

## **CABINET**

**MINUTES** of the meeting held on Tuesday, 15 October 2024 commencing at 2.00 pm and finishing at 3.35 pm

**Present:**

**Voting Members:** Councillor Liz Leffman – in the Chair  
Councillor Dr Pete Sudbury (Deputy Chair)  
Councillor Neil Fawcett  
Councillor Andrew Gant  
Councillor Kate Gregory  
Councillor John Howson  
Councillor Dr Nathan Ley  
Councillor Judy Roberts

**Other Members in Attendance:** Councillor Donna Ford

**Officers:**

Whole of meeting Martin Reeves (Chief Executive) Lorna Baxter (Executive Director of Resources & Section 151 Officer), Anita Bradley (Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer), Stephen Chandler (Executive Director of People and Transformation), Chris Reynolds (Senior Democratic Services Officer)

*The Cabinet 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.*

### **124/24 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

(Agenda Item. 1)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Tim Bearder and Dan Levy.

### **125/24 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

(Agenda Item. 2)

There were none.

### **126/24 MINUTES**

(Agenda Item. 3)

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 September 2024 were approved as a correct record.

### **127/24 QUESTIONS FROM COUNTY COUNCILLORS**

(Agenda Item. 4)

See annex.

### **128/24 PETITIONS AND PUBLIC ADDRESS**

(Agenda Item. 5)

There were no requests received.

### **129/24 APPOINTMENTS**

(Agenda Item. 6)

There were no appointments to report to Cabinet at this meeting.

### **130/24 REPORTS FROM SCRUTINY COMMITTEES**

(Agenda Item. 7)

Councillor Eddie Reeves, Chair of the Performance and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee, presented the report and recommendations on Community Wealth Building and Wider Social Value.

Cabinet received the report and will respond in due course.

### **131/24 OXFORDSHIRE SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN'S BOARD ANNUAL REPORT 2023-24**

(Agenda Item. 8)

Cabinet considered a report which highlighted the findings from the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children's Board's annual report on the effectiveness of local arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in Oxfordshire.

Councillor John Howson, Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Young People's Services, presented the report.

The Head of Safeguarding (Children's Services) and the Business Manager (Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children's Board) answered a number of questions from members.

During discussion, the following points were made:-

- There was considerable concern about the timely flow of information for children placed outside Oxfordshire, who continued to face long

delays in their initial and continued health assessments. The issue was particularly acute in the area of community dentistry.

- The report highlighted the effectiveness of multi-agency working in response to an increase in violence between two groups of children in a specific area within the county. Rapid action and the formation of a task group had led to significant improvements
- The report noted that the cultural support offered to families who suffered the tragic death of a child was relatively limited for non-Christian faith families, those of no faith, or other faiths. This was an area identified for improvement
- School attendance in Oxfordshire had shown improvement compared to the previous year, but there were still concerns, particularly in the secondary school sector. The correlation between attendance and exclusion was discussed, with a focus on the need for more work with academies to address this issue.
- There was a significant increase in safeguarding issues in West Oxfordshire, particularly related to child exploitation. This increase was noted by the independent chair and was being investigated further
- The partnership had made significant progress in early help assessments, with a combined effort leading to the achievement and even exceeding of targets.
- The use of the graded care profile as an intervention tool was emphasised. This tool helped parents understand the impact of neglect on their children and was being promoted across the partnership.
- The report also referred to the issue of elective home education, noting that there were strengthened processes in place to ensure that children who were electively home educated were still receiving appropriate support and oversight.

Councillor Howson moved and Councillor Sudbury seconded the recommendations, and they were approved.

**RESOLVED to note the annual report of the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board senior safeguarding partners and to consider the key messages.**

**132/24 OXFORDSHIRE SAFEGUARDING ADULTS BOARD ANNUAL REPORT 2023-24**

(Agenda Item. 9)

Cabinet had before it a report summarising the work of the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board (OSAB) and its partners over the course of the year 2023-24

In the absence of the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Councillor Liz Leffman, Leader of the Council presented the report.

The Director of Adult Social Services and the Business Manager (Oxfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board), answered a number of questions from members.

During discussion, the following points were made:-

- There was some discussion about staff recruitment and retention within adult social care.
- The report highlighted the importance of system partnership working, particularly with the ambulance service. There were many referrals that did not meet safeguarding criteria but required advice and guidance.
- The report referred to the in reach work into prisons around safeguarding and Care Act responsibilities. There was close collaboration with probation services to address safeguarding matters during the discharge process.
- The early release scheme was discussed, but it was noted that it was too early to comment on its impact. However, the service was monitoring it closely and responding appropriately.

Councillor Leffman moved, and Councillor Howson seconded the recommendations, and they were approved.

**RESOLVED to note the content of the annual report as set out in the annex to the report.**

### **133/24 LOCAL AGGREGATE ASSESSMENT FOR 2023**

(Agenda Item. 10)

Cabinet had before it a report on the Local Aggregates Assessment (LAA) which set the level of mineral provision for the County Council as the Mineral Planning Authority, to ensure an appropriate supply for Sand and Gravel and Crushed Rock. This provision level, known as the Aggregates Provision Rate (APR) was based on an assessment between the supply and demand of aggregates in Oxfordshire and forecast demand.

Councillor Pete Sudbury, Deputy Leader with Responsibility for Climate Change, Environment and Future Generations, presented the report.

The Principal Minerals and Waste Policy Planner answered a number of questions on the report.

During discussion, the following points were made:-

- The assessment highlighted the balance between supply and demand for aggregates in Oxfordshire. It was noted that there is a sufficient supply of sand and gravel to meet the county's needs for the next 10 years.
- There was a significant focus on the environmental impact of aggregate extraction. The report emphasised the need for sustainable practices and the importance of minimising the carbon footprint of extraction activities.
- Members also referred to the importance of recycling and reusing materials to reduce the demand for new aggregates. It was noted that Oxfordshire has made significant progress in this area, with a high percentage of construction and demolition waste being recycled.
- The report highlighted the role of planning and regulation in managing aggregate extraction. It was noted that strict planning controls were in place to ensure that extraction activities did not have a negative impact on local communities and the environment.
- The assessment included projections for future aggregate demand, taking into account planned infrastructure projects and housing developments. It was noted that while demand was expected to increase, the county was well-positioned to meet this demand through a combination of new extraction sites and increased recycling.

Councillor Sudbury moved and Councillor Leffman seconded the recommendations, and they were approved.

**RESOLVED to:-**

- a) approve the Local Aggregate Assessment presented in Annex 2.**
- b) authorise the Director of Economy and Place in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Environment and Future Generations to make any revisions and publish the Oxfordshire Local Aggregate Assessment for the calendar year 2023 on the Council website.**

## **134/24 BUDGET AND BUSINESS PLANNING REPORT**

(Agenda Item. 11)

Cabinet had before it a report on the budget and business planning process for 2025/26. It explained the process for developing and agreeing the budget for 2025/24 and the assumptions on which the Council's current medium term financial strategy (MTFS) was based. It also provided updates on information arising from government and other announcements plus the on-going impact of challenges apparent in 2024/25 and new or emerging financial issues for 2025/26 and beyond which would be incorporated into the new MTFS.

In the absence of the Cabinet Member for Finance, Councillor Liz Leffman, Leader of the Council, presented the report.

During discussion the following points were made:-

- Concern that the term "environment and climate action" used in the budget calculator was too general and should be reviewed
- The Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer explained that it had not been recommended that the Council plan beyond a 3-year period because of the current uncertainties with regard to government funding
- The importance of resolving the position concerning the High Needs Block funding in Children's Services

Councillor Leffman moved, and Councillor Howson seconded the recommendations and they were approved.

### **RESOLVED to:**

- a) endorse the report and note the assumptions that will form the starting point for the 2025/26 budget as well as updates since the Medium Term Financial Strategy was agreed in February 2024 that need to be considered;**
- b) approve the budget and business planning process for 2025/26;**
- c) approve a three-year period for the medium-term financial strategy to 2027/28 and ten-year period for the capital programme to 2034/35**
- d) delegate to the Section 151 Officer in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance the decision on whether to continue to be a member of the North Oxfordshire Business Rates Pool and;**
- e) note the requirement for the council to set a sustainable balanced budget which shows how income will equal spending plans.**

## **135/24 CAPITAL PROGRAMME AND MONITORING REPORT (AUGUST MONITORING)**

(Agenda Item. 12)

Cabinet had before it the second capital programme update and monitoring report for 2024/25 which set out the monitoring position based on activity to the end of August 2024. The report also updated the Capital Programme approved by Cabinet on 16 July 2024 taking into account additional funding and new schemes. The updated programme also incorporated changes agreed through the Capital Programme Approval Reports to Cabinet during the year as well as new funding.

In the absence of the Cabinet Member for Finance, Councillor Liz Leffman, Leader of the Council, presented the report.

During discussion, members welcomed the bids for funding for Active Travel across the County and decarbonisation of the corporate estate. Members also referred to the importance of the Childcare Expansion capital funding.

Councillor Leffman moved, and Councillor Ley seconded the recommendations and they were approved.

### **RESOLVED to:-**

#### **Capital Programme**

1. **note the capital monitoring position for 2024/25 set out in this report and summarised in Annex 1.**
2. **approve the updated Capital Programme at Annex 2 incorporating the changes set out in this report.**

#### **Budget Changes / Budget Release**

3. **approve the submission of a bid for £2.800m to Sustrans T8 (pending potential funding from Active Travel England) for a number of schemes to improve the National Cycle Network and to note the total match funding of £0.355m required. Match funding will be met by a combination of Community Infrastructure Levy funds, S106 funding and corporate resources. (para 68)**
4. **a. approve the submission of a bid to the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme: Phase 4 (PSDS4) to support the programme to implement decarbonisation measures across the corporate estate.**  
**b. delegate authority to the Executive Director of Resources and S151 Officer and Director of Property**

**and Assets to approve the grant offer letter in the event of a successful award of funding for PSDS4 and**

**c. note the required match funding for PSDS4 which is estimated to be between £6.00m and £9.00m, which will be addressed as part of the 2025/26 business planning process. (para 71)**

- 5. approve the carry forward of £1.651m from the current Early Years Programme and include new funding of £1.286m received from the Department for Education Childcare Expansion Capital Grant to support the extension of early years childcare and wraparound provision for children in working families. (para 73)**

### **136/24 HYER POWER PROJECT**

(Agenda Item. 13)

Cabinet had before it a report on the Hyer Power Project, an initiative to develop hydrogen fuel-cell powered emergency vehicles, including a prototype fire engine and potentially other specialised vehicles like ambulances. The project was fully funded by a £3.9M grant from APC/Innovate UK, with Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) receiving £1.56M to cover all its costs.

Councillor Pete Sudbury, Deputy Leader with Responsibility for Climate Change, Environment and Future Generations, presented the report.

During discussion, members noted that the County Council was taking a leading position, nationally, on the development of hydrogen power for the uses referred to in the report.

Councillor Sudbury moved and Councillor Leffman seconded the recommendation, and it were approved.

**RESOLVED to approve a key decision to permit the procurement of a hydrogen production and refuelling rig that will be fully funded by an external grant and will be installed on the Highways Depot at Drayton.**

### **137/24 DELEGATED POWERS REPORT FOR JULY TO SEPTEMBER 2024**

(Agenda Item. 14)

**Cabinet noted that there were no uses of delegated powers during the period July to September 2024.**

### **138/24 FORWARD PLAN AND FUTURE BUSINESS**

(Agenda Item. 15)



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.**

**139/24 FOR INFORMATION ONLY: CABINET RESPONSE TO SCRUTINY ITEM**

(Agenda Item. 16)

**Cabinet noted the response to the Scrutiny item on Draft Customer Experience Strategy.**

.....in the Chair

Date of signing .....