

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet on Wednesday 15 November 2023

www.oxford.gov.uk



Cabinet members present:

Councillor Brown	Councillor Chapman
Councillor Hunt	Councillor Lygo
Councillor Munkonge	Councillor Railton
Councillor Linda Smith	Councillor Upton

Officers present for all or part of the meeting:

Tom Bridgman, Executive Director (Development)
Ian Brooke, Head of Community Services
Clare Golden, Team Leader, Urban Design and Heritage
Caroline Green, Chief Executive
Ruth Harris, Zero Carbon Project Manager
Tom Hook, Executive Director (Corporate Resources)
Emma Jackman, Head of Law and Governance
Nigel Kennedy, Head of Financial Services
Emma Lund, Committee and Member Services Officer
Jonathan Malton, Committee and Member Services Manager
Alex Miller, Transactions Manager
Paula Redway, Culture and Community Development Manager
Mish Tullar, Head of Corporate Strategy
Rachel Williams, Planning Policy and Place Manager
Jane Winfield, Head of Corporate Property

Apologies:

Councillor Turner sent apologies.

78. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Nigel Chapman declared, in relation to agenda item 10 ('Grant Allocations to Community and Voluntary Organisations 2024/25'), that he was to become the new Chair of Elmore Community Services (which was a grant recipient) with effect from January 2024. Councillor Chapman declared that he had had no involvement with any decisions relating to the awarding of the grant.

79. Addresses and Questions by Members of the Public

None.

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

None.

81. Councillor Addresses on Neighbourhood Issues

None.

82. Items raised by Cabinet Members

None.

83. Scrutiny Reports

The Scrutiny Committee had met on 6 November 2023, and the following reports had been considered:

- (i) Grant Allocations to Community and Voluntary Organisations 2024/25
- (ii) FutureFit Oxford(shire) Project Grant Funding Bid
- (iii) Central (City & University) Conservation Area Appraisal

The Committee had also reviewed the consultation response to the Oxfordshire Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

Two recommendations had been made in relation to Grant Allocations to Community and Voluntary Organisations 2024/25. These had related to including a further breakdown between fully, partially and lower funding, and to note the minimum requirements for all organisations which don't work with children, young people or vulnerable adults. Both recommendations had been fully agreed by the Cabinet Member.

Two recommendations had been made in relation to the Central (City & University) Conservation Area Appraisal. These had related to (i) including that the Council would encourage the use of modern windows and other retrofitting measures on historic buildings where appropriate and signpost the relevant documents within the report; and (ii) amending the appraisal to welcome applications that would make private green spaces more accessible to the public. Both of these recommendations had also been accepted by the Cabinet Member.

No recommendations had been made in respect of the FutureFit Oxford(shire) Project Grant Funding Bid.

84. ITEM WITHDRAWN Appropriation of Land at Bertie Place to a Planning Purpose

This item had been withdrawn from the agenda prior to the meeting.

85. Central (City & University) Conservation Area Appraisal

The Head of Planning and Regulatory Services had submitted a report to seek approval for, and adoption of, the Central (City & University) Conservation Area Appraisal, enabling the document to be used to inform the decision-making process for development management and to form an evidence base to inform planning policy.

Councillor Louise Upton, Cabinet Member for Planning and Healthier Communities, reported that the conservation area had originally been designated in the 1970s, and represented a part of the city which was thought to be the most densely packed with historic buildings. The Area Appraisal was a very detailed document which included 9 character zones, ranging from the University Science Area to areas such as Oxford Castle. It would be a very useful guide for developers and those wishing to build or alter buildings within the Conservation Area, as well as for the planning authority when determining planning applications. An extensive consultation process had taken place during its development, which had resulted in the boundary being extended to include the St Thomas' and University Science Area.

It was highlighted that the purpose of the Conservation Area Appraisal was not to constrain development, but rather to allow and foster positive change.

Cabinet resolved to:

1. **Adopt** the Central (City & University) Conservation Area Appraisal; and
2. **Endorse** the adopted Conservation Area Appraisal for use in informing development management decisions and as part of the evidence base for planning policy decisions.

86. Grant Allocations to Community & Voluntary Organisations 2024/25

The Head of Community Services had submitted a report to (i) demonstrate the impact of Oxford Community Impact Fund; and (ii) agree the criteria and weighting for assessing the 2024/25 Oxford Community Impact fund grants.

Councillor Susan Brown, Leader, welcomed the report and in particular the breadth and range of organisations which worked to provide support and services within the community and which had been able to be granted aid. It was noted that 20% of new applicants had not applied previously, which reflected officers' work to ensure that the application process was made as easy as possible. Work had also been done to ensure that the grants awarded aligned with the Council's priorities.

Cabinet is resolved to:

1. **Note** the implementation of the Oxford Community Impact Fund agreed by Cabinet on 15 December 2021 as part of the strategic grants review;
2. **Note** the social value and economic impact of the fund; and
3. **Agree** that the criteria and weighting for assessing Oxford Community Impact Fund grant applications in 2024/2025 are as set out in paragraph 5 of this report with the additional requirement for applicants to comply with the safeguarding arrangements specified by the Council. Cabinet agrees such safeguarding requirements are to be determined by the Safeguarding Coordinator in consultation with the Head of Community Services.

87. FutureFit Oxford(shire) Project Grant Funding Bid for Retrofit

The Head of Corporate Strategy had submitted a report to seek project approval for Oxford City Council's involvement in the FutureFit Oxford(shire) Project (FOx Project), and delegated authority for the facilitation and delivery of the project.

Councillor Anna Railton, Cabinet Member for Zero Carbon Oxford and Climate Justice, highlighted that the project included key strands of centering retrofitting on a whole building approach using smart technology; and innovative work on carbon in-setting to provide local community benefits.

The Head of Corporate Strategy highlighted that the Council was part of a consortium which included both universities, the County Council and the district councils as well as other public sector organisations. Corporate expressions of interest in carbon in-setting had already been received in discussions at the Zero Carbon Oxford Partnership.

Cabinet was informed that subsequent to the production of the report, a decision from the funder on whether the Council's bid had been successful had been delayed. It was now expected to be received later this month.

Cabinet resolved to:

1. **Grant project approval** for the FOx project to proceed, including approval of Oxford City Council's role as overall project lead;
2. **Recommend to Council** to establish a revenue budget for £1.56 million funded by a government grant to enable the necessary resources to be employed and the work undertaken;
3. **Delegate authority** to the Head of Corporate Strategy, in consultation with the Head of Financial Services / Section 151 Officer and the Head of Law and Governance to enter into a grant agreement with Innovate UK for the sum of £1.56 million as well as any related agreements, contracts and transactions to facilitate the project and its delivery in terms of accepting grant offer letters, partnership agreements, retrofit seed funding payments, subcontracting and subscriptions;
4. **Delegate authority** to the Head of Corporate Strategy, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Zero Carbon Oxford and Climate Justice, to deliver the grant funded consortium project, and to comply with Innovate UK's project monitoring and grant payment processes (and project change processes, if required); and
5. **Note** that this is a multi-partner collaborative project with a total value of £5.28m. At time of writing a decision from the funder on whether the bid has been successful has not been received (expected later in November).

88. Commercial Property Lettings

The Executive Director (Development) had submitted a report to seek authority to let 16-17 Turl Street, 24-26 George Street, 33-35 George Street and Cadogan House, Wheatley to provide a rental income to the Council.

Cabinet resolved to:

1. **Delegate authority** to the Executive Director (Development) in consultation with the Head of Financial Services / S.151 Officer, the Head of Law and Governance and the Deputy Leader (Statutory) Cabinet Member for Finance and Asset Management to agree final terms, negotiate the form of documents and then enter into leases and any ancillary documents required for the letting of 16-17 Turl Street, 24-26 George Street, 33-35 George Street and Cadogan House, Wheatley subject to the requirements of S.123 Local Government Act 1972 being met.

89. Minutes

Cabinet resolved to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 18 October 2023 as a true and accurate record.

90. Dates of Future Meetings

Meetings are scheduled for the following dates:

13 December 2023

24 January 2024

7 February 2024

13 March 2024

17 April 2024

All meetings start at 6.00pm.

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 6.24 pm

Chair
2023

Date: Wednesday 13 December

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.