

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet on Wednesday 19 October 2022



Cabinet members present:

Councillor Brown	Councillor Turner
Councillor Hollingsworth	Councillor Munkonge
Councillor Linda Smith	Councillor Thomas
Councillor Upton	Councillor Walcott

Officers present for all or part of the meeting:

Arome Agamah, Senior Planner
Tom Bridgman, Executive Director (Development)
Richard Doney, Scrutiny Officer
Stephen Gabriel, Executive Director (Communities and People)
Caroline Green, Chief Executive
Simon Grove-White, Principal Economic Development Officer
Tom Hook, Executive Director (Corporate Resources)
Nigel Kennedy, Head of Financial Services
Emma Lund, Committee and Member Services Officer
Nerys Parry, Head of Housing
Susan Sale, Monitoring Officer and Head of Law & Governance
Mish Tullar, Head of Corporate Strategy
Rachel Williams, Principal Planner
Richard Wood, Housing Strategy and Needs Manager

Also present:

Councillor Dr Christopher Smowton, Chair of Scrutiny

Apologies:

Councillors Aziz and Chapman sent apologies.

Substitutes are shown above.

64. Declarations of Interest

None.

65. Addresses and Questions by Members of the Public

None.

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

None.

67. Councillor Addresses on Neighbourhood Issues

None.

68. Items raised by Cabinet Members

None.

69. Scrutiny reports

The Housing and Homelessness Panel had met on 6 October 2022 and considered the draft Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023-28.

The Scrutiny Committee had met on 11 October and considered the Botley Road Retail Park Development Brief; the UK Shared Prosperity Fund Investment Plan; and recommendations of the Housing and Homelessness Panel relating to the draft Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy.

Five recommendations had been made in relation to the draft Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, which had mostly related to improving the clarity of the document. The Cabinet Member for Housing responded that they had all been accepted.

In relation to the recommendations relating to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund Investment Plan, the Cabinet Member for Zero Carbon Oxford and Climate Justice responded that whilst it had been helpful to have a steer from scrutiny as to the priorities of members, given the nature of the recommendations it had not been possible to give a binary 'yes' or 'no' answer as to whether the recommendations were accepted. Clarification was provided in the 'comments' section of the Cabinet Member's response. As an example, one of the scrutiny recommendations had been that a report outlining progress, outcomes, and any proposed changes to the programme should be submitted annually to the scrutiny committee, whereas reporting and a reporting format already formed part of central government's requirements for the scheme.

70. Botley Road Retail Park Development Brief

The Acting Head of Planning Services had submitted a report to seek endorsement of a development brief for Botley Road Retail Park.

Two scrutiny recommendations had been made in relation to the item. The Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Delivery advised that these had both been accepted and the recommended amendments to the document would be made.

The Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Delivery reported that Botley Road Retail Park was in a sustainable location which was close to the station, cycleways, and local bus routes. It comprised a series of large retail units surrounded by car parking, and had been subject to a number of ad-hoc planning permissions in the 1980s and 1990s - prior to changes to national planning policies - which had resulted in a poor quality environment and associated traffic consequences.

In the past few years there had been increasing demand for office space across the city, particularly research and development space. Changes to the Use Classes Order

in 2021 now meant that differentiation between a retail use and most employment uses had been removed.

Given these considerations, the development brief sought to pull together all of the existing Local Plan policies and demonstrate how they could be applied to the Botley Road Retail Park in order to maximise its potential. The brief set out the aims and aspirations for the site, and would help to improve certainty for residents, landowners, developers or potential purchasers. Importantly, it could not, and did, not create any new policies: rather, it was a Technical Advice Note covering a specific geographic area.

The Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Delivery clarified that the site was not being considered for housing development: the main reason for this was its location in relation to an active flood zone, and the Environment Agency's requirement for 'safe egress' from a residential development in the event of flooding.

Cabinet resolved to:

1. **Endorse** the Botley Road Retail Park Development Brief.

71. Draft Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023-28

The Executive Director (Communities and People) had submitted a report to seek approval for a draft Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023-28 for public consultation. The strategy was designed to offer a clear plan for the next five years which captured the Council's priorities but remained flexible enough to respond to challenges and changes over the period, which were expected to be significant. The document would therefore remain adaptable, with updates brought to Cabinet as the plan progressed.

The Cabinet Member for Housing outlined the five priorities of the strategy as: providing more, affordable homes; great homes for all; housing for a net zero carbon future; preventing homelessness and adopting a rapid rehousing response; and ending rough sleeping. The Cabinet Member explained how the Council would aim to address each of these priorities within the period of the strategy.

It was noted that the document would be subject to a statutory six week public consultation, and it was hoped that there would be a good level of engagement in order to further strengthen and improve it.

In response to a Cabinet Member's comment, the Housing Strategy and Needs Manager undertook to include additional detail relating to the governance of the strategy within the final document.

Cabinet heard that a comprehensive consultation on the strategy was proposed which would include: online surveys; social media engagement; stakeholder and Member events involving community groups and charities; and engaging with those with lived experience. The Leader commented that it would also be helpful to seek to engage city centre businesses with the plan, in order to assist with understanding the actions which the Council was already taking, and intended to take, to address homelessness.

Cabinet resolved to:

1. **Note** the progress made to develop a new Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy for Oxford;

2. **Approve** the draft Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy at Appendix 1 for public consultation;
3. **Approve** the launch of a statutory 6-week public consultation to collect feedback on the draft strategy; and
4. **Delegate authority** to the Executive Director (Communities and People), in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing, to make any necessary editorial corrections, minor amendments, and updates to the draft strategy and strategy evidence base prior to the public consultation.

72. UK Shared Prosperity Fund Indicative Investment Plan

The Head of Regeneration and Economy had submitted a report to seek Cabinet endorsement of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) Investment Plan, allocation of budget, and delegated authority to enter into a contract with government for delivery of the plan on behalf of the City Council.

The Cabinet Member for Zero Carbon Oxford and Climate Justice reported that in accordance with the Levelling Up White Paper, in April 2022 the government had launched the UK Shared Prosperity Fund to help address geographical disparities in economic performance and circumstances. The Council, as lead local authority for Oxford and the city, had been allocated a modest sum of grant funding (£1,000,000 plus £20,000 to cover costs incurred in developing the plan) to invest over the period 2022/23 to 2024/25. The Council could also use up to 4% of the £1,000,000 allocation to undertake necessary fund administration. The majority of the grant funding would be payable in the third year, with smaller amounts payable in the first two years.

The Cabinet Member for Zero Carbon Oxford and Climate Justice outlined the objectives of the fund, as well as priority programme areas, projects and workstreams as detailed in the report. It was highlighted that these did not represent discrete areas of work developed specifically in response to the grant funding, but built on work which the Council had already undertaken to identify and address gaps through the development of the City Centre Action Plan and the Oxford Economic Strategy.

Cabinet resolved to:

1. **Endorse** the Oxford City Council UK Shared Prosperity Investment Plan, as submitted to government on 1 August under a delegated officer decision, in order to secure up to £1m of funding for the city;
2. **Delegate authority** to the Executive Director (Development) to take the necessary decisions and actions to oversee the UKSPF investment plan, including implementing and administering the scheme and the resulting projects in accordance with the requirements and priorities of the prospectus and fund;
3. **Delegate authority** to the Executive Director (Development) to enter into a contract with central government to deliver the UKSPF and to make non-material changes to the investment plan in consultation with the Head of Financial Services / S151 Officer, the Cabinet Member for Inclusive Economy and Partnerships, and the Cabinet Member for Zero Carbon Oxford and Climate Justice; and

4. **Recommend to Council** the establishing of capital and revenue budgets in accordance with paragraph 21 of the report.

73. Minutes

Cabinet resolved to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 14 September 2022 as a true and accurate record.

74. Dates of Future Meetings

16 November 2022

14 December 2022

25 January 2023

8 February 2023

15 March 2023

19 April 2023

All meetings start at 6.00pm.

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 6.57 pm

Chair
2022

Date: Wednesday 16 November

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.

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