

CABINET

MINUTES of the meeting held on Tuesday, 21 June 2022 commencing at 2.00 pm and finishing at 5.10 pm

Present:

Voting Members: Councillor Liz Leffman – in the Chair
Councillor Liz Brighthouse OBE (Deputy Chair)
Councillor Glynis Phillips
Councillor Dr Pete Sudbury
Councillor Tim Bearder
Councillor Duncan Enright
Councillor Calum Miller
Councillor Jenny Hannaby
Councillor Mark Lygo
Councillor Andrew Gant

Other Members in Attendance:

Councillors David Bartholomew, Robin Bennett, Ted Fenton, Donna Ford, Charlie Hicks, John Howson, Dan Levy, Kieron Mallon, Ian Middleton, Sally Povolotsky, Eddie Reeves, Ian Snowden

Officers:

Whole of meeting Stephen Chandler, Interim Chief Executive; Kevin Gordon, Corporate Director for Children's Services; Steve Claire Taylor, Corporate Director Customers, Organisational Development & Resources; Lorna Baxter, Director of Finance; Anita Bradley, Director of Law & Governance; Karen Fuller, Interim Corporate Director for Adult Services; Owen Jenkins, Director of Transport & Infrastructure; Colm Ó Caomhánaigh, Committee Officer.

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.

70/22 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

(Agenda Item. 1)

There were no apologies for absence.

71/22 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

(Agenda Item. 2)

There were no declarations of interest.

72/22 MINUTES

(Agenda Item. 3)

The minutes of the meeting held on 24 May 2022 were approved as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

73/22 QUESTIONS FROM COUNTY COUNCILLORS

(Agenda Item. 4)

See attached Annex.

74/22 PETITIONS AND PUBLIC ADDRESS

(Agenda Item. 5)

10. Report from the Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee
Cllr Jane Hanna

11. SEND top-up funding for schools
Carole Thomson

13. Local Transport and Connectivity Plan
Cllr Charlie Hicks
Graham Smith
John Center
Deborah Glass Woodin
Danny Yee

14. Vision Zero
Alison Hill
Peter Barnett
Danny Yee
Cllr Dan Levy

15. National Bus Strategy – Enhanced Partnership
Danny Yee

17. HIF1 Grant Determination Agreement
Greg O’Broin
Chris Hancock
Richard Harding
Cllr Robin Bennett
Cllr Charlie Hicks
Cllr Ian Middleton

75/22 ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT 2021-2022 AND PROVISIONAL REVENUE OUTTURN 2021/22

(Agenda Item. 6)

Cabinet considered a report presenting the Council's annual performance report and provisional year-end finance position for 2021/22.

Councillor Glynis Phillips, Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, introduced the report which acknowledged the challenges presented by the Covid pandemic and the excellent partnership working with the NHS and city and district councils. The partnerships were continuing to work well in supporting refugees from Ukraine and host families. The report showed the initial progress made in the first year of the administration's strategic plan.

Councillor Calum Millar, Cabinet Member for Finance, referring to the Provisional Revenue Outturn, particularly noted the underspend of \$4.6m and its transfer to general balances which he believed was a prudent approach in challenging times.

The Chair put the recommendations which were agreed.

RESOLVED:

- a) **To note the Annual Report for 2021/22.**
- b) **To note the summary of the provisional year - end financial position for 2021/22 along with the year-end position on general balances and earmarked reserves as set out in Annex B.**
- c) **To note the virements set out in Annex B-2.**
- d) **To agree that the surplus on the On-Street Parking Account at the end of the 2021/22 financial year that has not yet been applied to fund eligible expenditure in accordance with Section 55(4) of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, can be carried forward to the 2022/23 financial year as set out in Annex B-3c.**
- e) **To approve the transfer of £4.6m underspends to general balances as set out in paragraph 6.6.**
- f) **To approve the updated risk share arrangements for the pooled budgets for Live Well and Age Well services from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023 as set out in paragraph 8.1.**
- g) **To approve the use of directorate underspends to offset the £1.2m overspend on COVID-19 costs related to High Needs in Children's Services as set out in paragraph 7.1.**

76/22 PROVISIONAL CAPITAL OUTTURN 2021/22

(Agenda Item. 7)

Cabinet considered a report setting out the performance against the Capital Programme shown in the latest monitoring report for 2021/22 and also comparing back to the capital programme agreed by Council in February 2021. The figures shown reflected those to be included in the Council's Statement of Accounts for 2021/22.

Councillor Calum Millar, Cabinet Member for Finance, drew attention to the table in paragraph 14 of the report which showed the underspend in the programme for 2021/22. Some of this related to significant projects that

were being re-profiled for the new financial year and did not represent a risk to the grant funding.

He took the opportunity to report that there were significant pressures across the programme as a result of construction and other inflation. Officers have been asked to assess the programme as a whole, and particularly the projects that have fixed grant funding, and report back to Cabinet.

The Chair moved the recommendations which were agreed.

RESOLVED: to note the performance against the capital programme for 2021/22 as set out in the report.

77/22 TREASURY MANAGEMENT ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT

(Agenda Item. 8)

Cabinet had before it the Treasury Management performance for the 2021/22 financial year measured against the original budget agreed by Council in February 2021.

Councillor Calum Millar, Cabinet Member for Finance, described it as a broadly positive story. Despite interest rates in the period being slightly lower than anticipated, the Council held slightly higher balances and mildly exceeded expectation in terms of income generation within treasury management. The charts in Annex 5 showed that the team performance had significantly exceeded the benchmarking index. He thanked the team for their hard work in a volatile period and hoped that their success would continue.

The recommendations were moved by the Chair, seconded by Councillor Millar and agreed.

RESOLVED: to note the report, and to RECOMMEND Council to note the council's treasury management activity in 2021/22.

78/22 WORKFORCE REPORT AND STAFFING DATA - QUARTER 4 - JANUARY-MARCH 2022

(Agenda Item. 9)

Cabinet considered a report providing an update for Quarter 4 on key HR activities along with a refreshed workforce profile at Appendix 1.

Councillor Glynis Phillips, Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, drew attention to the main points:

- The apprenticeship programme was going in the right direction with 163 new apprenticeships in 2021/22 compared to 93 the previous year. This was helping the Council to 'grow its own' staff in a competitive marketplace.

- Spending on agency staff remained a concern at over £8m in Q4. There was an urgent need for the Environment & Place directorate to finalise its structure to recruit to permanent places and Children's Services was managing to reduce its numbers of agency staff.
- A lack of qualifications in English and Maths had been identified as a barrier resulting in an imbalance in having a higher proportion of females in lower grade positions in the Council. To redress this, staff were being given the opportunity to achieve Level 2 qualifications – the equivalent of GCSE qualifications.

The recommendations were moved by Councillor Phillips, seconded by Councillor Hannaby and agreed.

RESOLVED: to note the report.

79/22 REPORT FROM THE JOINT HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE: CARE HOMES/NATIONAL COVID ENQUIRY

(Agenda Item. 10)

Cabinet was asked to consider a letter endorsed by the Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 9 June 2022 in relation to care homes and the national Covid enquiry.

Councillor Jane Hanna, Chair of the Oxfordshire Joint Health and Scrutiny Committee (OJHOSC), noted that the scrutiny committee had previously made a request for an Oxfordshire review of the discharges to care homes at the start of the Covid pandemic. There was no doubt that hard working officers had followed the national guidance at the time but there was a need to understand the lessons learned.

The request had been accepted in the context of a national review taking place. However, it was now clear that the national review was going to take a very long time. There had also been a recent court judgment that concluded that the discharges had been illegal and an Oxfordshire resident had been one of the litigants. The scrutiny committee wished therefore to renew its request for a local review which could at least get started on early work.

Councillor Hanna accepted that the executive might not be able to organise a cross-system review in the time it is required to respond to a scrutiny report but she hoped that Cabinet could give a positive response which would be considered at the following scrutiny committee meeting.

Following comments from Cabinet Members the following points were agreed:

- Consultation will take place with the Leader, Cabinet Member and Corporate Director for Adult Services to consider the terms of reference, timeline and resources required for a review and if costs could be shared with system partners.

- The review should align with the national review as far as possible in order for comparisons to be made.

Cabinet will respond formally to the next OJHOSC meeting. The Chair thanked all those working across the health and care systems for their hard work on behalf of residents of the county during the pandemic.

80/22 SEND TOP-UP FUNDING FOR SCHOOLS

(Agenda Item. 11)

Cabinet had before it a report on providing Top-Up funding for Early Years settings, mainstream Primary, mainstream Secondary and Special Schools.

Carole Thomson, Chair of the Oxfordshire Schools' Forum, stated that the consultation process on this item had fallen well short of what was required by the Department's good practice guide. The Forum's meeting on 26 April was presented with a totally changed paper published just three working days before the meeting. It was promised that information would be circulated to Headteachers but this did not happen. If the Council was to implement its SEND Strategy it was essentially to adopt a policy of investing to save in our mainstream schools. There was no increased funding for special schools who may no longer be able to employ sufficient staff. The Schools' Forum was fully supportive of recommendation b).

Councillor Liz Brighthouse, Cabinet Member for Children, Education & Young People's Services, stated that she had attended the Schools' Forum and heard the concerns expressed at this paper. However, this paper was just extending a policy already in place. She agreed that there was a need to consult with schools on how to take it further than this and that the Council needed to consider, in making its budget for next year, how it could provide the funds to support the strategy. This administration was committed to building our own special schools and children's homes to avoid sending children out-of-county.

Kevin Gordon, Corporate Director for Children's Services, added that significant reform was expected in this area as recognised in a recent Green Paper. In the meantime, this temporary measure was needed. He was pleased that, even with a deficit in the High Needs Block, it had been possible to invest in some additional top-ups.

Councillor Brighthouse moved the recommendations, Councillor Phillips seconded and they were agreed.

RESOLVED: to

- a) Agree to continue the current enhancement in Top-Up funding for Early Years settings, mainstream Primary, mainstream Secondary and Special School forecast at approximately £4.1M for academic year 2022-23.**

- b) **Agree an approach that timetables the 2023-24 Top-Up funding decision as part of the Councils annual budget setting process to allow schools more time for planning**

81/22 CABINET RESPONSE TO TRANSGENDER MOTION FROM COUNCIL

(Agenda Item. 12)

Cabinet considered a paper setting out the key areas of focus and recommendations for the Cabinet response to the motion agreed at Council in April 2022 requesting action to support our transgender and non-binary residents.

Councillor Glynis Phillips, Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, summarised the report which included:

- Proposed focused engagement with the LGBTIQ+ community on access to Council services and, through Healthwatch, to similarly engage on NHS services, leading to the development of a guidance document.
- Updating the Including Everyone framework to ensure a clearer commitment to supporting our Transgender and non-binary residents.
- Consideration of the implications of gender-inclusive bathrooms in the current review of property strategy.
- A review in one year with an offer of discussion at the appropriate scrutiny committee.

Councillor Lygo proposed the recommendations which were seconded by Councillor Sudbury and agreed.

RESOLVED to:

- a) **Agree the commissioning of research to provide an evidence base to underpin prioritisation and delivery**
- b) **Agree to update our Including Everyone framework to set out our commitment to transgender and non-binary residents**
- c) **Agree the approach to providing gender inclusive bathrooms through the council's Property Strategy**
- d) **Agree the approach to providing consistent and inclusive language**
- e) **Agree to the development of an LGBTIQ+ guidance document**
- f) **Agree to an annual review of progress**

82/22 LOCAL TRANSPORT AND CONNECTIVITY PLAN (LTCP)

(Agenda Item. 13)

Cabinet considered a report updating on the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP), summarising the results of the LTCP consultation and outlining the key changes to the final LTCP.

Before discussing the report the meeting heard from the following speakers:

John Center stated that he believed Councillor Leffman was being hypocritical supporting traffic measures that did not affect her own town. He criticised the Low Traffic Neighbourhoods for inconveniencing drivers, forcing them to take longer journeys. He complained that the bus service where he lived in Littlemore was inadequate and that blue badge parking was not being enforced. Complaints from him to the Council had gone unanswered.

Councillor Charlie Hicks, Deputy Chair of the Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee, summarised the report from the Transport Policy Development Working Group:

- There was really good ambition on active travel plans but this was not matched by the necessary resources.
- Car congestion was the major barrier to safer walking and cycling and to better bus services. Solving this in the city would help rural services too.
- There was a lack of ambition on rail. Providing more stations should be considered.
- A tougher stance was needed with the freight sector which was resisting change.
- Modelling being used was not reliable and there was a lack of evidence base.
- Land use and transportation needed to be considered together more closely.
- There was a need to identify why previous local transport plans fell short on achievement.
- The three main messages were: better data, stronger system leadership and understanding behaviour.

Graham Smith, urban designer, stated that ideals were not enough: they had to be linked through appropriate design ideas to the fabric of the built environment itself. Without change in guidance and practice what will happen is that the old ways of doing things will continue to create formless places just like now. The review of the previous LTP4 simply failed to identify key problems and blithely spent millions on poor, incoherent design and even missing out changes on major junctions.

Deborah Glass Woodin, Co-chair of the Coalition for Healthy Streets and Active Travel, noted that previous LTP plans had great words and that the problem was with implementation. If they had been implemented the Council would not be spending £300m on new roads. She welcomed co-production and urged working with local campaign groups. On a personal level she was disappointed to see the commitment to 'net-zero' rather than 'zero-carbon'.

Danny Yee, commended officers for their work and taking on feedback. He recommended adopting the report but shared the concern that much of it will be ignored. It had been policy for many years to promote walking and cycling but yet every new junction design had prioritised motor vehicles. There was a need to provide clear guidance for designers, contractors and housing developers.

Councillor Duncan Enright, Cabinet Member for Travel & Development Strategy, thanked the speakers and noted the common view that implementation was key. More detailed plans and area strategies will come with the next stage and the comments from the Working Group and others will be considered. This draft had particularly taken onboard criticism that the Plan had been focussed on urban problems. The partnership work involved in the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 was a move towards bringing consideration of land use and transportation closer together and there was a need to ensure that was effective.

Other Cabinet Members added the following comments:

- The report from the working group was comprehensive, detailed and progressive.
- With plans in place for 100,000 new houses it was vital to get active travel plans embedded in the new developments.
- 90% of carbon emissions from transport were in rural areas so it was pleasing to see rural issues had been brought into the plan.
- The needs of disabled residents needed to come higher up the agenda and be specifically addressed in all plans.
- The lack of implementation of plans in the past was down to previous administrations. This administration accepted the challenge.
- Developers were making a lot of money and thought needed to be given to how to feed some of that back into the communities.

It was proposed to amend the recommendations to take account of the report from the Working Group. Councillor Enright moved the amended recommendations which were seconded by Councillor Gant and agreed.

RESOLVED: to

a) Approve the content of the LTCP document, and the supporting strategies subject to consideration of the recommendations from the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee, for adoption by the County Council on 12th July 2022, and

b) Delegate the decision on the final LTCP document, including consideration of the recommendations from the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee and graphical format to the Corporate Director for Environment and Place in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Travel and Development Strategy.

83/22 VISION ZERO

(Agenda Item. 14)

Cabinet had before it a report providing an overview of the proposed approach and scope of Vision Zero for Oxfordshire to try and reach a target of zero for fatalities and life changing injuries from road traffic collisions by 2050.

Before considering the report, the Chair had agreed to requests from a number of speakers to address the meeting.

Alison Hill, Chair of Cyclox, welcomed the report and the funding allocated and added that active travel campaign groups were ready to help. Some local authorities were allocating £20 per person per year towards active travel and Oxfordshire needed to be up there with them. However, the decision approving £294m expenditure on new roads would make targets more difficult to achieve. Her group was also disappointed at what she described as the abandonment of the Banbury Road and Woodstock Road schemes.

The Chair responded that those schemes had not been abandoned. The administration will find a way to make them happen but it will not necessarily be with Growth Deal money.

Peter Barnett stated that this was a fundamentally different approach that would need strong leadership from councillors and senior officers to make it happen. He was disappointed to see no evidence of outside collaboration in its development. Open access to data was important as well as the development of an action plan to lay out how the strategy would be achieved.

Danny Yee urged councillors to use the collision and injuries mapping tool that was available to see the extent of the problem. Many rural roads had a worse rate of accidents on a per trip basis and due to higher speeds, more fatalities and serious injuries. A cross-system approach was needed with guidelines provided and political willingness to restrict motor traffic.

Councillor Dan Levy, the County's Active Travel Champion, stated that most accidents involving fatalities and serious injury to pedestrians and cyclists occurred at junctions, which were primarily designed for motorists. Cycling needed to be made more convenient and having to mix with lorries seriously discouraged cycling. Many of the changes needed will result in slowing down traffic. This might be unpopular in the short term but he asked Cabinet to approve this new policy to promote a healthier more active county.

Councillor Andrew Gant responded to a number of points made by the speakers:

- He thanked the campaign groups for their valued input into all such policies of the Council.

- With regard to the expenditure on roads versus active travel, central government dictated most of this in their decisions on allocation of funds.
- The number of accidents was not a good measure of the safety of a road. There may be fewer accidents because people are afraid to walk or cycle on the road.
- Schemes needed to take into account their connectivity beyond their boundaries.

Other Cabinet Members reiterated the commitment to listen to expert advice and see the implementation of this policy through.

The recommendations were proposed by Councillor Gant, seconded by Councillor Enright and agreed.

RESOLVED to:

- (a) Approve the County Council Vision Zero commitment to: “Eliminate all fatalities and severe injuries on Oxfordshire’s roads and streets, to have a safer, healthier, and more equitable mobility for all. Work closely with partners and stakeholders to take a whole system approach, working together on infrastructure, behaviour, technology and legislation to achieve this change”**
- (b) To note the proposed ‘Vision Zero’ programme and governance arrangements being assembled as set out within this report.**
- (c) To note the drawdown of initial funding of £0.25m from the Budget Priorities Reserve to develop and start to progress the implementation of Vision Zero. Required for additional resources and delivery of key infrastructure changes at known areas of concern for road users.**

84/22 NATIONAL BUS STRATEGY - ENHANCED PARTNERSHIP

(Agenda Item. 15)

Cabinet received a report setting out the proposals for the Oxfordshire Bus Enhanced Partnership (EP), reflecting the Council’s indicative Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) funding allocation and the schemes / measures which this is proposed to fund. It also asked for agreement to the draft EP, including the Governance arrangements for the Partnership.

Before considering the report, the Chair had approved a request to speak.

Danny Yee was disappointed that the proposals did not include integrated ticketing or a revival of the “Pick Me Up” service. However, he urged Cabinet to adopt the plan. He believed that giving the political leadership required to make difficult decisions was going to be more important than the technical

details of proposals. He noted that the potential 10-month implementation date would be difficult to meet and would require emergency planning.

An amendment was proposed by Councillor Tim Bearder, seconded by Councillor Sudbury and agreed as follows:

Annex A of Oxfordshire Enhanced Partnership Plan & Scheme:

On Agenda Page 667 in the row headed "Bus Lanes" it currently states under "Timescale": "Existing facilities to be retained at least at current hours of operation".

Append " – bus lanes will only be removed if modelling can show that alternative bus priority measures would improve bus journey times and cycle and pedestrian safety."

Councillor Andrew Gant, Cabinet Member for Highway Management, responded that, while the "Pick Me Up" service had not been economically viable, it was not far off and he hoped that improving conditions generally for bus services might enable it to be looked at again.

Councillor Gant congratulated officers on achieving the indicative offer which was better than many local authorities have achieved. He drew particular attention to the £1 flat fare in the city for under-19s which would get them into the habit of using public transport. He hoped that could be extended to the whole county in the future.

Other Cabinet Members commented as follows:

- Mobility hubs were the key to improving services across the county. These proposals demonstrated the Council's commitment to improving bus services.
- The flat fare rate should be available to young people across the county.
- The current service was not inclusive and consideration should be given to reviving the 'Pick Me Up' service.
- It was hoped that a wide interpretation of the term 'user groups' could be taken in consulting on proposals to include for example the Children in Care Council, Age UK and disability groups.

Councillor Gant responded that the report included extending under-16 fares to those under-19 outside the city.

Councillor Gant proposed the recommendations with the amendment to Annex A of the Partnership Document. Councillor Millar seconded and they were agreed.

RESOLVED to:

- (i) **Approve the draft Oxfordshire Enhanced Partnership Document (attached as Annex 1) for submission to the Department for Transport.**
- (ii) **Consult on the draft Enhanced Partnership Document with all Oxfordshire Bus Operators, for the statutory 28 objection period.**

85/22 EXEMPT ITEMS

(Agenda Item. 16)

It was agreed that there was no need to go into private session.

86/22 HIF1 GRANT DETERMINATION AGREEMENT

(Agenda Item. 17)

Cabinet had before it a report outlining the renegotiated position and options considered as requested by the meeting of Cabinet in March.

Before considering the report the Chair agreed to hear the following speakers:

Richard Harding emphasised that reducing car traffic was an important part of all local and central government policies in order to reduce carbon emissions. Studies had shown that by-pass schemes generally result in more traffic than predicted and ultimately fail to even reduce traffic in the town centres. He believed that this plan would induce more traffic and result in demands to link to the M40. He asked that the scheme be paused while the administration considered how to transition to a low carbon future.

Gregory O'Broin, Chair of Appleford Parish Council and the Neighbouring Parish Council Joint Committee, stated that all five Parish Councils in the Joint Committee strongly opposed this road. HIF was a solution from an earlier decade. It was not necessary to deliver housing and there were alternative infrastructures available. The HIF scheme was not designed to promote sustainable modes of travel and it will not improve air quality or reduce CO2 emissions. He asked Cabinet to pause and consider alternatives.

Chris Hancock stated that the current estimated cost of £294m for this road was the highest expenditure of 31 future HIF1 schemes in the UK and one of the most expensive per new home realized. It could be anticipated that the three bridges could approach 1/3 of the total scheme cost whereas redesigned bridges to a reduced scale to support a dedicated busway with lightweight cycleway/footpath bridges alongside could be constructed at less cost and with much less risk.

Councillor Robin Bennett, Berinsfield & Garsington, recognised that this was a legacy project. He supported the letter to Highways England making clear opposition to any kind of East-West expressway. However, this project

risked locking in car dependency. It was not fully funded requiring borrowing by the Council which was already under all kinds of funding pressures. He would not be minded to proceed as the government had not given sufficient assurance.

Councillor Charlie Hicks stated that there was a high risk of this project becoming a financial black hole. Inflation at current rates was likely to add £30m to the costs. Policies on transport were changing and new roads would shortly be consigned to the history books. These houses were for future generations and each generation drives less. There were alternatives in rail and active travel and providing more facilities locally and he asked Cabinet to explore those.

Councillor Ian Middleton suggested that Cabinet call the government's bluff on this project and let them build the roads if that's what they want. It was a most controversial project and the Council will be held responsible. It was at odds with everything the administration stood for. The government was calling for more climate friendly development so there was an opportunity to pause this project and examine alternatives.

The Chair noted the letter from Homes England included in the latest Addenda in which they made it clear they were open to rescoping projects.

Councillor Duncan Enright, Cabinet Member for Travel & Development Strategy, responded that the existing infrastructure in the Didcot area was inadequate. The high traffic levels could not be reduced without this route. The project had the support of Didcot Town Council and the District Councils. It will be possible to reduce the embedded carbon and the roads will be highly capable for active travel and buses. The County Council had built a very strong relationship with Homes England and through them could access the Department of Transport and the Treasury. He would not rest until there was an exemplar scheme in place.

Councillor Calum Millar addressed the financial concerns. He was pleased to say that officers had succeeded in securing an increase in the funding envelope as well as an extension of the period in which funds will be made available. He noted that 25% of the cost was already allocated to contingency and risk. OCC will retain the option to stop the project at key decision points to manage financial risk without any clawback of funds by Homes England. He was content that measures had been taken to reduce the risk and was happy to support the project. He asked the Leader to respond to the Homes England letter reflecting the concerns expressed in this debate and to emphasise that £30m really was the limit on what the Council can provide.

Councillor Pete Sudbury outlined why he would abstain on the vote while accepting collective Cabinet responsibility. Climate change was accelerating and the UK's own climate committee had said that we were falling ever further behind on emissions. He was concerned that the evidence base for the project involved studies of towns and cities at least three times the size of

Didcot that did not have the same problems. Modal shift was much harder in semi-rural areas with lower concentrations of population. Cultural norms that lie behind travel patterns were hard to shift. It will only happen if we ruthlessly prioritise the modes we want people to use.

Councillor Tim Bearder outlined why he could not support the scheme. He stated that all of the other policies of the Council were aimed at radically reducing motor traffic but yet this project was creating a whole new network of roads. The project was already £70m over budget before construction even started. It was believed that construction costs of other projects had increased by up to 25%. It was built on a car-dependent model which could facilitate further road building and the Council could not stop Highways England from stepping in. A paradigm shift was needed and this was not it.

The Chair concluded the discussion stating that she was confident that the work done by officers, Cabinet Members and the Cabinet Advisory Group had resulted in a scheme very different from that approved by the previous administration.

The recommendations were proposed by Councillor Enright and seconded by Councillor Millar. The proposal was passed with 8 votes in favour, 1 against and 1 abstention.

RESOLVED to:

- a) **Approve the amendments to the Grant Determination Agreement (GDA)**
- b) **Seek an additional letter of comfort from Homes England and Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC).**
- c) **Authorise the signing of the Grant Determination Agreement by the Director for Transport and Infrastructure, in consultation with the Director of Law & Governance, Director of Finance, Cabinet Member for Travel and Development Strategy and Cabinet Member for Finance.**

87/22 HIF 2 SMART CORRIDOR – AMENDMENT OF GRANT DETERMINATION AGREEMENT / DEED OF VARIATION

(Agenda Item. 18)

Cabinet considered changes to the HIF Grant Determination Agreement (GDA) agreed in principle, between Oxfordshire County Council and Homes England, which include:

- (d) Inclusion of the delivery of the Science Transit scope within the Infrastructure to be delivered under the GDA.
- (e) Update to the Milestones schedule and Delivery Plan to reflect an integrated programme for HIF2 and Science Transit.

- (f) Draw down of Homes England funds against costs incurred on the Science Transit programme.

Councillor Duncan Enright, Cabinet Member for Travel & Development Strategy, summarised the proposal which was to merge two pots of funding in order to achieve greater flexibility in the two schemes.

Councillor Tim Bearder responded that he did not particularly value either scheme however there was no commitment from the Council to put a large amount of money into this and both schemes had been developed a long way so he would not oppose this move.

The recommendations were proposed by Councillor Enright, seconded by Councillor Brighthouse and agreed.

RESOLVED to:

- a) **Note the draft terms of the proposed Deed of Variation**
- b) **Authorise the Director of Transport & Infrastructure, in consultation with the Director of Law & Governance and Director of Finance, to finalise the terms of, and enter the Deed of Variation to the Grant Determination Agreement.**

88/22 FORWARD PLAN AND FUTURE BUSINESS

(Agenda Item. 19)

The Cabinet considered a list of items (CA19) 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

Questions	Cabinet Member
<p>1. COUNCILLOR FREDDIE VAN MIERLO</p> <p>Streetlights around Cuxham Road roundabout, industrial estate and Willow close in Watlington have not been working for 9 months. SSE had been contracted to fix the lights on 06/04/2022 but have failed to do so, despite requests by myself and officers to do so. Will the cabinet member for highways write to SSE to urgently rectify the issue?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR ANDREW GANT, CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAY MANAGEMENT</p> <p>We echo your concerns with this issue and as you will appreciate that as SSE own this network, we have to rely on the timescales they present. However, we have contacted them again and pushed for them to confirm when the work will be carried out and that they endeavour to prioritise this work.</p>
<p>2. COUNCILLOR SALLY POVOLOTSKY</p> <p>The Household Support Fund, how much is being requested from government to support our most vulnerable, and increasingly vulnerable families and individuals in the county, what agencies are we working with and how is this funding being distributed into our society given the funding has to be committed between April 2022 and September 2022? Also what % of increase does this council project will need additional help, and how will be resource that</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR CALUM MILLER, CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE</p> <p>Residents in Oxfordshire, as across the UK, are facing a cost of living emergency. As food, fuel and transport costs rise well beyond the planned increases in welfare payments and the proposed increases in wages the Council does expect many households to be increasingly affected. As an example, many households are now struggling with the costs of fuel and power – which together account for a higher proportion of family spending in low income households. Extrapolating from national data (The rising cost of living and its impact on individuals in Great Britain - Office for National Statistics (ons.gov.uk)), and adjusting for Oxfordshire's levels of deprivation, we estimate that 24,000 adults in</p>

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<p>assistance, throughout our services and the wider community initiatives that are being created by the week and lifelines to their local residents.</p>	<p>Oxfordshire would state that they are behind on payments for gas and electricity. The scale of the challenge is beyond the means of the Council so we will continue to press for a more ambitious and sustained response from national government. For now, direct support from government is limited and time-bound. Taking account of this, the Council has can play a role in directing our support to the most economically vulnerable in our communities.</p> <p>Government determines the allocation of Household Support Fund (HSF) to each upper tier local authority. Oxfordshire will receive £3.4m in the second round (approximately £5 per resident). The previous round of £3.4m (October 2021-March 2022) was 100% utilised. For the second round, we will continue our approach of funding free school meal equivalent support in school holiday periods through schools, colleges and early years provides. This works alongside the delegation of funds for emergency welfare schemes delivered through the city and district council in partnership with the voluntary and community sector. FSM support was funded for May half term and the City and District schemes will formally relaunch in mid-June. In developing plans we have engaged with county-wide and local advisory services and the wider voluntary and community sector.</p> <p>In addition to HSF, Council agreed £500,000 of annual revenue funding for emergency welfare support for 2022/23-2025/26. In response to the cost of living emergency we are focussing our limited funding on where we can make the most difference to the most vulnerable through two schemes. Firstly, plans are well underway for a rapid expansion of the</p>

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	<p>Better Housing Better Health scheme (BHBH). BHBH works with the most at risk households to identify energy and cost saving measures that can improve quality of life and help mitigate the impact of energy price rises. Phone consultations will increase from 400 to 2700 during the year and home visits to the most vulnerable from 200 to 500 reaching in total approximately 10% of fuel poor households. The BHBH steering group are building relationships with key partners who serve residents who are likely to be in fuel poverty, such as the Agnes Smith Centre in Blackbird Leys and Citizens Advice. BHBH are training frontline staff about fuel poverty and promoting the BHBH service. The provider of the service is an expert in the field of fuel poverty and is able to triage the offer of home visits and use data to ensure we are reaching those who are most likely to be in need. Secondly, we have agreed to support the critical debt and money advice teams from our partners at Citizens Advice with a grant of £210,000 to maintain capacity through 2022/23. Details of these schemes will be fully announced in the coming weeks as details are finalised with the providers.</p> <p>In addition working in partnership with the Oxfordshire Community Foundation, Community First Oxfordshire, Good Food Oxfordshire and OCVA, the Council has used one off grant funding to provide a further round of community resilience grants which will support grass-roots organisations who play a critical role in supporting the most vulnerable remain sustainable into the winter period. £300,000 will support projects across the county. The deadline for applications closed on Thursday 16 June and will be reviewed by a cross-sector grants panel. As part of this grants round, the VCS led a number of workshops to expand access to</p>

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	the scheme.
<p>3. COUNCILLOR FREDDIE VAN MIERLO</p> <p>The Watlington Relief Road is an important piece of local infrastructure that, when delivered, will relieve heavy traffic through the centre of the historic market town, which can then be remodelled to prioritise local business and people.</p> <p>Concerns have been expressed by some that the route would see an increase in HGV traffic. Can the cabinet member confirm that the Watlington Relief Road will fall within the existing area weight restrictions around Watlington thereby preventing through traffic of HGVs, and confirm that there are no plans to change the weight restrictions around Watlington?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR DUNCAN ENRIGHT, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRAVEL & DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY</p> <p>OCC can confirm that the Watlington Relief Road scheme has no plans to amend or alter the current weight restriction that is currently enforced around Watlington. The Watlington Relief Road will remain within the existing area weight restriction band which is currently 7.5 tonnes.</p>
<p>4. COUNCILLOR JOHN HOWSON</p> <p>How long do you anticipate the 'pause' in the Woodstock Road corridor scheme will last?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR DUNCAN ENRIGHT, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRAVEL & DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY</p> <p>This scheme will be considered by Cabinet in July as part of the review of the Capital Programme.</p>

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<p>Supplementary</p> <p>The Banbury Road scheme has clearly already been abandoned before even reaching the consultation stage so today I want to ask on behalf of my residents that the proposals for Moreton Road, considered part of the Banbury Road study, be actioned as a distinct small scale scheme. This would have the benefit of making any Marston Ferry Road bus gate unnecessary but also prevent traffic aiming for the ill-advised Oxford North scheme from using the Marston Ferry Road and the Moreton Road as a cut-through.</p>	<p>Response</p> <p>Local Members' input is extremely important on this and all other schemes. I'll take those comments and discuss them further.</p>

