



Cabinet
Tuesday, 18 October 2011

ADDENDA

- 4. Questions from County Councillors (Pages 1 - 2)**
- 5. Petitions and Public Address (Pages 3 - 4)**
- 8. Local Government Resource Review - Response (Pages 5 - 8)**

Report of the Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance & Property is attached.

- 14. Forward Plan and Future Business (Pages 9 - 10)**

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ITEM 4 – QUESTIONS FROM COUNTY COUNCILLORS

Questions received from the following Member:

Councillor Jean Fooks to the Cabinet Member for Transport

1. “There seems to have been a moratorium on the processing of traffic regulation orders over the last twelve months or so. Small but important schemes in Oxford, agreed for safety reasons, have not been implemented, such as a review of parking near a new nursery school in Rawlinson Road and a time limit on parking on Aristotle Lane near St Philip and St James primary school. Taxi spaces in Oakthorpe Road have been redundant for many years and were promised to be converted to much-needed disabled parking spaces early this year. Is this a county-wide problem? Why have staff not been given the time needed to progress them to implementation?”

Answer

“Councillor Fooks will be aware that in response to the substantial reduction in funding from central Government, attributable to the high level of debt inherited from the previous national administration, this Council has had to significantly reduce the staffing resource available to respond to general traffic management issues, which includes the processing of traffic regulation orders. Priority has been given to matters such as the restrictions to facilitate the reintroduction of forces' repatriations at RAF Brize Norton and to temporary orders related to the major increase in capital maintenance schemes across the County. However as there is developer funding available to carry out works at the specific locations mentioned by Cllr Fooks I am hopeful that these will be addressed over the coming months.”

Councillor Roz Smith to the Cabinet Member for Finance & Property

2. “How many buildings owned by the County Council, are unoccupied or partly occupied for more than one year, and what is the cost of security contractors for these buildings?”

Answer

“12 buildings are unoccupied for more than one year. The total cost of security contractors for these buildings is £9,050 p.a. It is not possible to give the number of partly occupied property as the situation constantly changes.”

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CABINET – 18 OCTOBER 2011 ITEM 5 – PETITIONS AND PUBLIC ADDRESS

Public Address

The Leader of the Council has agreed the following requests to address the meeting:-

Item	Speaker
Item 6 2011/12 Financial Monitoring & Business Strategy Delivery Report - August 2011	Councillor Alan Armitage, Shadow Cabinet Member
Item 7 Big Society Fund - Allocation of Wave 2 Funding	<p>Councillor Lynda Atkins, Wigod Centre in Wallingford (pg17) - and may mention the Phoenix project in Cholsey (pg7) Councillor Anne Purse, Wheatley Youth Club (pg13)</p> <p>Councillor David Turner, Chalgrove Parish Council – Youth Worker Recruitment (pg15) Councillor Carol Viney, Edge Youth Centre (pg20) and Mrs Rosemary Edgington, Vice-Chairman, The Sonning Common Community Youth Club Management Committee (pg20)</p> <p>Councillor Janet Godden, West Oxfordshire Cycle Track (pg36); Councillor Charles Mathew, West Oxfordshire Cycle Track (pg36); and Mr Leggatt, member of the public, West Oxfordshire Cycle Track (pg36)</p>
Item 8 Local Government Resources Review – Response	Councillor Alan Armitage, Shadow Cabinet Member
, Item 9 National Planning Policy Framework - Response	Councillor Anne Purse, Shadow Cabinet Member; Councillor Charles Shouler
Item 10 Learning Disability - Supported Living and Daytime Support Services - Outcome of Consultation	Councillor Jenny Hannaby, Shadow Cabinet Member (Zoe Patrick as leader if Cllr Hannaby not able to make meeting)
Item 11 Property & Facilities Procurement - Scope of Contract - Food with Thought/Quest Cleaning Service Strategy Paper	Councillor Alan Armitage, Shadow Cabinet Member Mrs Ruth Lyster, member of the public
Item 12 Community Safety Partnership Strategies	Councillor Roz Smith

ADDENDA

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LOCAL GOVERNMENT RESOURCE REVIEW

Report by Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance & Property

1. Oxfordshire County Council supports the overarching principles of the Local Government Resource Review, which will give local authorities incentives to increase local development and develop our national economy. In particular, we support the general principle of re-localising business rates.
2. While we welcome this move to localise local government revenues, it is a miniscule step; the changes still involve massive central control – more than most European countries. We urge the Secretary of State to see this as just a first step along a road of liberalisation of local government finance that we hope, in the medium to long term will lead to much greater autonomy for local government.
3. There are however a number of concerns around the finer detail which will continue to be discussed whilst primary legislation is developing next year. Oxfordshire County Council believes that, “the devil is in the detail” and that ministers may be rushing through this complex change in the way that local government is funded.
4. Concerns remain over:
 - The short timescale for the review;
 - The use of 2012/13 damped formula grant allocations as the baseline for future allocations;
 - Funding for the increasing pressures on social care
 - The retention of the business rate link to RPI - resulting in any gains being at the expense of other authorities.
 - The way spending review cuts and the costs of the New Homes Bonus are shared out;
 - The different incentives for district councils
 - The need to incorporate systems to protect authorities from economic shocks and to share windfall gains
5. In particular, we are concerned that the 2012/13 formula grant figures do not represent a fair starting point for Oxfordshire. As just one example, we consider that the existing formula grant system does not make sufficient allowances for the extra costs of operating in sparsely populated areas. Given this and other failings of the four block model, it is most important that if our 2012/13 formula grant figures are used, they must include the ‘damping grant’. See our response to question 2.
6. We strongly support the Society of County Treasurers suggestion for determining a county council’s share of a billing authority business rate

baseline being based on the split between county and districts using the share of formula grant approach. This approach would be the fairest basis for allocation. We do not support either of the proposals in the consultation.

7. Another very serious concern is that we may end up with too high a share of the Spending Review cuts and the costs of the New Homes Bonus (NHB). Tariffs, RPI inflation added to the Tariffs and possibly Levies – will neutralise the benefits of collecting large amounts of business rates in Oxfordshire. In these circumstances it would be quite wrong to allocate cuts and the NHB costs according to the amount of business rates collected in Oxfordshire. Cuts and the NHB costs should be related to the level of the existing formula grant.
8. Thus, using the jargon from the technical consultation papers, we think that the proposed ‘Set aside’ and ‘Adjustments’ should not be allocated using the proposed ‘proportionate shares’ but they should be allocated using the ‘baseline funding’. As the proposals stand, larger cuts and more of the costs of the NHB will have to be found in areas that collect more business rates. This would not be reasonable or fair. See our response to question 4.
9. We consider that tariffs should not increase in line with inflation as this removes all the benefit of having a large local business rate base. See our response to question 4.
10. We are also concerned that the incentives will encourage housing development rather than business rate growth in areas with counties and district councils. Districts will have a large incentive to build new housing (they receive 80% of the New Homes bonus) but a comparatively small incentive to allow industrial developments (perhaps only just over 20% of the resulting business rate growth). Counties will have less development levers and will need industrial development to fund social care and the other pressures on their budgets. As noted earlier, much of the funding for the New Homes Bonus at the national level could be removed from Counties such as Oxfordshire. Thus we consider that incentives should be balanced, by reducing district councils share of the New Homes Bonus from the current 80%. See our response to question 26.
11. There should be a system of ‘levies’ and ‘safety nets’ to protect authorities from large economic shocks – such as the expected closure of Didcot A power station and to share out windfall gains.
12. Pooling should be encouraged by applying a lower levy rate in areas that join pools. Pooling should be focused on county or possibly LEP areas in shire areas. See our responses to questions 21 to 24 and 32.

RECOMMENDATIONS

13. The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to:

- a) **Agree to this overarching response to consultation about the Local Government Resource.**

Cllr Keith Mitchell
Leader of the Council

Cllr Jim Couchman
Cabinet Member for Finance and Property

October 2011

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ITEM 17 – FORWARD PLAN AND FUTURE BUSINESS

Members are asked to note the following changes to the Forward Plan:

Amendments to items in the present Plan:

Portfolio	Topic (Ref)/Decision	Present Timing	Change
<i>Deputy Leader</i> Cabinet	Independent Admission Appeals – Panel Member Arrangements (Ref: 2011/086) To review the arrangements for Panel Members including expenses.	18 October 2011	Deferred to 15 November 2011
<i>Adult Services</i>	Joint Strategic Commissioning Arrangements with NHS Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Cluster PCT (Ref: 2011/167) To seek approval for the renewal and potential expansion of s75 (NHS Act 2006) partnership arrangements between the Council and the PCT.	15 November 2011	Deleted – not needed at this time.
<i>Children, Education & Families</i> Cabinet	Progress Report on CLA and Leaving Care (Ref: 2011/112) To note progress and issues in relation to the Children and Young People in the Council's care.	18 October 2011	Deferred to 15 November 2011
<i>Schools Improvement</i> Cabinet	St Christopher's Primary School (Ref: 2011/072) If objections to the statutory proposal are received, to consider representations and decide whether to expand St Christopher's Primary School, Cowley.	15 November 2011	Deleted – No objections
<i>Schools Improvement</i> Cabinet	Cotteslowe Primary School (Ref: 2011/120) If objections to the statutory proposal are received to consider representations and decide whether to expand Cotteslowe Primary School	15 November 2011	Deleted – no objections
<i>Transport</i> Cabinet	Review of Funding Support for Parish-Organised Local Dial-a-Ride Service in South Oxfordshire (Swyncombe	17 November 2011	Deleted – Supported by local

Member	Lifeline (Ref: 2011/152) To continue County Council funding support for Swyncombe Lifeline service for further period until June 2013.		community. Dial-a-Rides being dealt with elsewhere later.
<i>Transport</i>	B4016 Blewbury – Speed Limits (Ref: 2011/170)	17 November 2011	Deleted – No objections
Cabinet Member	To consider approval of proposed changes to speed limits arising from new housing development.		

New Items added to the present Plan:

Cabinet Area	Topic/Decision	Timing	Contact/ Report by
<i>Deputy Leader</i>	Hampshire and Oxfordshire County Council ICT Partnership (Ref: 2011/184)		Graham Shaw, Head of ICT Business Delivery Tel: 07939069084
Cabinet	To seek approval in principle for an ICT Partnership between Hampshire County Council and Oxfordshire County Council through a framework arrangements.	15 November 2011	<i>Director of Environment & Economy</i>
<i>Transport</i>	Oxfordshire Concessionary Fares Scheme (Ref: 2011/183)		John Disley, Strategic Manager Policy & Strategy Tel: (01865) 810460
Cabinet	To seek approval of the Oxfordshire Concessionary Fares Scheme from April 2012 for consultation.	15 November 2011	<i>Deputy Director of Environment & Economy – Highways & Transport</i>