

CABINET

MINUTES of the meeting held on Tuesday, 28 November 2017 commencing at 2.00 pm and finishing at 2.52 pm

Present:

Voting Members: Councillor Ian Hudspeth – in the Chair
Councillor Mrs Judith Heathcoat
Councillor Lawrie Stratford
Councillor Lorraine Lindsay-Gale
Councillor Yvonne Constance OBE
Councillor David Bartholomew
Councillor Hilary Hibbert-Biles
Councillor Mark Gray

Other Members in Attendance: Councillor Helen Evans (Agenda Item 7)
Councillor Bob Johnson (Agenda Item 6)
Councillor Laura Price (Agenda Item 10)
Councillor John Sanders (Agenda Item 6)

Officers:

Whole of meeting	Nick Graham (Director of Law & Governance); Sue Whitehead (Resources Directorate)
Part of meeting	
Item	Name
6	Owen Jenkins, Director for Infrastructure Delivery
7	Joseph Turner (Treasury Management & Pension Investment)
8	Sarah Jelley, Senior Policy and Performance Officer
9	Lucy Butler, Director for Children's Services

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.

83/17 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

(Agenda Item. 1)

Apologies were received from Councillor Steve Harrod.

84/17 MINUTES

(Agenda Item. 3)

The Minutes of the meeting held on 17 October 2017 were approved and signed as a correct record.

85/17 QUESTIONS FROM COUNTY COUNCILLORS

(Agenda Item. 4)

Councillor Howson had given notice of the following question to Councillor Constance:

“The speed humps installed 25 years ago in Kingston Road, when Honorary Alderman Dermot Roaf was county councillor for that part of North Oxford, are no longer an effective deterrent, partly due to higher ground clearances in modern commercial and private vehicles. Since the closure of Beaumont Street, after the fire at the Randolph Hotel, the St Margaret’s Road and Kingston Road route to Worcester Street has become a favoured alternative route through Oxford. This has resulted in more speeding vehicles on Kingston Road, despite the traffic calming measures already in place.

Would the Cabinet Member ask officials to conduct both a speed check of traffic using Kingston Road and also to devise a scheme to reinforce the speed humps in order to deter through traffic and the users of the road that regularly ignore the speed limit. Any scheme should also aim to make the road safer for the many cyclists that currently use it.”

Councillor Constance replied:

“The regular monitoring of traffic flows on Kingston Road undertaken shows no obvious upward trend in recent years. However, there is no recent speed survey data so I will commit to getting this carried out. Before any commitment can be made as to whether or not to implement initiatives to help manage speed though, I would wish to see the results of this speed survey.”

Supplementary: Asked whether the Cabinet Member would also consider trying to measure type and weight of vehicles using the road, Councillor Constance replied that she would see what can be done

Responding to a question from Councillor Heathcoat as Deputy Leader as to why Councillor Howson had not gone direct to officers, but brought the question to Cabinet he replied that the issue of speeding was raised at a public meeting and he would have raised the question at the Cabinet Member’s delegated decisions meeting but already had a question down for answering. In view of the public interest in the issue within Councillor Howson’s division, he wished to ask the question and receive an answer in a public forum.

Councillor Emily Smith had given notice of the following question to Councillor Hudspeth:

"How will elected members and members of the public be involved in the development of the Joint Spatial Plan for Oxfordshire? Given that the County, City and Districts have different community involvement policies,

which body will be responsible for coordinating public engagement to ensure consultation is meaningful and the process is transparent?"

Councillor Hudspeth replied:

Appropriate decision-making arrangements for developing the Joint Statutory Spatial Plan (JSSP) have yet to be finalised; an appropriate governance structure will be jointly devised by the County and District Councils, through the Oxfordshire Growth Board.

The JSSP will be a statutory plan and therefore subject to statutory consultation. A Joint Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) will be developed in the early stage of the plan-making process; this will set out the detailed consultation plan and consultation will be required to be undertaken at the following stages:

- The scoping of evidence, in particular the Strategic Environmental Assessment
- The scoping of the key issues facing Oxfordshire and the options for addressing them
- Preferred options & emerging strategy
- The draft pre-submission (Reg19) plan – ahead of the JSSP being submitted to the Inspectorate for examination

Councillor Roberts had given notice of the following question to Councillor Hudspeth

"Does the Leader of the Council consider the £150 million identified for infrastructure in the Budget to be adequate, given the current congestion on our roads, and the number of houses that are planned for Oxfordshire?"

Councillor Hudspeth replied:

"The £150m funding for infrastructure, though very welcome, is a starting point in terms of being able to support Oxfordshire's growth – it will help get us through the next few years, but we have a longer term plan based around our newly agreed Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy which sets out what we need beyond that. The funding is spread over a 5 year period and we will be working with our City and District partners to obtain the best value for money. This is a clear indication from Central government that it recognises that Oxfordshire councils can work together to deliver infrastructure; I am confident that this will boost our chances of being successful in the future."

Supplementary: Councillor Roberts enquired what level of funding was required given the £150m was referred to as a starting point. Councillor Hudspeth highlighted the £7b funding made available nationally that was split between a number of agencies including Network Rail and Highways England.

Responding to a question from Councillor Heathcoat as to the figure Councillor Roberts considered adequate she replied that she did not know but that her original question was valid when it was considered that the budget of the Cambridge-Oxford Expressway was several billion pounds. Councillor Hudspeth clarified that the funding for the Expressway and the growth funding were not connected.

Councillor Roz Smith had given notice of the following question to Councillor Gray:

"I am pleased that decisions on the local community fund grant applications were devolved to locality boards, although the fact that the published deadline differed from what was originally communicated for Oxford did cause unnecessary confusion. Could the cabinet member explain how, and by whom, expenditure of the grant monies will be monitored, against what was proposed in each applicant's grant application."

Councillor Gray replied:

"I understand you attended the Oxford Locality meeting in July when the majority of councillors agreed that a strategic approach to allocating funds in the City would be taken where possible, and applications would be considered at the September Oxford Locality meeting. This was to ensure there was sufficient time for successful applicants to spend the money before March 2018. I also understand this approach was publicised on the Council's website, that interested community groups were notified and councillors were provided with a suggested statement to use when communicating with groups in their division. I am pleased to learn that the full £50,000 of funding has since been allocated to community groups in the City following your September Locality meeting. I appreciate some confusion may have been caused with a later deadline date published on the generic application form, however it has always been the intention to be clear to organisations intending to bid that they should be aware of the local variation.

Successful applicants are expected to comply with any monitoring request, which will include receipts detailing how money has been spent, reports and evidence of project activities, and feedback from people impacted by the project. All projects are subject to review and successful applicants are encouraged to keep the Policy Team informed of their project's progress and any setbacks incurred. Monitoring will be undertaken by the Accountable Officer Sarah Jelley post March 2018 and include a financial return from the organisations. A monitoring report will be made available for Councillors. As with any grant the County Council awards, Councillors can be assured that any unspent monies will be recovered by the County Council."

Supplementary: Councillor Roz Smith confirmed that some organisations had still worked on the later date because that was the date on the grant form. Councillor Roz Smith asked where only part of a bid was funded whether there would be a subsequent agreement on how the monies allocated were

spent. He asked whether she could meet with him to discuss. Councillor Gray undertook to provide an answer

86/17 PETITIONS AND PUBLIC ADDRESS

(Agenda Item. 5)

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

Item 6. Review of Highway Maintenance Policies - Councillor Bob Johnson, local councillor for Kennington & Radley
Councillor John Sanders, Shadow Cabinet Member for Environment

Item 7. Treasury Management Mid Term Review - Councillor Helen Evans, Shadow Cabinet Member for Finance

Item 8. Transition Fund for Community Initiatives for Open Access Children's Services Round 4 - Councillor Liz Brighthouse (did not speak)

Item 9. Chiltern Edge School - Dave Robinson, Save Our Edge campaign
Moira Green, Headteacher of Chiltern Edge

Item 10. Staffing Report - Councillor Laura Price, Opposition Deputy Leader

87/17 REVIEW OF HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE POLICIES

(Agenda Item. 6)

The County Council's current Highway Maintenance Policy and Strategy are based on the old National Code of Practice for Highway Maintenance (Well Maintained Highways) which has now been superseded by the new Code of Practice, 'Well-managed Highway Infrastructure', commissioned by DfT and published in late 2016.

Refreshing the policies and supporting principles will underpin improvements in the effectiveness of highway maintenance delivery, and assist in meeting planned savings in the delivery of frontline services and to maximise funding Through the DfT Incentive Fund process. Cabinet considered a report that set out a draft policy for approval together with recommendations for a future approach.

Councillor Bob Johnston, local councillor for Kennington & Radley referred to the diagram on page 26 and stated that he was anxious to ensure that the road closures for Armistice Day ceremonies would be able to continue. Councillor Hudspeth commented that this was a high level document but that local services were held across the County which he expected would be accommodated.

Councillor John Sanders, Shadow Cabinet Member for Environment, noted that there were still other documents to come forward and he queried when

and how councillors would get oversight of these additional documents. He was assured that councillors would get oversight and that an advisory group was to be set up.

Councillor Constance, Cabinet Member for Environment, moved the recommendations. Owen Jenkins highlighted that the policy set out very new thinking. The policy provided a core statement and a set of underpinning principles and it would take a couple of years through the proposed CAG to review all the documents. What was proposed was a risk based, targeted spend that should reflect local need, with greater local engagement.

During discussion Cabinet welcomed that the policies and procedures were to be shortened. In response to a query as to how local engagement would be achieved and local knowledge fed in to the procedures Owen Jenkins stated that they would be looking to the CAG to consider that.

RESOLVED: to:

- (a) approve the draft Highway Infrastructure Management Policy;
- (b) agree to the arrangements for sign-off of other documents as set out in the report; and
- (c) establish a Cabinet Advisory Group as set out in the report.

88/17 TREASURY MANAGEMENT MID TERM REVIEW (2017/18)

(Agenda Item. 7)

Cabinet considered a report that set out the Treasury Management activity undertaken in the first half of the financial year 2017/18 in compliance with the CIPFA Code of Practice. The report included Debt and Investment activity, Prudential Indicator monitoring and forecast interest receivable and payable for the financial year.

Councillor Helen Evans, Shadow Cabinet Member for Finance, acknowledged the strong performance of the Treasury Management Team and understood that the budget principles would be reviewed prior to the Council budget. Councillor Evans queried the impact of Brexit on treasury management strategy and whether the uncertainty made planning difficult. Councillor Evans requested that a report be prepared either for Cabinet or the Audit & Governance Committee. She also queried the lack of ethical investment.

Councillor David Bartholomew, Cabinet Member for Finance, replied to the comments made and expressed his satisfaction that performance against budget was good. He hoped that would continue and although it was right to ask questions if we were overperforming and this cautious approach would continue. ~~underperforming he would continue to take a cautious approach.~~ The risk around Brexit was being considered and would be reported to the Audit & Governance Committee. On ethical investment ~~policy~~ there was no

specific policy. ~~nothing very specific~~. The primary objective was the security of investments that led to investment being with banks, building societies and some external funds. (Paragraph amended at the Cabinet meeting on 19 December.)

Councillor Bartholomew introduced the contents of the report and moved the recommendations.

RESOLVED: to:

(a) note the report; and

(b) RECOMMEND Council to approve the revision to the Treasury Management Strategy Statement & Annual Investment Strategy 2017/18.

89/17 TRANSITION FUND FOR COMMUNITY INITIATIVES FOR OPEN ACCESS CHILDREN'S SERVICES ROUND 4

(Agenda Item. 8)

In February 2016 the council agreed to set aside £1m for creating a 'one off' fund to provide pump priming to support the provision of open access children's services. In September 2017 Cabinet agreed the proposed use of the underspend for further rounds of grant funding. Cabinet had before them a report setting out the recommendations of the cross party group of councillors following their consideration of the applications received against the criteria outlined in the guidance notes.

RESOLVED: to:

(a) Approve for funding the following bids:

- (a) Leys Community Church
- (b) Slade Nursery School

(b) Ask that further work is conducted to develop more robust business plans and reapply for funding under the next round of applications:

- (a) Dovecote Voluntary Parent Committee
- (b) Sutton Courtney Stay and Play Group

90/17 CHILTERN EDGE SCHOOL - PROGRESS REPORT

(Agenda Item. 9)

Chiltern Edge School has been placed in Special Measures following an Ofsted rating of 'Inadequate'. On 18 July 2017 Cabinet considered a report on a consultation into the future of Chiltern Edge School, and resolved to commission an external review of the progress made by October 2017 towards addressing the weaknesses identified by Ofsted and the

construction of an in-year balanced budget. Cabinet considered a further report on the progress identified by the external review.

Dave Robinson, Save Our Edge campaign spoke as a parent and former teacher in support of keeping the School open. He outlined the actions that had been taken by the campaign including taking over the running of the Parent Teacher Group. He stressed that since the earlier report the school was improving and the potential was clear. He commended the strong leadership provided by the headteacher.

Moira Green, Headteacher of Chiltern Edge School highlighted the effect on the children at the School of living with uncertainty over its future. The children were fiercely loyal to the School and she asked that this uncertainty be removed. Ms Green outlined the actions taken by the School and the progress made in all areas. Councillor David Bartholomew referred to the level of concern raised with him as a local councillor at the beginning of May and his admiration for everything that had been achieved in such a short space of time.

Councillor Hilary Hibbert-Biles, Cabinet Member for Public Health & Education in moving the recommendations emphasised that the School had made progress in all the areas outlined in the earlier report. The Inspectors agreed that there were green shoots of recovery. She referred to the fantastic job by Ms Green and that she wanted to see the School move forward strongly. Councillor Stratford proposed an additional recommendation recognising the work of the headteacher and parents.

RESOLVED: to:

- (a) note the content of the external review of progress made by the school towards addressing the weaknesses identified by Ofsted;
- (b) note the progress made by the school in creating an in year balanced budget;
- (c) note progress made in identifying an appropriate academy sponsor for the school;
- (d) resolve not to publish a statutory notice proposing closure of Chiltern Edge School; and
- (e) Cabinet recognises and supports the leadership of the new headteacher and the wonderful job that parents have done for the children at the school.

91/17 STAFFING REPORT - QUARTER 2 - 2017

(Agenda Item. 10)

Cabinet considered a report giving an update on staffing numbers and related activity during the period 1 July 2017 to 30 September 2017. It give

details of the actual staffing numbers at 30 September 2017 in terms of Full Time Equivalents. In addition, the report provided information on the cost of posts being covered by agency staff and an Agency Trend analysis.

Councillor Laura Price, Opposition Deputy Leader, in recognising the scale of the reduction in staff that the Council has had to make in challenging times, stressed the need to retain and maintain the staff we have and welcomed the Capita staff coming back in house. Councillor Price noted that consultancy spend had gone up and noted the new arrangement with Comensura. It was important to ensure the expected delivery was achieved. Responding to a request to see the contract framework Councillor Judith Heathcoat, Deputy Leader replied that it would be shared with Political Group Leaders once the contract had started.

Councillor Heathcoat moved the recommendations.

RESOLVED: to note the report.

92/17 FORWARD PLAN AND FUTURE BUSINESS

(Agenda Item. 11)

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