

## CABINET

**MINUTES** of the meeting held on Tuesday, 15 December 2015 commencing at 2.00 pm and finishing at 3.12 pm

**Present:**

**Voting Members:** Councillor Ian Hudspeth – in the Chair  
Councillor Rodney Rose  
Councillor Mrs Judith Heathcoat  
Councillor Nick Carter  
Councillor Melinda Tilley  
Councillor Lorraine Lindsay-Gale  
Councillor David Nimmo Smith  
Councillor Lawrie Stratford  
Councillor Hilary Hibbert-Biles

**Other Members in Attendance:** Councillor Steve Curran (Agenda Item 8)  
Councillor Jean Fooks (Agenda Item 5)  
Councillor Nick Hards (Agenda Item 6 & 7)  
Councillor George Reynolds (Agenda Item 8)

**Officers:**

Whole of meeting Lorna Baxter, Chief Finance Officer; Sue Whitehead (Corporate Services)

Part of meeting Item	Name
6	Katy Jurczynszyn (Capital Team)
8	Bev Hindle, Deputy Director Strategy Infrastructure Planning; Robin Rogers (Environment & Economy)

*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.*

### **108/15 MINUTES**

(Agenda Item. 3)

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 November 2015 were agreed and signed.

### **109/15 QUESTIONS FROM COUNTY COUNCILLORS**

(Agenda Item. 4)

Councillor Jean Fooks had given written notice of the following question to Councillor David Nimmo Smith:

“White lines are fading or all but invisible across much of Oxfordshire. I am told that the budget for this financial year is already overspent so no refreshing of existing markings can be done for at least another four months or even longer. As these lines and markings were largely installed for safety reasons, it is highly regrettable that they are not being maintained. Would you ask officers for a safety audit to be undertaken as a matter of urgency, before accidents occur which could be attributed to the lack of clear markings on the road?”

Councillor Nimmo Smith replied:

“Your concerns over the hazards posed by road markings not being maintained are very understandable, and priority is given within the limited resources available to refresh markings where the possible safety implications of not doing so are greatest.

In the reports on injury accidents received from the police, information is provided by the reporting officer on the contributory factors they have judged relevant to an accident. The factor relating to ‘inadequate or masked road signs or road markings’ is in fact selected only in a small minority of incidents (under 1%) and looking over the last 10 years (to 31 October 2015), there is no clear trend either upwards or downwards in the number of such accidents. This data however will continue to be very closely monitored.

Officers are correct in telling you that the budget for this financial year is already spent so no refreshing of existing markings can be done for at least another four months or even longer. That is because they have determined that the best way to stretch their limited resources is to carry out the majority of the re-marking in the summer months when the roads are dry and free from salt and other winter detritus.”

Supplementary: Asked whether in view of the mild winter it was possible that some of the money set aside for gritting could be used for white lining, Councillor Nimmo Smith replied that it was not possible to predict the weather for the remainder of the winter so he was not willing to do as suggested.

Councillor John Tanner had given written notice of the following question to Councillor Rodney Rose:

“The residents in my division would like to thank the Cabinet for the sensible recommendation and anticipated decision to keep open the Redbridge recycling centre in Oxford for the time being. Will Councillor David Nimmo-Smith now reconsider the inconvenient ban on pedestrians from the local area using the centre?”

Councillor Rose replied:

“The County Council strive to ensure the Household Waste Recycling Centres are managed to protect the wellbeing of all visitors and operate reasonable and proportionate measures to prevent accidents from occurring particularly where a hazard is identified.

None of Oxfordshire's HWRCs are able to allow pedestrian access because they do not have pavements that provide access, nor dedicated walkways around the site. As such, we are unable to guarantee the wellbeing of visitors arriving on foot.

As part of any future works at Redbridge or if the site is replaced pedestrian access will be considered but not guaranteed.”

Supplementary: Asked whether pedestrian access could be looked at, even if at specific times, Councillor Rose commented that the District Councils worked well and that he saw few occasions when someone would need to carry a bag to the recycling centres that would not be possible to recycle through the service provided.

## **110/15 PETITIONS AND PUBLIC ADDRESS**

(Agenda Item. 5)

Councillor Jean Fooks, submitted a petition on behalf of people in and around Cutteslowe asking for a rethink on the proposal to close the Children's Centre there.

The Chairman had agreed the following requests to speak:

Item 6 – Councillor Nick Hards, Shadow Cabinet Member for Finance

Item 7 – Councillor Nick Hards, Shadow Cabinet member for Finance

Item 8 – Councillor George Reynolds, local councillor for Wroxton & Hook Norton

Councillor Steve Curran, Shadow Cabinet Member for Environment

## **111/15 2015/16 FINANCIAL MONITORING & BUSINESS STRATEGY REPORT - OCTOBER 2015**

(Agenda Item. 6)

Cabinet considered a report that focussed on the management of the 2015/16 budget. Parts 1 and 2 included projections for revenue, reserves and balances as at the end of October 2015. Capital Programme monitoring was included at Part 3.

Councillor Nick Hards, Shadow Cabinet Member for Finance made detailed comments on the report. This included reference to the recruitment freeze on non-essential staff, as he did not accept that the Council any longer had workers that were not essential. Referring to the children, education and families overspend he highlighted the increasing pressures on social workers and queried the impact of reduced back office support and also highlighted the increasing cost of home to school transport. On social and community

services, Councillor Hards raised concerns over the sustainability in relation to care home placements. He further noted the pressures in environment & economy.

Councillor Stratford responded to the comments made and in referring to the phrase non-essential staff accepted that the wording was unfortunate and commended the work of all staff during a difficult time. The increase in children needing intervention and the implications of the recruitment freeze on social worker workloads would be carefully monitored. Cabinet Members also responded to the comments made.

**RESOLVED:** to:

- (a) note the report;
- (b) approve the virement requests set out in Annex 2a;
- (c) approve the supplementary estimate set out in Annex 2e of £0.6m relating to the cost of the Transport Safeguarding Assurance Framework project;
- (d) note the Treasury Management lending list at Annex 4;
- (e) in relation to reserves:
  - i. approve the temporary use of Environment & Economy reserves as set out in paragraph 76;
  - ii. approve the transfer of £0.3m to a new Commercial Reserve to support the development of the Children, Education & Families trading arm as set out in paragraph 9; and
- (f) approve the changes to the Capital Programme set out in annex 7c.

## **112/15 SERVICE & RESOURCE PLANNING REPORT - 2016/17 - DECEMBER 2015**

(Agenda Item. 7)

Cabinet considered a report that was the second in a series on the Service & Resource Planning process for 2016/17 which will culminate in Council setting a budget for 2016/17 and a medium term plan to 2019/20 in February 2016. The report set out:

- the savings options that have been subject to public consultation and an update on the pressures for 2016/17 and the medium term,
- the implications of the Spending Review and Autumn Statement announced on 25 November 2015,
- a forecast of reserves over the medium term, and
- the capital programme proposals for 2016/17 to 2019/20.

Councillor Nick Hards, Shadow Cabinet Member for Finance, indicated that it was difficult to comment in the absence of the settlement from Government. However he highlighted the pressures and uncertainty facing the Council. In particular he referred to the pressures relating to adult social care set out in paragraph 18 of the report. He would want to see further detail once the settlement had been received but would support any efforts to meet the huge challenge. He commented on reducing carers support and the potential for

unforeseen consequences with the possibility of increasing costs elsewhere as a result. Responding Councillor Stratford acknowledged that the position was very challenging and welcomed the support for looking after the elderly and vulnerable people.

Lorna Baxter, Chief Finance Officer, introduced the contents of the report. Councillor Stratford moved the recommendations and following comments from Councillor Carter, Cabinet Member for Business and Customer Services, in relation to the New Homes Bonus and the changes to business rates it was:

**RESOLVED:** to take the issues set out in the report into consideration in forming their proposed budget for 2016/17, Medium Term Financial Plan to 2019/20 and Capital Programme to 2019/20.

## **113/15 HOUSEHOLD WASTE RECYCLING CENTRE (HWRC) STRATEGY**

(Agenda Item. 8)

In July 2015 Cabinet had received a report proposing to consult the public on revised principles for the provision of Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) capacity.

Cabinet had before them a report setting out the results of the consultation alongside an analysis of financial and service pressures. The report sought approval to a revised approach to developing the HWRC network in the medium to long term.

Councillor George Reynolds, local councillor for Wroxton & Hook Norton, referred to the high level of concern expressed to him by residents over the proposals. In the north of the County there was real concern about the lack of facilities. He felt that rather than a rationalisation to 3 facilities there was a need for 4 or 5 to ensure proper access. Although supporting the recommendation he hoped the Council would look carefully at facilities north of Oxford.

Councillor Steve Curran, Shadow Cabinet Member for Environment, highlighted the results of the consultation and noted the legal requirement to provide recycling centres for everybody at reasonable times. He commented on the good things in the report notably paragraph 66. Referring to opening times he commented that 5 pm was a particularly difficult time to visit a recycling centre given traffic congestion. He hoped that opening hours would take into account the problems of queuing traffic. He queried some of the figures relating to green waste and hoped that they could be maintained. With regard to recommendation (b) he would wish to see such decisions come back to Cabinet.

Councillor Rose, Deputy Leader, in moving the recommendations stressed that it was important to get a strategy in place in order to be able to get developer contributions. Cabinet was being asked to agree the strategy and

it was not about what was closing. There was a need for flexibility going forward that the strategy provided.

Bev Hindle, Deputy Director, Strategy Infrastructure Planning, introduced the contents of the report. With regard to recommendation (b) he stated that there were a range of decisions to be taken and wherever appropriate they would come to either the Cabinet member or Cabinet. Robin Rogers, Environment & Economy outlined the consultation responses.

During discussion, Cabinet Members in supporting the strategy, made the following points:

- 1) A Cabinet Member noted that Oakley Wood was one of the most used sites despite its rural location.
- 2) The Leader cautioned against making any decisions based solely on the numbers of respondents and stressed that it was about providing quality and the best service for all residents.
- 3) There was support for looking at reduced opening hours as an alternative to closure.
- 4) In noting the judgement of officers that the proposals would not lead to increased fly-tipping from members of the public Cabinet referred to the need to look at communication with the public that would assure the public that this was the case.
- 5) The importance of working with District Council was stressed. The Leader referred to the good work of the District Councils.
- 6) Cabinet would hope to see a range of solutions coming forward to suit the needs of particular sites.
- 7) In response to a query about who went to recycling facilities and why Bev Hindle replied that data was collected and would increase so that assumptions about use could be challenged.
- 8) Bev Hindle responding to a request that when developing the strategy the equivalent strategies of neighbouring authorities be taken into account agreed that this was important as was the need to consider growth.

**RESOLVED to:**

- (a) approve the Household Waste Recycling Centre Strategy as set out from paragraph 57; and
- (b) authorise the Director for Environment and Economy in consultation with the Cabinet Member for the HWRC service to bring forward implementation plans for decision within agreed delegations.

**114/15 FORWARD PLAN AND FUTURE BUSINESS**

(Agenda Item. 9)

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.

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**RESOLVED:** to note the items currently identified for forthcoming meetings.

..... in the Chair

Date of signing

2016