

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet on Wednesday 19 April 2023

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Cabinet members present:

Councillor Brown

Councillor Turner

Councillor Aziz

Councillor Chapman

Councillor Hollingsworth

Councillor Munkonge

Councillor Railton

Councillor Linda Smith

Councillor Upton

Councillor Walcott

Officers present for all or part of the meeting:

Stephen Cohen, Refugee and Resettlement Manager

Rhian Davies, Interim Head of Law and Governance

Stephen Gabriel, Executive Director (Communities and People)

Caroline Green, Chief Executive

Emma Lund, Committee and Member Services Officer

Jonathan Malton, Committee and Member Services Manager

Nerys Parry, Head of Housing

Richard Wood, Housing Strategy and Needs Manager

Apologies:

No apologies were received.

138. Addresses and Questions by Members of the Public

None.

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

None.

140. Councillor Addresses on Neighbourhood Issues

None.

141. Items raised by Cabinet Members

Councillor Anna Railton, Cabinet Member for Zero Carbon Oxford and Climate Justice, reported on the Construction, Logistics and Community Safety (CLOCS) standard: a national industry standard which aimed to improve the safety of construction vehicle

journeys. Councillor Railton explained that it was the Council's intention to become a CLOCS champion.

Councillor Alex Hollingsworth, Cabinet Member for Planning & Housing Delivery, drew attention to two elements within his portfolio area which could be used to enable the Council to show its support for the CLOCS principles.

Firstly, the Local Planning Authority was required to issue conditions for Construction Traffic Management Plans (CTMPs) on major applications, and there was potential to include within such conditions wording which sought to make the principles of the CLOCS scheme as binding as possible on those undertaking construction within the city. This would require consultation with Oxfordshire County Council as the Highways Authority; however, the County Council had not so far raised any objections to the principles.

Secondly, whilst the Council's housing development company, OX Place, was not itself a contractor it did collaborate with operators which used the types of vehicles covered by the CLOCS standard. OX Place had indicated that it would be very keen to endorse the standard and sign up to its principles.

142. Scrutiny reports

There were no scrutiny recommendations to be reported to the meeting.

143. Local Authority Housing Fund

The Executive Director (Communities & People) had submitted a report to seek project approval and delegations to enable the Council to proceed with entering into the national Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF) and to make available the required budget provision. The LAHF was a national fund to support local authorities in providing accommodation to Ukrainian and Afghan families settled in the UK under various government schemes following the respective conflicts which had occurred in their countries. As a condition of the fund, local authorities were required to meet part of the funding required to purchase properties to provide new affordable homes: the remainder would be provided as grant from the fund.

The proposed agreement with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities would enable the Council to purchase six properties to offer as affordable social housing for Ukrainian and Afghan refugee families, thereby helping to reduce emergency, temporary and bridging accommodation costs.

Councillor Linda Smith, Cabinet Member for Housing, reported that entering into the agreement reflected the Council's values a City of Sanctuary. It would allow the Council an opportunity to welcome Ukrainian and Afghan refugees into the community, allowing them to contribute to life in Oxford and providing a life-changing opportunity for the individual families who would receive the tenancies. It would also be very beneficial for the Council in that it would allow the Council to receive grant funding of c£1.1 million in return for an investment of c£1.2 million. Once the properties were purchased the Council would become the owner, and this would provide a source of rental income to the Council. Once the initial tenancy had ended the properties would become part of the Council's regular housing stock, available for allocation to eligible applicants on the housing register.

Cabinet resolved to:

1. **Approve** the Council becoming part of the Local Authority Housing Fund in order to deliver 6 new affordable homes;
2. **Recommend to Council** the allocation of a £2,330,320 capital budget from the Housing Revenue Account for the Council's investment to purchase the properties as part of Local Authority Housing Fund; and
3. **Delegate** authority to the Executive Director (Communities & People) in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing; the Head of Financial Services/Section 151 Officer; and the Head of Law and Governance/Monitoring Officer, to enter into agreements and contracts to facilitate the purchase by the Council of housing (to be held in the HRA) within the identified budget and within the project approval.

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

The Head of Paid Service (Chief Executive) had submitted a report asking Cabinet to note a decision taken by the Head of Paid Service (Chief Executive) using 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.

145. Minutes

Cabinet resolved to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 15 March 2023 as a true and accurate record.

146. Dates of Future Meetings

14 June 2023
12 July 2023
9 August 2023
13 September 2023
18 October 2023
15 November 2023

All meetings start at 6.00 pm.

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 6.15 pm

Chair

Date: Wednesday 14 June 2023

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.