

## **Remote meeting**

### **Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet on Wednesday 9 September 2020**

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#### **Cabinet members present:**

Councillor Brown (Chair)	Councillor Turner (Deputy Leader)
Councillor Chapman	Councillor Clarkson
Councillor Hollingsworth	Councillor Rowley
Councillor Linda Smith	Councillor Tidball
Councillor Upton	

#### **Officers present for all or part of the meeting:**

Gordon Mitchell, Chief Executive  
Tom Bridgman, Executive Director (Development)  
Caroline Green, Assistant Chief Executive  
Paul Leo, Interim Director of Housing  
Tim Sadler, Transition Director / Chairman Direct Services Companies  
Anita Bradley, Monitoring Officer  
Nigel Kennedy, Head of Financial Services  
Tanya Bandekar, Service Manager Revenue & Benefits  
Jenny Barker, Regeneration Manager  
Laura Bessell, Benefits Manager  
Tom Hudson, Scrutiny Officer  
Annette Osborne  
Dave Scholes, Housing Strategy & Needs Manager (Affordable Housing Supply Lead)  
Gail Siddall, Team Leader , HMO Enforcement Team  
Mish Tullar, Corporate Policy, Partnership and Communications Manager  
Paul Wilding, System Change Manager - Homelessness Prevention  
Ian Wright, Head of Regulatory Services and Community Safety  
Jennifer Thompson, Committee and Members Services Officer

#### **Also present:**

Councillor Andrew Gant, Chair of the Scrutiny Committee

#### **Apologies:**

Councillor Hayes sent apologies.

#### **48. Declarations of Interest**

None.

## **49. Addresses and Questions by Members of the Public**

None received.

## **50. Councillor Addresses on any item for decision on the Board's agenda**

None received.

## **51. Councillor Addresses on Neighbourhood Issues**

None received.

## **52. Items raised by Board Members**

None.

## **53. Scrutiny Committee Reports**

The Scrutiny Officer, Tom Hudson, outlined the Scrutiny Committee and its Panels' recommendations to Cabinet and the reasons for these.

The Scrutiny Committee on 1 September made

- 10 recommendations on the Air Quality Action Plan.
- 3 recommendations on the Discretionary Housing Payments Policy

The Housing & Homelessness Panel on 3 September made one recommendation on the Selective Licensing and the Renewal of the HMO Licensing Scheme.

The Chair asked that these be considered along with the Cabinet reports under the appropriate agenda item.

## **54. Revised Oxford City Council Business Plan 2020-21**

The Assistant Chief Executive had submitted a report seeking approval of Oxford City Council Business Plan 2020-21.

Councillor Brown, Leader of the Council, introduced the report and explained that the Council's overall aims and priorities as set out in the Council Strategy 2020-24, adopted by Council in February 2020, had not altered and the business plan also included actions to mitigate where possible the economic and social impact of the Covid19 pandemic on the city.

### **Cabinet resolved to:**

1. **Agree** the revised draft Oxford City Council Business Plan 2020-21 as set out in Appendix 1 of the report, updated due to the impact of the on-going COVID 19 crisis, setting out the Council's priority work programmes for the remainder of the financial year; and
2. **Delegate** authority to the Assistant Chief Executive in consultation with the Council Leader to make minor amendments to the draft Oxford City Council Business Plan 2020-21 before implementation.

## **55. Land acquisition and Project Approvals for the development of homes in the HRA**

The Head of Housing Services had submitted a report seeking project approval, delegations, and budget, to enable spending from the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), on land purchases, build contracts and other necessary agreements and associated development costs for the purpose of delivering affordable housing.

Councillor Rowley, Cabinet Member for Affordable Housing, introduced the report and the recommendations.

### **Cabinet resolved to:**

1. **Give project approval** to the proposals, to purchase land; enter into build contracts and any other necessary agreements or contracts and incur associated development cost spends, as set out in this report, and within the allocated HRA capital budgets and business plan, for the purpose of delivering more affordable housing in Oxford;
2. **Recommend to Council** that it approves a revision to the HRA capital budget in 2020/21 of £31.647m, in order for the schemes listed in this report (paras 11 to 40) to be added into the capital programme funded predominantly from additional borrowing;
3. **Recommend to Council** that it approves a revision to the HRA base (revenue) budget from 2021/22 on, for £235k to be added, for the creation of the Affordable Supply Programme and Enabling Team to manage and co-ordinate the various work streams to deliver the programmes;
4. **Delegate** authority to the Director of Housing, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Affordable Housing; the Head of Financial Services/Section 151 Officer; and the Council's Monitoring Officer, to enter into agreements for the purchase of land, and any other necessary agreements or contracts and/or spend within the identified budget, for the provision of additional affordable housing; and
5. **Delegate** authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Cabinet Members for Finance and Asset Management, and Affordable Housing, to approve any property or development purchases over £500,000 for affordable housing, within this project approval and budget envelope.

### **a) Land acquisition and Project Approvals for the development of homes in the HRA - Appendix 4**

This appendix was taken with its report without discussion.

## **56. Implementation of the Housing Infrastructure Funding for Oxford North (Northern Gateway)**

The Executive Director for Development had submitted a report to seek approval to enter into an agreement with Thomas White Oxford ("TWO") to deliver infrastructure to facilitate the delivery of housing at Oxford North.

Councillor Hollingsworth, Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Delivery, introduced the report and the recommendations.

**Cabinet resolved to:**

**Delegate** authority to the Executive Director for Development, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Delivery, and the Head of Law and Governance, to:

- a) **Finalise** the legal agreement with the developer Thomas White Oxford (“TWO”);
- b) **Enter** into the legal agreement to secure the delivery of the Housing Infrastructure Funding (“HIF”) funded infrastructure at Oxford North;
- c) **Secure** the HIF funding and implementation of the HIF agreements, including the provision of funding to TWO; and
- d) **Agree** any changes necessary to the HIF agreement with Homes England to facilitate the securing of the HIF funding, the delivery of the infrastructure and the recouping of funding.

**a) Implementation of the Housing Infrastructure Funding for Oxford North (Northern Gateway) - Appendices 1&2**

This appendix was taken with its report without discussion.

## **57. Discretionary Housing Payment Policy**

The Head of Financial Services had submitted a report seeking approval to amend the current Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) Policy and to note the trends in expenditure detailed in the report.

Councillor Tidball, Cabinet Member for Supporting Local Communities, introduced the report and recommended approval of the revised policy. She outlined the changes in light of an anticipated increase in demand for support due to the economic impacts of Covid19 and highlighted the role of these payments in preventing long-term poverty or homelessness. She supported the recommendations of the Scrutiny Committee on increasing awareness of and access to DHPs.

**Cabinet resolved to:**

**Approve** the revised Discretionary Housing Payment Policy as set out in Appendix 1 of the report.

## **58. Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2021/22**

The Head of Financial Services had submitted a report seeking approval for proposals for consultation on changes to the Council’s Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2021/22.

Councillor Tidball, Cabinet Member for Supporting Local Communities, introduced the report and the reasons for the proposed changes to the scheme. She reminded Cabinet that this is a discount scheme not a benefit.

**Cabinet resolved to:**

1. **Agree** that the proposals for the 2021/22 Council Tax Reduction Scheme outlined in the report be subject to consultation for an 8 week period from 14th September 2020; and

2. **Instruct** the Head of Financial Services to bring a further report to Cabinet in January 2021 to outline the outcome of the consultation process and make proposals for the 2021/22 Council Tax Reduction Scheme.

## **59. Proposal to improve the Private Rented Sector through selective licensing.**

The Head of Regulatory Services and Community Safety had submitted a report to inform Cabinet of the review of the housing conditions undertaken to inform a decision for the implementation of a selective licensing scheme.

Councillor Hollingsworth, Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Delivery, introduced the report and the recommendations. He accepted the recommendations from the Housing & Homelessness Panel and asked that officers sought consultation responses from a wide range of renters including from private tenants who would not normally respond to council consultations but who would be affected by the licensing scheme.

### **Cabinet resolved to:**

1. **Note** the Review of Housing Conditions and other factors affecting the private rented sector and note its findings;
2. **Note** that the Review indicates that a significant proportion of the private rented sector should be inspected to determine whether any category 1 and 2 hazards exist;
3. **Instruct** Officers of the Council to proceed with a statutory 10 week public consultation; and
4. **Request** a future report in setting out the results of the statutory consultation and to consider and determine if the proposed scheme should be made and submitted to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government for conformation.

## **60. Review of the Additional HMO licensing scheme**

The Head of Regulatory Services and Community Safety had submitted a report to provide findings from a review carried out for the Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) Licensing Scheme and seek Cabinet approval to conduct a statutory consultation to renew the scheme in 2021.

Councillor Hollingsworth, Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Delivery, introduced the report and the recommendations. He reminded Cabinet that this proposal was for the renewal and improvement of the existing HMO licensing scheme.

He thanked Councillor Linda Smith (previously Cabinet Member responsible for this) and officers for their work on the review of the scheme.

### **Cabinet resolved to:**

1. **Note** the findings of the Review of Licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation 2020;
2. **Note** that the Review indicates that a significant proportion of HMOs in the Council's area are being managed ineffectively;
3. **Instruct** Officers of the Council to proceed with a statutory 10 week consultation on the scheme on the basis that it is necessary to renew the licensing scheme in its entirety for a further 5 years; and

4. **Request** a future report setting out the results of the statutory consultation and the proposed future of the licensing scheme.

## **61. Air Quality Action Plan**

The Transition Director had submitted a report seeking approval of the Draft Air Quality Action (AQA) Plan for public consultation.

Mai Jarvis, Environmental Quality Team Manager, introduced the report and the draft action plan. She outlined progress in improving air quality and the future actions. The consultation would run for 7 weeks and would use a variety of methods to reach a wide range of respondents.

Cabinet members asked for inclusion in the supporting text an explanation of the economic impact and costs of poor air quality to emphasise the urgency of improvements.

Members noted that improving indoor air quality, which could also be poor, was not within the scope of the AQA Plan.

Cabinet accepted all the Scrutiny Committee recommendations and asked that these, and coverage of the economic costs, be incorporated into the action plan before publication.

### **Cabinet resolved to:**

1. **Approve** for public consultation the Air Quality Action Plan **subject to** the inclusion of the Scrutiny Committee recommendations and of the economic costs of poor air quality (as set out in the Cabinet's discussion); and
2. **Delegate** authority to the Transition Director in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Zero carbon Oxford to make the amendments at (1) and any minor textual amendments to the draft Air Quality Action Plan in advance of the public consultation.

## **62. Treasury Management Performance: Annual Report and Performance 2019/20**

The Head of Financial Services had submitted a report setting out the Council's Treasury Management activity and performance for the financial year 2019/20.

Councillor Turner, Cabinet Member for Finance and Asset Management, introduced the report.

**Cabinet resolved to note the report.**

## **63. Procurement Strategy 2020 - 2022**

The Head of Financial Services had submitted a report seeking approval for a two year Procurement Strategy for the Council.

Councillor Turner, Cabinet Member for Finance and Asset Management, introduced the report and explained how the procurement strategy supported the Council's core values and economic development strategy. He thanked the officers involved in its production.

**Cabinet resolved to approve** the procurement strategy 2020-2022.

## **64. Approval of a contract award for a revenues and Benefits system**

The Head of Financial Services had submitted a report seeking project approval and delegated authority for the Head of Financial Services to award a contract for the Supply of a Revenues and Benefits system.

Councillor Chapman, Cabinet Member for Customer Focused Services, introduced the report and the recommendations.

### **Cabinet resolved to:**

1. **Note** the results of the tender exercise; and
2. **Give project approval** to implement a new revenues and benefits ICT software package , which will enable the Council to deliver effective, efficient and modern revenues and benefits services for the benefit of the Council and its customers;
3. **Delegate** to the Head of Financial Services authority to award a contract for the supply of a revenues and benefits system subject to agreement of appropriate terms to Civica UK Ltd; and
4. **Recommend to Council** to make a budget allocation of £735k within the Council's capital programme for 2020-21 and note the savings accruing to the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan.

### **a) Approval of a contract award for a revenues and Benefits system - Appendix 1**

This appendix was taken with its report without discussion.

## **65. Minutes**

**Cabinet resolved to approve** the minutes of the meeting held on 12 August 2020 as a true and accurate record.

## **66. Matters Exempt from Publication**

## **67. Decisions taken under Parts 9.3(b) of the Constitution**

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

The Leader moved and the Cabinet agreed to exclude the press and public for this item in accordance with the provisions of Paragraph 4(2)(b) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 on the grounds that their presence could involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as described in specific paragraphs of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972. The live webcast was ended.

**Cabinet resolved to note** the decision taken as set out in the report and confidential appendix.

### **a) Decisions taken under Parts 9.3(b) of the Constitution - Appendix 1**

This appendix was considered with its report.

## 68. Dates of Future Meetings

The dates were noted.

**The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 7.20 pm**

**Chair .....**

**Date: Wednesday 14 October 2020**

*When decisions take effect:*

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

*Details are in the Council's Constitution.*