DELEGATED DECISIONS BY CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT (INCLUDING TRANSPORT)

Extract of the MINUTES of the meeting held on Thursday, 14 January 2016 commencing at 10.00 am and finishing at 11.52 am

Present:

Voting Members:	Councillor Ian Hudspeth (In place of Councillor David Nimmo Smith) – in the Chair
Other Members in Attendance:	Councillor Nick Hards (for Agenda Items 2 and 4) Councillor Anne Purse (for Agenda Item 3) Councillor Patrick Greene (for Agenda Item 4 and 5) Councillor Rodney Rose (for Agenda Item 7) Councillor Steve Curran

Officers:

Whole of meeting	G. Warrington (Law & Governance); M. Kemp and D. Tole (Environment & Economy)

Part of meeting

Agenda Item	**Officer Attending**
5 & 6	J. Sherwood (Environment & Economy)
6.	P. Mulvihill (Environment & Economy)

The Leader of the Council (deputising for the Cabinet Member for Environment) considered the matters, reports and recommendations contained or referred to in the agenda for the meeting, together with a schedule of addenda tabled at the meeting and decided as set out below. Except as insofar as otherwise specified, the reasons for the decisions are contained in the agenda, reports and schedule, copies of which are attached to the signed Minutes.

Councillor Hudspeth advised that he was deputising for the Cabinet Member for Environment Councillor David Nimmo-Smith and wished him a speedy recovery following recent hospital treatment.

45/15 PETITIONS AND PUBLIC ADDRESS

(Agenda No. 3)

Petition

Councillor Purse presented a petition (220 signatures) organised by residents of Horton-cum-Studley regarding withdrawal of subsidies to the 118/108 bus services. She advised that a second on-line petition, which also called for the protection of these services would obviously include signatures from outside the relevant area.

The submitted petition highlighted that “the service was an essential part of the community for the following reasons:

- They were an isolated rural community without any amenities such as a shop, post office or pub.
- Many residents were elderly without cars and were dependent on the bus to access Headington or Oxford for shopping and other such facilities.
- Many in the village used the bus in order not to drive into Oxford where cars were discouraged and parking difficult and expensive. That also helped reduce ‘carbon footprints’.
- Many used the bus to get to work and children who attended school in Oxford also made very good use of the bus which was full in the early morning. Loss of bus service would inevitably increase car usage at rush hour times which was highly undesirable.”

The Leader of the Council referred the petition to the Director for Environment & Economy to respond.

Public address

Speaker	*Item*
Tim Foxhall – Consultant David Bird – Consultant County Councillor Patrick Greene (Didcot East & Hagbourne) County Councillor Nick Hards (Didcot West)	))) Item 5 – Orchard Centre (Phase 2))Didcot))
Jane Imbush Dr Janice Bridger Frank Dumbleton County Councillor Patrick Greene (Didcot East & Hagbourne)	))) Item 6 – Traffic Improvements –)Hagbourne & Chilton Areas)
Ben Arrowsmith (on behalf of a local resident) Colin Alderman – Minster Lovell Parish Council Warwick Robinson – West Oxfordshire District Council County Councillor Rodney Rose (Charlbury & Wychwood)	))) *Item 7 – Amendment of One-way* *)Traffic restriction – Old Minster Lovell* *)* *)* *)* *)*

47/15 PROPOSED BUS LANE & PARKING/WAITING RESTRICTIONS - ORCHARD CENTRE (PHASE 2), DIDCOT

(Agenda No. 5)

The Leader of the Council considered (CMDE5) comments and objections received in the course of a statutory consultation on proposals to introduce and amend various traffic restrictions in Station Road and The Broadway, Didcot as part of the Orchard Centre (Phase 2) development.

Tim Foxhall (Glanvilles) explained that his company had provided support to both District Council and county highway officers and that the orders currently before the Leader of the Council were fundamental to the success of the scheme. Having reviewed the findings of Vectos the other consultants involved he agreed that objections lodged could be met.

David Bird (Vectos) advised that his company had worked closely with both County and District Councils and he was satisfied that all issues had been fully considered and addressed. Thames Travel and Oxford Bus Company were now content with the road width proposed for Station Road and that there would be sufficient emergency procedures should there be any failures of the rising bollards. As all servicing would take place off-street there would be no interruption to bus flow. He confirmed one resident parking place would be lost but advised that Hammersons had agreed a provision of £10,000 towards the cost of a controlled parking zone. The scheme had been fully assessed with full safety audits carried out and there were no technical reasons why the scheme should not be approved.

Councillor Patrick Greene opposed the recommendation. He referred to a petition of over 1,500 signatures against the Station Road bus route proposals which had been presented to the County Council in April 2015 but not mentioned in the report currently before the Leader of the Council. Comparisons between this scheme and Queen Street in Oxford were misleading as the situation in Didcot was very different. He felt that opponents to this scheme had been denied a fair opportunity to present their views particularly at meetings at South Oxfordshire District Council and he asked that those concerns be conveyed to the District Council. He urged the Leader not to approve the scheme or at the very least defer to enable all necessary information to be considered including the petition previously presented to Council.

Mr Kemp confirmed that he had not been aware of the petition referred to by Councillor Greene.

Councillor Nick Hards also opposed the proposals and referred to a pre-planning public exhibition for the Orchard Centre Phase 2 proposals held in November 2013 which had been the first time that a large number of the public had first been alerted to the proposed arrangements for buses including closure of the bus link along High Street. He also referred to congestion at the Jubilee Way roundabout and asked if consideration had been given to the recent award of Garden Town status and how that might affect what was now being proposed. The proposals also needed to be considered in the light of a statement from the Leader of South Oxfordshire District Council who had referred to the need to reduce traffic into the town and that the Northern Perimeter Road remained a first priority. The current road layout worked

well with the large open space outside the Cornerstone well used. Some of that would relocate but not all and he mentioned the cinema, which had large numbers of children attending the Saturday morning show as a potential area of conflict. He was not convinced that the proposal had been looked at properly and whether consultants had in fact looked at the situation to see what happened on the ground and advised that only yesterday a large lorry had been unloading which would have inevitably held up any buses. He referred to a letter from Jenny Wilson (also submitted on behalf of 1500 local residents) objecting to the proposal.

Mr Tole advised that the report dealt with how traffic and safety implications of a planning permission issued by another authority could be best managed. It was not the function of the report to consider the rights or wrongs of that decision. Although the number of buses involved would not be great the use of Station Road for buses had been the main focus of objection. He accepted that the situation could change as Didcot grew but the road would only be used by buses with no other through traffic. The question had been asked if this was a suitable route for buses with comparisons made to Queen Street and, whilst the two routes were not exactly the same, buses used Queen Street without significant problems and, as similarly trained and experienced drivers would be using Station Road it was reasonable to expect that would be the case here and that vehicles would be present in a controlled way. County officers considered that would be the case and although the introduction of buses into the street would require pedestrians to learn and adapt but measures would be introduced to assist with that. It was inevitable that the area would change but he did not accept that all sitting areas would be affected and whilst the offer of funding for a CPZ had been welcome it was unlikely that that could be taken up due to lack of adequate enforcement. The one parking space to be lost was not one of long standing having only been in situ for 3 or 4 years. Regarding the letter from Jenny Wilson that had referred to a number of detailed design issues which would be addressed as the scheme developed. Bus shelters would be provided on Station Road with issues of loading accommodated through a combination of careful design and planned delivery by local businesses. The road would be widened with the number of buses adapting to local needs. There would not be a constant stream of buses. The issue of further investment in the strategic network was not a matter for consideration now and the County Council needed to focus on its response to the proposals put forward by the developer and agreed by the District Council. He had not been aware of the earlier petition presented to the County Council but confirmed that this consultation had been free standing and had focussed around the recent planning process.

Responding to questions from the Leader of the Council:

Mr Tole confirmed a £10,000 offer of funding towards a CPZ but as that was a brand new offer it had not been included in any S106 agreement but that it could be used towards funding a much wider scheme in the future.

Mr Sherwood confirmed that the whole length of Station Road would be resurfaced to a suitable standard. The only difference between the northern and southern sections being the need to introduce traffic restrictions on one.

Mr Tole confirmed that the main part would be widened on the east side of the southern section with the whole width resurfaced.

Mr Tole confirmed that it was not possible to impose a legal limit below 20 mph. Oxford's Queen Street had an advisory limit of 5 mph and that would be applied in this instance. Bus operation was now very controlled and these measures would to a large extent be self-enforcing by bus operators.

Mr Sherwood confirmed that detailed design would be carried out as part of the planning process and not in consultation with local businesses and residents.

The Leader of the Council recognised that the status of the northern perimeter road had been ongoing for the past 20 years and that the recent award of Garden Town status for Didcot was no guarantee that that situation would change. The County Council needed to deal with the detail of the issued planning permission and he could see no reason why the situation, which existed in Queen Street, which was not bus dominated, could not be successfully transposed to Didcot. He also hoped that proposals for a suitably enforced CPZ could be pursued and that developers would take on board local views as part of the detailed design work. Therefore having regard to the arguments and options set out in the documentation before him, the representations made to him and the further considerations set out above he confirmed his decision as follows:

to approve implementation of the proposals for bus lane and waiting restrictions as advertised.

Signed……
Leader of the Council

Dated……..