# CABINET

**MINUTES** of the meeting held on Tuesday, 16 June 2020 commencing at 2.00 pm and finishing at 2.55 pm.

**Present:**

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| **Voting Members:** | Councillor Ian Hudspeth – in the Chair |
| | Councillor Mrs Judith Heathcoat |
| | Councillor Lawrie Stratford |
| | Councillor Steve Harrod |
| | Councillor Ian Corkin |
| | Councillor Lorraine Lindsay-Gale |
| | Councillor Yvonne Constance OBE |
| | Councillor David Bartholomew |
| | Councillor Mark Gray |
| | |
| **Other Members in Attendance:** | Councillor Liz Brighouse – Agenda Item 6 |
| | |
| **Officers:** | Yvonne Rees, Chief Executive; Claire Taylor, Corporate Director Customers and Organisation Development Lorna Baxter, Director of Finance; Steve Jorden, Corporate Director of Commercial Development Assets and Investment; Deborah Miller, Law & Governance. |

*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.*

**45/20  APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
(Agenda Item. 1)

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Liam Walker

**46/20  MINUTES**
(Agenda Item. 3)

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 26 May 2020 were approved and signed as an accurate record.

**47/20  QUESTIONS FROM COUNTY COUNCILLORS**
(Agenda Item. 4)

Councillor John Howson had given notice of the following question to Councillor Yvonne Constance:

How many responses were received to the consultation on the Closure of Walton Street that ended on 29th May?

Councillor Constance replied:

As this consultation only closed recently the detail of responses received in all formats (online, via email, postal and as petitions) is still being analysed, therefore the full breakdown is not yet available, but I can confirm that we received 487 responses online, and have recorded 147 emails so far, the final number is not yet known. We have also received at least three petitions.

Supplementary Question:

That is a very significant response and demonstrates the depth of feeling on the issue. If I may, I would like to ask about something that has arisen from the consultation but was not a part of it.

Residents of Lekford Road have pointed out there is a 7.5 tonnes weight limit on their road. They would like to know how that weight limit is enforced and what further measures might be taken to prevent heavy vehicles using their road?

Reply:

I am very aware of 7.5 tonne weight limit on Lekford Road. St. Margaret's Road is the designated route for heavier HGV traffic. We are aware that there does seem to be greater use of Lekford Road and we have informed Trading Standards who are responsible for enforcement. We are working with Lekford Road residents who have agreed to carry out a further traffic survey in the hope that we can resolve the issue. We are not sure how we can stop heavy vehicles from using Lekford Road, but we are looking for a solution.

Councillor Howson replied:

The present signs are described by the government as in the Signs Giving Orders classification – the addition of 'for access' makes the issue more complicated, one solution could be to remove the 'for access' from the signs.

## 48/20 PETITIONS AND PUBLIC ADDRESS
(Agenda Item. 5)

The Chairman had agreed the following request to speak:

| Item 6 | Speaker |
|---|---|
| Item 6 – Oxfordshire County Council Post COVID Planning: Restart, Recover, Renew | Councillor Liz Brighouse, Opposition Leader |

*The address is recorded at the item.*

## 49/20 OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL POST COVID PLANNING: RESTART, RECOVER, RENEW
(Agenda Item. 6)

*As set out under Rule 19(a) of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules, this decision was exempt from Call-In as it was deemed urgent to enable the actions and proposals in the report to be implemented immediately without any delay, which is important given the fluid situation with covid guidance and the need to respond and adapt.*

Cabinet had before it a report which set out Oxfordshire County Council's approach to post COVID-19 planning and recovery following the national period of lockdown and a prolonged period of operation within an emergency response context.

Councillor Liz Brighouse explained that in moving forward from the past 5 months where Corona Virus had dominated the lives of people across the world, there was a need to build on the commitment of all those public sector workers who had given so much to treat and care for those suffering from the virus, those who had kept us safe, those who fed us and those who continued to educate our children or were just there as a friendly voice on the end of a phone. That goodwill must not be squandered, and we must recognise and mend the cracks in our public services which became so visible. Referring to the tragic death of George Floyd in the US which had prompted waves of protests across the world, in Oxfordshire despite the threat of COVID many people went onto the streets and into the Parks to call for an end to racism and discrimination against the black community. The BAME community had suffered disproportionately as a result of COVID and many children from that community will have fallen even further behind in their educational attainment.

She welcomed the statement from the Leader in relation to Black Lives matter and

believed that the approach in the document could pave the way to an Oxfordshire which was Inclusive, Diverse and Thriving. Many of the pillars were in place in the Corporate Plan and the Director of Public Health Report, although some of the objectives would need to be reprioritised. The suggestion to prioritise Health Checks in our BAME Communities was welcome as was work with vulnerable children and families. Revisiting and reprioritising needed to be undertaken urgently. It was important also to continue and learn from the work which was being done in Banbury as a result of the DPH report. Working together and with and not just for Communities had to be the norm.

The lockdown had changed working and travelling patterns.  Inevitably some people would be going back into offices, but as this report considered, there was a need to ensure that the digital technology which had been developed was used and that innovative ways of delivering services took priority, to ensure that no one was digitally homeless. In education, children should have Chrome Books etc, and access to the internet. We had already considered how technology could be used to access and deliver services and that now needed to be accelerated.  It was important that there was inclusive consultation with communities across the county.  Everywhere was different and one size did not fit all but unless we have the tools of inclusivity, we will lose the opportunity to change the lives of the those suffering the most disadvantage. There was a need to be clear and accountable. That meant assurance that community engagement was taking place, collecting the evidence so that when outcomes could be properly scrutinised as we go forward.  She sought assurance from the Leader for the above.

The financial impact on Local Government of the pandemic was still uncertain and there would need to be significant injections of money to reach the end of the year without a deficit which would have to be funded. The LGA was lobbying for additional funding. She questioned whether the Leader had been told how much of the £300m the Council would get for test and trace, and whether it would be enough to cover the actual cost?

The Leader had been very active in highlighting the problems associated with the infection control funds £7.3m. 75% was allocated to Oxfordshire Care Homes on bed numbers. She asked if the Leader was any further forward in securing this money and whether the county would lose almost £2m if the Government was not satisfied with the returns from the Care Homes about the expenditure of the 75%?   We have received £27m of the £64m deficit. Whilst I accept there are at this point of time variables as to what we might receive. how confident is the Cabinet that Oxfordshire along with other local authorities will receive what is due to them?

At the beginning of this Pandemic Local Authorities were doing what they do best responding to need in their local communities we were testing and tracing which is the bread and butter of Public Health Authorities who regularly undertake this activity in relation to 100 notifiable diseases. That stopped and National Government stepped in and we know the catastrophic narrative which followed.

Today the officers of this Council, who I thank for all they have done throughout this awful time.   have put in front of you a thought through deliverable report which will engage with other local authorities and stakeholders alongside our staff and their Trade Unions, our communities and all the people who live there. It will be overseen by robust

local Government Arrangements to deliver recovery for all our residents.
We look forward to working with you to make this happen.

Councillor Ian Hudspeth thanked Councillor Brighouse for her support and assured her that he felt it was very important to understand the impact of COVID, particularly on the BAME community and work to ensure that no one was losing out as recovery took place. In relation to test and trace, he believed they would receive about £2.9m which should be sufficient to ramp up the services they already had. There was a very good network working across the county, with all councils working together to make sure environmental health departments across the board were going to target areas of hotspots and clusters so that they could clamp down as quickly as possible. In relation to money for Care Homes, they had received 50% of funding and would receive a second tranche of funding if requirements and criteria's set by Government were met. Oxfordshire had already received £27m to meet the deficit, early estimates of the overall impact across the County, started off quite high, but as they were working through as to what the actuals might be, it was hoped that the figure would come down. However, there would still be a deficit and he would be lobbying as much as possible to try to ensure there was not a need to make cuts.

Councillor David Bartholomew, Cabinet Member for Finance assured Councillor Brighouse in relation to Monitoring and Analysis. The finance team had done an exemplary job of monitoring the costs of COVID to the Council, together with modelling and projecting future impacts, including key financial considerations that they were reporting back to Government whenever appropriate. He cautioned that the challenges faced by local authorities should not be under-estimated, dealing with so many unknowns which would have an impact, such as social distancing, 2 meters or 1 meter made a huge difference on areas such as home to school transport, which would have a considerable financial impact on the Council. Everything possible was being done to model those scenarios, ensuring that Government is fully aware of the financial implications of COVID on the Council now, and going forward, being as far sighted as possible.

Councillor Ian Hudspeth, Leader of the Council thanked staff for tirelessly working so hard to continue to deliver services throughout the entire period. Staff who could not do their jobs from home had taken up jobs had been redeployed to take up other challenges in the Council. He emphasised that the Council would not be returning to the way it was, there was a need to give the best possible opportunity to rebuilt, reboot and restart the economy, making sure that those people who were not so fortunate were not overlooked after and to reduce inequalities. This was an opportunity to give assurances to stakeholders that planning was taking place now, standing up services to make sure if there is a local outbreak in Oxfordshire, the resources will be there to deal with it to ensure the safety of the community. The long-term future of Oxfordshire could look very different. Another area which was very important was local communities, with many groups opening up across the county, supporting each other, supporting the vulnerable and assisting the formal services. He hoped to retain that sense of community spirt going forward and particularly the local knowledge about the community the groups held. He was impressed by local response to getting thing restarted.

He emphasised that recovery was going to be about the short, medium and long term

around social, cultural, health, community and economic.  In order to address impacts, there was a need to understand how to build a sustainable post COVID Oxfordshire, and to ensure that if a solution wasn't working, not to be afraid to try something else. The local authority had a role to set long term plans for the wellbeing and sustainability of communities, it was unknown what the impact would be of COVID on young people; interrupted education; recession for local businesses and people entering the job market and the changes that would come about as a result of social distancing; the funding of local authorities and loss of income.  As such, OCC stood ready to work with the community, voluntary sector, business community, health and local authority partners to ensure the long term COVID response built on Oxfordshire's strengths to support those most impacted.  He commended the report to the Cabinet and moved the recommendations, subject to recommendation 1.5 being changed from 'noting' to recognising and thanking' staff.

Councillor Ian Corkin, Cabinet Member for Council Business & Partnerships welcomed the report.  The report by its nature was functional, and he emphasised the importance of remembering those who had lost their lives.  Transformation was already in the DNA of the Council, and the response to COVID was to boost those efforts, with people being the key to that success.  Over the past months, Customer Services had all been dispersed to work at home and all of the ambitious targets that had been set pre-COVID had been achieved, despite the fact that the team had taken on the responsibility for looking after the 14,000 shielding residents in Oxfordshire, receiving and making outward bounds calls to them.

ICT and digital had taken the important role of enabling the systems and hardware that we work with, together with bringing everyone's skill base up to a level to be able to work remotely.  Going forward he would be looking at how they could embed the digital learning into how services could be delivered in the future.  The Communications Team had been vital for keeping the public informed, and this would become more important as the Public Health Team took on more responsibility for local Test and Trace.  The digital infrastructure, including super-fast broadband in the County, delivered with our partners had ensured the success of the last few months and teams were now working on ultra-fast Broadband for the future.   The report showed that services could be adapted for the future He thanked all staff in his portfolio for the tremendous work of the past few months.

Councillor Judith Heathcoat, Deputy Leader of the Council supported the comments made by Councillor Hudspeth and Corkin made.  All staff had made a superb effort for the residents of Oxfordshire in the delivery of services the Council was responsible for. We have not only helped locally but had been involved in National participation.  HR staff had been working from home to ensure there had been no break in the provision they were required to provide.  Trading standards had been effectively dealing with the despicable scams that had occurred during the lockdown period.  The fire & rescue had also gone over and above their duties, not only looking after road collisions and fires, but undertaking activities which had increased the potential of bringing infection into their workplace and homes, with staff having to come back to the station and sterilise all their equipment each time they returned.  When they were supporting the ambulance service the staff had been complimented on their driving skills, which was a wonderful testament to the staff.  The Fire and Rescue Service had managed to maintain 89% on call availability, despite some of the Fire Fighters having to go into isolation because

there was a vulnerable member in their home or having COVID in their home, the service had whole-heartedly served the Community.  She thanked all staff in her portfolio.

In relation to page 11 of the report, she noted that the Corporate Plan had in fact been revised as part of the 2020 Budget process and not 2016 as stated in the report.

Councillor Harrod, Cabinet Member for Children & Family Services added his thanks to all staff and particularly those in the Children's Services arena whom like others, had operated in extremely difficult circumstances.  In terms of looking forward to the recovery, he was already seeing changes in the area in terms of service delivery, which could quite readily continue into the longer term, such as online consultations with young people on social media, therefore obviating the need for many face to face meetings with all the consequential negatives in travel, time, pollution and cost.  He was very confident that the team would go on to develop many more new ways of delivering services to the residents of Oxfordshire as they moved forward.

Councillor Constance, Cabinet Member for Environment spoke to the area of Transport.  Lockdown had created a unique position for Transport, as not only had the roads emptied, allowing the delivery and operations of road maintenance to make great strides, but most importantly those in cities had urged her to take note and learn and take advantage of the reduction in traffic air pollution and noise and the opportunities for pedestrians.  They were listening and were looking to ensure what they planned and spent would benefit the whole County.  They had undertaken a councillor survey to understand the priorities in their divisions.  Government funding had presented them with the opportunity to make immediate starts.  They had received £600,000 from the Active Travel grant which had allowed them to bring forward projects in the four weeks to be completed within the 8-week timeframe government required.  Up to a further £2.4 million was expected.  This sat within a much bigger programme of transport improvements and growth within transport provision across the whole of Oxfordshire.  They had been working on improving cycle provision in Oxford city for many years and Access to Headington was just completing, works on the Botley Road had commenced on 26th May, and Cuttleslow and Wolvercote Roundabouts had seen improvements for cyclists.

They still expected to bring forward plans for a workplace parking levy and a congestion monitoring scheme, with consultation in the Autumn.  Immediately, ahead of the major programmes in the active travel programme, they were hoping to introduce bus gates in central Oxford; 20 mph speed limits across the County; improved cycle provision in terms of storage and parking and cycle routes.  The work would continue across the County.

Councillor Mark Gray, Cabinet Member for Local Communities added a huge vote of thanks to all those people in the County who had supported their local communities.  Many thousands of people had supported the community by delivering medication, delivering food, setting up new food banks and a huge variety of activities all over the County.  He had heard on Radio Oxford that 40,000 had been helped by a volunteer, which was about 6% of the population had been helped by a volunteer in the community.

The Council had been linking up the statutory and the voluntary services and he wanted to see this continue into the future. Currently, they were undertaking a piece of work with the local voluntary sector, looking at where the infrastructure money went, it was a substantial amount of money each year and he wanted to ensure they continued to work with those locally based community organisations.

Councillor Lorraine Lindsay-Gale, Cabinet Member for Education & Cultural Services thanked the staff in schools. Throughout the whole period over 94% of schools had stayed open, providing teaching and care to the children of care workers and to those children who were deemed disadvantaged or vulnerable. They continued to do that work, though were now struggling bringing in the extra cohorts which was proving to be extremely difficult. The picture across the County was mixed, which was to be expected. The County Council's Education Service was continuing to work with all schools to help and support as much as they could. The service had been there throughout providing advice and interpreting the extensive guidance and documents coming from Government and would do all they could to foster the catch-up scheme which would hopefully be coming over the summer months. They had also applied for a lot of laptops for disadvantaged children, which were due to arrive shortly and would be distributed immediately.

She thanked staff, such as the Library Service who had taken up other areas of work during the pandemic including marshalling traffic and delivering registration documents. She was pleased to announce that the Registration Service was now open again for registering births, and they were now contacting all parents who had given birth prior to the 9th March. There was a huge backlog, but the service would be working hard to get through them as quickly as possible.

She welcomed and referred to the fantastic uptake of on-line Library and History Services.

Councillor Lawrie Stratford, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health added his thanks and referred to the excellent work carried out by the Adult Social Care Team and Public Health Team. These services had been dealing with people who were most vulnerable, such as older people those with mental health and addictions. He remained very positive that the 'good neighbour' attitude of communities pulling together to look after those most vulnerable in their area that had prevailed throughout the lockdown period could continue into the future to improve wellbeing for all.

***RESOLVED:*** (nem con)

1.1 to note the contents of the report and endorse the approach to planning for recovery for the immediate, transitional and longer term as set out.

1.2 to request that officers continue to work within the Thames Valley Local Resilience Forum (TVLRF) framework with a specific place-based focus on the needs of Oxfordshire and its communities within that context.

1.3 to agree that the Joint Cherwell District and Oxfordshire County Council's Member Partnership Working Group co-ordinates all partnership related recovery work and that the current Transformation Cabinet Advisory Group

(CAG) expands its remit to include long term recovery planning as well as organisational change.

1.4    to note the financial impacts as set out and request that officers prepare financial and transformational plans which align with the council's policy response to COVID and its impacts. This should include refreshing the medium-term financial plan and savings targets, fully renewing the Council's corporate plan and undertaking consultation and impact assessments as required.

1.5    recognising and thanking the council's workforce had been key to the Oxfordshire response to the pandemic and to ask senior officers to ensure there are effective organisational development plans in place to engage, support and develop the workforce to address the short, medium and long-term consequences of COVID-19, including lessons learnt.

## 50/20   FORWARD PLAN AND FUTURE BUSINESS
(Agenda Item. 7)

The Cabinet considered a list of items (CA7) 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.

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Date of signing    .................................................