

CABINET

MINUTES of the meeting held on Tuesday, 26 May 2015 commencing at 3.00 pm and finishing at 5.07 pm

Present:

Voting Members: Councillor Ian Hudspeth – in the Chair
Councillor Rodney Rose
Councillor Mrs Judith Heathcoat
Councillor Nick Carter
Councillor Melinda Tilley
Councillor Lorraine Lindsay-Gale
Councillor David Nimmo Smith
Councillor Lawrie Stratford
Councillor Hilary Hibbert-Biles

Other Members in Attendance: Councillor Liz Brighthouse, (Agenda Item 11)
Councillor John Christie, (Agenda Items 10, 14 & 15)
Councillor Steve Curran (Agenda Item 9)
Councillor Janet Godden (Agenda Item 7)
Councillor Hards (Agenda Item 6)
Councillor Laura Price, (Agenda Item 12)
Councillor Gill Sanders (Agenda Item 7 & 8)

Officers:

Whole of meeting Peter Clark, County Solicitor & Monitoring Officer; Sue Whitehead (Chief Executive's Office)

Part of Meeting Item	Name
6	Lorna Baxter, Chief Finance Officer
7	Jim Leivers, Director for Children's Services
8	Jim Leivers, Director for Children's Services; Matthew Edwards, Corporate Parenting Manager
9	Alexandra Bailey, Service Manager Business Development & Fleet Management
10	Lorna Baxter, Chief Finance Officer; Steve Munn, Chief HR Officer
11	Sue Scane, Director for Environment & Economy
12	Kate Terroni, Deputy Director Joint Commissioning
13	Lorna Baxter, Chief Finance Officer; Kate Terroni, Deputy Director Joint Commissioning

The Committee 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 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.

37/15 QUESTIONS FROM COUNTY COUNCILLORS

(Agenda Item. 4)

Councillor Rooke had given notice of the following question to Councillor Tilly

'Can the Cabinet member please explain why, given that an increase in births happened and was known about four years ago, there has continued to be an increasing lack of locally situated primary school places available to Reception pupils in the north of Abingdon (a journey to the southern Abingdon schools can take up to an hour in the rush hour), and what is being done to ensure that this problem is resolved to the satisfaction of the effected families this year and not repeated in 2016?'

Councillor Tilley replied:

“The Council has a statutory duty to ensure that there are enough school places for every Oxfordshire child whose parents request one. I am proud of our record in making sure that the Council always meets this responsibility, a boast that not all Local Authorities can make. The Council also seeks to ensure that as many parents as possible are able to send their children to their preferred schools; this year nearly nine out of ten had their first preference met, that's over 7,000 children placed in their parents' first preference and over 600 more in either their second or third preference. So although 335 more children were allocated their parents' first preference this year, there are some who unfortunately weren't allocated any of their preferred schools, including, I'm sorry to say, some in North Abingdon.

The Council was aware that there had been an increase in live births that would translate into an increased demand for school places in Abingdon, as indeed it has in other areas of the county, and has made sure that there are enough places to accommodate all of them in September. In previous years a number of schools in Abingdon have either admitted 'bulge classes' (Carswell, Dunmore, St.Edmund's & Thameside) or have been permanently expanded (Caldecott) to ensure that there's an overall sufficiency of places. This year, given that births data indicated there would be an exceptional demand for places in 2015, all Abingdon schools, and particularly those in the north of the town, were asked in November to consider whether they would be able to admit a bulge class, either in their existing accommodation or by having a temporary classroom put on site. The schools at that time did not think that the demand they were then experiencing for nursery places supported the prediction that there would be a shortage of reception places when the same cohort reached school age, and no offers to take more children were forthcoming. Early admissions data also suggested that there would be sufficient places, but once the full set of applications data was available it confirmed the shortage of places. At this point both St.Edmund's and Thameside schools were approached as they were known to have sufficient accommodation to admit a 'bulge class'; Thameside's head teacher was able to agree this in time for the extra 30 places to be available at the time of the first allocation round.

I accept that Thameside is far from ideal in terms of location but it is a good school and having volunteered to accommodate the additional children promises to give them the warmest of welcomes. As the school is over the statutory walking distance of 2 miles for children aged up to 8 years the Council will provide free transport from home to school each day, making a miniscule addition to the cross-town traffic and obviating the need for parents to make a daily journey.

This year has been pretty exceptional in North Abingdon and the live births data for next and subsequent years show that overall demand north and south of the river is likely to much more closely match the numbers of children needing school places. The issue of some schools being more popular than others does mean that there may still be some families in North Abingdon who won't be able to secure a place at their catchment school and this is particularly likely to be the case with Rush Common Academy. "

Councillor Howson had given notice of the following question to Councillor Nimmo Smith

"How many traffic incident (accidents) involving a] pedestrians b]cyclists and c] vehicles have been recorded at the Frideswide Square redevelopment between the start of the roadworks and 16th May?"

Councillor Nimmo Smith replied:

"There have been 3 accidents – one involving a pedestrian and two involving cyclists. They all resulted in slight injury. However it has been noted that whilst drivers are asked not to overtake cycles in the narrow areas there is evidence that cyclists are “undertaking” cars which could lead to accidents.”

Supplementary: Councillor Howson queried whether in view of the response Councillor Nimmo Smith was suggesting that cyclists should wait in line rather than moving to the head of the queue. Councillor Nimmo Smith replied that it was a judgement for cyclists to make and they should do whatever they see as safest.

38/15 PETITIONS AND PUBLIC ADDRESS

(Agenda Item. 5)

A petition was submitted by Mr Adams, a local resident, in support of the neighbourhood bus service in Kidlington.

Public Address

Item 6 – Councillor Hards, Shadow Cabinet member for Finance

Item 7 – Councillor Gill Sanders, Shadow Cabinet Member for Children, Education & Families

Councillor Janet Godden,

- Item 8 – Councillor Gill Sanders, Shadow Cabinet Member for Children, Education & Families
- Item 9 – Councillor Steve Curran, Shadow Cabinet Member for Environment
- Item 10 – Councillor John Christie, Opposition Deputy Leader
- Item 11 – Councillor Liz Brighthouse, Opposition Deputy Leader
- Item 12– Councillor Laura Price, Shadow Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care
- Item 14 – Councillor John Christie, Opposition Deputy Leader
- Item 15 – Councillor John Christie, Opposition Deputy Leader

39/15 ADDRESSING THE COUNCIL'S FUTURE CHALLENGES

(Agenda Item. 6)

Following the General Election, the Cabinet considered a report taking stock of both the council's financial position and its policy priorities, reflecting both local drivers and what was known of the national context.

Councillor Hards, Shadow Cabinet Member for Finance, acknowledged that the report was an important reminder of the situation but that it did not mean that he was happy or accepted that it was inevitable and the only way to proceed. He queried the implications of information contained in the report drawing attention to the graph on page 10. With regard to the capital programme he considered that investment was required and not cuts. He expressed concern at the national system of financing which he considered needed reform.

Councillor Stratford introduced the contents of the report and emphasised that the most vulnerable would continue to be protected and the Council would need to plan to meet statutory responsibilities. He had some sympathy with the desire for reform noting that the County Council received some of the lowest levels of comparative funding. He commended the work of staff particularly those providing frontline services.

During discussion Cabinet commended the report for providing a useful and comprehensive snapshot of the position. It was suggested that a further report would be needed in July once more information was available.

RESOLVED: to consider the issues set out in this paper and consider any changes to our financial and corporate strategy that are required at this time.

40/15 THE COUNCIL'S RESPONSE TO THE FINDINGS OF THE SERIOUS CASE REVIEW FOR CHILDREN A-F AND FURTHER ACTION TAKEN IN RESPONSE TO CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION IN OXFORDSHIRE

(Agenda Item. 7)

Cabinet had before them a report that set out the council's response to the findings in the serious case review, which have been accepted in full, and

also provided a summary of the action that the council has taken since 2010 when Operation Bullfinch was launched.

Councillor Godden, commented that she had attended all the briefing sessions for councillors and had read the report. It was a thorough and searching review and clearly set out what went wrong but noted that the council had sought to improve. She emphasised a number of points in the report and stated that a debt of gratitude was owed to the girls whose actions had allowed convictions to be secured. The Leader thanked Councillor Godden for her comments and echoed her praise of the victims who had had to relive their harrowing stories.

Councillor, Shadow Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, commented on the importance of the report as the cases had rocked the Local Authority and it had needed to know what went wrong and to have assurance that it would not happen again. She commented that the Labour Group was concerned at the rise in sexual exploitation and slavery and were suggesting that central government look into it nationally. Councillor Sanders paid tribute to the work of Jim Leivers and highlighted the importance of the next steps as set out in the report. She noted that many Local Authorities did not acknowledge the problem.

Councillor Tilley, Cabinet Member for Children, Education & Families in introducing the contents of the report thanked both speakers for their support on the Corporate Parenting Panel.

During discussion Cabinet queried whether with the number of areas of operation where there was some overlap with District Councils it would be better if there was a more unified approach. In particular with planning and the taxi and private hire licensing. Jim Leivers responded that generally one authority was easier than five but that the district councils had worked well with the County council on this issue. Cabinet also considered the role of GP's with regard to safeguarding.

On the statement from Performance Scrutiny Committee, Cabinet noted the comments made, recognised the key roles of the Corporate Parenting Panel and scrutiny but did not accept the recommendation that the Need to Know report be shared more widely than with the Lead Member in order to provide that member with support.

RESOLVED: to note the Council's response to the findings of the Serious Case Review into Children A-F, published in March 2015; and the further actions in progress.

41/15 SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER AND LEAVING CARE INTO EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION & TRAINING

(Agenda Item. 8)

Cabinet considered a report seeking approval to the Education, Training and Employment Strategy for children who are looked after and leaving care.

Councillor Gill Sanders, Shadow Cabinet Member for Children, Education & Families, spoke in support of the proposed Strategy.

RESOLVED: to approve the strategy.

42/15 SUPPORTED TRANSPORT PROGRAMME PUBLIC CONSULTATION - TRANSPORT HUB & SUBSIDISED BUS SERVICES

(Agenda Item. 9)

Cabinet considered a report that outlined proposals to deliver £6.25m of savings from the Council's supported transport services by 2017/18. It's estimated that £3.69m of this can be delivered through greater efficiency, brought about by the introduction of a new Transport Hub with the remaining £2.56m being delivered by reducing subsidies to commercial bus operators, while prioritising services used by older people and people with disabilities.

Councillor Curran, Shadow Cabinet Member for Environment, recognised the difficult position the Council faced and commented that officers had done a good job in replacing Dial-a-Ride with Aspire and felt that it had the potential to bring benefits County wide. He felt it was important to involve users in shaping services and suggested regular meetings involving users.

During discussion Cabinet agreed that given the current financial situation it was important to explore all options and that therefore the consultation include a further option removing all bus subsidies within the County.

RESOLVED: to:

- (a) note progress with making efficiencies through the introduction of the 'Transport Hub', and plans to make further such efficiencies; and
- (b) grant permission to consult on the proposals outlined in the paper;
- (c) to consider a further consultation option to remove all bus subsidies within the County subject to meeting the Council's statutory duty.

43/15 PROVISION OF HR AND FINANCE SERVICES BY HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

(Agenda Item. 10)

In July 2014, Cabinet agreed to join the Hampshire partnership as an operational partner for the provision of back office support services through their Integrated Business Centre with an expected go-live date of 1 July 2015. Cabinet considered an update on the progress to date, that confirmed the services transferring and the savings that will be achieved both as a direct result of the partnership and those that are achieved as a consequence of the partnership.

Councillor Christie, Opposition Deputy Leader, commented that he understood that Unison had raised some questions over the medium and long term future and he sought an assurance that such concerns will be discussed in full. It was important to have a review of progress after 6 months and suggested that going forward an annual review be considered by Performance Scrutiny committee.

During discussion Cabinet supported the suggestion of a 6 month review.

RESOLVED: to:

- (a) note the progress made in joining the Hampshire partnership as an operational partner for the provision of back office support services with a confirmed go-live date of 1 July 2015; and
- (b) agree that a review be held after 6 months with the information also being considered by Performance Scrutiny Committee.

44/15 ENGLAND'S ECONOMIC HEARTLAND - TRI-COUNTIES PROSPECTUS

(Agenda Item. 11)

In December 2014 the Leaders of the three County Councils set out their proposal for a Tri-County Strategic Alliance. The emerging framework has the flexibility to be extended to adjoining areas where there is common cause. At the same time the framework explicitly recognises that whilst partners chose to work together on strategic issues, they retain their own identity and their roles and responsibilities in local issues. The framework is set out in a brochure being promoted as 'England's Economic Heartland'

Cabinet had before them a report that set out engagement and work to date and sought agreement to the next steps.

Councillor Brighouse, Opposition Leader, highlighted two issues in respect of the paper. Firstly with regard to democracy and democratic accountability the proposals did have the potential to bring some benefit. It was about how in taking it forward the Council worked in the local communities. Secondly it was a question of how the proposals would engage back bench councillors. Both issues linked back to localities, the use of locality meetings and questions of local community and empowerment.

The Leader moved the recommendations and Cabinet in welcoming the recommendations emphasised the importance of engaging with local MP's. Councillor Hudspeth confirmed that he was talking with MPs.

RESOLVED: to:

- (a) endorse the engagement and work that has taken place with Oxfordshire/Buckinghamshire/Northamptonshire County Councils and the Local Enterprise Partnerships;
- (b) agree to the formation of a Strategic Leaders Board comprised of the three County Councils and three Local Enterprise Partnerships with the remit to:
 - i) Take forward the engagement and work in order to develop specific proposals that address the barriers to economic growth
 - ii) Enter into initial dialogue with the Government in respect of seeking devolution of powers, funding and accountability for functions that support economic growth; and
- (c) agree that a further report be submitted to Cabinet and Local Enterprise Partnership Boards once this further work has been undertaken.

45/15 HELP TO LIVE AT HOME - HOME CARE BUSINESS CASE

(Agenda Item. 12)

The current model of home care in Oxfordshire will not be able to deliver the capacity and capability required to meet future needs, as providers do not have the security of future business to employ sufficient care staff.

The intention is to develop a new model of home care that will enable people to maximise their independence. Cabinet considered a report that sought approval to the proposed model for home care.

Councillor Price, Shadow Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, welcomed the new approach, with a smaller number of providers and block purchasing. She highlighted 2 key elements essential to drive standards: firstly it was important to do everything possible to ensure care worker had a recognised professional status; secondly providers needed to recognise the importance of good HR practices.

Councillor Heathcoat, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care introduced the contents of the report.

RESOLVED: to agree the proposed Oxfordshire model for home care.

46/15 SECTION 75 AGREEMENT

(Agenda Item. 13)

Cabinet considered a report seeking approval for variations to the legal agreement under Section 75 of the NHS Act 2006 that governs the existing formal joint working arrangements and pooled budgets between Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group and Oxfordshire County Council from April 2015 onwards.

Councillor Stratford referred to the way the NHS had been funded over many years, with the ability to write off debts each year and hoped that the Council would lobby government. He supported the recommendations and it provided more flexibility in funding but the Council should argue against 1 year plans.

RESOLVED: to

- (a) approve the proposed changes to the pooled budget arrangements with Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group, including changes to the Section 75 Agreement for All Client Groups (as set out in Annex 1) to reflect this, subject to the inclusion of any necessary changes in the text as agreed by the Director OF Adult Social Services after consultation with the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care;
- (b) approve the permanent virement of £0.657m into the Physical Disability Pool in respect of physical disability client contribution budgets as discussed by the physical disability JMG;
- (c) **RECOMMEND** to County Council the permanent virement of £5.481m into the Learning Disability Pool in respect of learning disability client contribution budgets as discussed by the learning disability JMG;
- (d) delegate authority to the Chief Finance Officers of Oxfordshire County Council and Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group to agree and implement technical changes in the accounting treatment for the Better Care Fund.
- (e) to approve a reduction in the contribution to the Older people's pool by £0.53m and a temporary virement of this amount to the Council's Strategic Measures budget.

47/15 EQUALITIES - ANNUAL UPDATE

(Agenda Item. 14)

Oxfordshire County Council is committed to making Oxfordshire a fair and equal place in which to live, work and visit. We want our services to effectively meet the needs of all local residents, including those in rural areas and areas of deprivation. We also aim to ensure that our staff are equipped with the knowledge and skills to meet the diverse needs of customers, that our services are accessible, and to encourage supportive and cohesive communities through our service delivery.

In 2012 Oxfordshire County Council launched its Equality Policy setting out how we meet obligations under the Equality Act 2010. Cabinet had before them a third annual update together with updated actions against which to measure progress.

Councillor Christie, Opposition Deputy Leader, supported the recommendations and highlighted the need to keep under review the Joint gic

needs assessment and to improve the way in which service and community impact assessments (SCIA's) are done.

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Councillor Hibbert Biles, Cabinet Member for Public Health and the Voluntary Sector indicated that the JSNA was a living document and went into a lot of detail.

Councillor Rose in moving the recommendations stated that the Council had done well in the past but must continue to do well.

RESOLVED: to agree to the new Equality Policy Actions for 2015/16 (Annex 2).

48/15 STAFFING REPORT - QUARTER 4 - 2014

(Agenda Item. 15)

Cabinet had before them a report that provided an update on staffing numbers and related activity during the period 1 January 2015 to 31 March 2015. Progress is also tracked on staffing numbers since 31 March 2014 as we continue to implement our Business Strategy.

Councillor Christie, Opposition Deputy Leader, noted that agency staffing was slightly down. He emphasised the importance of regularly reviewing the information given the level of change in the Council.

RESOLVED: to:

- (a) note the report; and
- (b) confirm that the Staffing Report meets the requirements in reporting and managing staffing numbers.

49/15 FORWARD PLAN AND FUTURE BUSINESS

(Agenda Item. 16)

The Cabinet considered a list of items for the immediately forthcoming meetings of the Cabinet together with changes and additions set out in the schedule of addenda.

RESOLVED: to note the items currently identified for forthcoming meetings.

..... in the Chair

Date of signing 2015