

CABINET

MINUTES of the meeting held on Tuesday, 23 February 2016 commencing at 2.00 pm and finishing at 4.52 pm.

Present:

Voting Members:

Councillor Rodney Rose
Councillor Mrs Judith Heathcoat
Councillor Nick Carter
Councillor Melinda Tilley
Councillor Lorraine Lindsay-Gale
Councillor David Nimmo Smith
Councillor Lawrie Stratford

Other Members in Attendance:

Councillor Liz Brighthouse (Agenda Items 6 and 10)
Councillor Jean Fooks (Agenda Item 6)
Councillor Susanna Pressel (Agenda Item 6)
Councillor Gill Sanders (Agenda Item 6 & 8)
Councillor Janet Godden (Agenda Item 6)
Councillor Richard Webber (for Agenda Item 6)
Councillor Nick Hards (Agenda Item 7 & 10)
Councillor Patrick Greene (Agenda Item 10)

Officers:

Whole of meeting Peter Clark (Head of Paid Service); Graham Warrington (Law & Governance)

Part of meeting

Item	Name
6	Jim Leivers, Director for Children, Education & Families; Lucy Butler, Hannah Farncombe, Rebecca Matthews (Children Education & Families)
7	Katy Jurczynszyn (Finance)
8	Hannah Farncombe & Matthew Edwards (Children, Education & Families)
9	Steve Munn, Chief HR Officer
10	Mark Kemp and Paul Fermer (Environment & Economy)

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.

12/16 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

(Agenda Item. 1)

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor Ian Hudspeth and Councillor Hilary Hibbert-Biles

13/16 MINUTES

(Agenda Item. 3)

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 January 2016 were approved and signed.

14/16 QUESTIONS FROM COUNTY COUNCILLORS

(Agenda Item. 4)

Councillor Bartholomew to Councillor Nimmo Smith

“Various Berkshire councils and enterprise groups have been campaigning vigorously in recent years for a new Thames crossing known as the 'Third Reading Bridge'. It is likely this bridge would link the end of the A329(M) in Berkshire to Playhatch in Oxfordshire. The enthusiasm of the scheme promoters is not shared by many Oxfordshire residents who are concerned about the large amount of extra traffic that would be deposited on to already congested rural roads. Historically, both OCC and SODC have shared residents' concerns, but both councils recently agreed to contribute to a traffic modelling study in order to remain part of the process. I have learnt that this study has now been named 'Strategic Outline Business Case', which worryingly seems to indicate that all parties are supporters of the proposal. I would be grateful if the Cabinet Member could confirm the costs involved in the study and provide reassurance that any resultant proposals will be challenged to ensure they best meet the needs of Oxfordshire residents.”

Cabinet Member for Environment

“The term Strategic Outline Business Case is the technical terminology of an in depth traffic modelling assessment for a specific transport scheme – it is neutral in its approach and can come to a negative as well as positive conclusion and will also need to consider wider impacts beyond direct traffic impact and mitigation including potential environment, economic and social impacts.

The County Council has agreed to support the study to finally provide detailed analysis of the impacts of a third Thames crossing scheme. It has been made clear to the other partners in this piece of work, that the council, by helping to fund this work, is not inherently supporting the scheme and will await the results of this work before taking a position on whether to support a full business case submission for funding, this decision process will also involve further consultation with the communities a scheme may impact upon.

Oxfordshire is contributing £20,000 towards the modelling work. Beyond the Third Thames Crossing assessment work, the council will also benefit more generally as the new transport model that is being developed, will be available to Oxfordshire Councils for their own transport studies and scheme analysis and will provide in- depth coverage of South of Oxfordshire and overlap with our own Strategic Transport Model. This will provide this part of the county with an even more robust evidence base for transport scheme development and decision making.”

Supplementary

“I would be obliged for sight of the briefing document/study specification and confirmation of the date results are expected.”

Cabinet Member for Environment

“I will pass the information onto Councillor Bartholomew.”

Councillor Susanna Pressel

“I’m very worried about the threatened loss of services for the people I represent in Jericho. At present they have a new, purpose-built, fully equipped and professionally staffed children’s centre in Cutteslowe and a Baby Café in Jericho. It would be appalling if one or both of these were to close. There are many vulnerable families in Jericho and even more in Cutteslowe. They need these facilities badly or their problems will escalate, and addressing them will cost more in the long run.

We have been told that outreach support will be provided and that group work sessions will happen in community venues. *It makes no sense* to try to hold group sessions in places like Jericho Community Centre, which is a horrible old building, with no equipment, and leave North Oxford Children’s Centre standing empty! Please can you ensure that the children’s centre will stay open and tell me who will provide breast-feeding support at the standard of the Baby Café?”

Cabinet Member for Children, Education & Families

“The new service will provide outreach and it is our intention to provide that outreach in venues that families feel are suitable, convenient and comfortable.

As part of the consultation the Local authority has had discussions with groups including, parents, schools and district, town and parish councils to explore the continued use of children centre buildings that cease to be funded by the service as part of the service redesign.

With regard to the children centre at Cutteslowe we would want to proactively engage with the school and partners to explore continued use of the building to provide services for children. If this can be achieved it means that

outreach services including provision of groups could still continue to run from this building. This would be a preferred option for the Local Authority.

With regard to breast feeding support this will continue to be commissioned by the public health directorate within the County Council.”

Councillor Pressel

“When and how will that engagement be carried out and to what extent.”

Cabinet Member for Children, Education & Families

“When the consultation has been carried out discussions will be held with all centres to see what we are able to maintain.”

15/16 PETITIONS AND PUBLIC ADDRESS

(Agenda Item. 5)

<i>Speaker</i>	<i>Item</i>
County Councillor Liz Brighthouse David Turner County Councillor Jean Fooks County Councillor Susanna Pressel County Councillor Gill Sanders County Councillor Janet Godden County Councillor Richard Webber))) 6 – New arrangements for)Oxfordshire County Council’s)Children’s Services))
County Councillor Nick Hards	7 – 2015/16 Financial Monitoring & Business Strategy Report
County Councillor Gill Sanders	8 – Progress Report on Looked After Children and those Leaving care
County Councillor Liz Brighthouse Mark Beddow David Bird County Councillor Nick Hards County Councillor Patrick Greene)) 10 – Follow up to a call in of a)decision by the Cabinet Member for)Environment (Councillor Ian)Hudspeth deputising))

16/16 NEW ARRANGEMENTS FOR OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL'S CHILDREN'S SERVICES

(Agenda Item. 6)

The Cabinet had before it an overview report together with a series of three supporting reports covering:

- The outcome of public consultation regarding proposals for change to early help services, including, children's centres and early intervention hubs
- Proposals for the future shape of Education and Learning Services
- Proposals for future Safeguarding and Corporate Parenting Services
- Proposals for future Children's Social Care services.

The resolution set out below incorporates the recommendations from Agenda Items 6, 6(a), 6(b) and 6(c).

The Deputy Leader of the Council set out the terms of the decision made by Council on 16 February 2016 to reinstate £2 million from early intervention services, including Children's Centres and Early Intervention Hubs, originally earmarked as part of the identified budget reductions. In addition Council further agreed to make available an additional £1million short term funding to develop alternative working arrangements with District Councils and local voluntary groups to allow a number of Children's Centres to remain open but be funded from sources other than the County Council. It was agreed that the detail of how the reinstated funding was to be used should be identified at a later date. Consequently, Cabinet would consider at this meeting the recommendations of the Director of Children, Education and Families regarding the future of Children's Services as laid out in the various reports before it and that in addition the Director be required to provide to a future meeting of Cabinet detailed proposals as to how the additional and retained funding arrangements would be best utilised.

The Council's Monitoring Officer drew the Cabinet's attention to a letter received from Central England Law Centre challenging the Council's decisions regarding the radical reorganisation of children's centres in Oxfordshire. The letter stated that the decisions taken had been fundamentally flawed and therefore challengeable. However, he advised that in his view the letter had failed to take into account the terms of the Council's decision taken in February insofar as a further report would be submitted to Cabinet with proposals as to how the extra £2m might be used whereas the Cabinet, at this meeting, was considering establishment of Hubs for the delivery on intervention services with no decisions scheduled to be taken with regard to specific closures of Children's Centres. He added that the consultation process, which it had been claimed, was flawed had in his opinion been conducted correctly.

Presenting a paper setting out the comments from the Performance Review Scrutiny Committee regarding proposed future arrangements for children's services Councillor Liz Brighthouse referred to the long scrutiny process which had been carried and thanked officers for the work in developing the proposals and undertaking the extensive consultation.

Speaking on behalf of the Chalgrove/Watlington Children's Centre and Maple Tree (Wheatley) Children's Centre Steering Groups David Turner recognised the difficult position the County Council found itself in but a great deal of uncertainty existed with regard to future provision and he was particularly concerned regarding provision in rural areas whose need was as great as in urban areas. He advised that the Chalgrove and Watlington centres had merged under one management team to achieve some savings which he suggested could be rolled out countywide. He urged the County Council to do all it could to save as much as possible and protect vulnerable areas.

Speaking with regard to her specific local centre which provided vital support Councillor Fooks was also cognisant that the level of need existed right across the county. She was concerned that uncertainty was already leading to staff leaving and felt that the Cabinet Advisory Group should be reconvened to consider these issues.

Councillor Susanna Pressel endorsed the views of the previous speakers but felt the advice of the Monitoring Officer had been incorrect insofar as closures were being considered and the issues today were clearly connected. Supporting Option 4 she called for deferral of a decision regarding the 8 hubs and proposed that the rise in councillor allowances agreed last year be rescinded and used as a saving towards the costs of this service..

Responding to a question from Councillor Heathcoat she advised that she had donated her allowance increase to charity.

Expressing regret at the need for cuts Councillor Gill Sanders recognised that there had been little real option but her Group had welcomed a compromise being reached. However, it was imperative that as much of the service as possible was retained along with experienced professional staff and to do that all Groups needed to continue to work together.

Responding to Councillor Carter who had reminded her that cuts necessary today had also been as a result of central government policy pre 2010 Councillor Sanders acknowledged there had been huge problems over 5/6 years but felt that the current government could have done more to help protect valuable services and in that regard current government policy was wrong.

Councillor Janet Godden endorsed the comments from the Performance Review Scrutiny Committee as presented by Councillor Brighthouse. A full and frank consultation and discussion was now required to take this forward to retain as high a level of service as possible.

Councillor Richard Webber acknowledged that it was unlikely that the letter referred to earlier by the Monitoring Officer would be the last such letter received in the light of clear messages from the consultation undertaken so far such as 71% of respondees not supporting any of the proposals. He was concerned at the loss of universal services and saw this as a short term solution. The timetable for delivery and savings was unclear and more clarity was required. A decision had been taken now to pause and rethink but any decision should be further deferred to enable the Cabinet Advisory Group to consider the issues.

Councillor Webber responded to questions from –

Councillor Carter – with regard to membership of the Cabinet Advisory Group the Liberal Democrat Group would review its position to participate if the CAG was reinstated and charged to explore opportunities given by the recent Council decision.

Councillor Rose – he felt that unitary government could look at these issues from a different perspective and as there was already a lot of uncertainty with no clear timeline for these issues to be addressed there could be a case to defer.

Councillor Melinda Tilley affirmed that the County Council were required to find £6m and the proposals currently before the Cabinet today were aimed at reorganising services in order to do that while meeting the needs of more vulnerable children. She commended the reports and moved the recommendations in each together with the additional recommendation set out in the addenda sheet.

Jim Leivers explained that the suite of papers before the Cabinet had been prepared in order to change fundamentally how the Directorate for Children, Education & Families carried out its functions while addressing the requirement to find a budgetary reduction of £6m over 3 years. Acknowledging that requirement to make reductions he emphasised that the main driver behind the current proposals had been to provide a safer environment for safeguarding children. The county council could not afford to stand still and choices needed to be made to make the service fit for purpose. A number of future government proposals regarding the moving role of education; changes to adoption services; youth offending services and child protection and local safeguarding boards would need to be factored in but it would not be possible to meet future statutory requirements while retaining current levels of service. In his judgement the series of papers before the Cabinet provided a way of meeting future commitments and making that service safe. Whatever was decided would be contentious but he was faced with a statutory set of duties which he and the Cabinet Member had a duty to meet.

Three presentations were made regarding:

- Safeguarding and Corporate Parenting Service
- Future Arrangements for Education Support for Oxfordshire Schools
- Future Arrangements in Children's Social Care

Councillor Tilley pointed out that the recommendations for future arrangements highlighted the commitment to effective change. Members of the Cabinet thanked officers for their presentations and the full consultations which had been undertaken and obviously taken on board as part of the proposals now being put forward.

RESOLVED (unanimously):

New Arrangements for Oxfordshire County Council's Children's Services

- (a) receive the outcome of the consultation exercise on the future of early help services along with the proposed alternative arrangements for Children's Services as outlined in the Cabinet Advisory Group report of September 2015 along with recommendations from the Director of Children's Services regarding future organisational arrangements for Children's Social Care;
- (b) approve the proposed arrangements for Safeguarding and Corporate Parenting Services as outlined in the report (CA6);
- (c) approve the proposed arrangements for Education Services as outlined in the report (CA6); and
- (d) receive a further detailed report on the implementation of the proposed changes.

The Safeguarding and Corporate Parenting Service

- (a) agree the proposals outlined in paragraph 19-22 of the report (CA6a); and
- (b) agree that a further report outlining in detail the proposed staffing arrangements and costs be made to a future Cabinet meeting.

Future Arrangements for Education Support for Oxfordshire Schools

- (a) approve the proposed arrangements for Education and Learning Services as outlined in the report (CA6b).

Future Arrangements in Children's Social Care

- (a) that eight Children and Family Centres be developed in the locations set out in the report (CA6c). These Centres would deliver services that met the authority's statutory duties relating to Children's Centres and

deliver statutory and targeted services to vulnerable children and families;

- (b) that limited open access services be provided from within the eight Children and Family Centres;
- (c) a mobile bus be retained to deliver services to rural communities and the traveller community as these communities were less likely to attend the main centres;
- (d) to continue to support the child care settings currently based in Children's Centres through to April 2017. During this time the authority would work with the centres to ensure they were financially self-sufficient from April 2017.
- (e) approve the inclusion of £1.9m budget in the capital programme for the new Children and Family Centres to be funded from the unallocated corporate resources;
- (f) commit to continue conversations with organisations and groups that had shown an interest in using alternative funding streams to enable centres to remain open; and
- (g) that the Director for Children, Education & Families provides a future meeting of Cabinet with detailed proposals as to how the additional and retained funding arrangements agreed at full Council on 16 February 2016 be best utilised.

17/16 2015/16 FINANCIAL MONITORING & BUSINESS STRATEGY REPORT - DECEMBER 2015

(Agenda Item. 7)

The Cabinet considered (CA7) a report focusing on the management of the 2015/16 budget together with an additional recommendation as set out in the addenda.

Councillor Hards referred to the high variance on the Children, Education & Families Directorate. The increased use of taxis for home to school transport for children with special needs clearly emphasised the need to progress provision of additional special needs facilities as proposed for example in the Didcot valley. He was pleased to see underspends on mainstream transport and education entitlement for disadvantaged two year olds but with regard to the forecast overspend on Children's Social Care (paragraph 12) he asked whether there was any prospect of a reduction in the number of looked after children and queried the need for increased use of agency staff. He also sought an explanation why the Didcot station car park expansion scheme had slipped and why the Milton Interchange scheme was forecast to overspend.

Responding Councillor Stratford advised that he understood the Didcot Station car park had reverted to its original programme and he would write

separately to Councillor Hards with regard to the Milton interchange. He agreed with concerns regarding use of taxis and the need to expand special school facilities in the south of the county. The increase in numbers of looked after children reflected the sensitivity of officers to their particular needs and he supported the levels of spend to offset any possibility of risk to children. He would look at the use of agency staff.

He confirmed that budgets would continue to be managed aggressively but felt that generally all Directorates were doing a good job to come in either very close to or within budget. Inevitably Children Education & Families faced the biggest challenge but it was imperative that everything that should be done was done to safeguard children at risk. Un-ringfenced reserves were perilously close to maximum level but any impact on school balances would be lessened as more schools attained academy status. He moved the recommendations in the report and addenda.

Councillor Heathcote hoped that negotiations with the Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group for an additional contribution to offset part of the overspend relating to Non-Emergency Patient Transport would continue favourably.

RESOLVED: to

- (a) note the report CA7;
- (b) note the Treasury Management lending list at Annex 4 to the report CA7;
- (c) approve an increase of £0.935m for the A34 Milton Interchange scheme;
- (d) approve the full budget of £11.165m for the Eastern Arc Phase 1: Access to Headington project and to proceed to detailed design;
- (e) note the changes to the Capital Programme set out in Annex 7b and 7c to the report CA7;
- (f) approve the allocation of the un-ringfenced grant for Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme to the Fire and Rescue Service.

18/16 PROGRESS REPORT ON LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN AND THOSE LEAVING CARE

(Agenda Item. 8)

The Cabinet considered (CA8) a report which reviewed the performance and outcomes of Looked After Children and Care Leavers since April 2014 and

identified key challenges moving forward, particularly around understanding the causes for and then addressing the growth in the looked after population.

Welcoming the report Councillor Gill Sanders referred to the impact of unaccompanied asylum seeking children and the pressure on services. She asked how the Multi Agency Group referred to in paragraph 82 would be constituted and whether we would be working with partners in its establishment.

Responding Matthew Edwards advised that district involvement and joint working on support networks would be key. Work would continue to scope out need.

Also on paragraph 82 Councillor Stratford expressed some concern that independent district action with regard to refugee families could impact on the county council's budget.

Responding to a question from Councillor Carter regarding the Mockingbird Family Model (paragraph 50) officers explained that the project was aimed at providing more support for foster families who looked after more challenging children. It was a community based model and was being piloted in the city and north of the county.

Councillor Tilley commended the report and moved the recommendations.

RESOLVED: (unanimously):

- (a) that further analysis of the child in need and child protection populations be undertaken to isolate more specific risk factors for care and what constituted an effective intervention. That work should draw on the learning and recommendations of the Neglect pilot and OSCB's reviews of adolescents who had died and suffered or caused serious harm;
- (b) that a multi-agency group be established to devise a county-wide strategy to respond to the growing challenges nationally of Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers and Refugee families;
- (c) the Placement Strategy Board be tasked with measuring the impact and cost savings of the Placement Strategy for reporting up to Cabinet.

19/16 STAFFING REPORT - QUARTER 3 - 2015

(Agenda Item. 9)

The Cabinet considered (CA9) a report giving an update on staffing numbers and related activity during the period 1 October 2015 to 31 December 2015.

Commending the report Councillor Rose moved the recommendation.

RESOLVED: (unanimously) to note the report.

20/16 FOLLOW UP TO A CALL IN OF A DECISION BY THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT (COUNCILLOR HUDSPETH SUBSTITUTING): PROPOSED BUS LANE & PARKING/WAITING RESTRICTIONS - ORCHARD CENTRE (PHASE 2), DIDCOT

(Agenda Item. 10)

On 4 February 2016, the Performance Scrutiny Committee considered the decision of the Cabinet Member for Environment (Councillor Hudspeth substituting) which had been made on 14 February 2016 following proper notice of a call in. The Committee had agreed to refer the decision back to Cabinet to consider in the light of a material concern that officers dealing with the matter had not been made aware of the fact that a 1500+ signature petition had been presented to Council opposing the proposal.

Councillor Brighthouse presented the comments from the Scrutiny Committee.

Mark Beddow felt that the current layout worked well with no clear justification to change things. There was insufficient room in Station Road for the new arrangement to work efficiently and pedestrian safety would be compromised particularly in the vicinity of The Cornerstone. It would also detract from the recently awarded Didcot Garden Town status and discriminated against elderly shoppers who would be required to walk greater distances from shops such as Sainsbury. He felt the Cabinet should at least defer a decision.

David Bird confirmed that the 1500 signature petition had been considered when the planning application had been approved and he referred to a letter of acknowledgement from the Deputy Director for Environment (Strategy & Infrastructure Planning) to that effect. There was need for retail expansion and the traffic regulation order had been through a great deal of scrutiny with no procedural or technical reasons for it not to proceed.

Responding to Councillor Rose he confirmed that the petition had been considered by both South Oxfordshire District and Oxfordshire County Councils.

Councillor Hards did not consider that the petition had been taken fully into account or considered when Councillor Hudspeth had taken his decision on 14 January nor by the South Oxfordshire District Council Planning Committee when it granted permission. Speakers at that meeting had been given insufficient time to state their case and he considered that the scheme was being promoted purely to meet the requirements of the bus companies and it should not go ahead.

Councillor Rose confirmed that the petition had formed part of the consideration of Cabinet at this meeting.

Councillor Greene felt that consultants and developers had been allowed to influence council officers. Endorsing the comments regarding the lack of democratic opportunity afforded to people to make representations to the

district planning committee he felt the application and scheme had been pushed through. A better option would have been to pursue provision of the Didcot Northern Perimeter Road.

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Addressing the specific terms of the call-in Mr Kemp confirmed that the petition had been identified by the district council as part of its deliberations and that had been minuted accordingly. The petition had also been considered by county officers and although not specifically mentioned in the report considered by the Leader of the Council on 14 January it would not have influenced the officer recommendation to him. The A4130 Northern Perimeter Road was not programmed and remained an aspiration. Additional funding proposed towards a controlled parking zone did not affect the bus lane proposal but would be retained as part of future decisions in the area. He confirmed the scheme was technically sound.

Councillor Nimmo-Smith accepted that the scheme might not be seen as the most ideal solution to some people but the scheme was technically sound and the bottom line remained that as the district council had granted permission the county council were therefore required to implement the terms of that permission. He moved the recommendation.

RESOLVED: (unanimously) to approve implementation of the proposals as advertised.

21/16 FORWARD PLAN AND FUTURE BUSINESS

(Agenda Item. 11)

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

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

..... in the Chair

Date of signing

2016