

CABINET

MINUTES of the meeting held on Tuesday, 19 December 2023 commencing at 2.00 pm and finishing at 3.05pm.

Present:

Voting Members: Councillor Liz Leffman – in the Chair
Councillor Dr Pete Sudbury (Deputy Chair)
Councillor Tim Bearder
Councillor Neil Fawcett
Councillor Kate Gregory
Councillor John Howson
Councillor Dan Levy
Councillor Dr Nathan Ley
Councillor Judy Roberts

Other Members in Attendance:

Councillors David Bartholomew Ted Fenton, Donna Ford, Jenny Hannaby, and Kieron Mallon

Officers:

Whole of meeting Martin Reeves (Chief Executive), Stephen Chandler, Executive Director (People, Transformation and Performance), Lorna Baxter (Executive Director of Resources & Section 151 Officer), Anita Bradley (Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer), Ansaf Azhar (Corporate Director Public Health & Community Safety), Bill Cotton (Corporate Director Environment & Place) Karen Fuller (Interim Corporate Director Adult Social Care), 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.

150/23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

(Agenda Item. 1)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Andrew Gant.

151/23 MINUTES

(Agenda Item. 3)

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 November 2023 were approved and signed as a correct record by the Chair.

152/23 QUESTIONS FROM COUNTY COUNCILLORS

(Agenda Item. 4)

There were none received.

153/23 PETITIONS AND PUBLIC ADDRESS

(Agenda Item. 5)

There were no requests received.

154/23 APPOINTMENTS

(Agenda Item. 6)

Cabinet noted the change of title for the Deputy Leader with Responsibility for Climate Change, Environment and Future Generations and the following changes to responsibilities: -

Climate Change Mitigation

Climate Adaptation and Resilience

Lead Flood Authority incl Oxford Flood alleviation

Planetary Boundaries and Circular Economy

Ecology, Nature Recovery and Enhancement

Future Generations

Minerals Strategy, Waste Disposal and Recycling centres

Countryside Operations and Volunteers

Ecology/Archaeology/Heritage

Water Strategy incl TW Reservoir

Energy Strategy

Tree Strategy

Highways Verge **and Vegetation** Management Strategy

155/23 REPORTS FROM SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

(Agenda Item. 7)

Councillor Jane Hanna, Chair of the Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee, presented the report and recommendations on Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health of Children.

Councillor John Howson, Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Young People's Services, welcomed the report but referred to the importance of early intervention by GPs in cases where children were being excluded from school and the impact of the funding settlements for schools and the NHS on providing adequate services.

Councillor Nigel Simpson, Chair of the People Overview & Scrutiny Committee, presented the report and recommendations on the Oxfordshire Education Commission report.

Councillor Howson referred to the establishment of the Education and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee which would consider the range of issues raised in the Commission's report.

Councillor Kieron Mallon, Chair of the Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee, presented the report and recommendations on the Infrastructure Funding Statement 2022/23.

Councillor Judy Roberts, Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Development Strategy, welcomed the report and, in particular, confirmed that the Council would be monitoring that its polices were being incorporated into local plans in the County.

Cabinet received the reports and will respond in due course.

156/23 AWARD FOR ALL AGE ADVOCACY CONTRACTS

(Agenda Item. 8)

Cabinet had before it a report recommending an approach for the procurement of the future provision for the All-Age Advocacy contracts.

Advocates were independent professionals who are qualified to help people understand their rights, communicate their needs and preferences, and ensure that their voices are heard in decisions about their care and support. They provide help and guidance to people who are experiencing difficulty accessing or using social care services. Local Authorities had a duty to provide independent advocacy under the Care Act 2014, the Mental Capacity Act 2005 and The Advocacy Services and Representations Procedure (Children) (Amendment) Regulations 2004. The statutory elements of these contracts were:

- a) Independent Mental Capacity Advocacy for Children & Adults (IMCA)
- b) Independent Mental Health Advocacy (IMHA)
- c) Independent Care Act Advocacy (ICCA)
- d) NHS Complaints Advocacy
- e) Children's Advocacy
- f) Regulation 44 Reviews
- g) Independent Visitors Service

Councillor Tim Bearder, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, presented the report.

During discussion members referred to the importance of ensuring face to face provision of advocacy services for those residents not able to use digital applications.

Councillor Bearder move and Councillor Howson seconded the recommendations, and they were approved.

RESOLVED to:

a) agree the approach for the procurement of the future provision for the All-Age Advocacy contracts.

b) delegate authority to the Corporate Director of Adult Social Care in consultation with the Corporate Director of Children's Services following the end of the stand still period to award the All-Age Advocacy contracts

c) delegate authority to the Corporate Director of Adult Social Care in consultation with the Corporate Director of Children's Services and the Head of Legal and Deputy Monitoring Officer to finalise and complete the contract documentation to deal with the contract award of the All-Age Advocacy service

157/23 DEPARTMENT FOR SCIENCE, INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY (DSIT) 5G INNOVATION REGION FUNDING

(Agenda Item. 9)

Cabinet had before it a report regarding the successful bid for 5G Innovation Region funding.

The Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT) was the central government department responsible for improving the nation's fixed and mobile connectivity. Under the broad category of the £5bn Project Gigabit, was a sub-section focussing on 5G Connectivity. As part of that, a competitive funding bid for setting up ten 5G Innovation Regions was submitted and for which Oxfordshire had been successful in being awarded the maximum grant of £3.8m. Oxfordshire County Council would be the lead authority with Buckinghamshire, Central Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, & all Berkshire councils forming the Region. 5G Innovation Regions focus on developing innovative commercial models withing specific targeted sectors and 'England's Connected Heartland' will deliver outputs in two sectors - Rail Connectivity and Research & Development/Science Parks. The project would deliver outputs described in the report.

Councillor Glynis Phillips addressed the Cabinet on this report and congratulated officers on their work in securing the funding for Oxfordshire. She expressed concerns about the financial risks to the Council should the grant funding be insufficient to cover all the staffing costs in relation to the project, and the need to understand the contributions from other partners to the Digital Infrastructure Gainshare Fund will would serve as a means of underwriting the project such that if there were to be any financial exposure that has not been forecast, the project will not require any financial support from OCC treasury.

The Director of Digital and IT explained the funding arrangements and the uses to which the Gainshare funding would be put.

Councillor Neil Fawcett, Cabinet Member for Community & Corporate Services presented the report.

During discussion members welcomed the award of grant funding and the benefits that would be achieved for public services as a result of improved connectivity within Oxfordshire and across the country as a whole.

In response to a question, the Corporate Director: Environment & Place confirmed that there would be minimal requirements for planning permission as a result of the provision of additional 5G infrastructure and planning applications would be considered by the relevant district councils where required.

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

RESOLVED to

- (a) **approve the acceptance of £3.8m of Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT) 5G Innovation Region funding pursuant to Oxfordshire County Council implementing a project to be known as 'England's Connected Heartland'.**
- (b) **approve the use of Gainshare funding previously awarded for Digital Infrastructure projects in the event of deliverability issues to the 'England's Connected Heartland' project or to fund further development of the project.**

158/23 INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING STATEMENT 2022/23

(Agenda Item. 10)

Cabinet had before it a report on the Infrastructure Funding Statement. This was a statutory statement of fact to be reported annually, by 31 December 2023 on developer contributions secured, spent or received during the previous financial year, 1 April 2022 – 31 March 2023.

Councillor Judy Roberts, Cabinet Member for Infrastructure & Development Strategy presented the report.

During discussion, members welcomed the improved processes outlined in the report, and in particular, increased liaison with district council processes.

Councillor Roberts moved and Councillor Levy seconded the recommendations, and they were approved.

RESOLVED to

- a) **consider the content of the Infrastructure Funding Statement 2022/23**
- b) **approve the publication of the report onto the Oxfordshire County Council website**
- c) **note the current work underway to review S106 expenditure and governance arrangements.**

159/23 CAPITAL PROGRAMME UPDATE AND MONITORING REPORT

(Agenda Item. 11)

Cabinet considered the third capital programme update and monitoring report for 2023/24 which set out the monitoring position based on activity to the end of August 2023. The report also provided an update to the Capital Programme approved by Council in February 2023 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 financial year as well as new funding.

Councillor Dan Levy, Cabinet Member for Finance, presented the report.

During discussion, members highlighted the range of social, environmental and economic benefits for Oxfordshire arising from the initiatives within the capital programme and, in particular, the rollout of 20mph speed limit schemes across the County.

Councillor Levy moved and Councillor Gregory seconded the recommendations, and they were approved.

RESOLVED to:

Capital Programme

1. Accept the latest capital monitoring position for 2023/24 set out in Annex 1.
2. Approve the updated Capital Programme at Annex 2 incorporating the changes set out in this report, noting the return of £3.8m corporate funds from the 20mph Programme (paragraph 58).

Additions to the Capital Programme

3. Approve a budget increase of £5.965m to £13.959m for the new primary school in Wallingford (St Nicolas Church of

England Primary School). The additional budget will be met from s106 contributions and from basic need (paragraph 55).

4. Approve the inclusion of the capital grant of £17.330m towards the A34 Lodge Hill scheme (paragraph 59).
5. Approve the acceptance and inclusion of £3.8m from the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT) 5G Innovation Region funding to implement a project to be known as 'England's Connected Heartland' (paragraph 64).
6. Approve the use of Gainshare funding previously awarded for Digital Infrastructure projects in the event of deliverability issues to the 'England's Connected Heartland' project or to fund further development of the project (paragraphs 65 and 66).

160/23 WORKFORCE REPORT AND STAFFING DATA - QUARTER 2 - JULY TO SEPTEMBER 2023

(Agenda Item. 12)

Cabinet had before it a report providing the workforce profile for quarter 2 including an overview of headcount, agency spend, sickness, turnover and other relevant management information and performance indicators set out in Annex A. The report also set out some of the actions being taken to address the trends identified.

Councillor Neil Fawcett, Cabinet Member for Finance, presented the report and referred, in particular, to some of the trends shown in the report and the favourable comparisons to other similar authorities.

Councillor Fawcett moved and Councillor Leffman seconded the recommendation, and it was approved.

RESOLVED to note the report.

161/23 FORWARD PLAN AND FUTURE BUSINESS

(Agenda Item. 13)

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.

.....in the Chair

Date of signing