

CABINET

MINUTES of the meeting held on Tuesday, 25 January 2011 commencing at 2.00 pm and finishing at 4.45 pm

Present:

Voting Members: Councillor Keith R. Mitchell CBE – in the Chair
Councillor David Robertson (Deputy Chairman)
Councillor Arash Fatemian
Councillor Ian Hudspeth
Councillor Jim Couchman
Councillor Kieron Mallon
Councillor Louise Chapman
Councillor Michael Waine
Councillor Mrs J. Heathcoat

Other Members in Attendance: Councillor Alan Armitage (Agenda Item 6 and 8)
Councillor Zoe Patrick (Agenda Item 7 and 8)
Councillors Altaf-Khan, (Agenda Item 8)
Councillor Jenny Hannaby (Agenda Item 9)
Councillor David Turner (Agenda Item 11A)

Officers:

Whole of meeting Chief Executive, J .Dean (Chief Executive's Office)

Part of Meeting Agenda Item	Officer
6	K. Wilcox (Corporate Finance)
7	Assistant Chief Executive & Chief Finance Officer
8	Assistant Chief Executive & Chief Finance Officer
9	Director for Social & Community Services
10	B. Chillman & R. Leach
11(A) &(B)	J. Disley
12	S. Pickard
13	S. Collins
14	Head of Law & Governance

The Committee considered the matters, reports and recommendations contained or referred to in the agenda for the meeting, together with two schedules 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.

1/11 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

(Agenda Item. 1)

An apology for absence was received from Cllr Rodney Rose.

2/11 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

(Agenda Item. 2)

There were no declarations of interest.

3/11 MINUTES

(Agenda Item. 3)

The Minutes of the meeting held on 21 December 2010 were approved as a correct record subject to the following amendments:

- Paragraph 7, page 7, sentence 1, to read 'Councillor Heathcoat replied that in retaining the proposed 23 libraries this provided for 82% of all business.';
- Pages 12 & 13, 'Tamar' Thomas should read 'Tamara' Thomas;
- Page 17, paragraph 4, sentence 1, to insert the words 'primary school' to read 'Councillor Waine in introducing the report acknowledged that it was a difficult decision but that the key issue was to address in a positive way the OFSTED primary school inspection judgement.'

4/11 QUESTIONS FROM COUNTY COUNCILLORS

(Agenda Item. 4)

Councillor Suzanna Pressel had given notice of the following question to the Cabinet Member for Safer & Stronger Communities:

"Is the Cabinet satisfied that we can continue to provide adequate access to our museums and to the artefacts that we hold in trust for the people of Oxfordshire if, as proposed, you make a 40% cut in the budget of the museums service and a 50% cut in its staffing, and above all can we be assured that, if these cuts go ahead, the museums service will have sufficient capacity to support the new Oxfordshire Local Heritage Partnership with Oxford University Museums in order to lever in £2 million a year for 5 years, much of which would be spent on work with schools in Oxfordshire?"

Councillor Mrs J. Heathcoat replied:

The budget proposals and service plans for the county museums service are challenging. The service aims to retain a core of professional staff sufficient to maintain the collections at the Museum Resources Centre (MRC), to continue the public services at The Oxfordshire Museum and outreach to schools and

target groups (including the elderly). Total staff numbers will be reduced from 30 fte to 15 fte so there will be a significant reduction in service.

The reduction of staffing at The Oxfordshire Museum will require replacement by volunteers if the current opening hours are to be maintained; discussions are already taking place with the Friends of the Oxfordshire Museum and the Soldiers of Oxfordshire about how to plan this and how to extend the opportunity to volunteer to the wider community. The MLA (Museums Libraries and Archives Council) has funded a project to advise museums on the greater use of volunteers.

The museums service continues to work closely with Oxford University Museums with plans to consult heritage organisations throughout Oxfordshire on an Oxfordshire Heritage Strategy. The Oxfordshire Local Heritage Partnership (OLHP) between the County Council, City Council and Oxford University will bid for 'core' museum status; the MLA has yet to announce the criteria and details of these 'cores', but it is anticipated that the details will be published shortly and OLHP is preparing its plans. Core museum funding is likely to focus on the stewardship and use of significant collections (including the County Council's collections at the MRC) with up to £2 million per year for each 'core' to reach new audiences, provide learning opportunities, and improve access.

Supplementary: Councillor Mrs Heathcoat was asked if she considered it less likely that the Council would win the bid for £2m now that staffing had been reduced by 50%.

Councillor Heathcoat replied that a new partnership would add value for the County Council.

Councillor Zoe Patrick had given notice of the following question to the Cabinet Member for Safer & Stronger Communities:

“Grove is expected to expand over the coming years with the first stage of the planning application expected very soon. With the new development comes a S106 agreement to build a new library on the airfield site. Does the cabinet agree that closing the local library now will seriously jeopardise the future of Grove’s library service forever.”

Councillor Mrs J. Heathcoat replied:

At the present time, there are proposals to cease funding 20 out of the 43 libraries currently run by Oxfordshire’s Library Service. These proposals are just that, proposals. So to say the Grove library is to close is premature. The consultation period is due to start in February and last for 12 weeks. On conclusion of the consultation all the findings will be analysed and of course all aspects relating to each library taken into account.

In relation to the S106 element, the localities agenda will indeed have to take account of those areas in the County which will experience significant growth. It may well be that Section 106 funding will provide community presence where we can co-host a range of services which need not be a single dedicated library.

Supplementary: Councillor Patrick expressed concern about the possible danger of developers not committing to the Section 106 agreement in response to a perception that the County Council was not undertaking its part in the agreement.

Councillor Mrs J. Heathcoat responded that a Section 106 agreement was a legal document and would be looked at alongside the proposal for the library.

Cllr Jenny Hannaby had given notice of the following question to the Cabinet Member for Adult Services:

“On 13 December a letter was sent to all users of Oxfordshire County Council’s Internal Home Support Service informing them of the new proposals and the reasons for the changes. The letter stated that formal consultations will take place with users groups.

If the County Council does really believe in choices for all its people when will all 1000 users of Internal Home Support Services be allowed to have their say?”

Councillor Arash Fatemian replied:

There are currently around 570 Users of internal Home Support. A Helpline has been established, and all Service Users have been given information on who to contact if they wish to comment on the proposed change to the service. Each Service User will be individually contacted and transitioned to new arrangements as part of the roll-out of Self Directed Support. At that stage they will have the opportunity to discuss their needs, and select from the range of services available in their locality.

A programme of consultation with groups representing Service Users has been set up in February and March. Consultation will take place with five independent groups:

- Age UK Panel
- Oxfordshire LiNK Steering Group
- Unlimited (User Led Organisation representing adults with physical disabilities)
- Oxfordshire Carers Forum
- Service User/Carer Reference Group

A consultation paper has been produced which sets out the background, and the details of how proposed changes will affect Service Users and Carers. I have asked the Director to circulate this paper to the Opposition

Spokespersons and this paper can be made available to Members on request.

Councillor Richard Stevens had given notice of the following question to the Cabinet Member for Adult Services:

“On 7 December 2010, Paul Burstow MP, Minister of State for Care Services, said in the context of the overall 26% cut to local authority budgets that an additional “£1 billion that will go into social care directly through the local government settlement [in October 2010] will be available for local government to support social care services. The £1 billion that will go in via the NHS will also be there to support social care, but it will particularly address issues such as reablement and preventive services.

Would the Cabinet Member for Adult Services confirm:

- (a) how much Oxfordshire County Council is receiving from the £1 billion put into social care through the local government settlement referred to above (which is intended to “support social care services” in Oxfordshire)?; and
- (b) how much Oxfordshire County Council is receiving via the NHS (also intended to “support social care” in Oxfordshire)?”

Councillor Arash Fatemian replied:

- (a) Although we had assurances from the Department of Health that the money had been made available through the personal Social Services Grant, we have not been able to find the evidence of it, nor have colleagues working for other authorities. We believe that it has been used to offset the overall settlement to local government, but we are not in a position to confirm this for certain.
- (b) Oxfordshire County Council is receiving £6.1m as stated in paragraphs 34 – 37 of the report.

Councillor Liz Brighouse had given notice of the following question to the Leader of the Council

“The Council carried out a consultation exercise in relation to the budget and an Equality Impact Assessment was also written. Can the Leader tell us in what ways the Draft Budget changed in response to the consultation and what has been done to mitigate the impact of the cuts on the most vulnerable in our community: older people, children and young people living in poverty or having a disability”

Reply from the Leader of the Council

We have been extremely forward thinking in our approach in that, for many of the areas where efficiency savings have been proposed in the budget, we have had early discussions with staff, service users and members of the public alike over the last six months. Hence the proposals were developed with input from these groups. However, it will be vitally important for the

service users and members of the public to be able to inform service change going forward and, once the budget is set, the county council will consult on key service changes as appropriate.

In terms of formal consultation, the Cabinet has also considered the comments on the draft budget proposals from individual Scrutiny Committees held on 20 December 2010, as well as the outcome of the Big Debate public consultation which was undertaken in September 2010. The results of the Oxfordshire Voice Panel have provided further views which have been taken into account. The Council has invited comments on its overall proposed budget and three comments were received. A summary of comments and feedback that has helped inform the proposals is attached to the Service & Resource Planning Report being considered at this meeting (Item 8, Annex 1). We were told that the services people were most concerned about were those supporting the vulnerable - older people, children and those with disabilities. The reductions to some services, such as ceasing to fund directly a number of our libraries, is part of trying to prevent reductions in direct services to these vulnerable groups.

Officers have conducted equality impact assessments for the proposed service changes and the initial assessments are available on the county council's website. A link to these documents has been circulated to all councillors. The documents are intended to be an initial assessment of the impact of the proposals on vulnerable groups and include potential mitigation actions should the proposals be agreed by Council. Cabinet members have been specifically briefed on the law relating to equality impact assessments. A specific example of work flowing from the consultations and equality impact assessments described above has been development of the Big Society Fund and of a protocol for assessing bids to it. The Big Society Fund is intended to help local communities to sustain valued local services that the County Council can no longer afford to fund.

Supplementary: Councillor Brighthouse commented that many were concerned about the cuts as the economy had not performed as expected, unemployment was rising and jobs were not being created, asking how the Leader justified this to the vulnerable people in Oxfordshire.

The Leader of the Council replied that outcomes would be apparent as the coalition government continued to amend the economy, but this would entail considerable pain for all. However, the County Council would do its best to ease pain for the vulnerable.

Councillor Val Smith had given notice of the following question to the Cabinet Member for Safer & Stronger Communities

“We have learnt in the last month - that it is just not a question of books being borrowed and books going out the door; a large part of the service is to do with schools and being aware of books. The Blackbird Leys Library is used by all the primary schools for story time sessions - by the children's centre for

reading with Mums and by Mabel Pritchard School which is a school for severely disabled children.

Those children could not get to Temple Cowley library - it would mean hiring a bus and in the case of the disabled children in wheelchairs using their County Council transport. Many of you will have experience of taking a couple of children on public transport - let alone a whole class.

I am sure you all agree with me that losing this valuable aspect of the service must not happen and can I be assured that:

- (a) These important questions have been thoroughly examined
- (b) That these functions are part of the Councils statutory requirement and must be kept.

Councillor Mrs J. Heathcoat replied:

Many, if not all of our libraries provide a wide variety of services and I'm surprised that Cllr Smith was not aware of this? All aspects of the service provision for each library has and will be considered within the proposals relating to the ceasing of funding of 20 out of 43 of the Oxfordshire libraries. The current proposals within the budget are just that at this moment in time, proposals. There is to be a full consultation undertaken which is due to start at the beginning of February and will cover a period of 12 weeks. Equality Impact Assessments will be undertaken, too and full analyse of the material collected during the consultation and period. All correspondence received to date, emails and letters will also be included within the analyse of data. We are proposing to fulfil our statutory duty to provide a comprehensive library service by providing 24 hub libraries supported by an online service together with a mobile library service. Communities may develop solutions in areas where we are proposing to cease funding a particular library - or indeed where there has never been a library.

We are in the process of preparing detailed guidance on what support might be available for a community run library. The building - current, or a new building would of course be one of the issues. The guidance will be available for the start of the formal consultation.

Supplementary: Councillor Val Smith commented that everybody was aware that the County's Library services is a good service. She asked if she could be assured that all Blackbird Leys schools would be consulted on the proposals.

Councillor Mrs J. Heathcoat replied that schools would be consulted on the proposals.

Councillor Roy Darke had given notice of the following question to the Leader of the Council

“Has the leader written to Eric Pickles asking for clarification and explanation of why the Secretary of State chose to set up a smokescreen by referring to Oxfordshire County Council only getting a reduction of 1.87% in local spending power when the draft budget and service planning analysis have been indicating for some time that loss of government grant under the settlement announced before Christmas shows a much higher percentage reduction in revenue support for OCC and, indeed, that this massive reduction is front loaded with heart-rending reductions in front line services in 2011/12?”

Reply from the Leader of the Council

No. I refer Cllr Darke to my answer to Cllr Larry Sanders at the January Council which raised a similar issue.

Supplementary ; Councillor Darke asked to view the letters the Leader had received which had regard to the local government settlement, adding that the Local Government Association (LGA) were very upset at the settlement, its lateness and the two year timescale.

The Leader replied that he had written one letter to Eric Pickles MP and it could be made available to Cllr Darke. He pointed out that the LGA was not Conservative controlled and that it operated by consensus of all major political groups.

5/11 PETITIONS AND PUBLIC ADDRESS

(Agenda Item. 5)

A petition was presented by Ms Sarah Eddie urging the Council not to close Headington Library. She made the following points:

- There had been no room for discussion about alternative means by which the library could be kept open;
- There were families within the Headington area who were committed library users and who would find it difficult to travel to another library using public transport with young children;
- OCC were seeking to modernise the service using audio and ebooks – but this would restrict usage to those with home internet use and would restrict access to many more;
- She urged the Council to trust that the community would work alongside it in finding a solution and asked that they be not ‘sold out’ to modernity.

The following requests to address the meeting had been agreed:

Item 6 – Cllr Alan Armitage

Item 7 – Cllr Zoe Patrick

Item 8 – Sarah Lazenby, on behalf of ‘Oxford Save Our Services’; Neil Clark, Vice-Chairman, Save Botley Library campaign; Emma Jones, active member

on several local voluntary groups; Cllr Altaf-Khan, Councillor Zoe Patrick and Cllr Alan Armitage

Item 9 – Cllr Jenny Hannaby

Item 10 – Jo Edmondson, Chair of Governors, Trinity School

Item 11a – Mr Michael Hugh-Jones, Mrs Betty Standingford and Cllr David Turner

6/11 FINANCIAL MONITORING - JANUARY 2011

(Agenda Item. 6)

Cabinet considered the fifth financial monitoring report (CA6) for the 2010/11 financial year which covered the period up to the end of November 2010. Part 1 and 2 set out the Council's forecast position for the 2010/11 financial year and included projections for revenue, balances, reserves. The capital programme monitoring and capital programme review update was included in Part 3

Prior to consideration of this item Councillor Alan Armitage addressed the meeting commending the Chief Finance Officer and her team for managing the Council's finance in such an efficient and transparent manner. Councillor Jim Couchman responded by thanking Councillor Armitage for his plaudits and echoing his commendations.

RESOLVED: to note the report and approve the virement requests as set out in annex 2a.

7/11 DRAFT CORPORATE PLAN 2011/12

(Agenda Item. 7)

Cabinet had before them a draft of the Corporate Plan 2011/12 – 2015/16 (CA7) The Plan was scheduled for submission to Council on 15 February 2011. It was split into two parts, the first (Annex A) summarising the Council's broad strategic direction and the second (Annex B) setting out the Council's short and medium term delivery commitments.

RESOLVED: that subject to the inclusion of consequential and editorial changes in the text, as agreed by the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to **RECOMMEND** the Council to approve the Medium Term Corporate Plan 2011/12-15/16.

At this point it was proposed and it was agreed to vary the order of the agenda.

8/11 ANNUAL REPORT BY THE COMMISSION FOR SOCIAL CARE INSPECTION ON ADULT SOCIAL SERVICES

(Agenda Item. 9)

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) is the independent regulator of all health and adult social care in England. Within its remit it provides an annual

performance assessment of all councils with adult social care responsibilities in England. The Cabinet considered the 2009/10 report for Oxfordshire (Annex 1). Oxfordshire had been rated as performing well i.e. that Oxfordshire was 'consistently delivering above the minimum standard required for people.'

The report (CA9) is structured around seven key outcomes, which are used to evaluate how well the council currently serves people, and two further criteria which are used to describe the future prospects for the council. The Council had been described as performing well on 5 of the 7 outcomes, and as performing excellently on the other two outcomes, 'Making a positive contribution' and 'Economic well-being'.

The outcomes showed a significant improvement on the previous report (2008/9) where the council had been assessed as performing well on 6 outcomes and as performing adequately on one outcome. The outcome that had moved from performing adequately to performing well is 'Maintaining Personal Dignity and Respect'. The report also noted that following the inspection of adult safeguarding in 2008/09 the Council had addressed all the issues raised. It noted that strong governance arrangements were in place, improved public awareness of adult safeguarding, greater partnership working and improvements in the time taken to complete case work. The report's overall summary says 'Oxfordshire County Council has had a very productive year and has achieved well on the key outcome areas.

Prior to consideration of this item the Cabinet was addressed by Councillor Jenny Hannaby. She commended the Director and his officers for their achievements as cited in the report. She asked that monitoring continue on the out-sourced areas of safeguarding dignity and on ensuring that sufficient information is conveyed with patients on their hospital discharge.

Councillor Arash Fatemian and Jim Couchman echoed Councillor Hannaby's commendations, adding that the numbers of delayed transfers of care were moving in the right direction.

RESOLVED: to

- (a) receive the report;
- (b) review progress on the areas for development through the council's performance reporting arrangements for next year.

9/11 SERVICE & RESOURCE PLANNING REPORT FOR 2011/12 - 2015/16 (JANUARY 2011)

(Agenda Item. 8)

The report by the Assistant Chief Executive & Chief Finance Officer (CA8B) was the final report to Cabinet in the series on the Business Strategy and Service & Resource Planning process for 2011/12 to 2015/16, providing

councillors with information on budget issues for 2011/12 and the medium term. Any outstanding information at the time of the Cabinet meeting, would be reported to Council when it considered the budget on 15 February 2011.

The report set out the latest information on the Council's financial position, included the Treasury Management Strategy for 2011/12 and considered the capital funding, including an updated Capital Programme.

The Cabinet Member for Finance & Property had prepared a separate report which set out the basis for the Cabinet's proposals to Council for the 2011/12 budget and Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) to 2015/16. This took into consideration comments on the draft budget proposals from the individual Scrutiny Committees in December 2010 as well as the latest information on the Council's financial position. It also took account of the public consultation on the budget which had been undertaken in both August 2010 through Oxfordshire Voice and a further consultation during December

Prior to consideration of the reports the Cabinet were addressed by the following members of the public and councillors:

Sarah Lazenby

Made a statement on behalf of 'Oxford Save our Services' group asking members of the Council's Conservative Group to change direction and preserve the institutions and services that had been built up over many years', stressing the anxiety expressed to the group by users of various services. Amongst those expressing their concern had been young people worried about the possible closure of their youth centres, fearing their friends would turn back to drugs and crime; young carers who may not have the support of the Young Carers Centre; and for the services in place for those suffering from mental illness.

In response Councillor Jim Couchman stated that the County Council was to lose 28% of its government grant over the next 4 years. He asked which services did Sarah Lazenby suggest the Council should take the money from? Sarah Lazenby suggested that the Cabinet approach central government pointing out that 'deep and very speedy cuts could push the country into a double-dip recession as the IMF had already warned they may.'

Neil Clark

As a representative of the 'Save Botley Library' campaign, Neil Clark, urged the Cabinet not to withdraw funding from the libraries pointing out that this was very 'disproportionate, given that libraries only represented 1% of Oxfordshire County Council's total budget'. He added his concerns about problems which could arise should local volunteers take over the running of some libraries, such as the safeguarding of private information, safeguarding of strict standards as currently practiced by trained professionals, travel inconveniences for the elderly, the disabled and young parents. He urged the Cabinet to 'do what they were elected to do' and fulfil the requirements of the Public Libraries & Museums Act 1964 which is to 'run a comprehensive and efficient library service' in Oxfordshire.

Councillor Jim Couchman asked Neil Clark which alternative services he would suggest that the Council should take the money from, given the 28% reduction in government grant funding. Neil Clark responded that the proposed cuts to the libraries were disproportionate to the other savings proposals.

Emma Jones

Called on the Leader of the Council, as a person 'in a position of power and influence to 'lobby the government on behalf of the vulnerable of Oxfordshire and to engage positively with campaigners on their behalf.'

Councillor Mohammed Altaf Khan

Councillor Altaf Khan, speaking as local member for the Headington/Marston division, whose library was included within the proposals, urged the Cabinet to ensure that consultation with the local residents takes place prior to the budget being set at Council on 15 February, adding that transport issues to an alternative library were of great concern to residents. He asked the Cabinet Member for Safer & Stronger Communities to take into consideration that the literacy rate was low in his area and one of the schools was in special measures.

Councillor Zoe Patrick

Referred to the Capital Strategy (Draft) 2011/12 - 2021/22 (page 360, Annex 12) pointing out the typing error indicating that there was no new secondary school development for the Vale of White Horse area within the Growth Portfolio.

Councillor Alan Armitage

Expressed concern at 'the lack of consultation' on the proposed cuts and hoped the Cabinet would respond to the public at large. He added that he hoped there would be some flexibility to respond to the Equality Impact Assessments in relation to those services which were most at threat, as the people who suffered most were those living in rural areas. He also pointed out that the Liberal Democrat Group did not believe that the cuts needed to be actioned as rapidly as proposed.

The Assistant Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer introduced report CA8B pointing out that the Council was still awaiting the final settlement figure from the Government and advising the Cabinet therefore not to make a decision with regard to the Collection Fund settlement until this was known. Councillor Jim Couchman echoed this advice at the same time as congratulating Sue Scane and her team, together with the Directorates, for all their hard work and efficiency in producing balanced budgets and for constructing a complete Medium Term Financial Plan.

During the full discussion which followed, Councillor Mrs J. Heathcoat highlighted the fact that the proposals relating to the Libraries were proposals and not decisions and that the consultation period had not taken place as yet. She went on to describe the proposals for alternative services and the

opportunities for communities to look into whether there would be scope for a community run library.

RESOLVED: to:

(a) (in respect of revenue) RECOMMEND Council to approve:

- (1) a budget for 2011/12 and a medium term plan to 2015/16, based on the proposals set out by the Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance;
- (2) a budget requirement for 2011/12;
- (3) a precept for 2011/12;
- (4) a council tax for band D equivalent properties;
- (5) virement arrangements to operate within the approved budget;

(b) (in respect of treasury management) RECOMMEND Council to approve:

- (1) the Treasury Management Strategy Statement ;
- (2) Prudential Indicators from April 2011;
- (3) that in relation to the 2011/12 strategy any further changes required be delegated to the Chief Finance Officer in consultation with the Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance.

(c) RECOMMEND Council to approve the Minimum Revenue Provision Methodology Statement as set out in paragraphs 10 to 13 of Annex 7.

(d) (in respect of capital) RECOMMEND Council to approve:

- (1) the updated Capital Strategy, Corporate Asset Management Plan and Transport Asset Management Plan;
- (2) a Capital Programme for 2010/11 to 2015/16;
- (3) Prudential Indicators from April 2011.

(e) to delegate authority to the Leader of the Council, following consultation with the Chief Finance Officer, to make appropriate changes to the proposed budget.

10/11 HENLEY PRIMARY SCHOOL PROVISION

(Agenda Item. 10)

The Cabinet had before them a report (CA10) that considered two alternative proposals to expand primary school provision within Henley. The number of 4-year-olds needing school places has risen over the last few years, and is forecast to peak in 2012 before again falling. This has led to increasing pressure on primary school places across the town, which has been met in the last two years through Trinity CE Primary School and Badgemore Primary School agreeing to admit over their admission number on a temporary basis.

A consultation was carried out in Henley (9 June – 21 July 2010) to gather views on whether Trinity CE Primary School or Badgemore Primary School should be expanded permanently. Feasibility studies have been carried out at both schools to assess the accommodation requirements and capital implications for each expansion.

A decision was now sought as to whether to proceed to issuing statutory notices to expand either Trinity CE Primary School or Badgemore Primary School. Publication of such a statutory proposal requires confirmation from the local authority that funds will be made available for the necessary capital costs.

The Cabinet were recommended to either:

- (a) approve the publication of a statutory notice for the expansion of Badgemore Primary School, Henley to 1 form entry, confirming that funds will be made available for the capital costs identified in paragraph 25 above; or
- (b) approve the publication of a statutory notice for the expansion of Trinity Primary School, Henley to 2 form entry, confirming that funds will be made available for the capital costs identified in paragraph 24 above.

Prior to consideration of this item the Cabinet were addressed by Jo Edmondson, Chair of Governors, Trinity C. of E. Primary School, Henley. She circulated an alternative submission on behalf of the School Governing Body which was substantially less than the stated £3.5m, as a result of amending the design and substantially reducing the scope.

In response to this Councillor Michael Waine pointed out that the pressure on numbers was similar for Badgemore School, who had also worked with officers to alleviate the situation.

Following a full discussion and after receiving advice given by Barbara Chillman and Roy Leach, it was

RESOLVED to defer decision on this item to either the 1 March 2011 Cabinet Member for Schools Improvement Delegated Decisions meeting or to the next meeting of Cabinet on 15 March 2011, so that further advice could be given by the officers, taking into account consultation with both schools.

11/11 OXFORDSHIRE CONCESSIONARY FARES SCHEME
(Agenda Item. 11)

- (a) **Oxfordshire Concessionary Fares Scheme - January 2011**

Mrs Betty Standingford addressed the members of the Cabinet at this point as a user of the Dial A Ride Octobus. She commended the service, saying that she (and other older people) relied upon it heavily and would find it too much to take two buses to the shops to do her weekly shopping and it also enabled her to keep a stock of food at home in case of inclement weather, or other encountered emergencies. She added that the Joseph Rowntree Foundation had highlighted that people living in rural areas required an extra £43 per month and older people were unlikely to be able to afford it. Therefore the Octobus afforded them some security which was very much valued.

Councillor David Turner welcomed the report CA11A and the efforts on the part of the Cabinet to make concessionary passes more fair. He particularly welcomed the 9:00 am start and the concession for free Dial A Ride use for bus pass owners. He enquired whether the carers accompanying passengers would also be able to participate in the scheme and also whether it could be made easier for renewal post April 2011 and April 2012. He wished the Scheme every success in the future.

Councillor Ian Hudspeth took this opportunity to recommend the Cabinet to agree an additional recommendation to confirm its decision made at the 16 November 2010 Cabinet to offer companion passes to those residents who are eligible for a concessionary pass on grounds of disability and who are between the ages of 5 and 15. This was duly agreed. He also explained that there was an intention to streamline the renewal of contracts process.

The Cabinet then considered the report CA11A. The County Council was obliged to take over from District Councils the statutory duty of managing the concessionary fares scheme for elderly and disabled people from 1 April 2011. Some decisions on this matter had already been made by Cabinet in November 2010; the report covered the further issues which required to be resolved to ensure that this duty was fulfilled. In all cases decisions were for 2011/12 only; the details of schemes for future years, from 1 April 2012 onwards, would be considered nearer the time.

A pass for free bus travel was a statutory entitlement for elderly and disabled people, but some districts had been exercising discretionary powers also to offer travel tokens and/or free travel on dial-a-ride services. Consultation had been carried out with users and stakeholders on a proposal that the County Council would not offer these discretionary enhancements from 1 April 2011 (thus reducing the options which are available to some users in some districts at present). The outcome of this consultation was summarised in the report and a decision invited on this.

RESOLVED:

- a) to allow free travel on Dial-a-Ride services for concessionary passholders during 2011/12;
- b) not offer any alternative (such as tokens or a senior railcard) to the standard concessionary pass, during 2011/12;

- c) delegate to the Deputy Director (Highways and Transport), in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Growth and Infrastructure, the authority to manage all aspects of the County Council's concessionary fares scheme during 2011/12, in accordance with the principles set out in this report and the report to Cabinet on 16 November 2010, and to incur expenditure as necessary for the purpose; and
- d) ask officers to report back on experience of running the scheme during 2011/12, and invite Cabinet to agree the details of the scheme for subsequent years (including possible changes to the scheme and the taking over of pass-issuing by the County Council); and
- e) to confirm its decision made at the 16 November 2010 Cabinet to offer companion passes to those residents who are eligible for a concessionary pass on grounds of disability and who are between the ages of 5 and 15.

(b) Oxfordshire Concessionary Fares Scheme - Issuing of Concessionary Passes

The Cabinet had before them report CA11B. A major part of the statutory duty was to issue passes to entitled users, and handle the many enquiries they make. In the short term, the best option to meet this duty was for the districts to continue to issue the passes on the county's behalf, under a formal delegation arrangement. There were also various details regarding pass-issuing, on which decisions must be made, and these were described in the report.

Prior to consideration of the report, members of the Cabinet were addressed by Michael Hugh Jones, Honorary Secretary to the Oxfordshire Pensioners Action Group. He welcomed the change to the Dial A Ride concessions as an outcome of the consultation. However, he did not consider the new idea sustainable in the long term. Each Dial a Ride trip cost the tax payer £12, which was not good value when tokens costing £2 a week cost less. He felt that local organisations such as the parish councils and the churches should be helping. He added his strong support for the Big Society concept.

John Disney corrected 'April 2012' to 'April 2011' in paragraph 2 of the report CA11B.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED** to:

- a) formally to delegate to each Oxfordshire District Council, under the terms of Section 2(b) of Article 10 of the Council's Constitution, the County Council's functions under Section 145(2) of the Transport Act 2000 [duty to issue concessionary passes], and associated powers, plus such of the powers under Section 93 of the Transport Act 1985 as may be necessary to issue additional

passes or other concessions on a discretionary basis as agreed by the County Council; and agree appropriate funding payments to each district council – to include the cost of enquiry-handling as well as pass-issuing; for the period from 1 April 2011 until 31 March 2012;

- b) ask the District Councils to issue concessionary passes during 2011/12 in accordance with the principles set out in paragraph 8 of this report; and
- c) Agree the provision of a dedicated telephone enquiry resource at the Customer Service Centre to handle those enquiries which are directed to the County Council.

Note: That as set out under Rule 18(b) of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules, this decision is exempt from Call-In as the Council's call-in procedure should not apply to any decision on the letting of a contract arising from termination of an existing contract if the time available is such that allowing for call-in would result in service discontinuity. Since the County Council's duty to provide a concessionary fares scheme will come into effect on 1 April 2011, and existing District Council contracts to meet that duty will end on that date, the effect of any call-in would be to prevent introduction of any replacement contracts, this resulting in cessation of any concessionary fares scheme in Oxfordshire and a consequent service discontinuity.

12/11 AMENDMENTS REQUIRED IN FAIR FUNDING FORMULA FOR SCHOOLS FROM APRIL 2011

(Agenda Item. 12)

The Cabinet considered a report CA12 that explained which significant changes were required to the Fair Funding Formula for Schools from April 2011, and why these were required. The report summarised the national funding position and the implications for the Strategic Review of Schools Funding which had been started in Oxfordshire, following Cabinet's agreement in May 2009 that this should be carried out.

The main changes required were the introduction of an Early Years Single Funding Formula and the inclusion of a new factor in the funding formula to deal with the specific grants which had now been merged in to the Dedicated Schools Grant for 2011/12 onwards. The merging of grants factor was only expected to apply for one year pending the revision of the formula in April 2012 after conclusion of the Strategic Formula Review.

The report explained that the original plan to introduce changes in the funding formula from April 2011 had been revised due to the Coalition Government's funding announcements and the introduction of the Pupil Premium. The intention was now to introduce the main changes from April 2012, once further work had been done and the implications of the Pupil Premium and future changes were fully assessed.

The report summarised which principles had been agreed by Schools Forum and sought Cabinet approval/ endorsement of proposals pending finalisation of the budget proposals and inclusion of final figures in Budget papers to be considered in February 2011.

RESOLVED: to:

- (a) agree the proposals for introduction of the Early Years Single Funding Formula (EYSFF) from 1 April 2011;
- (b) endorse the proposed principles for a formula funding factor for 2011-12 for merged standards fund grants; and
- (c) note the revised target date of April 2012 for completion of the Strategic Review of School Funding and introduction of a revised funding formula for schools.

At this juncture the Cabinet agreed a variation in the order of business.

13/11 FORWARD PLAN AND FUTURE BUSINESS

(Agenda Item. 14)

The Cabinet considered a list of items (CA14) 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.

14/11 EXEMPT ITEM

RESOLVED:

that the public be excluded during the consideration of the following matter since it was likely that if they were present during that discussion there would be a disclosure of "exempt" information as described in Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act, 1972 and specified in the item.

15/11 CFBT ADVICE & GUIDANCE - PENSION LIABILITIES

(Agenda Item. 13)

(The information contained in the report is exempt in that it falls within the following prescribed category:

3 – information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)

It is considered that in this case the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information in that

disclosure would be detrimental to the activities of the charitable organisations and their ability to provide effective services to the public.

Consideration of this item was taken in private session but a summary of public information and decision is set out below.

This report on behalf of the Pension Fund Committee asked the Cabinet to consider accepting the transfer of responsibility for funding the past service pension deficit in respect of former staff of CfBT (Advice & Guidance). This followed the Council decision not to renew the connexions service contract with CfBT (Advice & Guidance) following a tender exercise, combined with the current Pension regulations which prohibited transferring the past service pension liability on to the new provider. The Pension Fund Actuary had advised that due to the relative size of the pension deficits of the County Council and CfBT (Advice & Guidance), that a transfer in respect of these staff would have no impact on the County's employer contribution rate.

RESOLVED: to accept the transfer of responsibility for the past service pension liabilities in respect of the former members of CfBT (Advice & Guidance) employed in respect of the careers/connexions service.

..... in the Chair

Date of signing
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