

CABINET

MINUTES of the meeting held on Tuesday, 17 December 2019 commencing at 2.00 pm and finishing at 2.50 pm

Present:

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

Other Members in Attendance: Cllr Mark Lygo (Agenda Item 6)
Councillor Glynis Phillips (Agenda Items 7 & 8)
Councillor Laura Price (Agenda Item 9)

Officers:

Whole of meeting Yvonne Rees (Chief Executive); Lorna Baxter, Director of Finance; Nick Graham, Director of Law & Governance; Sue Whitehead (Law & Governance)

Part of meeting
Item

	Name
6	Claire Taylor, Corporate Director Customers and Organisational Development; Will Harper, Head of ICT
9	Claire Taylor, Corporate Director Customers and Organisational Development; Karen Edwards, Deputy Director HR

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.

118/19 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

(Agenda Item. 1)

Apologies were submitted by Councillor Steve Harrod.

119/19 MINUTES

(Agenda Item. 3)

The Minutes of the meeting held on 19 November 2019 were approved and signed as a correct record.

120/19 QUESTIONS FROM COUNTY COUNCILLORS

(Agenda Item. 4)

Seven questions with notice were asked. Details of the questions and answers and the supplementary questions and answers (where asked) are set out in Annex 1 to the Minutes.

121/19 PETITIONS AND PUBLIC ADDRESS

(Agenda Item. 5)

Mr Patrick Davey, presented a petition on behalf of residents, on the impact on St Barnards Road, of closing Walton Street South, Oxford

The Chairman received the Petition and referred it to the Strategic Director for Communities for consideration.

The following requests to speak had been agreed by the Chairman:

Item	Speaker
Item 6 – ICT Digital Strategy & Endorsement of Local Digital Declaration	Councillor Mark Lygo, Shadow Cabinet Member for Transformation
Item 7 – Business Management & Monitoring Report - September 2019	Councillor Glynis Phillips, Shadow Cabinet Member for Finance
Item 8 – Capital Programme Monitoring Report	Councillor Glynis Phillips, Shadow Cabinet Member for Finance
Item 9 – Staffing Report Quarter 2 July – September 2019	Councillor Laura Price, Opposition Deputy Leader

122/19 ICT STRATEGY, DIGITAL STRATEGY & ENDORSEMENT OF LOCAL DIGITAL DECLARATION

(Agenda Item. 6)

Cabinet considered a report setting out the Information Technology Strategy and the Framework for Digital Service Delivery and seeking approval to adopt and become a signatory on the Digital Declaration.

Councillor Mark Lygo, Shadow Cabinet Member for Transformation asked about the timescale for the Digital Declaration which he would want to see as soon as possible. Councillor Lygo asked for more detail on the finance information set out in the report and queried whether it would come to the Transformation Cabinet Advisory Group. He was advised that a meeting of the Group had already been set for January 2020

Councillor Eddie Reeves, Cabinet Member for Transformation in moving the recommendations introduced the contents of the report. Responding to the query from Councillor Lygo Councillor Reeves detailed the capital investment

and expected savings and reduction in ongoing revenue commitment. This would be built into the Medium Term Financial Plan.

Claire Taylor, Corporate Director for Customers and Organisational Development, responding to the query from Councillor Lygo on the Digital Declaration advised that it was about a commitment to the Declaration and that at this stage there was no specific timeframe. What was important was how it linked into how our services can be accessed. On the expected savings Ms Taylor added that an early assumption had been the development of one large new system. However, it was more important to sweat the existing assets and to use effectively the existing digital capability. The business case was the investment profile referred to by Councillor Reeve. If it was ever decided to go with a big new system, then a business case would be developed for approval.

During discussion Cabinet welcomed the proposals and thanked officers for their work. The opportunity to share the work with partners was welcomed. Cabinet highlighted the energy efficiency of the cloud-based systems with it being noted that since 2012 Microsoft had declared all their data centres were carbon neutral.

RESOLVED: to:

- (a) agree the proposed Information Technology Strategy and the Framework for Digital Service Delivery; and
- (b) adopt the Local Digital Declaration and become a signatory.

123/19 BUSINESS MANAGEMENT & MONITORING REPORT - OCTOBER 2019

(Agenda Item. 7)

Cabinet considered a report that set out Oxfordshire County Council's (OCC's) progress towards Corporate Plan priorities and provided an update on the delivery of the Medium Term Financial Plan from 1 October to 31 October 2019.

Councillor Glynis Phillips, Shadow Cabinet Member for Finance welcomed the clarity in identifying changes since the previous report (paragraph 13 refers) and welcomed the three improved indicators particularly that for the timeliness of Education & Health Care Plans (EHCPs). She noted that two indicators, those relating to the proportion of people walking/cycling and the levels of energy use had moved from green to amber. Councillor Phillips stressed that it was important to meet targets as they were linked to savings. Councillor Phillips referred to a number of indicators still causing concern including those relating to delayed discharges of care and unaccompanied asylum seekers. In terms of finance Councillor Phillips went on to highlight that 80% of savings were forecast to be met by year end and commented on the overspend in the High Needs Block due to the increase in EHCPs

Councillor Judith Heathcoat, Deputy Leader of the Council in introducing the business and risk elements of the report stated that the report gave a detailed picture against priorities in a transparent and timely way. It confirmed there was continuing good progress against targets. For the first time it included an annex on risk (Annex B). Councillor Heathcoat highlighted the work on electric blanket testing by Trading Standards and the Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Service.

Councillor David Bartholomew, Cabinet Member for Finance introduced the finance element of the report.

Councillor Lawrie Stratford, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care & Public Health referred to the position on delayed discharges of care. It was frustrating to be low in the league table relative to other local authorities. He did feel that the relative position was perhaps not how it was portrayed as he believed that the counting elsewhere was done differently.

The new Director was working well with the health service and steps were being taken to improve the reablement contract. Locally they did ensure that the time people were in hospital was shorter than in many other hospitals.

RESOLVED: to:

- (a) note the contents of this report; and
- (b) approve the virements set out in Annex C – 2a and note the virements set out in Annex C – 2b.

124/19 CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING REPORT - OCTOBER 2019

(Agenda Item. 8)

Cabinet had before them the third capital programme update and monitoring report for the 2019/20 financial year that focused on the delivery of the capital programme based on projections at the end of October 2019 and new inclusions within the overall ten-year capital programme.

Councillor Glynis Phillips, Shadow Cabinet Member for Finance referred to the increased costs for the school expansion projects and sought assurance that the quotes were accurate and querying the level of confidence in the current quotes. Councillor Phillips also queried how confident the Cabinet Member was in the costs for the Legacy Programme.

Councillor David Bartholomew, Cabinet Member for Finance referring to the school expansion projects indicated that clearly when estimating there was always a risk involved. However, the risk had been minimised. On the Legacy Programme latest discussions indicated that the sum concerned was a generous amount and that everything should be accommodated within that figure.

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

During discussion Cabinet supported the recommendation. In particular Cabinet welcomed the Milton Heights Bridge scheme that would improve facilities for cyclist and pedestrians across the County.

RESOLVED:

- (a) to approve the updated Capital Programme at Annex 2 and the associated changes to the programme in Annex 1c;
- (b) In relation to the Housing & Growth Deal to agree:
 - 1. the release of the Benson Relief Road scheme with a budget of £12.0m;
 - 2. the release of the Milton Heights Bridge scheme with a budget of £2.0m;
- (c) in relation to Schools to agree:
 - 1. the inclusion of the New Faringdon Primary School project in the Capital Programme with a budget of £10.9m;
 - 2. the inclusion of the New Primary School project in Wallingford in the Capital programme with a budget of £8.7m;
 - 3. the inclusion of the expansion project at Thame, Lord Williams's School in the capital programme with a budget of £4.5m;
 - 4. the release of the expansion project at Chalgrove Primary School in the Basic Need programme with a budget of £2.0m;
 - 5. the release of the expansion project at John Watson Special School (Secondary) in the Basic Need programme with a budget of £3.0m;
- (d) to agree the release of the Legacy Programme with a budget of £15.0m, and report the governance of these projects at a programme level.

125/19 STAFFING REPORT - QUARTER 2 - JULY - SEPTEMBER 2019

(Agenda Item. 9)

Cabinet considered a report that gave an update on staffing numbers and related activity during the period 1 July 2019 to 30 September 2019. It gave details of the actual staffing numbers at 30 September 2019 in terms of Full Time Equivalents. In addition, the report provided information on the cost of posts being covered by agency staff and a 4 year Agency Trend analysis.

Councillor Laura Price, Opposition Deputy Leader welcomed the narrative within the report that enabled readers to get under the actual figures to understand key challenges. Councillor Price referred to the agency staff funded by short term government grants and highlighted the need to monitor this area carefully. It was important to interrogate the outcomes to ensure that the Council was not becoming over reliant on grant funding that may not continue.

Councillor Price welcomed the reduction in agency funding by the Communities Directorate. However, she was alarmed at the unplanned demand increase and queried what was being done to address that.

Councillor Price also sought clarity on why some agency staff were being sourced directly rather than through Comensura.

Councillor Judith Heathcoat, Deputy Leader of the Council, in moving the recommendations introduced the contents of the report. Councillor Heathcoat commented that the report provided more effective trend analysis than previously. Responding to the points raised by Councillor Price, Councillor Heathcoat recognised that the figures for agency staff had risen slightly although spend was relatively stable. She agreed that the use of a single supplier had benefits including more competitive rates and strengthened control.

Councillor Corkin, Cabinet Member for Cherwell Partnership highlighted the number of shared posts referred to at paragraph 21 and 22 of the report and the continued commitment to joint working. Councillor Corkin also referred to a recent induction event for new staff that he had attended. He had been impressed with the interesting people he had met who had been challenging and questioning in a positive way.

Cabinet welcomed the refresh of the Cycle to Work Scheme and the removal of the limit on the loan available. This would enable free choice of the bike purchased including electric bikes. Members also highlighted the pool bike scheme that also included electric bikes.

RESOLVED: to note the contents of the report.

126/19 FORWARD PLAN AND FUTURE BUSINESS

(Agenda Item. 10)

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 2020

CABINET – 17 DECEMBER 2019

ITEM 4 – QUESTIONS FROM COUNTY COUNCILLORS

Questions	Answers
<p>1. COUNCILLOR MARK CHERRY</p> <p>Noting the recent trials by Skanska, contractors of graphene enhanced asphalt road resurfacing near Witney, on the Oxfordshire County Council website and the cost savings to Oxfordshire County Council thereafter, of the new tarmac treatments - will the Cabinet member for Environment consider the next trials at Warwick Road in Banbury Ruscote. The Cabinet member will note a similar question as parts of the Warwick road continues to fail.</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR YVONNE CONSTANCE, CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT</p> <p>The recent trial using the Graphene material was undertaken at a location that was selected as it was already in the capital programme and was suitable for a trial to be undertaken.</p> <p>Although the issues in Warwick Road are known to officers it is not yet a confirmed scheme in the capital programme. I do note your appetite for a trial within your division, and I will ask officers to note this enthusiasm and progress similar trials if suitable opportunities arise.</p>
<p>2. COUNCILLOR MARK CHERRY</p> <p>Could the Cabinet member for Environment, Councillor Yvonne Constance urgently look at funding a strategy to stop grass verges and areas</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR YVONNE CONSTANCE, CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT</p> <p>I understand the problems and damage caused by vehicles parking and driving on verges. Unfortunately, given our current budget pressures, this isn't a priority for the highway service, particularly given the often high cost of</p>

Questions	Answers
<p>of land like Prescott close in Banbury Ruscote, being totally ruined by cars or vans in the winter time. Highway officer's hands are totally tied due to the lack of funding from Oxfordshire County Council. I feel long term strategy needs to be considered going forwards in the form of either bollards or parking bays.</p>	<p>installing bollards or parking bays. However, where there are specific areas causing a safety concern then officers will investigate to determine if there is a feasible and affordable solution.</p>
<p>3. COUNCILLOR MARK CHERRY</p> <p>Could the Cabinet member for Environment, Councillor Yvonne Constance urgently look at a different strategy on storm drainage in Banbury Ruscote. Currently FixMyStreet reports are made, quite rightly, by members of the public on blocked storm drainage, to local members for Ruscote or to officers. In essence, what's needed is a whole scale rolling maintenance programme, so that storm drainage gets pumped out yearly by OCC contractors, especially like parts of Warwick Road that has tree proximity, which over time is clogging up storm drainage that with heavy rainfall will consequently flood. Something needs to be done, as we will see more flooding with climate change'.</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR YVONNE CONSTANCE, CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT</p> <p>I am informed that officers are investigating where drainage issues have been reported and ongoing problems recognised. This work will include more than just clearing the gullies, but it will also involve ensuring the system is running effectively and removing any obstructions, such as tree roots.</p> <p>I have also asked officers to ensure that the scheduled gully emptying programme targets areas where there are known flooding issues.</p>

Questions	Answers
<p>4. COUNCILLOR CHARLES MATHEW</p> <p>Have you noticed the grubbiness of the road signs in Oxfordshire and do you not think that signs on major roads in the county at least should be cleaned twice a year, to uphold the pride of Oxfordshire County Council?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR YVONNE CONSTANCE, CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT</p> <p>I agree that grubby road signs can be unsightly. Funding pressures do mean that we cannot clean signs routinely but I can assure you that statutory signs are cleaned when required so that people can move safely around the network. We are already working closely with our District and City colleagues as well as our local communities to see how we can resolve these issues and create a better look and feel for our local towns and villages. We do currently have a number of locations where this is happening across the county, and I am keen to see this approach extended further within a structured and safe working environment.</p>
<p>5. COUNCILLOR CHARLES MATHEW</p> <p>Should the abundance of commercial advertisements attached to or on OCC property (ie roads/signs) be subject to a monthly charge</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR YVONNE CONSTANCE, CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT</p> <p>Any commercial advertising does require planning permission and approval from the highway authority to ensure it is acceptable and safe. I agree it is worth exploring charging and will ask officers to investigate this, along with</p>

Questions	Answers
for use of those assets?	District Council colleagues, as well as looking at how we can ensure that any unapproved commercial advertising is removed. The agency agreement with Cherwell District Council allows the District to undertake the removal of illegal signage on the highways and also for then to manage the advertising on roundabouts in the local area. Where any illegal signage is on OCC property we will remove if the signage does not have the required permission, is inappropriate or deemed to create a highways related safety issue.
<p>6. COUNCILLOR CHARLES MATHEW</p> <p>Filming in Merton Street /Oriel Square, Oxford took place over two days in September this year by Pinewood Studios. How much were they charged for freeing of those areas from traffic?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR DAVID BARTHOLOMEW, CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE</p> <p>£3069.75</p>
<p>7. COUNCILLOR JOHN HOWSON</p> <p>What discussions did the Cabinet member have with Councillors about the closure of Walton Street, and the possible extension of that closure, between 12th September - the date of her answer to my question on the subject - and the announcement of the extension of the closure for an experimental period of up to 18 months?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR YVONNE CONSTANCE, CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT</p> <p>I can confirm that I relayed the request to consider an extension of the closure to officers, should such an opportunity arise. I was satisfied with this approach as the Experimental Order allows for continuous feedback from residents.</p> <p>We are now monitoring the impact of the closure on cyclists and other road users. I am aware that the current closure has caused issues within the Walton Manor area of your division and that Officers are working closely with</p>

Questions	Answers
	key residents and other internal teams to try and find a solution to the issues that are being experienced.
SUPPLEMENTARY	Responding to a query from Councillor Howson Councillor Constance explained that the experimental order functioned like a constant consultation and feedback was welcomed. Councillor Constance undertook to check on how the Pick-me-up Service may have been affected. In respect of bus services, if any funding for subsidised services became available the No 17 service would be considered but this was not likely.