

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet on Wednesday 13 October 2021



Committee members present:

Councillor Brown (Chair)	Councillor Turner
Councillor Hayes	Councillor Arshad
Councillor Aziz	Councillor Blackings
Councillor Clarkson	Councillor Hollingsworth
Councillor Rowley	Councillor Upton

Also present:

Councillor Elizabeth Wade

Officers present for all or part of the meeting:

Caroline Green, Chief Executive
Tom Bridgman, Executive Director (Development)
Susan Sale, Monitoring Officer and Head of Law & Governance
Nigel Kennedy, Head of Financial Services
Jenny Barker, Regeneration Manager
Tom Hudson, Scrutiny Officer
John Mitchell, Committee and Member Services Officer

Apologies:

None

47. Declarations of Interest

None.

48. Addresses and Questions by Members of the Public

None.

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

None.

50. Councillor Addresses on Neighbourhood Issues

None.

51. Items raised by Cabinet Members

None.

52. Cabinet: Scrutiny reports

Development of Land at South Oxford Science Park

Cllr Wade thanked Cllr Hollingsworth, Cabinet Member for Planning & Housing Delivery and Jenny Barker, Regeneration Manager, for their contribution to the Committee's extensive and helpful discussion and was grateful for the Cabinet's positive response to its recommendations.

EV Strategy

Cllr Wade reminded those present that the Committee's recommendations had originally been submitted to Cabinet on 25 July but had since been reconsidered by the Committee, revised to some extent, and were now being submitted once more.

Cllr Tom Hayes, Cabinet Member for Green Transport and Zero Carbon Oxford, apologised for not having been able to respond to the revised recommendations but assured Cllr Wade that he would do so in the next day or two.

Housing Performance in Q1

Tom Hudson, Scrutiny Officer, gave apologies on behalf of Cllr Linda Smith, Chair of the Housing & Homelessness Panel, who had been unable to attend to speak to the Housing & Homelessness Panel's report on Housing Performance in Q1. He noted that Tenant Ambassadors were to be involved in all meetings of the Housing & Homelessness Panel in the present Council year to look at the issue of tenant involvement and empowerment.

The recommendation in the report arose from a challenge from a Tenant Ambassador. The Panel had accepted the challenge that the exceptional circumstances of Covid were beginning to recede and the subsequent recommendation that there should be a return to previous levels of engagement with the Lived Experience Advisory Forum.

Cllr Diko Blackings, Cabinet Member for Affordable Housing, Housing Security, and Housing the Homeless said she had been very happy to agree to the recommendation.

The Chair recorded her thanks for the work of the Panel and was pleased to hear about the service's increasing level of community engagement.

53. Development of land at South Oxford Science Village (Land South of Grenoble Road)

The Executive Director Development had submitted a report to set out the progress to date on the South Oxfordshire Science Village (SOSV) proposals and seek agreement to the next stages of work to progress towards delivery of the proposed development.

Cllr Alex Hollingsworth, Cabinet Member for Planning & Housing Delivery, introduced the report which represented a significant milestone in a scheme which sought to address a 20 year old aspiration to develop the land in question for housing in partnership with the two other land owners, Thames Water and Magdalen College. It was important to note that the land was subject to the South Oxfordshire District Council's (SODC) Local Plan and final planning decisions would therefore be made by

it and not the City Council. It was also important to recognise that the partners would not, necessarily, support City Council proposals for conditions which went further than those in the SODC Local Plan.

The report outlined a number of disposal/delivery options, setting out a range from those with lower risk and reward to those with higher risk and reward. The outliers had been rejected and the recommended option (Promotion & Master Developer Agreement) was seen to provide the best balance of risk and reward, leaving the Council with a degree of control and influence.

Cllr Ed Turner, Cabinet Member for Finance & Asset Management, said the project had the potential to offer life changing opportunities for many families through the establishment of a new community of affordable housing. He was clear that the recommended option represented the best way to proceed. He applauded officers for their technical skills, wisdom and diplomacy in getting the proposal to this point, Cabinet members were unequivocal in their support and enthusiasm for the scheme noting, among other things, its ideal location.

The contribution that good quality affordable and appropriate housing made to the quality of individual/family lives and wellbeing could not be underestimated. The absence of sufficient affordable housing in the city remained one of its greatest challenges; the provision of housing through the scheme would make a significant difference and would be one of the greatest gifts to those who, in time, would make their homes in this new community.

Cllr Hollingsworth noted the need to add to the recommendations as published with the agenda a reference to delegations to be in consultation, also, with the Cabinet Members for Planning & Housing Delivery and Finance & Asset Management.

Cabinet resolved to:

1. **Delegate** to the Director for Development in consultation with the Head of Law and Governance; Head of Finance; and Cabinet Members for Planning & Housing Delivery and Finance & Asset Management, the final wording of the key principles of collaboration and the entering into a formal collaboration agreement if the partners so wish;
2. **Delegate** to the Director for Development in consultation with the Head of Law and Governance; Head of Finance; and Cabinet Members for Planning & Housing Delivery and Finance & Asset Management, working in collaboration with the other land owners, the procuring of a development partner to bring forward the site for development (although the entering into an agreement with the proposed development partner would be subject to a further decision);
3. **Delegate** to the Director for Development in consultation with the Head of Law and Governance; Head of Finance; and Cabinet Members for Planning & Housing Delivery and Finance & Asset Management, the appointment of consultants on behalf of the partnership, with sharing of costs secured through an agreement, to provide legal advice for the procurement of a development partner;
4. **Note** the spend to date and approve the continued use of the allocated budget to enable the project to move forward, including for procuring specialist advice, progressing issues impacting the site, the setting up of a delivery vehicle and procurement of a development partner. Delegate to the Director for Development, in consultation with the Head of Law and Governance and Head of Finance, the agreement of works and spend within the allocated budget.

54. Minutes

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

55. Dates of Future Meetings

Meetings are scheduled for the following dates:

10 November
15 December
26 January 2022
9 February 2022
16 March 2022
13 April 2022
26 May 2022

All meetings start at 6.00

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 6.35 pm

ChairDate: Wednesday 10 November 2021