

CABINET

MINUTES of the meeting held on Tuesday, 28 June 2016 commencing at 2.00 pm and finishing at 3.10 pm

Present:

Voting Members: Councillor Ian Hudspeth – in the Chair
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 Hards (Agenda Items 6 & 7)
Councillor Howson (Agenda Item 6)
Councillor Fooks (Agenda Item 6)
Councillor Patrick (Agenda Item 6)
Councillor Curran (Agenda Item 6)

Officers:

Whole of meeting Nick Graham, Chief Legal Officer; Sue Whitehead (Corporate Services)

Part of meeting
6 Katy Jurczynszyn (Corporate Finance)
7 John Disley, Policy Strategy Manager; Melissa Goodacre (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.

49/16 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

(Agenda Item. 1)

Apologies were received from Councillor Rose.

50/16 MINUTES

(Agenda Item. 3)

The Minutes of the meeting held on 24 May 2016 were approved and signed as a correct record.

51/16 QUESTIONS FROM COUNTY COUNCILLORS

(Agenda Item. 4)

Councillor Lilly had given notice of the following question to Councillor Tilley:

“I am advised that a large number of children are now attending our library’s for the excellent children’s reading programmes recently introduced. How does this impact on children’s overall education?”

Councillor Tilley replied:

“Oxfordshire Libraries have been delivering the Summer Reading Challenge since 1999, working in partnership with The Reading Agency to engage young people across the county to take part and so maintain their reading for pleasure throughout the summer break from school. During summer 2015:

- 8402 children took part
- 4923 children read 6 or more books. 199 children joined their library in order to take part.
- 44% of those taking part were boys and 56% were girls.

Alongside the Summer Reading Challenge the Library Service offers other reading related activities throughout the year: Children’s Book Clubs, young volunteering opportunities, author events, class visits to branch libraries and other seasonal, topical events such as our hugely successful Harry Potter Night events where young people come into libraries to join in fun activities inspired by books and reading.

“Research shows that one of the most effective ways of helping children to reach their potential is to engage them in reading for enjoyment. Children who read for enjoyment make more progress in maths, vocabulary and spelling between the ages of 10 and 16 than those who rarely read and young people who read regularly are significantly more likely to attain a professional or managerial position than those who do not read.” **Clémence Pabion and Christina Clark: The Impact of Chatterbooks on Children’s Reading Enjoyment, Behaviours and Attitudes: Final report. National Literacy Trust, 2016”**

Councillor Lilly had given notice of the following question to Councillor Carter

“May this council be updated on the disabled Blue badge Scheme and steps being introduced to avoid Fraudulent usage.”

Councillor Carter replied:

“There are currently 25724 Blue Badge holders in Oxfordshire. Of these, 25003 are individual badges and 721 are badges used by organisations.

In the last 12 months (to 31st May 2016) 9087 badges were issued and 731 applications were unsuccessful because they did not meet the eligibility criteria.

A pilot scheme for Blue Badge Enforcement was carried out in late December in Bicester, Banbury and Oxford City, focussing on a number of designated disabled parking bays in those towns, and (with their agreement) a number of major supermarkets in each town.

During the exercise over 200 badges were checked by the officers involved, who were regularly approached by members of the public with comments of thanks and support for tackling this type of crime.

In the course of three days, 10 blue badges were seized by the officers for blatant misuse. These included cases where the badge holder was not present and the badge was being used by persons not entitled to use it, using out of date badges and even using the badges of deceased persons. In each of these cases, offenders have been interviewed and legal action is under consideration.”

Councillor Howson had given notice of the following question to Councillor Tilley

“Who is responsible for prosecuting pupils attending academies, UTCs and free schools for non-attendance at school and what part, if any, does the County Council and the Regional School Commissioner play in the process?”

Councillor Tilley replied:

“The Council is responsible for prosecuting parents of pupils who persistently fail to attend those institutions.

The role of the Council is to respond to notifications from schools of poor attendance/unauthorised absences, issue warning notices and, if necessary, initiate prosecution. In addition, the Council draws to the Regional Schools Commissioner's (RSC) attention those schools which have notably poor levels of attendance. The RSC's role would be best ascertained by asking him when he appears at Education Scrutiny Committee meeting on 04 July.”

Supplementary: Nick Graham, Chief Legal Officer and Monitoring Officer responded to a question about the approach to prosecutions in the light of the High Court Judgement on the Isle of Wight case. He explained that as the authorising officer for all prosecutions there was a Code he was obliged to follow. In respect of attendance cases in particular there was considerable effort to try and remedy the poor attendance and prosecution would only be considered if it was in the best interests of the child's education. He added that there was less control of the approach taken by head teachers of

academies but that the guidance to all schools on fixed penalty notices was the same.

Councillor Patrick had given notice of the following question to Councillor Nimmo Smith:

"In the LTP4, it states that the location for a rail station in Grove will have to move from the current site where planning permission was originally granted because the recent alignment of the road bridge along the A338 means that they cannot build it there now. As the Leader has already stated his support for a station in Grove, where would he suggest would be the best location for it to be built?"

Councillor Nimmo Smith replied:

"A preferred location has not yet been identified as more work needs to be done with the rail industry and the Vale of White Horse as Planning Authority. We have stated the need to do this work in our emerging Rail Strategy."

Supplementary: Asked whether there was any timescale Councillor Nimmo Smith replied that timescales were dependent on Network Rail.

Councillor Webber had given notice of the following question to Councillor Hudspeth:

"Please would the Leader summarise what he sees as the implications for County Council services of the recent Referendum result?"

Councillor Hudspeth replied:

Councillor Hudspeth referred to rumours circulating concerning deportation and reassured members of staff that this was not happening. It was a case of waiting for Article 50 to be invoked and to see what emerged. It was now clear that there would be no emergency budget at this stage. There would be implications of the volatile market on the Local Government Pension Fund but these would need to be worked through over time. Currently it was a case of waiting to see what emerged from Government and the EU.

Supplementary: In response to a further question Councillor Hudspeth commented that the Prime Minister had allowed Cabinet members to make their own choice, Now that it was over the Conservative Party was one party, comprising the Government of this country and focussed on getting the best possible deal for the people of this country.

52/16 PETITIONS AND PUBLIC ADDRESS

(Agenda Item. 5)

Award

A CIHT/Mouchel Streets and Places Commended Award 2016 was presented to Councillor Nimmo Smith for work by E&E in conjunction with Skanska on Frideswide Square.

Public Address

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

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

Item 7–Councillor Howson, local councillor for St Margaret's
Councillor Fooks, local councillor for Wolvercote & Summertown
Councillor Hards, local councillor for Didcot West
Councillor Patrick, local councillor for Grove & Wantage
Councillor Curran, Shadow Cabinet Environment

53/16 PROVISIONAL 2015/16 REVENUE AND CAPITAL OUTTURN

(Agenda Item. 6)

Cabinet considered a report that set out the provisional revenue and capital outturn position for 2015/16 and showed how actual expenditure and income for the year compared to the budgeted position. Cabinet also considered a further explanatory note and updated Annex. The Council's draft Statement of Accounts for 2015/16 is required to be signed by the Chief Financial Officer by 30 June following which a period of public inspection will commence. The final Statement of Accounts will be submitted to the Audit and Governance Committee on 14 September 2016 following external audit and certification by the Chief Finance Officer.

Councillor Hards, Shadow Cabinet Member for Finance, commended officers for the work that had gone on to achieve the outturn result and he also commended the way the work had been carried out. He expressed concern as to whether the juggling that had gone on could continue, with virements from underspends elsewhere offsetting overspends in Children, Education & Families. He highlighted a number of areas of continuing concern including SEN transport, children's social care and waste. With regard to the Independent Living Fund he was pleased the Council was able to make savings by cutting the level of support but he queried the implications of doing so. He expressed anger at the financial burden placed on the Council in picking up the deficit of two schools converting to Academy status as detailed in paragraph 112 of the report.

Councillor Tilley, Cabinet Member for Children, Education & Families responded to a number of the points raised by Councillor Hards commenting that the numbers coming on to care plans was a national trend and she saw it as a good thing as more children were getting the care they needed. She updated him in relation to the position with regard to the SEN education provision in the South of the County and children's homes provision.

In relation to the Independent Living Fund Councillor Heathcoat, referred to paragraph 35 which set out what had happened and that transition funding was available.

Councillor Stratford Cabinet Member for Finance noted that he shared Councillor's Hards views in relation to Academy finances and it was something he was pursuing. Councillor Stratford introduced the contents of the report, moved the recommendations and congratulated the Finance Team and all staff on achieving the outturn position. The Leader added his thanks to the Finance Team and all staff on the outturn achieved which showed the resilience of the organisation.

RESOLVED: in respect of the 2015/16 outturn to:

- (a) note the provisional revenue and capital outturn for 2015/16 along with the year-end position on balances and reserves as set out in the report;
- (b) approve the debt write-off as set out in paragraph 60;
- (c) approve the virements as set out in Annex 2a;
- (d) recommend Council to approve the virements greater than £1.0m for Children, Education & Families and Social & Community Services as set out in Annex 2a;
- (e) recommend Council to approve the virement of £1.5m from contingency to offset the overspend within Children's Social Care; and
- (f) agree that the surplus on the On-Street Parking Account at the end of the 2015/16 financial year, so far as not applied to particular eligible purposes in accordance with Section 55(4) of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, be carried forward in the account to the 2016/17 financial year.

54/16 CONNECTING OXFORDSHIRE UPDATE - LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN (LTP4) 2015-2031

(Agenda Item. 7)

Cabinet had before them a report that set out the key changes to Connecting Oxfordshire, Oxfordshire's Local Transport Plan (LTP4), which was adopted by Council in September 2015, following full public and Stakeholder consultation. The report outlined the first update to LTP4, which is required to reflect the changed policy context and new and updated strategies.

Councillor Howson, speaking as local Councillor expressed concern over the implications of railway plans that could result in more night running freight

trains and felt that other train routes could be developed and that the possibility of air freight ignored. Referring to the proposed bus gates at Worcester Street and St Cross Road Councillor Howson was concerned that this would cut off local residents and he suggested that there should be plans to revamp St Giles. He was disappointed that tunnels remained an option in the current plan feeling that they were a relatively expensive waste of money.

Councillor Fooks speaking as a local Councillor generally welcomed the plan but questioned the schedule for the A40 works. She also suggested that the proposed bus lane be extended to Witney rather than introducing dual carriageway. The overall aim of the plan had to be to reduce congestion and there was a need to make cycling more attractive. Councillor Fooks raised a number of detailed points around freight transport, signage, air quality and parking.

Councillor Hards speaking as a local Councillor referred to work on Milton Interchange which improved matters travelling north from Didcot but otherwise worsened the situation. He highlighted a number of local issues including concerns around Phase 2 of the Orchard Centre development, the lack of proposals for the northern perimeter of Didcot that needed some relief from traffic congestion and concern that the implications of the withdrawal of bus subsidies was not recognised in the plan.

Councillor Patrick, speaking as a local Councillor was pleased to see that much of the work of the cross party working group remained in the plan. Councillor Patrick highlighted the bus and rail strategies and in particular stressed the need for properly integrated public transport links, including effective cross ticketing. She welcomed the news on Grove a Station whilst recognising that there still remained a lot to do and urged the Leader to start this work now.

Councillor Curran, Shadow Cabinet Member for Environment generally commended the document but felt that some of the good intentions were compromised. He referred in particular to the impact of the withdrawal of bus subsidies that could lead to a lack of rural buses and rural isolation. He also highlighted the Rail Strategy where he would have wished to see the extension of the Cowley Road line on its original line. Councillor Curran welcomed the work on work place levies and supported the extension of CPZs. The work on low emission zones was welcomed but he stressed the need to find the necessary staff resource.

Councillor Nimmo Smith in moving the recommendations commented that economic growth was dependent on movement of goods and the plan was about compromise and balancing needs. Comments had been about the need for choice and the intention was to make all forms of transport attractive, working together. Councillor Nimmo Smith stressed that this was an update of the existing plan produced following consultation and that it was intended to be a living working document. He highlighted a number of sections in the plan where there had been changes including the higher priority placed on air quality and the updated proposals for the A40. John

Disley referred to the A240 Strategy and requested an amendment which was agreed and is set out below.

Cabinet generally commended the Plan and thanked officers for their work with the A420 working group whose suggestions had been included in the Plan. Officers were congratulated for their work with Public Health colleagues that ensured that public health issues were taken into account. It was noted that the plan relied on the support of other organisations for successful delivery of the Plan.

RESOLVED: to:

- (a) approve the Connecting Oxfordshire update, and to RECOMMEND it for adoption by Full Council at its meeting in July 2016 subject to the following change:

Delete the third bullet point on page 10 of the A420 strategy document:

“A new roundabout at the A420 junction with Coxwell Road. This upgrade is partially funded by developers of nearby strategic sites.”

Substitute with the following bullet point:

“A significant junction improvement will be required at the A420 junction with Coxwell Road to accommodate known housing growth in the area. The Highway Authority has been negotiating with the developers through the planning process and a full signalisation of the junction is an agreeable solution in principle.”

and;

- (b) note the contents of Annex 2 and to instruct officers to undertake work to progress proposals for Clean Air Zones in parallel with proposals for an Oxford city centre zero-emission zone.

55/16 FORWARD PLAN AND FUTURE BUSINESS

(Agenda Item. 8)

The Cabinet considered a list of items (CA) 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.

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..... in the Chair

Date of signing