

Divisions- N/A

COUNTY COUNCIL – 11 July 2023

REPORT OF THE CABINET

Cabinet Member: Leader

1. Appointments 2023/24

(Cabinet, 23 May 2023)

Cabinet had before it a report recommending member appointments to a variety of bodies which, in different ways, supported the discharge of the Council's executive functions.

Cabinet approved the appointments set out in the report, subject to some amendments including the additional role of "Champion for Future Generations"

Cabinet Member: Deputy Leader

2. Cabinet response to report from People Overview and Scrutiny Committee - Home to School Transport Policy Working Group

(Cabinet, 23 May 2023)

Cabinet considered a report and recommendations from the Home to School Transport Working Group which had been established to consider:-

- (a) the Home to School Transport Policy and the options for any changes to the policy;
- (b) the impact on carbon emissions of any change in policy;
- (c) the equalities implications of any changes

The provision of Home to School Transport for eligible children was a statutory duty for local authorities. The Council determines and reviews its policy that applies to providing home to school transport for children of compulsory school age and also its Post 16 transport policy statement that applies to young people of sixth form age.

Members were addressed by parents affected by the proposals and by the Chair of the Working Group.

Cabinet approved a number of recommendations on changes to the policy.

3. SEND Sufficiency and LGSCO findings report

(Cabinet, 20 June 2023)

Cabinet had before it a report detailing proposals for an updated SEN sufficiency strategy and learning from a recent decision by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman. The Council's Special Education Needs service, during 2021 and 2022, was delayed in its handling of the

production of a child's education, health and care plan. Additionally, during that period the child was not provided with education between April 2022 and December 2022. The service, following the intervention by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman, addressed the handling of the request for the child's school place and had identified points of learning and service improvement opportunities which were identified in the report.

Cabinet welcomed the measures taken in response to the LGSCO report and noted the updated Special Educational Needs' School Places Sufficiency Strategy.

Cabinet Member: Climate Change Delivery and Environment

4. Oxfordshire Air Quality Strategy

(Cabinet, 23 May 2023)

Cabinet considered a report which provided an overview of the Oxfordshire County Council Air Quality Strategy. It summarised the background to the strategy, development process and content of the strategy.

Members noted that the results of traffic data collection exercises would form part of report for full consideration by the Cabinet in due course and recognised the issues concerning air quality in specific areas of the County due to traffic congestion. The Air Quality Strategy would help deliver transport and place planning policies across the County and the importance of working with partners including district councils and community initiatives was noted.

Cabinet approved the Air Quality Strategy and Route Map for launch on Clean Air Day (15th June 2023).

5. Oxfordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy

(Cabinet, 23 May 2023)

Cabinet had before it a report on the proposed governance structure for the Oxfordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS)

The Environment Act 2021 introduced a requirement to produce Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS). LNRS would be spatial strategies that establish priorities and map proposals for specific actions to drive nature's recovery and provide wider environmental benefits.

The County of Oxfordshire had been identified as a geographical area for an LNRS, and Oxfordshire County Council had accepted a nomination from the Department of Environment Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) to be the provisional Responsible Authority to lead production of the Oxfordshire LNRS in March 2022. The Council expected to be formally appointed Responsible Authority in May 2023.

Members noted the need to ensure ongoing financial provision in the long term and that the strategy would have a significant impact on a range of Council policies. The LNRS would provide the opportunity for the Council, as lead

authority, to work with a range of partners in delivering positive outcomes for the natural environment and biodiversity in Oxfordshire.

Cabinet noted the Council's anticipated appointment as Responsible Authority for the Oxfordshire LNRS and approved the governance structure.

6. Policy on Supply Chain Emissions

(Cabinet, 20 June 2023)

Cabinet had before it a report recommending adoption of a policy to create a robust and prioritised approach to addressing supply chain emissions.

Supply chain emissions (sometimes described as 'Scope 3' emissions) made up around 90% of Oxfordshire County Council's (OCC) overall emissions. The Council was already working with some of its contractors to reduce carbon emissions, both through the social value policy and direct engagement with some contracts. The reporting of contractor emissions however was currently very limited.

Cabinet approved the policy which would:-

- Develop OCC's industry knowledge through improved understanding of the carbon reduction measures and targets implemented or planned by contractors.
- Enable baselining and tracking of scope 3 emissions in the council's GHG report for improved transparency on the council's wider emissions footprint and to measure progress on carbon reduction.
- Identify opportunities to collaborate with our suppliers in bidding for external funding or knowledge transfer.
- Identify opportunities to work with organisations procuring similar goods and services on developing ambitious specifications that drive the market towards low carbon solutions.

Cabinet Member: Corporate Services

7. Workforce Report and Workforce Data Q4 2022/23

(Cabinet, 20 June 2023)

Cabinet had before it a report on the workforce profile for quarter 4 of 2022/23 (January – March 2023) and an update on the progress of some of the key workforce priorities. The report referred to an increase in the directly employed headcount in the current financial year which would be subject to further scrutiny, a reduction in staff turnover, an increase in the number of apprenticeships and an increase in agency worker costs which was being addressed through organisational reviews and recruitment campaigns.

Cabinet noted the report and welcomed the initiatives being taken on recruitment, wellbeing of staff and equality, diversity and inclusion in the workforce.

Cabinet Members: Finance and Corporate Services

8. Proposal from OUFC to OCC as Landowner: Arrangements for Engagement

(Cabinet, 23 May 2023)

Cabinet had before it a report which provided an update on work underway, feedback from stakeholder meetings held to date and the plans for the second phase of public engagement regarding the use of a parcel of land known as 'Land to East of Frieze Way / South of Kidlington Roundabout or the triangle' for the development of a new stadium for Oxford United Football Club (OUFC).

Cabinet agreed the recommendations including changes to strategic priorities and the second phase of public engagement.

Cabinet Member: Finance

9. Financial Management Report 2023/24

(Cabinet, 23 May 2023)

Cabinet had before it a report which set out details of funding notified to the Council since the 2023/24 budget was agreed as well as other changes and risks which would need to be managed in 2023/24 and in the context of the Medium Term Financial Strategy. It also included an update on funding for the Early Intervention programme which was part of the 2023/24 budget for High Needs.

Cabinet noted the improvement to the Council's financial position and approved the recommendations including virements a supplementary estimate, and an update of the Higher Needs DSG budgets.

10. Capital Programme Approvals – May 2023

(Cabinet, 23 May 2023)

Cabinet had before it a report setting out change requests requiring Cabinet approval that would be incorporated into the agreed programme and included in the next update to the Capital Programme in July 2023.

Cabinet approved the revised budget provision of £11.2m for Wantage Eastern Link Road, the addition of £2.7m of road safety works in the vicinity of RAF Barford St John and RAF Croughton to the capital programme, the addition of £4.0m of the £5.0m pipeline funding agreed in February 2023 to the capital programme to support the Vision Zero Delivery Programme, the revised budget provision of £23.1m for the delivery of the new secondary school at Grove Airfield, the revised budget provision of £9.3m for the completion of works at Blessed George Napier School, Banbury, and the addition of £0.8m to the programme to create an Energy Efficiency Recycling Fund for Oxfordshire County Council Maintained Schools.

11. Business Management and Monitoring Report - Annual Report and Provisional Revenue Outturn 2022/23

(Cabinet, 20 June 2023)

Cabinet had before it the Council's annual performance report and provisional year-end financial position for 2022/23. The report captured the Council's response to the cost of living crisis and migration support, the impact on services delivered and described how the Council coordinated and supported the delivery of services. It highlighted that 71% of the Council's performance indicators were above target or very close to it.

The financial position for 2022/23 reflected the impact of increases in the level of demand for children's social care and a lack of suitable care placements available in the system as well as inflationary pressures across the council's services. Action had been taking to manage and mitigate this in 2022/23 and the on-going impact in 2023/24 and over the medium term was considered through the Budget & Business Planning Process for 2023/24.

Cabinet noted the report and approved the recommendations regarding virements, the carry-forward of a surplus on the On-Street Parking Account to 2023/24 and the creation of a new reserve to hold £0.5m income relating to the Zero Emissions Zone in Oxford for future use.

12. Capital Programme Report 2022/23

(Cabinet, 20 June 2023)

Cabinet received a report on performance relating to the Capital Programme for 2022/23.

The ten-year Capital Programme set out the agreed capital investment to deliver the priorities identified in the council's Capital and Investment Strategy. The report set out the performance against the programme shown in the latest monitoring report for 2022/23 and also compared back to the capital programme agreed by Council in February 2022. The figures reflected those to be included in the Council's Statement of Accounts for 2022/23.

The capital programme was updated throughout the year to reflect the latest delivery profiles and cost estimates for each programme. The last update was in January 2023 and this was agreed by Cabinet in March 2023. Expected spend for the year totalled £184.0m. Actual capital programme expenditure was £172.2m in 2022/23. The variation between the latest programme and the actual expenditure was -£11.8m (-6%). This spend was now expected to take place in 2023/24.

The capital programme expenditure of £172.2m was funded by £99.1m of capital grants and other external contributions, £28.8m of developer contributions and Community Infrastructure Levy, £2.6m of revenue contributions, and £41.7m of prudential borrowing.

The availability of workforce and materials and inflationary increases in contract prices were continuing to increase the risk to the deliverability and cost of capital

schemes. The combined impact of these factors has affected delivery in 2022/23 and is expected to continue in 2023/24 and future years.

Cabinet noted the performance report.

13. Capital Programme Approvals – June 2023

(Cabinet, 20 June 2023)

Cabinet approved the addition to the capital programme of the expansion of Wood Green School, Witney (£4.3m) and £2.6m to support the council's Tree Policy.

Cabinet Member: Highway Management

14. Lane Rental for Oxfordshire

(Cabinet, 20 June 2023)

Cabinet had before it a report giving proposals for a lane rental scheme in Oxfordshire.

The Council, as the Traffic Authority, had been running a successful Permit Scheme for road and street works since 2020. As a result, a further opportunity was now available to apply to the Department for Transport (DfT) for an Order to allow for the introduction of Lane Rental in Oxfordshire.

The Lane Rental Scheme (LRS) allowed for additional charges to apply to works on our busiest roads at the busiest times. This encouraged those working on the highway to avoid peak times (to avoid the charges) or pay the charges (completing the works in shortest possible timeframe), the maximum for which is £2,500 a day.

Fees arising from Lane Rental must be invested in works operations to reduce impacts, improving the highway network, and compensating society for disruptive works. In accordance with the Department for Transport guidance, it was proposed to set up joint working arrangements between the highway authority and works promoters to manage the allocation of funding arising from Lane Rental.

The introduction of Lane Rental was identified as a key ambition of the Network Management Plan 2023-2028, adopted by Cabinet in February 2023.

Cabinet approved the submission of an application to the Department of Transport for Lane Rental in Oxfordshire and delegated decision making on the timing and specific content of the Scheme and application to the Corporate Director of Environment and Place in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Highway Management.

Cabinet Member: Travel and Development Strategy

15. A40 Access to Witney – Compulsory Purchase Order

(Cabinet, 23 May 2023)

Cabinet had before it a report recommending approval of a Compulsory Purchase Order and Side Roads Order for the Access to Witney traffic scheme. The scheme would provide new west-facing slip roads onto the A40 at Shores Green and new walking and cycling facilities on the B4022 and alongside the A40. The benefits included reduced traffic flow, reduced traffic delays and improved air quality within Witney town centre, improved connectivity, enhancements to active travel provision and safety, and support for residential and economic development in Witney.

Cabinet approved the recommendations and welcomed the positive outcomes that would be realised for communities in Witney.

Scrutiny Reports

16. Reports received from scrutiny committees

(Cabinet, 23 May 2023)

Cabinet received a report on, and committed to respond formally to, the following:

- Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee: Future of the Retail Sector and the High Street (25 January 2023)

LIZ LEFFMAN

Leader of the Council

July 2023