

CABINET

MINUTES of the meeting held on Tuesday, 24 November 2009 commencing at 2.00 pm and finishing at 3.30 pm

Present:

Voting Members: Councillor Keith R. Mitchell CBE – in the Chair
Councillor David Robertson (Deputy Chairman)
Councillor Jim Couchman
Councillor Ian Hudspeth
Councillor Louise Chapman
Councillor Michael Waine
Councillor Rodney Rose
Councillor Mrs J. Heathcoat

Other Members in Attendance: Councillor Patrick (item 7)
Councillor Dr Peter Skolar (Item 8)
Councillor Carol Viney (item 8)
Councillor Zoe Patrick (item 10)

Officers:

Whole of meeting Chief Executive; Sue Whitehead (Corporate Core)

Part of Meeting

Agenda Item

6

Officer(s) Attending

Kathy Wilcox (Financial Planning)

7

Roy Leach

8

Head of Transport; Owen South (Environment & Economy)

9

Head of Transport; Pat Higgins (Traffic Enforcement)

10

County Solicitor and Monitoring 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.

110/09 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

(Agenda Item. 2)

Councillors Mitchell, Robertson, Couchman, Hudspeth, Chapman, Waine, Rose and Heathcoat declared a personal interest in Item 10 on Outside Bodies in relation to insurance and indemnity for Councillors.

111/09 MINUTES

(Agenda Item. 3)

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 October 2009 were approved and signed.

112/09 QUESTIONS FROM COUNTY COUNCILLORS

(Agenda Item. 4)

Councillor Fooks had given notice of the following 2 questions to the Deputy Leader of the Council

“1. When will the HR module of SAP be implemented? Will its implementation require new staff or extra agency staff or consultants?”

Councillor Robertson:

We already use SAP to support HR operations in the Council. However we do recognise that implementation of Employee and Manager Self Service (ESS/MSS) will further enhance the capability of the organisation to deliver best in class HR services and will be key in supporting culture change across the Council. SAP Employee Self-Service (ESS) supports employees in maintaining their own personal information and to control many administrative transactions and other processes previously handled by HR staff. SAP Manager Self Service (MSS) helps managers by automating many routine managerial tasks and thus increasing managers productivity.

It is too early to say when ESS/MSS will be implemented as work needs to be completed on producing the business case for these enhancements but, assuming that the business case is proven and that appropriate resources are available, our aim will be to implement as quickly as possible. Benchmarks indicate that a phased implementation can be beneficial and we intend to explore all options available to ensure success. At this stage it is not envisaged that new staff or extra agency staff/consultants will be required for implementation - this will be further tested via the business case production.

Supplementary question:

Any idea of the timescale for implementation?

Councillor Robertson: He would wish to see it happen sooner rather than later but that it was dependent on a business case being made showing that it would provide value for money.

“2. What has happened to the Change Board? Can we have an update on the state of the change agenda now and what is the member involvement?”

Councillor Robertson:

The Change Management Board was established in November 2005 ‘To Take Forward the Change Agenda’ The role of the Change Management Board is ‘to design and drive the overall programme at a strategic level, ensuring cohesiveness between the different elements of the programme, and managing any risks.’ It is also to be responsible for championing change in the authority and making sure that there were appropriate links from the different elements of the programme back to the Council’s Corporate Plan.

The change programmes currently monitored by the Board are:

- Better Offices Programme (ends June 2010)
- Facilities Management (business case being developed)
- Information Management (ends January 2011)
- Customer Contact (business case to be considered, replaced 21st Century customer))
- Lead Oxfordshire (ends April 2010)
- Transforming Adult Social Care (ends September 2011)
- Re-tendering of Transportation Services (ends July 2010)

The Board also monitors the progress of Shared Services’ delivery of its savings targets and has oversight of the business efficiency strategy..

The Board signed off the Children, Young People & Families Directorate Restructuring programme in July 2009.

For four years the Change Management Board has been pivotal in defining and driving the change agenda for the authority, and in transforming the way the Authority goes about its business and delivers its services to all customers. However, taking into account progress made on the change agenda it is timely to consider if the Board is still fit for purpose and whether the change programme can be delivered In a different way.

The Board will be considering the options in the near future.

The current members on the Board are The Deputy Leader of the Council (Chairman) The Portfolio Holder for Finance and the Leader has a standing invitation to attend Board meetings.

Councillor Tanner had given notice of the following question to the Cabinet Member for Growth & Infrastructure:

“Would Cllr Hudspeth accept my congratulations for the reduction of 4% in the County Council’s carbon footprint in 2008/9? Will he say by what percentage the Council’s carbon footprint is likely to be reduced in 2009/10? Will he also say how much money the County Council would have spent had these reductions not been achieved?”

Councillor Hudspeth:

Oxfordshire County Council remains committed to hitting its 18% carbon reduction target by 2012, which was based on a 2005/6 baseline. The plan to achieve that, developed in association with the Carbon Trust, envisaged gross savings of £9.4m (£5.9m net), although the actual savings achieved will obviously depend on such things as future energy prices.

Councillor Mathew had given notice of the following question to the Cabinet Member for Growth & Infrastructure:

“Is the Cabinet Member for Sustainable Development content that the procedures currently being pursued by Oxfordshire County Council Planning Department follow the principles of democracy in view of the recent developments, inter alios, at Finmere, Controlled Reclamation, Longworth and Northmoor?”

Councillor Hudspeth:

He considered that the Planning & Regulation Committee was part of the democratic process and so he felt that the principles of democracy had been shown.

Supplementary Question: Are you aware that at the Stonehenge Farm appeal last week planning officers discussed with Hansons new revised plans that had not been the subject of a planning application? Could this be considered ultra vires?

Councillor Hudspeth: There was always discussion with planning officers and developers about proposals that could come forward at future times.

113/09 PETITIONS AND PUBLIC ADDRESS

(Agenda Item. 5)

The following requests to address the meeting had been agreed:

Speaker	Item
Councillor Patrick	7. European School Culham – Proposal to Replace it with an Academy
Councillor Skolar)

Councillor Carol Viney) 8. Reading Transport Innovation) Fund (TIF) Bid
Mr D Woodward, South Oxfordshire Transport Innovation Group))
Councillor Zoe Patrick	10. Appointments to Outside Bodies

114/09 FINANCIAL MONITORING

(Agenda Item. 6)

The Cabinet received the sixth financial monitoring report for the 2009/10 financial year covering the period up to the end of September 2009 for both revenue, balances, reserves and capital.

The current position for general balances showed an unchanged forecast of £14.088m. After taking into account the forecast Directorate overspend the consolidated revenue balances forecast was £10.604m.

Officers drew attention to the supplementary report and additional recommendation contained in the addenda.

The Leader highlighted three areas where he would wish to see further work undertaken:

- Putting more detail on the Children's Young People & Families Action Plan including targets and timescales
- Providing further analysis/information about future Direct Schools Grant
- The ongoing impact with regard to young unaccompanied asylum seekers.

He drew attention to pressures: around pooled budgets in Social & Community Services; on ICT services and outside County placements for looked after children. Cabinet noted the action being taken as detailed by individual Cabinet Members.

RESOLVED: to:

- (a) note the report;
- (b) approve the virements as set out in Annex 2a.
- (c) agree the extension of the reduction in payment terms for small to medium sized businesses from 28 to 14 days for a further year and to the replacement of the lost interest by LABGI funding.

At this point it was agreed to vary the order of the agenda.

115/09 READING TRANSPORT INNOVATION FUND (TIF) BID

(Agenda Item. 8)

Cabinet considered a report(**CA8**) updating them on developments in the Reading Area Transport Innovation Fund (TIF) bid, describing proposals for a Low Emission Zone in Reading, which included an element of charging and seeking a decision on whether or not Oxfordshire County Council should enter in to a Partnership Agreement with Reading Borough Council, other neighbouring authorities and the Department for Transport.

It was noted that there was a changed recommendation a0 and an additional recommendation set out in the addenda.

Councillor Dr Peter Skolar, speaking as a local member representing two parishes affected by the proposals, stated that he had had several meetings with Reading Borough Council, the local MP and local parish representatives. There was suspicion over the plans and concern at the impact on roads and traffic congestion. There was concern over the role of Oxfordshire County Council and worry that active participation meant approval of all parts of the bid, he was pleased to see the changed and additional recommendation.

Councillor Carol Viney expressed concern that level 2 participation made the County Council a very junior partner with no right of veto. She referred to concerns over the proposals including a lack of modelling and a lack of local consultation. She felt that the proposed third crossing would result in a challenge to the County's boundaries. The Council should use its land holding to ensure greater influence. Responding to a question she confirmed that she would like Cabinet to defer a decision on participation on the basis that it could participate at a later date.

Mr David Woodward, explained that SOTIG represented 7 parishes likely to be affected . He expressed concern that the third crossing would end on residential roads and feared that there would be pressure for a new major road. He outlined 3 major concerns; there had been little consultation; there had been no adequate traffic modelling and the report to Reading Borough Council Cabinet suggested that there was no right of veto. Responding to questions from Cabinet Members he appreciated the amendment and additional recommendation but felt that it did not address concerns over consultation and traffic modelling. The response rate to the SOTIG questionnaire, a copy of which was appended to the addenda, had been 30%.

The Cabinet Member for Growth & Infrastructure welcomed the contributions and stressed that he was very aware of the concerns from the many meetings he had attended. The recommendations were to clarify the Council's position. He confirmed that the Council could opt out at any time if necessary and that he would continue to negotiate hard to realise the available opportunities.

Responding to questions Steve Howell clarified how the maintenance of bridges was arranged and indicated that the costs were shared.

RESOLVED: to:

- (a) agree in principle that OCC supports Reading BC in its promotion of the Reading Area Transport Innovation Fund by participating as a Level 2 Programme Partner on the understanding that OCC is opposed to congestion charging and to any third bridge unless it is for public transport only.
- (b) to make clear to the other local authorities and the Department for Transport that this is conditional on their agreement that the various elements of the programme, and the bridge specifically, can only go ahead with the agreement of the local authorities in whose areas these are located;
- (c) to authorise the Cabinet Member for Growth and Infrastructure to sign the partnership agreement subject to the agreement in (ii) above and to legal and financial advice; and
- (d) this does not mean that OCC gives unconditional support to all aspects of the Reading TIF bid.

116/09 OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL PARKING POLICY

(Agenda Item. 9)

Cabinet noted that it was intended that West Oxfordshire District Council would be the first District within the County that will undertake Civil Parking Enforcement under an agency agreement. Oxfordshire County Council, as the highways authority, was required to make an application to the Department for Transport to create a Civil Parking Area which would enable civil enforcement of the various parking regulations in the District of West Oxfordshire to be undertaken and as part of this application the Council was expected to have in place a comprehensive parking policy document.

Cabinet considered a report (**CA9**) seeking approval of such a comprehensive parking policy document (attached as an Annex) that indicated how various aspects of the Traffic Management Act 2004 would be implemented and enforced. It contained an enforcement procedures section which would also serve to standardise the enforcement practices throughout the County as and when Civil Parking Enforcement was introduced.

RESOLVED: to approve the Parking Policy Document for use throughout those parts of the County where Civil Parking Enforcement is undertaken.

117/09 EUROPEAN SCHOOL CULHAM - PROPOSAL TO REPLACE IT WITH AN ACADEMY

(Agenda Item. 7)

The Cabinet considered a report (CA7) seeking support for the replacement of The European School at Culham with an Academy and seeking approval for submission of an 'Expression of Interest' to the Schools Minister for his approval of the replacement.

Councillor Patrick, Leader of the Opposition expressed concern at the impact of an Academy on surrounding schools and urged caution.

The Leader highlighted the good attributes of the school including its emphasis on languages its provision of a different type of qualification and the special feel of the school. The cabinet member for Schools Improvement added that the proposals fell directly in line with Government legislation aimed at bringing independent schools within the state sector. With regard to the catchment area of surrounding schools the current school already admitted a significant number of pupils from the wider area. Funding would not come from the County Council but from Government who had top sliced funding at a national level.

RESOLVED: to

- (a) note the contents of the draft Expression of Interest;
- (b) support the submission of the Expression of Interest as the basis of a proposal to replace the European School, Culham with an academy subject to the financial guarantees detailed in paragraphs 16, 17 and 18 of the report submitted; and
- (c) request officers to bring a further report on the outcomes of consultations undertaken as part of the 'Feasibility Study'.

118/09 APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES

(Agenda Item. 10)

Cabinet considered a report (CA10) detailing specific appointments requiring the formal approval of Cabinet; seeking endorsement of an advice note for members and reporting on indemnity and insurance issues for members on outside bodies. It sought approval to the arrangements for strategic partnership Cabinet Member appointments.

Councillor Zoe Patrick, Leader of the Opposition, was broadly welcoming of the advice and guidance contained in the report.

The Leader commented that he would be asking appropriate officers to draw up job descriptions in respect of Member Champions but that they would still allow flexibility to develop the role as needed.

RESOLVED: to:

- (a) agree the procedure for considering appointments to strategic partnerships as set out in the report;
- (b) agree specific appointments as set out in the report and addenda;
- (c) endorse the advice note for councillors serving on outside bodies for issuing to all members appointed to outside bodies; and,
- (d) delegate authority to the Monitoring Officer to put in place appropriate indemnity and insurance to enable members to undertake their functions.

119/09 FORWARD PLAN AND FUTURE BUSINESS

(Agenda Item. 11)

The Cabinet considered a list of items (**CA10**) 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.

120/09 DELEGATED POWERS OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

(Agenda Item. 12)

Paragraph (1)(c)(i) of Section I of the Council’s Constitution requires any executive decision taken by the Chief Executive under the specific powers and functions delegated to her under the terms of that Rule, to be reported to Cabinet.

RESOLVED: to note the decisions taken in the period as set out in the schedule attached to the agenda.

..... in the Chair

Date of signing 2009

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