

CABINET

MINUTES of the meeting held on Tuesday, 20 September 2022 commencing at 2.00 pm and finishing at 3.35 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, Donna Ford, Charlie Hicks, Dan Levy

Officers:

Whole of meeting Stephen Chandler, Interim Chief Executive; Lorna Baxter, Director of Finance; Anita Bradley, Director of Law & Governance; 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.

108/22 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

(Agenda Item. 1)

There were no apologies.

The Chair thanked all of the Council staff who had worked on the Proclamation ceremony and the Book of Condolences in the previous 10 days as well as staff of the Lord-Lieutenant. She believed that the County had done the late Queen and new King proud.

109/22 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

(Agenda Item. 2)

There were no declarations of interest.

110/22 MINUTES

(Agenda Item. 3)

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 July 2022 were approved and signed as an accurate record.

111/22 QUESTIONS FROM COUNTY COUNCILLORS

(Agenda Item. 4)

See Annex

112/22 PETITIONS AND PUBLIC ADDRESS

(Agenda Item. 5)

Item 6 – Business Management and Monitoring Report

Cllr Charlie Hicks

Item 10 – Highways Asset Management Strategy & Policy

Cllr Robin Bennett

Item 11 – Parking Standards for New Developments

Cllr Charlie Hicks

Cllr Dan Levy

Item 12 – Implementing ‘Decide & Provide’

Cllr Charlie Hicks

Cllr Dan Levy

113/22 BUSINESS MANAGEMENT & MONITORING REPORT - JUNE/JULY 2022

(Agenda Item. 6)

Cabinet had before it a report presenting the July 2022 performance, risk and finance position for the Council. Before considering the report, the Chair agreed to the following request to speak.

Councillor Charlie Hicks asked what was status of the cost predictions for the major capital projects were, including the Housing Infrastructure Fund and Growth Fund projects, and if they had been re-costed using the latest inflation figures.

Councillor Calum Miller, Cabinet Member for Finance, introduced the report. He noted that 15% of the targets were rated Red which mostly come under Children’s Services and Finance. Although measure OCC 11.06 “Total outturn variation for the dedicated schools grant funded services” indicates a change from Green to Red, this now incorporated the £17.5 million forecast overspend on high needs Dedicated Schools Grant and the underlying position had not changed.

There was a net deterioration in the forecast overspend on services of £5.9m. This was still within the risk assessed balance level but with a margin of £1.9m. This was being kept under very close review.

Responding to Councillor Hicks, Councillor Miller stated that the capital programme was being kept under close review, project by project but the full picture was not available yet.

Councillor Miller moved the recommendations and Councillor Enright seconded. The Chair noted that in recommendation c) it should read Annex B-2c and not 2b.

The recommendations were agreed as amended.

RESOLVED to:

- a) **Note the report.**
- b) **Agree the use of a further £0.4m funding from the COVID-19 reserve to extend the funding for the managed teams in the Family Solutions Plus service within Children's Services.**
- c) **Note the virements set out in Annex B-2c**

114/22 TREASURY MANAGEMENT QUARTERLY REPORT

(Agenda Item. 7)

Cabinet considered a report covering the treasury management activity for the first quarter of 2022/23, providing an update on the anticipated position and prudential indicators set out in the Treasury Management Strategy Statement & Annual Investment Strategy for 2022/23 agreed as part of the Council's budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy in February 2022.

Councillor Calum Miller, Cabinet Member for Finance, introduced the report. It needed to be viewed in the context of 10% inflation and the threat of recession. As a result of higher interest rates, interest receivable had increased by £2.24m. The Council also needed to borrow less this year, saving £600,000.

Councillor Miller was confident that the Council's lending to local authorities was well secured. The £100m invested in external funds was viewed as a long-term investment. So the current volatility in the market was not of great concern and the investments were producing a reasonable dividend.

The recommendations were moved by Councillor Miller, seconded by Councillor Sudbury and agreed.

RESOLVED to note the report, and to RECOMMEND Council to note the Council's treasury management activity in the first quarter of 2022/23.

115/22 WORKFORCE REPORT AND STAFFING DATA - QUARTER 1 - APRIL TO JUNE 2022

(Agenda Item. 8)

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

Councillor Glynis Phillips, Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, summarised the report. She drew particular attention to paragraph 9 outlining support for staff in obtaining qualifications in Maths and English. It had been identified as a barrier to promotion in the gender pay gap report, revealing a higher proportion of women in lower paid jobs.

Councillor Phillips also noted a reduction in absence. Managers had been encouraged to have early discussion with staff about the reasons for absence.

Councillor Duncan Enright asked if there was any more recent information on absence related to Covid infection. Councillor Phillips responded that she did not have anything more recent but those figures would be included in the next report.

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

RESOLVED to note the report.

116/22 RESPONDING TO THE COST OF LIVING CRISIS

(Agenda Item. 9)

Cabinet received a report setting out work already underway by the Council and recommending additional actions that can be taken to mitigate the impact of cost of living rises for those in greatest need.

Councillor Calum Miller introduced the report. He noted that there was particular concern entering the winter period about the costs of fuel and food. He was pleased that the Council was able to provide funding during school holidays for those entitled to free school meals. They were ensuring that there was continuing access to advice for individuals facing problems. £322,000 was being provided to support the care workers charity and £100,000 towards the programme to provide warm places during the winter. These were not huge sums but were manageable given the Council's limited resources. They will continue to highlight the challenges to national government.

Cabinet Members made the following points:

- The continued partnership working with other councils, partners and voluntary organisations, which worked so well during the pandemic, was welcomed.
- It was hoped the advice on financial wellbeing could be kept in place as it was likely this crisis would continue for some time.

- The number of children in poverty was rising – even in this relatively rich county. The poor always suffer most and it was important to ensure equitable distribution of funding to reduce inequalities.
- The Council was working with gypsy and traveller families to tackle their particular issues, for example they pay energy costs in their rent.
- The health impacts of hardship were not short-term but have lifelong impacts.

Councillor Mark Lygo left the meeting.

Councillor Miller proposed an amendment with a new text for recommendation d):

“Agree to contribute up to a maximum of £380,000 in matched funds to support Council Tax Hardship schemes in 2022/23, as described in paragraph 45, equitably dispersed between the City and District Councils.”

along with an amendment to the report:

In Table 2 on Page 11 of Addenda 2, delete “up to £50,000 per district / city authority” and replace with “up to a maximum of £380,000”.

The amendment was seconded by Councillor Phillips and agreed.

Councillor Miller moved the recommendations as amended. It was seconded by Councillor Sudbury and agreed.

RESOLVED to

- Note the arrangements already in place to support residents in the cost of living crises, noted from paragraph 31;**
- Agree to the proposals for additional support for residents set out in Table 2 as amended;**
- Agree to the funding arrangements included in Table 2 as amended to bring forward the use of £200,000 from the COVID reserve originally agreed to be used for emergency welfare spending in 2025/26 to 2022/23;**
- Agree to contribute up to a maximum of £380,000 in matched funds to support Council Tax Hardship schemes in 2022/23, as described in paragraph 45, equitably dispersed between the City and District Councils.**
- Note the additional support being put in place for staff in Annex 1.**

117/22 HIGHWAYS ASSET MANAGEMENT STRATEGY & POLICY

(Agenda Item. 10)

Cabinet had before it a report setting out the start of a new approach and focus for how the County Council undertakes Highway Maintenance and Asset Management.

Before considering the report, the Chair had agreed to the following request to speak:

Councillor Robin Bennett, Berinsfield & Garsington, stated that parts of South Oxfordshire had a high rate of road fatalities due to legacy road designs. He noted that the Council's Vision Zero policy was not mentioned and asked that it be included to support the drive to improve safety.

Councillor Andrew Gant, Cabinet Member for Highway Maintenance, summarised the report and accompanying documents that included the Policy, Strategy and Plan. On funding, the government provided around £16m per year and the Council borrowed to double that. However, it was estimated that £45m needed to be spent each year just to maintain roads in their current state. The Plan outlined how the finances will be managed to maximum benefit.

Cabinet Members commented:

- Footpaths and cycleways needed to be prioritised for maintenance. Just about everyone uses footpaths and those with mobility issues in particular need them to be well maintained.
- The shortfall that most stands out is the figure of £16m to spend on bridges in the next five years where the need is estimated at £96m.
- It would be helpful if the government would give the Council the powers to stop people parking on footpaths.

Councillor Gant proposed an amendment:

Page 101 of Addenda 1, Policy: AMP3 which currently states -

"The County Council will extend maintenance functions wherever possible to include for the betterment of walking, cycling, and other active/more sustainable transport choices (e.g. public transport)"

To append:

"and support the Council's commitment to Vision Zero."

The amendment was seconded by Councillor Sudbury and agreed.

Councillor Gant proposed the recommendations as amended, Councillor Sudbury seconded and they were agreed.

RESOLVED to

- a) Approve adoption of the Highway Asset Management Policy Statement (Annex 1, as amended), Strategy document (Annex 2), and Plan document (Annex 3)**

- b) Note the funding situation for Highway Maintenance summarised as Annex 4 that impacts on decisions and programmes which will be picked up through the normal budget setting process.**

118/22 PARKING STANDARDS FOR NEW DEVELOPMENTS

(Agenda Item. 11)

The Chair proposed to defer this item to the Cabinet meeting on 18 October 2022 to allow further work on the targets for this very important policy as part of the aim of reaching Net Zero by 2050. She believed the issue should be discussed by the Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee and she was in contact with the Chair to try to organise a meeting of the scrutiny committee before October Cabinet.

This was agreed.

119/22 IMPLEMENTING 'DECIDE & PROVIDE': REQUIREMENTS FOR TRANSPORT ASSESSMENTS

(Agenda Item. 12)

Cabinet considered a report which set out how a 'decide and provide' approach to transport planning will be adopted. The formal adoption of this document by Cabinet was recommended, as a supplementary document to the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan, in order to allow the relevant OCC officers to require the implementation of the approach in practice.

Before discussing the report, the Chair had agreed to the following requests to speak:

Councillor Charlie Hicks welcomed the fact that the Council will be one of the first to adopt such an approach. However, the tool could not be used until the car journey targets were known. He suggested that this policy be applied to new developments that were not yet master-planned as they might discover that some of the currently planned infrastructure was not needed.

Councillor Dan Levy also welcomed the policy. He was concerned that it might be difficult to implement in practice if a lot of pressure was brought to bear by developers and, perhaps, districts. He believed that there was a need to work with the city and districts to ensure that their plans were in line with this policy.

Councillor Duncan Enright, Cabinet Member for Travel & Development Strategy, summarised the proposals. Previously, future needs were calculated based on continuing previous trends. However, the new policy will take into account shifts to active travel and public transport. He agreed on the need for baseline data in order to set the targets. He was determined not to accept pushback on this policy. It would inform negotiations with landowners and developers.

Cabinet Members made the following comments:

- Some of the evidence on which previous predictions were made was very shaky.
- Life would become unbearable in many areas if traffic increased.
- There was a need to collocate residence and employment.
- It was regrettable that the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 was no longer available. However, the duty to cooperate still existed and the Future Oxfordshire Partnership would play a role.
- The timing on this was good as districts were now looking at their local plans.

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

RESOLVED to adopt the *'Implementing 'Decide & Provide': Requirements for Transport Assessments'* as a formal supplementary document to the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan.

120/22 TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR NEW INTEGRATED CARE PARTNERSHIP FOR BUCKINGHAMSHIRE, OXFORDSHIRE AND BERKSHIRE WEST

(Agenda Item. 13)

Cabinet considered draft Terms of Reference for the new Integrated Care Partnership (ICP) which will bring together Integrated Care Boards and Local Authorities (LAs) with responsibility for Social Care and Public Health in order to integrate the services they plan, purchase, and provide for local residents.

The Chair introduced the report. The Leaders of the six member organisations: OCC and the unitary councils Buckinghamshire, West Berkshire, Reading and Wokingham plus the ICB were working on Terms of Reference which will be adopted at the first meeting of the ICP in October.

As the only upper tier council in the ICP, it was agreed that Oxfordshire needed representation from the city and district councils to bring in issues such as health place shaping.

Cabinet Members commented as follows:

- This was an opportunity to move to an evidence-based health care approach.
- Compared to other health systems the NHS underspends on preventive and early intervention approaches.
- The draft indicated that the Chair of the ICP would agree the agenda whereas it should be agreed by the Members of the ICP. The Chair agreed to take that point up with the other organisations.

Responding to concerns expressed over control of pooled budgets, Stephen Chandler, Interim Chief Executive and local authority representative on the

ICB, added that the Section 75 pooled budget was agreed by this Council in March 2022 and can only be altered by this Council.

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

RESOLVED to

- a) **APPROVE the establishment of a new joint committee- the Integrated Care Partnership covering the Buckinghamshire Oxfordshire and Berkshire West area- and in principle, the working draft terms of reference for this partnership (See Annex 1)**
- b) **APPROVE the appointment of 2 cabinets members of Oxfordshire County Council to this partnership**
- c) **NOTE- the Leader of Oxfordshire County Council will agree the final version of the Terms of References once finalised in collaboration with all other founding partners**

121/22 FOR INFORMATION: CABINET RESPONSES TO REPORTS FROM SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

(Agenda Item. 14)

The Cabinet responses to reports from Scrutiny Committees were provided for information purposes and were noted.

122/22 FORWARD PLAN AND FUTURE BUSINESS

(Agenda Item. 15)

Cabinet was updated that the deferred Property Strategy item will go to Cabinet on 15 November 2022.

The Forward Plan as amended was noted.

.....in the Chair

Date of signing

ITEM 4 – QUESTIONS FROM COUNTY COUNCILLORS

Questions	Cabinet Member
<p>1. COUNCILLOR BRAD BAINES</p> <p>To ask the Cabinet Member whether she will commit to meeting with myself, City Councillors, the Headteacher and Governing Board to New Hinksey CofE Primary School to discuss the potential for rebuilding the school on its current site or finding a new site for the school? The historic buildings of the school are becoming more and more expensive to maintain and are increasingly struggling to provide an accessible environment for all pupils. Dialogue about the school's future is not only important, but essential.</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR LIZ BRIGHOUSE, DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN, EDUCATION AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES</p> <p>Thank you for your email about the buildings issues faced by New Hinksey CofE Primary School. We have recently corresponded directly with the Governing Body on this issue. Many of OCC's schools are located in buildings that are not modern and present challenges for senior leadership teams and governing bodies as they deliver the modern curriculum that our children need and deserve.</p> <p>In planning school places the Council absolutely sees a need for the school places provided by New Hinksey CofE Primary School but regrettably no real funding opportunities for the rebuild you seek.</p> <p>Capital investment in school buildings will usually come from one of three sources.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Basic need funding to provide more school places. 2. Funding from new housing developments if appropriate. 3. Condition funds to improve buildings at imminent risk

Questions	Cabinet Member
	<p>of closure if essential works are not carried out.</p> <p>Basic need This is funding received from government based on a calculation of how many additional school places are needed in an area. Whilst there is a need for the current places there is no need to increase the supply of places in this area, and therefore the council receives no basic need funding for this area.</p> <p>Developer Funding Unfortunately we are not in a position to seek developer funding for primary school places in Oxford at the moment, due to the falling primary school pupil numbers. Even where there is housing growth, this is only balancing out falling births, leaving us with no growth forecast in most parts of Oxford. We are legally only able to secure developer funding for school places where we can show there would be a shortage caused by the new houses, and that is not the case. There are exceptions in the very large scale housing developments planned just outside the city boundaries. The condition of the current school does not provide a basis for requiring developers to pay for new school places.</p> <p>Condition Funding Whilst there has been an increase in condition funding allocated to the council in the last two years it is only sufficient</p>

Questions	Cabinet Member
	<p>to meet the most extreme need of items which are required because not to complete them would leave a serious H&S issue capable of closing the school.</p> <p>Condition surveys of the maintained school estate will be undertaken later this year to allow objective prioritisation of schemes. Were that to show that New Hinksey CofE Primary School was one of the schools in worst condition in the county it might be eligible for improvement works but a rebuild is most unlikely.</p> <p>I am sorry not to be able to offer more help at this stage.</p>
<p>2. COUNCILLOR CHARLIE HICKS</p> <p>I commend the headline target in LTCP5 of “By 2030 our targets are to: Replace or remove 1 out of every 4 current car trips in Oxfordshire” and congratulate Cabinet Members and officers for this. As the next step, in order to assess whether this target will be met by the subsequent policies and projects being put in place (such as Decide & Provide Parking Standards, COTP etc.), it would appear to be important to know what the target number of car trips is in absolute terms (rather than as a proportion). Please could you provide what the 2030 targets are for number of car trips in Oxfordshire by 2030 in absolute terms (broken</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR DUNCAN ENRIGHT. CABINET MEMBER FOR TRAVEL & DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY</p> <p>The policy team is currently working on establishing the baseline for car trips. We expect to have that information next month.</p>

Questions	Cabinet Member
down by city/districts if possible)?	
<p>3. COUNCILLOR CHARLIE HICKS</p> <p>I commend the Cabinet’s much-stated ambition to put climate at the heart of everything the Council does. Given the role of Capital transport infrastructure projects on carbon output, what role (if any) are officers in the Climate team playing in the Capital programme review to ensure advice in the Pathways to a Zero Carbon Oxfordshire (PaZCO) report is being followed? i.e. Is there anyone from Sarah Gilbert’s team seconded to Belinda Dimmock-Smith’s team to support in the Capital programme review to ensure climate and PaZCO is being put front-and-centre in prioritisation of the capital programmes and projects?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR PETE SUDBURY, CABINET MEMBER FOR CLIMATE CHANGE DELIVERY & ENVIRONMENT</p> <p>The capital programme review is being overseen by the strategic capital programme board, chaired by Lorna Baxter, Director of Finance. Bill Cotton, Corporate Director for Environment and Place. The Chair of the Climate Action Programme Board sits on this board to provide links between both workstreams and ensure that the council’s priority to put climate at the heart of everything is met. Work is currently being scoped to further understand the role of embodied carbon within the capital programme and how we can use this information within the strategic capital programme review, with this project being driven by members from both teams. Of equal importance is ensuring that any new highways promote the LTCP prioritisation, both directly, and through indirect actions such as closures of current transit routes to through traffic other than public or active transport, thus holding down total highways capacity available to private cars.</p> <p>In addition, we should note that the current highways program is driven by the Growth Deal, under which the previous administration committed to unprecedented levels of house-building, especially in Cherwell and South Oxfordshire. In the</p>

Questions	Cabinet Member
	<p>case of South Oxfordshire, the previous administration worked with DCLG to force through a Local Plan opposed by local voters and Councils. The emissions from building these homes are at least a factor of ten greater than those from any major highways and a rational climate approach would suggest (a) opposing currently agreed developments in car-dependent locations (possibly rendering all or part of schemes (especially HIF-1) unnecessary), and (b) pressuring house-builders to adopt radically lower carbon building methods. Following the recent egregious decision of the planning inspectors to reject the zero-carbon specification for the Salt Cross development, we are negotiating with the developer to maintain as much of the original vision as possible.</p>