

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet on Wednesday 17 April 2024

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Cabinet members present:

Councillor Brown

Councillor Turner

Councillor Chapman

Councillor Railton

Councillor Linda Smith

Councillor Upton

Officers present for all or part of the meeting:

Helen Bishop, Head of Business Improvement

Alison Daly, Team Leader Lawyer

Caroline Green, Chief Executive

Tom Hook, Executive Director (Corporate Resources)

Clare Keen, Policy and Partnerships Officer

Rocco Labellarte, Chief Technology and Information Officer

Emma Lund, Committee and Member Services Officer

Dave Scholes, Affordable Housing Supply Corporate Lead

Mish Tullar, Head of Corporate Strategy

Apologies:

Councillors Hunt, Lygo and Munkonge sent apologies.

145. Addresses and Questions by Members of the Public

None.

146. Councillor Addresses on any item for decision on the Cabinet agenda

None.

147. Councillor Addresses on Neighbourhood Issues

None.

148. Items raised by Cabinet Members

None.

149. Scrutiny Reports

The Climate and Environment Panel had met on 20 March 2024, the Finance and Performance Panel had met on 26 March 2024 and the Scrutiny Committee had met on 11 April 2024.

Recommendations from those meetings, together with Cabinet Members' responses, were provided in the separately published supplement to the agenda.

Recommendations relating to items on the Cabinet agenda were considered within discussion of those agenda items. As no representative of scrutiny was present at the meeting, the Chair suggested that the remaining recommendations of scrutiny be considered at the next meeting of Cabinet.

150. Use of Retained Right to Buy Receipts to increase the provision of more affordable housing

The Head of Regeneration and Economy had submitted a report to seek project approval and delegations to enable the spending of Retained Right to Buy Receipts for the purpose of delivering more affordable housing through new build or acquisition activity.

Councillor Linda Smith, Cabinet Member for Housing, presented the report and explained the restrictions around the way in which Retained Right to Buy Receipts (RRTBRs) could be used. This included that RRTBRs had to be spent within five years; only a proportion of the full amount could be kept; the monies had to be matched with funding from the authority; and RRTBRs could not be put towards schemes which were receiving other government grant subsidies.

Councillor Smith reported that despite these restrictions, the Council had managed to use all of its RRTBRs and none had had to be returned to the government. Since 2016, 247 new units of affordable accommodation had been purchased using RRTBRs. The report set out how the expected receipts for the next 5 years (a budget of £27m) would be allocated: a spend of £3m per year for the next 5 years was proposed for the purchase of units on the open market, leaving a sum of £12m to be put into new build projects.

Cabinet resolved to:

1. **Grant project approval** to the proposals to purchase and develop accommodation as set out in the report and within the allocated capital budgets (2024/25 to 2028/29) for the purpose of delivering more affordable housing in Oxford; and
2. **Delegate authority** to the Executive Director (Communities and People) in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing; the Head of Financial Services; and the Head of Law and Governance to agree sites and enter into agreements and contracts relating to the spend of Retained Right to Buy Receipts for the provision of additional affordable housing into the Housing Revenue Account within this project approval.

151. Oxford City Council Annual Business Plan Priorities 2024/25

The Head of Corporate Strategy had submitted a report seeking approval for Oxford City Council's annual Business Plan Priorities 2024-2025 and providing an update on delivery of the 2023-2024 Business Plan.

One recommendation had been made by scrutiny: this had related to including wording in the specific year one actions for the 'Good, Affordable Homes' priority relating to the delivery of new housing for social rent. The recommendation had been accepted.

Councillor Susan Brown, Leader, highlighted that a new Corporate Strategy would be brought to Cabinet for approval, expected to be in June. The priorities were aligned with that strategy, as well as the previous business plans and strategies. The priorities had been widely consulted on both within and outside of the Council, which had produced helpful feedback. Account had also been taken of a recommendation of the LGA Peer Review relating to ensuring the priorities were more specific, deliverable and measurable.

Cabinet resolved to:

1. **Agree** the draft Oxford City Council Annual Business Plan Priorities 2024-2025, which set out the Council's priority work for the next financial year beginning 1 April 2024;
2. **Delegate authority** to the Head of Corporate Strategy in consultation with the Council Leader to make any further minor amendments to the draft Business Plan priorities before implementation, provided that such amendments do not materially affect substance of the Business Plan; and
3. **Note** the progress made in delivery against the actions set out in the Annual Business Plan 2023-2024.

152. Oxfordshire Health & Wellbeing Strategy 2024-2030

The Head of Corporate Strategy had submitted a report to present the Oxfordshire Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2024-30 and draft action plan, as a key partner in developing and delivering the strategy.

Councillor Louise Upton, Cabinet Member for Planning and Healthier Communities highlighted that the Health and Wellbeing Strategy was underpinned by the action plan. This had a focus on preventing ill health, tackling inequality, and collaboration between all parts of the healthcare system. It took account of all life stages and all of the elements which impacted on a person's chances of living a healthy life, such as: job insecurity, poverty, access to a decent home, effects of climate change, and access to social networks.

It was broad ranging, with actions which ranged from reducing smoking and increasing activity to looking after mental health. The Council had a role to play in a number of these actions, for example through the provision of green spaces or providing decent homes. Several other organisations also had actions within the action plan.

Councillor Ed Turner drew attention to the need for improved access to facilities within the healthcare system (most notably access to a GP) - particularly in areas where there

was housing growth and in areas of deprivation - and to address issues of capacity. There was a need for an improved interface with the planning process when developments were planned so as to ensure access to healthcare facilities. Concern was also expressed around sustainability and deliverability of the action plan in the current financial context.

Cabinet resolved to:

1. **Note** the Oxfordshire Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2024-30; and
2. **Note** the draft Health and Wellbeing Action Plan 2024 at Appendix 2.

153.Zero Emission Zone Pilot Income and Cost Sharing Agreement

The Head of Corporate Strategy had submitted a report which set out Oxfordshire County Council's proposed income and costs sharing agreement with the City Council in relation to the Zero Emission Zone (ZEE) Pilot Scheme.

Councillor Anna Railton, Cabinet Member for Zero Carbon Oxford and Climate Justice, highlighted that the ZEE pilot had been in place since February 2022, with the objectives of improving air quality and increasing the use of electric vehicles in the city centre. Both of these objectives had been met.

In response to questions, officers confirmed that the financial implications arising from the report had been factored into the Medium Term Financial Strategy; the agreement would cover the pilot only (and not the extended ZEE scheme) and that the income was ringfenced to meet costs associated with transport. However, the latter could include the park and rides, support to bus services or cycling infrastructure.

Cabinet resolved to:

1. **Endorse** the proposed legal agreement on income and costs sharing with Oxfordshire County Council with regards to the revenue that is being generated by the ZEE Pilot in the terms that are laid out in the report and in Appendix 1; and
2. **Delegate authority** to the Executive Director (Development) in consultation with the Head of Financial Services, the Head of Corporate Strategy and the Head of Law and Governance to enter into the legal agreement proposed by the County Council (as set out at Appendix 1) on behalf of the City Council.

154.Approval of a Vexatious Behaviour Policy

The Head of Law and Governance had submitted a report to seek approval for a Vexatious Behaviour Policy to enable the Council, in exceptional circumstances, to control or place restrictions on the way a citizen interacts with the Council, its officers and councillors.

Councillor Susan Brown, Leader, highlighted that it was hoped that the policy would need to be used only rarely. It set out the actions to be taken in order to maintain good behaviour towards officers and councillors. The policy was based on the model policy produced by the Local Government Association, which recommended that local authorities had such a policy in place.

Cabinet resolved to:

1. **Approve** the Vexatious Behaviour Policy attached at Appendix 1 and agree its implementation.

155. Migration from Data Centre to Microsoft Azure

The Executive Director (Corporate Resources) had submitted a report to seek project approval and delegated authority to award a five-year contract for the migration and running of business applications out of the data centre into a Microsoft Azure cloud hosting environment.

Councillor Nigel Chapman, Cabinet Member for Citizen Focused Services and Council Companies, highlighted that migration of business applications and data to the cloud offered better value for money and technical benefits, and was more compatible with the platforms which the Council used.

The proposal to work with the current supplier to achieve the migration mitigated the associated risks and would help to ensure business continuity. The Council was not able to undertake the work in-house, and going to the market would be a more time consuming and expensive process. The financial benefits of the proposed approach were significant, and a direct award would represent good value for money. The council's legal services team had been engaged and provided advice on the procurement and had raised no objection to a direct award.

Cabinet resolved to:

1. **Grant project approval** to the proposal to use the HealthTrust Europe (HTE) Framework to undertake a compliant process to make a direct award of a five-year contract to migrate systems and services from the SCC data centre to an Azure-centric hosting environment;
2. **Delegate authority** to the Executive Director (Corporate Resources) in consultation with the Head of Law and Governance, the Head of Financial Services and the Cabinet Member for Citizen Focused Services and Council Companies to use the (HTE) Framework to finalise terms and enter into a contract with the preferred supplier; and
3. **Approve** the waiver of the Contract Rules in respect of sections 19.18 and 19.19 of the Constitution where the terms of the contract, due to the rules of the framework, cannot be amended to conform with the requirements of the Contract Rules.

156. Minutes

Cabinet resolved to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 13 March 2024 as a true and accurate record.

157. Dates of Future Meetings

Meetings are scheduled for the following dates:

12 June 2024
10 July 2024
14 August 2024
11 September 2024
16 October 2024
13 November 2024

All meetings start at 6pm.

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 6.34 pm

Chair

Date: Wednesday 12 June 2024

When decisions take effect:

Cabinet: after the call-in and review period has expired

*Planning Committees: after the call-in and review period has expired and the formal
decision notice is issued*

All other committees: immediately.

Details are in the Council's Constitution.