporate plan period to 2024, such as the diversity and inclusion strategy that was due before Cabinet in the summer. Progress had also been made in attracting external funding, which had allowed the council to rebuild its finances and support service delivery.

RESOLVED: to note the corporate plan performance monitoring report for quarter 4, 2021/22 and the annual review report for 2021/22.

114 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.

115 Application for s106 funding - Thame and District Housing Association

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