

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet on Wednesday 21 July 2021

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Committee members present:

Councillor Brown (Chair)

Councillor Hayes

Councillor Rowley

Councillor Turner

Councillor Hollingsworth

Councillor Upton

Also present:

Councillor Elizabeth Wade

Officers present for all or part of the meeting:

Caroline Green, Chief Executive (attended via remote link)

Susan Sale, Monitoring Officer and Head of Law & Governance

Mish Tullar, Head of Corporate Strategy

Adrian Arnold, Head of Planning Services

Rachel Williams, Principal Planner

John Mitchell, Committee and Member Services Officer

Nigel Kennedy, Head of Financial Services

Apologies:

Councillors Arshad, Aziz, Blackings and Clarkson sent apologies.

18. Declarations of Interest

None.

19. Addresses and Questions by Members of the Public

Dr Robinson had submitted a statement on behalf of the Campaign to Protect Rural England Oxfordshire concerning the report on the Oxfordshire Plan to be considered later on the agenda. Her statement and the response to it given by Councillor Alex Hollingsworth, Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Delivery, are attached to these minutes.

20. Councillor Addresses on any item for decision on the Board's agenda

None.

21. Councillor Addresses on Neighbourhood Issues

None.

22. Items raised by Board Members

None.

23. Scrutiny Committee Reports

Cllr Liz Wade, speaking as Chair of the Scrutiny Committee, thanked Cllr Hayes, Cabinet Member for Green Transport and Zero Carbon Oxford and Mish Tullar, Head of Corporate Strategy, for their contribution to what had been a very full discussion of the report on the Oxfordshire Electric Vehicle Strategy. It was important, first, to note the Committee's overall clear support for the principle of the Strategy and what it would seek to achieve. As Chair of a new Committee she was keen that it should provide helpful and constructive criticism of Council proposals and that its recommendations should, therefore, provide a fair reflection of the Committee's views. The recommendations made in relation to the EV Strategy flowed, in some cases, from having taken a vote in which the majority of Committee members had abstained.

After some discussion it was agreed that there would be merit in asking the Committee to revisit the report and its recommendations with a view to re-submission of them to the next meeting of Cabinet. While the consultation which the Cabinet report sought to approve might go ahead, the Committee's final recommendations could still add value and be considered before the Strategy was finalised.

24. Oxfordshire Plan 2050 Regulation 18 (Part 2) consultation document

The Head of Planning Services had submitted a report to consider the approval of the Oxfordshire Plan consultation document which sets out a range of planning policy options and a series of spatial strategy options for Oxfordshire.

Councillor Alex Hollingsworth, Cabinet Member for Planning & Housing Delivery, introduced the report. The Oxfordshire Plan would be a new strategic planning document which would sit 'between' the National Planning Policy Framework (and the Oxford- Cambridge Arc) and Local Plans. All Oxfordshire's planning authorities and the County Council were being asked to approve the document for public consultation. It was important to note that the Council would be submitting responses to the document in its own capacity as a consultee in due course.

Cabinet resolved to:

1. **Approve** the Regulation 18 (Part 2) consultation document for public consultation as attached;
2. **Authorise** the Head of Planning Services to make any necessary editorial corrections and minor amendments to the documents, and to agree the final publication style, in liaison with the Cabinet Member for Planning & Housing Delivery subject to agreement with their counterparts in the other four partner Local Planning Authorities; and
3. **Adopt** the updated Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) which will become the formal basis for the forthcoming Regulation Part 2 consultation.

25. Integrated Performance Report for Q4

The Head of Financial Services had submitted a report to update Members on the financial outturn for the year ending 31st March 2021.

Councillor Ed Turner, Cabinet Member for Finance & Asset Management, introduced the report. It was very pleasing to note the ability to bring forward proposals for about 200 units of housing as a result of the Growth Deal, something which would make a real contribution to addressing the City's housing need. The report also dealt with the financial outturn of an exceptionally challenging year and a deficit on the general fund of just over £2m. Greater losses had been mitigated to some extent by Government grant but this was not, by and large, expected to continue. The longer term consequences of Covid would affect the Council's income streams for some time to come, such as those for commercial property and car parking. All of this emphasised the need for a fair funding settlement for local government. Despite the challenges, it was also pleasing to note that the Council's savings and efficiency targets had been met. Overall there had been no surprises and the outturn had been much as expected following such a challenging year.

It was confirmed that the Go Ultra Low On Street Charging project was being re-scoped, Phase 1 of the project having been completed, Phase 2 was currently paused. The current focus of the EV team was on the Go Ultra Low Taxi project which was going well.

It was noted that a number of projects had been put on hold as a result of Covid. Bringing them back on stream would have resource implications, not least because of the need, in some cases, to spend grant funding by deadlines, some of which may be soon and close to one another.

Cabinet resolved to:

1. **Note** the financial outturn and performance of the Council for the year 2020/21 and also the position on risks outstanding as at 31st March 2021;
2. **Agree** the transfer from the COVID emergency reserve of £2.043 million detailed in paragraph 2a;
3. **Agree** the carry forward requests in respect of the HRA of £1.881 million as shown in appendix D;
4. **Agree** the transfer to the HRA Contributions to HRA Reserves to fund future years capital works of £6.476 million detailed in paragraph 2c; and

Recommend to Council:

5. That it approves a revision to the general fund capital budget in 2021/22 of £4,984,000, for the grant payment in relation to Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal (OGD) schemes. In addition to give a further approval for a capital budget for 2025/26 of £33,000 to fund the remaining grant balance payable for the schemes all of which will be funded by capital grant income from Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal (OGD) detailed in paragraph 26 and in doing so:

- a. Give project approval to accept and distribute grant; enter into funding agreements; and any other necessary agreements or contracts, for the purpose of

delivering more affordable housing in Oxford, through the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal programme;

b. Delegates authority to the Director of Housing, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Delivery; the Head of Financial Services/Section 151 Officer; and the Council's Monitoring Officer, to enter into funding and other necessary agreements for the purpose of delivery affordable housing through the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal programme, within the identified budget; and

c. Delegates authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Cabinet Members for Finance and Asset Management, and Planning and Housing Delivery, to approve any agreements over £500,000 for affordable housing, within this project approval and budget envelope.

26. Oxfordshire Electric Vehicle Strategy

The Head of Corporate Strategy had submitted a report to seek approval to commission an EV Strategy.

Councillor Tom Hayes, Cabinet Member for Green Transport and Zero Carbon Oxford, introduced the report. The report sought agreement to proceed with the commissioning of an EV strategy as part of a contribution to the City's 2040 net zero carbon target.

In response to points made earlier in the meeting he confirmed that Go Ultra Low Taxi charging points would also be available for public use.

The Chair noted that this was matter of ever increasing public interest, not least in respect of the issues for the many parts of the City with terraced housing and no access to off street parking. The relatively high costs of charging via a public charging point as compared with a domestic one was fuelling this debate. It was agreed that communications/responses to questions about this were particularly important pending completion of the strategy.

It would probably be desirable to consider the extent to which charging points installed by other organisations such as the universities might, also, be made available to the public.

The provision of charging points throughout the City raised some interesting challenges. On the one hand they needed to be placed, ideally by the Council, where there was the greatest likelihood of uptake on the other it was important to ensure that those parts of the City where there was less likelihood of immediate uptake were not disenfranchised from what would be an increasingly important development.

Cllr Hayes concluded by noting that neither the Council nor ODS would have capacity to provide all the charging points which would eventually be required but it could, via the strategy, facilitate their installation and on the Council's terms. The strategy would make clear that the introduction of electric vehicles would not provide all the answers and that other means of transport within the City would be encouraged wherever possible.

Cabinet resolved to:

1. **Approve** the commissioning of Oxford City Council's EV Strategy, which will set out the strategic framework for the delivery of EV infrastructure in line with the city's 2040 net zero carbon target; and
2. **Note** the update provided on Oxford City Council's EV Programme

27. Appointments to outside bodies

The Head of Law and Governance had submitted a report to agree appointments to charities, trusts, community associations and other organisations for the 2021/22 Council Year.

The Chair briefly introduced the report which reflected the conclusion of discussions and agreements which had previously taken place .

Cabinet resolved to:

1. **Approve** appointments to charities, trusts, community associations and other organisations as shown in Appendices 1A – 1D; and note the appointments to partnerships as detailed in Appendix 1E;
2. **Note** the guidance for appointees as detailed in Appendix 2; and
3. **Delegate** authority to the Head of Law and Governance, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, and where appropriate with other group leaders, to make any changes to appointments to Outside Bodies as may be required during the course of the Council year 2021/22.

28. Minutes

Cabinet resolved to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 16 June 2021 as a true and accurate record.

29. Decisions taken under Part 9.3 (b) of the Constitution

The Head of Paid Service (Chief Executive) had submitted a report asking Cabinet and Council to note the decision taken by the Head of Paid Service using the urgency powers delegated in Part 9.3(b) of the Constitution.

Cabinet resolved to:

1. **Note** the decision taken as set out in the report and recommend to Council to note the decision.

30. Dates of Future Meetings

Meetings are scheduled for the following dates:

- 11 August (*please note that this meeting is now cancelled*).
- 15 September
- 13 October
- 10 November
- 15 December

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 7.10 pm

ChairDate: Wednesday 15 September 2021

Cabinet 21 June 2021

Address by Dr Natasha Robinson on behalf of CPRE Oxfordshire

“Councillors will be aware that CPRE Oxfordshire is supportive of the Oxfordshire 2050 Plan in principle, recognising the importance of a spatial plan for the county that respects environmental constraints whilst accommodating need.

However, we are concerned that this consultation document is not fit for purpose.

1. It doesn't make the tough decisions needed.
2. It will let the Arc dominate and
3. It will undermine the role of our local councillors.

The public deserves a revised consultation document, or at the very least an additional paper, that sets out the preferred growth and spatial options and provides adequate information to allow the impacts, risks and benefits to be compared.

Given that there has already been a Vision consultation and the next stage is a final draft Plan (Reg 19), then this should be a **Preferred Options consultation**. This approach is followed for the policy options proposed, but **not** for the fundamental issues of levels or location of growth – the core of what the Plan is supposed to address.

Environmental constraints must be a key consideration.

We ask that you consider these concerns. Thank you."

Response from Cllr Alex Hollingsworth, Cabinet Member for Planning & Housing Delivery

Thank you for your address today. I am very sorry that you were unable to attend today's Cabinet meeting, and I hope that your ankle recovers soon.

The purpose of the paper before the Cabinet today is to approve the Oxfordshire 2050 Plan Regulation 18(2) document for consultation. The purpose of this consultation is to gather comments, support and criticism of the document and its supporting evidence, and to respond accordingly at the next stage of consultation. Irrespective of the views of the CPRE on the proposals in the consultation document, it is my view – and more importantly, the view of the legal advisors to the 2050 Plan team – that it is fit for the purpose of carrying out the consultation required by Regulation 18.

This Council will be responding to the consultation, and I have no doubt that we will highlight both areas of agreement and areas where we think that the proposed policy approaches need to be amended and improved, and our priorities in terms of the choices presented. I am sure that the CPRE will be doing the same, and that will be the appropriate place to make the criticisms raised in the question. It will then be for all the five planning authorities to work together to arrive at a full draft of the 2050 Plan for Regulation 19 consultation that addresses all the comments received. That document will also be published for public consultation before submission for examination.

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