

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet on Wednesday 10 July 2024

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Cabinet members present:

Councillor Brown (Chair)

Councillor Arshad

Councillor Hollingsworth

Councillor Railton

Councillor Upton

Councillor Turner

Councillor Chapman

Councillor Munkonge

Councillor Linda Smith

Officers present for all or part of the meeting:

James Baughan, Leisure and Active Wellbeing Manager

Helen Bishop, Head of Business Improvement

Kieran Edmunds, Rapid Rehousing Manager

Vicki Galvin, Senior Programme Manager for Customer Experience

Caroline Green, Chief Executive

Emma Jackman, Head of Law and Governance

Clare Keen, Policy and Partnerships Officer

Nigel Kennedy, Head of Financial Services

Hagan Lewisman, Active Communities Manager

Emma Lund, Committee and Member Services Officer

Nerys Parry, Head of Housing Services

Malcolm Peek, Property Services Manager

William Sparling, Team Leader Planning Policy

Alexander Sutton, Planner (Planning Policy)

Mish Tullar, Head of Corporate Strategy

Richard Wood, Housing Strategy and Needs Manager

Also present:

Councillor Katherine Miles, Chair of Scrutiny

Apologies:

No apologies were received.

16. Addresses and Questions by Members of the Public

None.

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

None.

18. Councillor Addresses on Neighbourhood Issues

None.

19. Items raised by Cabinet Members

None.

20. Scrutiny Reports

The Scrutiny Committee had met on 2 July 2024 and the Housing and Homelessness Panel had met on 3 July 2024.

The Scrutiny Committee had made recommendations relating to the following items:

- Oxford City Council Corporate Strategy 2024-28
- Update of Byelaws for Parks and Open Spaces (report to Council)
- Leisure Investment Programme

Scrutiny had also considered but had not made recommendations in relation to: the Citizen Experience Strategy Progress Report; the Annual Review of the Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy; Temporary Accommodation Demand and Mitigations; and 2024/25 Capital Programmes (HRA Delegations).

All of the recommendations, together with Cabinet Members' responses, were included in the separately published supplement to the agenda.

Three recommendations had been made in relation to the Oxford City Council Corporate Strategy 2024-28. These had related to including a priority within the strategy to have an age and child friendly city; including specific reference to the work of the Child Poverty Review Group and adoption of the Socio-Economic Duty; and making more specific reference within the strategy to activity which is funded versus activity which is dependent on securing funding, and referencing prioritisation processes.

In responding to the recommendations Councillor Susan Brown, Leader of the Council, commented that whilst the 'Agree?' column in the published supplement stated that all three recommendations had been agreed, it was in fact not possible to summarise the responses in such a binary way due to their nuanced nature. Full consideration of the recommendations and acceptance level was set out in the narrative response.

Two recommendations had been made in relation to the Update of Byelaws for Parks and Open Spaces. These had related to including a speed restriction within the byelaws relating to cycling; and displaying information for the public in parks on how to report anti-social behaviour. Councillor Chewe Munkonge, Cabinet Member for A Healthy Oxford, responded that the first recommendation had been accepted in part, and the second recommendation had been fully accepted, as set out in the narrative responses.

Two recommendations had been made in relation to the Leisure Investment Programme. These had related to undertaking a thorough analysis of the Leys Leisure

Centre sports hall usage during all opening times; and publishing high-level information on the Leisure Investment Programme and progress on delivery on the Council's website. Councillor Chewe Munkonge, Cabinet Member for A Healthy Oxford, responded that the second recommendation was fully accepted, and the need to monitor the performance of the Council's leisure provider was well recognised. The first recommendation was also accepted.

21. Leisure Investment Programme

The Executive Director (Communities and People) and the Head of Financial Services had submitted a report to seek approval for a programme of improvements at the Council's leisure facilities.

Councillor Chewe Munkonge, Cabinet Member for A Healthy Oxford, reported that the transfer to the new leisure contract with Serco Leisure ('More Leisure') had now been successfully completed. The report before Cabinet sought approval for an additional capital budget of £1.04 million, above the £2 million already agreed in the capital programme, in order to improve facilities across Ferry Leisure Centre, Leys Leisure Centre, Barton Leisure Centre and Hinksey Outdoor Pool. These improvements would ensure that the Council's facilities would remain sustainable and meet customer demand in the long term; would enable the aims of the contract to be met and a return on investment to be achieved; and would help to reduce health inequalities, for example by the provision of concessionary access.

Cabinet resolved to:

1. **Grant project approval** for the Leisure Investment Programme at Appendix 1;
2. **Recommend to Council** the approval of an additional capital budget of £1.04 million, above the £2million already agreed in the capital programme necessary to deliver the Leisure Investment Programme;
3. **Delegate authority** to the Executive Director (Communities and People) in consultation with the Cabinet Member for A Healthy Oxford; the Deputy Leader (Statutory) - Finance and Asset Management; the Head of Finance/Section 151 Officer and the Head of Law and Governance to agree the terms of the legal agreement with Serco Leisure ("More Leisure) to govern payment of the monies for the Leisure Investment Programme; and
4. **Delegate authority** to the Executive Director (Communities and People) in consultation with the Cabinet Member for A Healthy Oxford; the Deputy Leader (Statutory) - Finance and Asset Management and the Head of Financial Services/Section 151 Officer to determine any additional opportunities to reinvest the funds if any monies remain following delivery of the Leisure Investment Programme, whilst ensuring no detrimental impact to the Council's return on investment.

22. Redesignation of the Neighbourhood Forums for Wolvercote and Summertown & St. Margaret's

The Executive Director (Development) had submitted a report to consider redesignation of the Neighbourhood Forums for Wolvercote and Summertown & St. Margaret's.

Councillor Louise Upton, Cabinet Member for Planning, reported that the Localism Act 2011 had provided for the establishment of Neighbourhood Forums, allowing interested local communities to become directly involved in planning for their areas. Neighbourhood Forums were able to produce Neighbourhood Plans which, if adopted, became part of the statutory development plan, and therefore an important consideration when making decisions on planning applications.

However, legislation set out that designation of a neighbourhood forum ceased to have effect five years after the date of designation. Cabinet was therefore asked to consider approving the redesignation of Wolvercote and Summertown & St Margaret's Neighbourhood Forums. Neighbourhood forum applications were required to link to a designated area: the proposed areas for both Forums were identical to those as originally designated.

Officers confirmed that consultation feedback for both neighbourhood forum redesignations had been very positive.

Cabinet resolved to:

1. **Approve** the redesignation of Wolvercote Neighbourhood Forum in respect of the originally designated neighbourhood area to which it related; and
2. **Approve** the redesignation of Summertown & St. Margaret's Forum in respect of the originally designated neighbourhood area to which it related.

23. Homelessness Temporary Accommodation Demand and Mitigations

The Executive Director (Communities and People) had submitted a report to (i) seek authorisation to establish an Emergency Temporary Accommodation Framework for the procurement of emergency temporary accommodation; and (ii) update Cabinet on increasing levels of homelessness use of temporary accommodation and mitigations in Oxford.

Councillor Linda Smith, Cabinet Member for Housing & Communities, reported that unprecedented numbers of people were now presenting to the Council as homelessness. Within that, there was an unprecedented number of people whom the Council had a statutory duty to house. Of these, many were in temporary accommodation whilst a permanent home for them to move to was sought. The report before Cabinet set out the scale of the situation.

Councillor Smith highlighted that, in addition to the detrimental effects on the individuals affected, the use of temporary accommodation was expensive for the Council. Whilst much work had already been done to seek to reduce the costs wherever possible and keep the numbers of those in temporary accommodation as low as possible (as set out in the report), further initiatives to increase temporary accommodation supply, prevent homelessness and increase the supply of move on accommodation were being pursued. The report also proposed the establishment of an Emergency Temporary Accommodation Framework for the procurement of emergency temporary accommodation.

Cabinet resolved to:

1. **Approve** the establishment of a framework under the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 for the Procurement of Emergency Temporary Accommodation;

2. **Delegate authority** to the Executive Director (Communities and People) to agree the final structure of the Emergency Temporary Accommodation Framework and appoint successful suppliers to all lots on the Framework;
3. **Delegate authority** to the Executive Director (Communities and People) to procure and award individual contracts through the Emergency Temporary Accommodation Framework in excess of £1 million;
4. **Note** the implementation of a new Private Sector Leasing Scheme to increase Temporary Accommodation supply and note that leases will be negotiated with Housing Associations where appropriate to release additional units;
5. **Note** the development of further mitigations, including the de-designation of certain housing stock for use as Temporary Accommodation; longer-term capital investment to increase supply of Temporary Accommodation; and work with Ox Place to increase the supply of move on accommodation.

24. Annual Review of the Housing, Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023-28

The Executive Director (Communities and People) had submitted a report to provide an update on the progress made in Year 1 of the Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023-28 and to seek approval for the implementation of the Year 2 action plan.

Councillor Linda Smith, Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities, presented the report and outlined the progress which had been made against the five strategy priorities over the year. Officers commented that one of the more significant updates to the Year 2 action plan had been to try to capture the risks and challenges of rising homelessness levels and transformation of rough sleeping services, and the cost inflation associated with the growing demand. Other challenges included competing demands for investment in housing stock, and growing expectations from tenants and central government.

A Cabinet Member highlighted the achievements of the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal, and agreements with the three District Councils on the allocation of social housing for Oxford's Unmet Need, in delivering affordable homes. It was suggested that the action plan should seek to continue to publicise this as a priority.

Cabinet resolved to:

1. **Note** the progress made in Year 1 to implement the Housing, Homelessness, and Rough Sleeping Strategy and Action Plan and the emerging risks and challenges for delivery over next year and beyond;
2. **Approve** the adoption of the new strategy Action Plan for 24-25; and
3. **Delegate authority** to the Executive Director (Communities and People), in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities, to update the Action Plan when required.

25. 2024/25 HRA Capital Programmes and Delegations

The Executive Director (Communities and People) had submitted a report to seek (i) approval for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Capital Programmes for 2024/25; (ii) authority to commence procurement procedures to deliver the programmes; and (iii) delegated authority for officers to enter into the necessary contracts.

Councillor Linda Smith, Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities, highlighted that the report sought authority for the spending of £12.5 million already in the HRA budget for three programmes of work to improve provision for residents. These were internal works, external works and communal works. Whilst the report before Cabinet was an interim programme relating to works for the current year, a five year programme of works informed by a stock condition survey was also being developed, in order to give greater clarity over the longer term. This would enable the details of the programme to be shared with residents and ward councillors.

Cabinet resolved to:

1. **Approve** the Council's HRA capital programmes for 2024/25 as set out in the report with the total value of £12,500,000 (twelve million and five hundred thousand pounds);
2. **Approve** the commencement of the appropriate procurement processes to undertake the works and provide the services necessary to deliver the capital programmes approved under recommendation 1; and
3. **Delegate authority** to the Head of Housing, in consultation with the Head of Financial Services; the Head of Law and Governance; and the Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities, to enter into all contracts required in order to deliver the HRA Capital Programmes subject to the proper procurement process being followed, with all spend falling within the budget of £12.5m.

26. Citizen Experience Strategy Progress Report

The Executive Director (Corporate Resources) had submitted a report to provide a comprehensive update on the delivery of the first year of the Citizen Experience (CEX) Strategy.

Councillor Nigel Chapman, Cabinet Member for Citizen Focused Services and Council Companies, reported that much positive progress had been made and commented that the feedback received from independent examiners on the customer experience continued to be very good. One of the particularly notable achievements over the past year had been the launch of a new website, making it easier and quicker for citizens to find the service and support they need. Other areas of key progress across the strategy workstrands were set out fully in the report.

Councillor Chapman highlighted that areas of focus for the next year were expected to include increasing the opportunity for payments to be made online and services such as garden waste collection to be arranged online. It was hoped that this would also enable the delivery of efficiency savings.

Cabinet resolved to:

1. **Note** the positive progress which has been made; and
2. **Agree** the revised action plan (Appendix 2).

27. DLUHC Productivity Return

The Executive Director (Corporate Resources) had submitted a report to seek approval for an Oxford City Council Productivity Plan for return to the Department of Levelling up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) and for publishing on the Council's website. The requirement for all councils to produce a productivity plan had been announced as part of the Local Government Finance Settlement, and the Minister for Local Government had written to local authority chief executives on 16 April 2024 requiring submission by 19 July 2024.

Cabinet resolved to:

1. **Approve** the Oxford City Council Productivity Plan (at Appendix 2) for return to DLUHC; and
2. **Approve** this Oxford City Council Productivity Plan (at Appendix 2) for publication on the Council's website for public consumption.

28. Oxford City Council Corporate Strategy 2024-2028

The Head of Corporate Strategy had submitted a report which provided the feedback from the public and stakeholder consultation on the Council Strategy 2024 to 2028 and which sought approval for the Strategy.

Councillor Susan Brown, Leader, highlighted that the Strategy had previously been brought to Cabinet in draft, and had been subject to an extensive and thorough consultation process. It had also been considered by the Scrutiny Committee and the Parish Councils' Forum.

Councillor Brown summarised that many of the overarching priorities remained similar to previous years, for example: having good affordable homes; a strong and fair economy; thriving communities; zero carbon oxford; and a well-run council. It was noted that the Strategy would be accompanied by an annual business plan; a separate report was also due to be brought to a future Cabinet meeting on Corporate Key Performance Indicators.

Cabinet resolved to:

1. **Note** the public and stakeholder consultation on the draft Council Strategy 2024 to 2028;
2. **Agree** the revisions made to the draft Council Strategy 2024 to 2028 in response to the consultation;
3. **Delegate authority** to the Head of Corporate Strategy in consultation with the Council Leader to make further minor amendments before adoption by Council; and
4. **Recommend to Council** to:
 - A. **Adopt** the Council Strategy 2024 to 2028 as attached as Appendix 1 to the report; and
 - B. **Delegate authority** to the Head of Corporate Strategy in consultation with the Council Leader to make any further amendments to the Council Strategy 2024

to 2028 before implementation and publication, provided that such amendments do not materially affect the substance of the Council Strategy 2024 to 2028.

29. Financial Outturn Report 2023/24

The Head of Financial Services had submitted a report to update Members on the financial outturn for the year ending 31 March 2024.

Councillor Ed Turner, Deputy Leader (Statutory) – Finance and Asset Management, highlighted that the General Fund Outturn showed a favourable variance of £3.903 million which was recommended for transfer into the risk reserve. However, the general fund variations had included a dividend payment from ODS of £4 million in respect of prior years and this had served to mask underlying pressures in the budget. One such pressure was the demand for temporary accommodation as highlighted in a previous agenda item. There were also service pressures around the contact centre and an adverse variance arising from local cost of benefits.

Councillor Turner also drew attention to slippage within the capital programme, which included unavoidable slippage. Provision had been made for an optimism bias going forward to correct optimism bias on programmed spend.

The HRA also showed a slight favourable variance. However, within this there were also some pressures, most notably relating to repairs.

Cabinet resolved to:

1. **Note** the financial outturn and performance of the Council for the year 2023/24 and the recommended transfer of £3.903 million to the risk reserve; and
2. **Agree** the carry forward requests in respect of the General Fund of £0.064 million in accordance with paragraph 2.

30. Appointments to Outside Bodies 2024/25

The Head of Law and Governance had submitted a report to agree appointments to Outside Bodies for the 2024/25 Council Year.

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 2024/25.

31. Minutes

Cabinet resolved to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 12 June 2024 as a true and accurate record.

32. Dates of Future Meetings

Meetings are scheduled for the following dates:

14 August 2024
11 September 2024
16 October 2024
13 November 2024
11 December 2024
22 January 2025

All meetings start at 6.00pm.

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 7.27 pm

Chair

Date: Wednesday 11 September 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.