

Minutes OF A MEETING OF THE



Listening Learning Leading

Cabinet

Held on Monday 19 December 2022 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), Maggie Filipova-Rivers (Vice-Chair), Robin Bennett, Sue Cooper, Kate Gregory, Andrea Powell and Anne-Marie Simpson
Officers: Steve Culliford (Democratic Services Team Leader) and Mark Stone (Chief Executive)

Remote attendance:

Cabinet member: Councillor Pieter-Paul Barker
Officers: Patrick Arran (Head of Legal and Democratic), John Backley (Technical Services Manager), Harry Barrington-Mountford (Head of Policy and Programmes), James Carpenter (Head of Development and Corporate Landlord), Simon Hewings (Head of Finance), Mark Minion (Head of Corporate Services), Adrianna Partridge (Deputy Chief Executive - Transformation and Operations), Susie Royse (Broadcasting Officer) and Richard Spraggett (Strategic Financial Manager)

58 Minutes

RESOLVED: to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 1 December 2022 as a correct record and agree that the Chair signs them as such.

59 Declaration of interests

None

60 Urgent business and chair's announcements

The chair reviewed the progress made on council projects during 2022. Highlighting some of these projects, he noted that the council had provided affordable homes to meet local need and had adopted a housing delivery strategy to provide homes in the future. This would provide more affordable homes through a variety of methods. Following the withdrawal of the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 work, the council had commenced work with Vale of White Horse District Council on a joint local plan.

61 Public participation

None

62 Car park fees 2023/24

Cabinet considered the report of the head of development and corporate landlord. This provided information to help the Cabinet undertake an annual review of the council's car park fees, in line with the council's policy, and to decide whether to change the fees for 2023/24. Cabinet noted that, for the first time, it was not being asked to review charges for penalties, as the level of car park penalty charges was now set by legislation, which changed on 1 November 2022 when the council introduced civil parking enforcement.

The car park policy, agreed by Cabinet in August 2022, included guidance from the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, which stated that council parking enforcement should be self-financing, and that the council should aim for its parking income to at least meet the cost of running its car parks. The report set out the current fees and permits, together with a comparison of fees in other neighbouring car parks. It also set out the cost of providing the car parks service and ancillary services such as public conveniences, and projected income and expenditure over a five-year period.

Based on the current usage and estimated income and expenditure, the report set out options to allow the car park account to at least 'break even' in the medium term. The options for 2023/24 were:

1. No change to the current car parking fees
2. Increase all fees and permits by 10 per cent (rounded), in line with inflation
3. Create premium rate parking spaces
4. Extend the charging period from 6pm to 9pm at a fee of £1
5. Remove free parking and charge a nominal 50p for up to one hour
6. Introduce a fee for parking in the winter season at the Riverside car park in Wallingford, and amend the permit prices.

The Cabinet member, with responsibility for the car parks service, recommended that Cabinet approved option 2, increasing all fees and permits by 10 per cent, roughly in line with inflation.

The Cabinet member reviewed the other options. Option 1, no change to fees, was rejected as it would leave the council with a deficit in the car parks account. Option 3, providing differential pricing through premium rates nearer to main facilities, had merit but required further work and consultation with the towns. Option 4, charging for parking in the evening, also had merit but was not supported during the current cost-of-living crisis. However, options 3 and 4 could be explored for future years. Option 5, removing the one-hour free parking, was rejected as it would not help residents or town centre businesses during the current cost-of-living crisis. Option 6, charging for winter season parking at the Riverside car park in Wallingford, would cost more to introduce than the income it was expected to generate, and so was also rejected.

Cabinet welcomed the report with its options clearly set out. Cabinet supported the Cabinet member's view that the council should increase its car park fees and permits by 10 per cent (rounded) with effect from 1 April 2023. Members believed that the car parks service should not be subsidised by those that did not use them. Parking would still cost less than £1 per hour as a result of these changes. Also, Cabinet welcomed investigations into introducing options 3 and 4 for future years, subject to consultation.

RESOLVED: to

- (a) agree the car parking fees for the financial year 2023-24, including increasing all fees and permits in line with inflation (10 per cent);
- (b) 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; and
- (c) authorise the head of development and corporate landlord to oversee necessary communications.

63 Corporate Plan and Climate Action Plan performance reports - quarter 2, 2022/23

Cabinet considered the head of policy and programmes' report, which set out the quarter 2 performance monitoring reports against the Corporate Plan and the Climate Action Plan.

The Cabinet member welcomed the reports; they illustrated the good work being undertaken by the council in achieving its corporate objectives. For example, the council's performance in tackling homelessness was significantly ahead of the council average for the South East of England. There had also been improvements to the website and the data hub would soon be introduced also. The reports showed many examples of cross-service working.

Cabinet concurred and noted that the council had recently achieved additional government funding through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, which would support the council's corporate objectives.

RESOLVED: to note the Corporate Plan and Climate Action Plan Performance Reports for quarter 2, 2022/23.

64 Budget monitoring April to August 2022

Cabinet considered the head of finance's report, being the budget monitoring report for April to August 2022.

The Cabinet member for finance highlighted a projected revenue overspend at the year-end, excluding budgets likely to be carried forward. Rising inflation had resulted in costs being higher than budgeted for but this was offset by investment income being higher than expected due to high interest rates. The capital programme would be kept under review and re-profiled.

RESOLVED: to note the budget monitoring report for April to August 2022.

65 Budget setting 2023/24 update report

Cabinet considered the head of finance's report, being an update on the budget position for 2023/24. This showed the work that was being undertaken to build the base budget.

The head of finance updated Cabinet with news of the government settlement, which had been sent to the council that afternoon. This showed that for 2023/24 the council would

receive a government funding increase of approximately 4.7 per cent and would allow the council to set a Band D council tax £5 higher or 3 per cent higher than in 2022/23. New Homes Bonus would continue for a further year but was then subject to review. Effectively this gave the council an increase in core revenue spending power of 5.24 per cent. Further guidance would be forthcoming from the government on help for households in greatest need during the cost-of-living crisis. No firm detail had been provided on government funding for 2024/25 onwards.

Cabinet thanked officers for the update report and noted that the next steps were for Cabinet members to consider a draft budget in February 2023 and recommend it to Council for adoption.

RESOLVED: to note the latest position for the 2023/24 budget.

The meeting closed at 6.45 pm

Chair

Date