

CABINET

MINUTES of the meeting held on Tuesday, 15 December 2020 commencing at 2.00 pm and finishing at 3.11 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 Liam Walker
Councillor Mark Gray

Other Members in Attendance: Glynis Phillips (Agenda Items 8 & 9)

Officers:

Whole of meeting Yvonne Rees (Chief Executive), Lorna Baxter, Director of Finance, Steve Jordan (Corporate Director - Commercial Development Assets & Investments and Sukdave Ghuman (Head of Legal Services & Deputy Monitoring Officer); Sue Whitehead (Law & Governance)

Part of meeting Item 6 – Sue Halliwell, Director of Planning & Place; Paul Staines, Interim Head of Programme, Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal;
Item 7 – Owen Jenkins, Director of Growth & Economy; Tom Shuttleworth (Communities)
Item 8 – Claire Taylor, Corporate Director Customers & Organisational Development; Louise Tustian, Head of Insight and Corporate Programmes

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.

105/20 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

(Agenda Item. 1)

An apology was received from Councillor Steve Harrod.

106/20 MINUTES

(Agenda Item. 3)

The Minutes of the meeting held on 17 November 2020 were approved and signed as a correct record.

107/20 PETITIONS AND PUBLIC ADDRESS

(Agenda Item. 5)

The following requests to address the meeting had been agreed by the Chairman:

Agenda Item 8 – Business Management and Monitoring Report: Councillor Glynis Phillips, Shadow Cabinet Member for Finance

Agenda Item 9 – Capital Monitoring Report: Councillor Glynis Phillips, Shadow Cabinet Member for Finance;
and Nick Welch, Divinity Road Area Residents Association (DRARA)

108/20 OXFORDSHIRE STRATEGIC VISION

(Agenda Item. 6)

Cabinet considered a report that introduced a first draft of a Strategic Vision for Oxfordshire as proposed by Oxfordshire Growth Board.

Councillor Hudspeth in moving the recommendations, introduced the contents of the report and Vision document noting that Cabinet had been asked to provide feedback on the draft strategic vision developed by the Growth Board. He commented that it set out a positive long-term strategic vision for the whole of Oxfordshire up to 2050. Its aim was to improve the lives of all people in Oxfordshire based on a number of key principles and outcomes. The Vision would be used to create an agreed set of long term strategic priorities for the social economic and environmental wellbeing in Oxfordshire, draw together the collective ambition in Oxfordshire for a zero carbon or even carbon negative future in Oxfordshire, collective vision in relation to the oxford-Cambridge Arc, inform the 2050 Plan as well as the strategies and policies of the local authorities and agencies. Councillor Hudspeth highlighted the key challenges and outcomes and noted that it highlighted the importance of safeguarding the natural environment. He emphasised that it would be important to measure progress to demonstrate delivery against the outcomes. No measures were proposed at this stage, but it was accepted that key indicators would be needed to hold the Growth Board to account and to provide a robust basis for decision making.

Paul Staines, Interim Head of Programme, Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal, made a presentation that explained the scope and content of the Vision including the timeline for the current engagement and finalisation of the Vision.

Responding to a question on the impact on delivery if the different organisations represented on the Growth Board interpreted the Vision differently the Leader advised that in setting the guiding principles it gave a framework that could provide the basis to refer to in the event of discussions. Paul Staines added that the principles in the Vision were set out a high level and this allowed for organisations to emphasise different elements dependent on the focus of their work.

During discussion Cabinet:

- Welcomed the ambition and timing of the Vision. The document and responses during consultation would bring together a sense of the ambition and vision of all the councils in Oxfordshire.
- Cabinet commended the efforts to define good growth particularly in light of and in support of the Housing and Growth Deal.
- Welcomed the decision of South Oxfordshire District Council to approve its Local Plan that ensured that it was possible to go ahead and plan the big housing infrastructure funding from Government.

RESOLVED: to:

- (a) provide feedback on the Draft Strategic Vision for Oxfordshire, appended in Annex 1 to the Oxfordshire Growth Board. The Draft Vision is presented for discussion and comments to help inform revisions prior to future Growth Board endorsement;
- (b) delegate responsibility to Claire Taylor, Corporate Director Customers, Organisational Development and Resources and Jason Russell, Director Community Operations to develop a response to the Strategic Vision engagement exercise, in consultation with the Leader, reflecting the views expressed at this meeting.

109/20 A40 SCIENCE TRANSIT 2 FUNDING AND FULL BUSINESS CASE SUBMISSION

(Agenda Item. 7)

In July 2014 the Science Transit 2 (ST2) project was awarded a provisional allocation of £35 million from Governments Local Growth Fund, subject to:

- i. the submission of an acceptable Full Business Case being submitted to the Department for Transport (hereafter referred to as DfT).
- ii. a minimum of £5 million matching local contribution.

The A40 Science Transit scheme was entered into the capital programme through a decision of Cabinet on 21st July 2015 that outlined the scheme and the longer-term strategy for the A40.

Cabinet had before them a report that set out progress to date and sought approval to the next steps.

Councillor Constance, Cabinet Member for Environment introduced the report and moved the recommendations.

Owen Jenkins, Director of Growth & Economy presented the contents of the report.

Cabinet welcomed the proposals and were fully supportive of the recommendations. In response to a query on the timescales on the Park and Ride, Owen stated that the funding for the whole scheme would be in place once the full Business Case went through to the DfT and was approved. On the accelerated plans for the Park and Ride it was intended to start on detailed design in early 2021 and £1.8m was committed to this.

RESOLVED: to:

- (a) note the current scheme cost, proposed funding package and agree to update the capital programme accordingly;
- (b) agree the preferred option to accelerate the delivery of the Park & Ride element of the project;
- (c) agree to the additional development costs up to £7.724m through to anticipated Department for Transport funding approval; and
- (d) authorise the delegated approval to submit the Full Business Case to Department for Transport to the Director of Growth & Economy in consultation with the S151 Officer, Monitoring Officer to the Council and Cabinet Member for Environment.

110/20 BUSINESS MANAGEMENT & MONITORING REPORT - OCTOBER 2020

(Agenda Item. 8)

Cabinet considered a report setting out Oxfordshire County Council's (OCC's) progress towards Corporate Plan priorities for 2020/21 – October 2020.

Councillor Glynis Phillips, Shadow Cabinet Member for Finance, noted that the Council would achieve a balanced budget and congratulated the Finance Team for managing the budget in ever changing circumstances. Councillor Phillips referred to Annex C 5b that clearly set out the grants from Government both ringfenced and non-ringfenced totalling some £62m. She commented that this money was welcome in providing vital services in response to the pandemic, but it should not be underestimated the additional work that went hand in hand with spending this funding and accounting for every single penny. Councillor Phillips noted that the report highlighted

challenges ahead and referred to children's social care where the report advised that the current increase in demand is expected to flow through into longer term plans for children and families. Councillor Phillips also noted that pressure on the high needs dedicated schools grant continued to rise and that work was underway to analyse activity demand and budget pressures.

Councillor Phillips supported the creation of a new risk area made by separating out the risks to children from that of adults.

Councillor Phillips also highlighted good news in the report such as the enhanced bus services in Banbury.

Finally, Councillor Phillips noted that this report confirmed the assurances given at the last full Council meeting that going forward there would be no service cuts in this financial year. However, she also noted that the report made it clear that the costs of covid would be felt into subsequent years.

Councillor Judith Heathcoat, Deputy Leader of the Council, introduced the risk and performance management elements of the report. Councillor Heathcoat commented on the largely positive picture of performance that was due in no small part to the Council's workforce and she thanked them for their service. Councillor Heathcoat detailed that of 27 performance indicators, 12 were green, 14 were amber and one was not collected due to reasons connected with covid. The change from the previous report was in community safety on the timeliness of emergency response that had moved from green to amber which now included a wider range of response. Councillor Heathcoat noted that the indicator was only 3% below the stretch target of attending 80% of incidents within 11 minutes. Councillor Heathcoat also referred to the annual electric blanket testing programme that had resulted in an average 21% failure rate, highlighting the danger of having an electric blanket that was not safe.

Councillor David Bartholomew, Cabinet Member for Finance, introduced the finance element of the report that outlined the forecast revenue budget at the end of October 2020 and an update on the Medium Term Financial Strategy. The report included information on the financial impact of COVID-19 for 2020/21 including the latest estimate for additional and exceptional expenditure and income losses which totals £52.3m.

Cabinet members highlighted aspects of services within their portfolios, paying tribute to the work of staff, including:

- The success of the tree audit;
- The delivery of the new library in Botley;
- The work of head teachers and school and council staff that has ensured that attendance figures for pupils in school have been consistently above the national average;

- The phenomenal response of the staff in adult social care and public health to the demands placed on their service due to the pandemic alongside their everyday work.
- The work on enhanced digital connectivity.
- The work to support the voluntary community.
- The work of the highways team on delivering repair and maintenance programmes and the successful super user scheme.

Cabinet also took the opportunity to thank Adrian Fenwick, Alistair Bastin and the wider IT team for their work in supporting councillors with their digital connection needs during the pandemic, including their work on MS Teams

RESOLVED: to:

- (a) note this month's business management and monitoring report; and
- (b) approve COVID expenditure and income virements set out in Annex C-2b and note virements in Annex C -2c

111/20 CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING REPORT - OCTOBER 2020

(Agenda Item. 9)

Cabinet considered a report that set out the latest monitoring position for 2020/21 capital programme based on activity to the end of October 2020 and provides an update on latest ten-year capital programme to 2029/30.

Councillor Glynis Phillips, Shadow Cabinet Member for Finance commented that the report raised a number of issues at a time of intense capital expenditure and a need to liaise with other organisations which is necessary but extremely time consuming; the report advised of co-operation with the Growth Board, academies, district councils, the Local Enterprise Partnership, Department of Education and the Environment Agency among others. It raised the issue of the Council being able to manage effectively all these schemes especially as the value of the capital programme continued to increase. Councillor Phillips highlighted paragraph 9 as being particularly worrying as it warned of the risks that the costs associated with a small number of projects in the construction phase are likely to incur additional costs, which may exceed some contingency budgets. There was a lack of detail on this and Councillor Phillips hoped that the next report would provide greater detail and report on the mitigations.

Councillor Phillips referred to the funding that had become available as a result of the Oxford Flood Alleviation Scheme being unable to spend its allocation. She hoped that a small amount could be used to provide the crossing on Collinwood Road in Risinghurst where a shovel ready proposal was in place and where funding had been the reason given for the scheme being unable to proceed.

Councillor Phillips commented that there were some excellent schemes in the capital programme, and it was important to ensure sufficient capacity/capability to deliver on them.

Nick Welch, Divinity Road Area Residents Association (DRARA), spoke in support of the Active Travel Programme. Residents living in the DRARA area had been increasingly concerned over many years about the substantially increased levels of traffic using the roads on which we live. In a survey carried out by DRARA 92% of residents who responded favoured the area becoming access only and nearly the same percentage agreed that reducing traffic would significantly improve the quality of their lives. DRARA warmly welcomed the work by officers and councillors on the Emergency Active Travel Fund and congratulated the council on the excellent result. In addition, Mr Welch commented that DRARA welcomed the policy framework that supports the strong presumption that low traffic neighbourhood should be introduced as a trial unless there is evidence that this does not support the wider public good or does not command public support. DRARA believed that their proposal would pass both tests and looked forward to working with you on an effective and comprehensive consultation. Finally, Mr Welch recognised that their and other LTN proposals would fundamentally alter how people will travel, It was important that if they are to be introduced across the City it be as part of a wider set of measures for the management and control of traffic and travel to support the range of low carbon, public health and active travel measures the Council is implementing.

Councillor David Bartholomew, Cabinet Member for Finance, introduced the contents of the report and moved the recommendations. Councillor Bartholomew Highlighted the extension into 2021/22 of the funding passported to District Councils through the affordable housing programme and the associated reduction of 20.8m in the 2020/21 programme.

Councillor Yvonne Constance, Cabinet Member for Environment expressed her appreciation for the comments from Mr Welch about the very great success of the Active Travel funding.

RESOLVED: to:

- (a) approve the updated Capital Programme at Annex 2;
- (b) note the approval made under delegated authority of the Leader of the Council for:
 - i. Inclusion of £1.4m contribution to Active Travel Programme from OxLEP;
- (c) approve the revised budget provision of £8.4m for the A40 Oxford North (Northern Gateway) scheme, an increase of £2.5m;
- (d) agree the inclusion of the new NE Didcot 2FE Primary School in the capital programme with a budget of £12.9m;
- (e) delegate agreement of Heads of Terms to enable the Council to pass funding to the DfE for the new Grove Airfield Secondary School to the Director of Finance and Director for Property, Investment & Facilities Management in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance and Property; and

- (f) agree the inclusion of the Active Travel (Tranche 2) grant of £2.4m into the capital programme.

112/20 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 2021