

Minutes

OF A MEETING OF THE



Listening Learning Leading

Cabinet

Held on Thursday 10 October 2024 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), Robin Bennett, Maggie Filipova-Rivers, Pieter-Paul Barker, Sam Casey-Rerhaye, Georgina Heritage, Sam James-Lawrie and Anne-Marie Simpson

Officers: Mark Stone (Chief Executive), William Maxwell (Waste Recycling Project Manager) and Becky Binstead (Democratic Services)

Remote attendance:

Officers: Bertram Smith (Broadcasting Officer), Dominic Lamb (Climate and Biodiversity Team Leader), Simon Hewings (Head of Finance), Paul Fielding (Head of Housing and Environment), Scott Williams (Environmental Services Manager), Jessie Fieth (Senior Climate Action Officer), Tim Oruye (Head of Policy & Programmes) and Heather Saunders (Corporate Energy Officer).

47 Chair's announcements

The chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, outlined the procedure to be followed and advised on emergency evacuation arrangements.

48 Apologies for absence

There were no apologies for absence.

49 Minutes

RESOLVED: to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 19 September 2024 as a correct record and agree that the Chairman sign them as such.

50 Declaration of interests

There were no declarations of interest.

51 Urgent business

There was no urgent business.

52 Public participation

There were no speakers registered to address Cabinet.

53 Recommendations and updates from other committees

Cabinet received the report on recommendations from other committees. As none of the recommendations related to items on the agenda for the meeting it was agreed to note the report.

54 Operational Net Zero Target

Cabinet received the Operational Net Zero Target Report from the Head of Policy and Programmes. The report sought to recognise the significant process made in reducing the council's operational carbon emissions and for Cabinet to adopt a revised operational net zero target of 2023.

Councillor David Rouane introduced the report and reminded members that the council had endorsed the challenging target of becoming a carbon neutral council by 2025. Over the past 15 years, South Oxfordshire District Council had reduced its carbon emissions by over 47 percent. It was noted that the council had two major areas that generated carbon emissions:

1. Leisure facilities: Grants from the public buildings decarbonisation fund had been utilised for ongoing projects at Didcot Wave, Thame and Wheatley. Efforts had been undertaken to decarbonise heating systems using solar panels, heat pumps and improved insulation. Future projects included the Cornerstone, Henley and Berinsfield.
2. Waste collection services: The council operated 98 diesel-fuelled waste vehicles. Challenges were encountered when looking to transition to electric vehicles due to technological and geographical limitations. The council had previously experimented with electric vehicles and had purchased its first electric vehicles for food collection. However, the current technology did not support the full transition of the fleet.

Members considered the council's progress towards net zero and emphasised the importance of setting ambitious yet realistic targets. It was noted that the council's circumstances had changes since the Climate Emergency Advisory Committee had recommended the net zero target, as a dedicated climate team had been established and the district had seen an expansion of new housing developments.

Cabinet was satisfied with the report and commended the Leisure Team for securing the competitive decarbonisation grants.

RESOLVED:

- a) That Cabinet recognises the significant progress made in reducing the council's operational carbon emissions. These have reduced by 19 per cent since the council's Climate Action Plan baseline year of 2019/20 and by 52 per cent since Greenhouse Gas reporting commenced in 2009/10.
- b) That Cabinet adopts a revised operational net zero target of 2030

55 District Net Zero Target

Cabinet received the District Net Zero Target report from the Head of Policy and Programmes. The report sought to commit the council to a new, but still ambitious, target of 2045 to reach net zero carbon for the district.

Councillor David Rouane presented the report and highlighted that the largest contributor to carbon emissions in the district was housing. It was explained that work was underway to investigating carbon-insetting, by retrofitting old housing stock. However, the process was complicated and costly. Moreover, there was a lack of skilled workers capable of carrying out the work. The council had urged local institutions, including the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (OxLEP), to address this gap. Furthermore, inconsistency in the government grant system presented a challenge to retrofitting efforts as uncertainty with funding discouraged investment in the sector.

Planning regulations emerged as a significant public concern, particularly in relation to the construction of new homes lacking solar panels and sufficient insulation. It was observed that while the council could encourage developers to surpass national standards, it had limited authority to mandate such improvements.

In the discussion that followed, it was proposed that the district had a greater level of influence on transport emissions through its role as planning authority and should be considered in the 'intermediate influence' category. Given that transport accounts for the largest share of emissions at 41 percent, it was emphasized that public attitudes toward transportation must shift to effectively reduce carbon consumption. Additionally, it was noted that planning policies should actively promote sustainable transport options.

Cabinet were content with the report and agreed to endorse a new 2045 target for reaching net zero carbon for the district.

RESOLVED:

- a) That Cabinet formally recognises that the aspirational target of being a net zero carbon district by 2030 cannot be met.
- b) That Cabinet commits to a new but still ambitious target of 2045 for reaching net zero carbon for the district, and to work within our sphere of influence to accelerate this decarbonisation as much as possible, in particular by working in partnership to deliver the Oxfordshire Net Zero Route Map and Action Plan.

56 Waste resources and street cleaning strategy

Cabinet received the Waste Resources and Street Cleaning Strategy report from the Head of Housing and Environment. The report was developed with Vale of White Horse District Council and sought to manage household waste resources and street cleaning.

Councillor Sam James-Lawrie, Cabinet member for the environment, introduced the report and noted that residents view the current waste services positively. The proposed strategy aimed to improve waste management and street cleaning in response to legislative changes, financial challenges, and the climate emergency. It emphasised adhering to the principle of the established waste hierarchy: preventing waste, increasing reuse and maximising recycling efforts. The strategy outlined a pathway for improved communication among stakeholders to maintain clean streets and minimise litter. The strategy identified

eight key themes, resulting in actions for consideration such as supporting repair cafes, supporting litter-picking groups, and taking firmer action against fly tipping and littering.

During the subsequent discussion, the importance of system-level changes to facilitate recycling and waste management was highlighted. The strategy's emphasis on partnership working would require improved communications with contractors and fostering good relationships with local stakeholders.

Cabinet welcomed the strategy and noted its commitment to improve recycling and reuse practices. Members were of the view that the strategy would improve resident's confidence in recycling and were keen to highlight the role of the zero waste champions.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

- a) approves the Joint Waste Resources and Street Cleansing Strategy as attached in Appendix 1.
- b) delegates to the Head of Housing and Environment to make any minor changes to the future versions of the strategy in consultation with the Cabinet member for Environment.

The meeting closed at 7.04 pm

Chair

Date