

CABINET

MINUTES of the meeting held on Tuesday, 18 August 2020 commencing at 10.00 am and finishing at 11.05 am

Present:

Voting Members: Councillor Ian Hudspeth – in the Chair
Councillor Mrs Judith Heathcoat
Councillor Lawrie Stratford
Councillor Steve Harrod
Councillor Ian Corkin
Councillor Lorraine Lindsay-Gale
Councillor Yvonne Constance OBE
Councillor David Bartholomew
Councillor Liam Walker
Councillor Mark Gray

Officers:

Whole of meeting Yvonne Rees, Chief Executive; Lorna Baxter, Director for Finance; Ansaf Azhar, Corporate Director for Public Health; Stephen Chandler, Corporate Director for Adults and Housing Services; Paul Feehily, Corporate Director for Place and Growth; Claire Taylor, Corporate Director, Communications and Organisational Development; Kevin Gordon, Director for Children’s Services; ; Jane Portman, Interim Director for Children’s Services; 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.

65/20 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

(Agenda Item. 1)

There were no apologies.

66/20 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

(Agenda Item. 2)

There were no declarations of interest.

67/20 MINUTES

(Agenda Item. 3)

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 July 2020 were approved and signed as a correct record.

68/20 QUESTIONS FROM COUNTY COUNCILLORS

(Agenda Item. 4)

Councillor Mark Cherry had given notice of the following question to Councillor Liam Walker:

Will the Cabinet member for Highways Delivery and Operations Cllr Liam Walker be able to give a timescale for the relining work at the end of Boxhedge Road, Banbury.

Highways Officers have informed me that the work will be done but cannot give me a timescale due to skanska contractors schedule lining work for active travel in Oxfordshire ie cycling lanes. I have had complaints from residents as cars have parked close to a pull through for neighbouring houses and Thames Valley police cannot enforce parking because the lines are faded there; a clear health and safety concern.

Councillor Walker replied:

As the Activity Travel cycle markings are now complete, we have added the lining work (mentioned) to the programme of works. We are expecting the work to be carried out during 18/19 August.

Councillor Judy Roberts had given notice of the following question to Councillor Steve Harrod:

It is very worrying that only £25k of the £200k budgeted for youth service development this year is now regarded as necessary expenditure, and that proposals agreed to unanimously by council at February's budget meeting are to be abandoned. During Covid our young people have suffered greatly with disruption to their education. Many of the most vulnerable young people with mental health issues have been unable to access services. We know that the impact of the 2008 recession hit young people the hardest

economically and that 14-24 year olds need this council's support now more than ever. Given that this £200k budget was intended to develop a proposal for an Oxfordshire youth service to be included in the budget for 2021/2, how else do the administration plan to provide these desperately needed professional youth services?

Councillor Harrod replied:

The £200k allocated in this financial year's budget to develop an up to date assessment of what young people want and need from youth services, which was always considered a generous budget, has not been removed, just reduced to £25k. A specification for this work has been prepared within this new financial envelope under the following timeline, which has obviously been affected by the pandemic:

- Request for quotation issued: July 2020
- Deadline for quotes: September 2020
- Supplier appointed: October 2020

The appointed consultants will be supported by officers in their on-going 'business as usual' assessment of provision. Furthermore, there is a lot of good existing information available about numbers and needs. There are strong 'umbrella' groups within the Voluntary sector that can provide insight on what is currently available and there is some great national work on what good youth provision would look like. The gap is probably around what young people want and therefore the need for consultation is significant as there is a lack of up to date information in this regard.

We anticipate most of the consultation with young people will be conducted online because of the pandemic, which is less costly, and our expectation is that we will receive initial feedback before Christmas 2020, with the final report by March 2021. Whilst this detail will clearly not be available in time to incorporate it into the 2021/22 budget, we will endeavour to make some provision for it, but this will be within the constrained financial position for the council overall.

Contrary to some speculation, this project has not been kicked into the long grass, but merely delayed by the impact of Covid-19.

Councillor Richard Webber had given notice of the following question to Councillor Yvonne Constance:

Given that the Active Travel pots are very small for what they are trying to achieve, and the time for any consultation was short, it is hardly surprising that the whole process has caused much consternation. Leaving aside that no clear explanation of what criteria were used to determine which projects should go ahead and how any criteria were applied, does the Cabinet accept

that the whole exercise has taken up an inordinate amount of Highway officer time to the detriment and delaying many other projects?

Councillor Constance replied:

As a result of COVID, It has been necessary to reprioritise our activities to ensure that the council is doing everything it can to enable our residents to travel safely as lockdown restrictions are eased. This includes the Active Travel programme, which comprises a wide range of initiatives and not just the Emergency Active Travel fund from the Department for Transport.

Some lower priority activities have been paused or delayed, however we will still deliver all of our planned activities this year. I am not aware of any complaints we have received as a result of this reprioritisation, however please contact your area highways team if you have any concerns.

Councillor Liz Leffman had given notice of the following question to Councillor Yvonne Constance:

The proposed revisions to the 2020/21 budget includes the postponement of schemes such as the LCWIPS, which would help residents to reduce their carbon footprint by using their cars less, and improving their health walking and cycling more. Given the government's commitment to both reversing climate change and improving health by encouraging walking and cycling, would this Cabinet consider approaching the government to ask for support so that the LCWIPS can go ahead immediately rather than having to wait indefinitely?

Councillor Constance replied:

LCWIPS are still going ahead with plans to develop more following the approval of the Plan for Oxford in March and the scheme for Bicester going to Cabinet next month. Implementation of agreed Plans is dependent on funding coming forward to put the schemes and measures in and we have already approached the Government with proposals for Tranche 2 of their Emergency Active Travel funding.

Supplementary Question:

If the Council does not receive the money it expects to get in Tranche 2 from the Government, what will happen with the LCWIPs? Will they be postponed? Because it seems as if we are very dependent on that money coming from the Government to make sure that they go forward.

Reply:

We are most certainly dependent on the Government money for the schemes to go forward. In October last year, we submitted a bid to

Government for £300m, which is the estimated cost to install just the LCWIPs around Oxford itself. We have gone on to develop bids for LCWIPs around Bicester and Witney and work has started on an LCWIP for Didcot. This is in order to have properly planned schemes for when funding does become available.

Currently the Tranche 2 bid has relied on the LCWIP work within Oxford City to get the most 'spade-ready' schemes because deliverability was such a test. If we do not get all of the funding, anything that does not meet a priority test, which will be based on the Benefit Cost Ratio, will simply wait for the next round of funding. This applies to all of the schemes that have been generated with this great interest in the Active Travel Fund - a maximum of £2.38m against £20m that we are spending on cycleways in Oxfordshire already.

Councillor Tim Bearder had given notice of the following question to Councillor Judith Heathcoat:

How many vacancies were advertised on the Oxfordshire County Council Job board between 1st April and 31st July in 2019 and 2020?

Councillor Heathcoat replied:

The figures requested are as follows:

	External	Internal	Grand Total
2019	253	265	518
2020	116	124	240

This takes into account any Advert that had a start or end date between these dates.

External adverts may have also had an internal advert running concurrently. This would be counted twice in the grand total.

69/20 PETITIONS AND PUBLIC ADDRESS

(Agenda Item. 5)

The Chairman had agreed the following requests to speak:

Item	Speaker
6	Councillor Liz Brighthouse
7	Councillor Sobia Afridi
	Councillor Liz Brighthouse

The addresses are recorded at the items.

70/20 BUSINESS MANAGEMENT & MONITORING REPORT - QUARTER 1 - APRIL - JUNE 2020

(Agenda Item. 6)

Councillor Liz Brighthouse, Chairman of the Performance Scrutiny Committee, drew attention to the written response from the scrutiny committee which was included in the Addenda.

Councillor Judith Heathcoat introduced the report. She noted that a financial annex was not provided on this occasion because the financial forecast will be given under the Revised Budget item. It will be included in following business management reports. Cabinet was updated on the finances on a regular basis during the Covid-19 crisis.

The Leadership Risk Register includes some new KPIs since April and there is distortion in some data due to the influence of Covid. Some services have had to be suspended such as the libraries and the Safe and Well visits to people's homes.

Councillors and staff continue to work from home and Councillor Heathcoat thanked officers for their resilience and flexibility during the crisis.

She added that the Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service has continued to exceed its targets. During the lockdown the number of road traffic incidents had actually increased as people drove with less care. She moved the recommendations.

Councillor Yvonne Constance complimented officers on the work done on the bids for the Active Travel Funds on which they had to operate to very short deadlines. She responded to criticism that operational teams had been diverted to the Active Travel work. The Council did not have the budget to increase resources and she asked councillors to be patient and to appreciate the significant achievement by officers in completing these bids.

The consultation on city centre bus gates received 7,200 responses and that has had to be given out to an agency to analyse.

Councillor Ian Corkin addressed a RAG rating that had moved from green to amber for Enhanced Digital Connectivity (Indicator 27, Agenda Page 20). This was due to the impact of Covid on some of the partner companies. The situation is being monitored. An announcement of extra funding is expected soon in relation to the Business in Rural Oxfordshire programme. He expressed confidence that the amber rating is temporary.

Councillor Steve Harrod noted a reduction in the number of Child Protection Plans of 25% over the last two years thanks to appropriate early intervention and he congratulated officers on that achievement.

RESOLVED: to note the contents of this report.

71/20 REVISED BUDGET 2020/21

(Agenda Item. 7)

Councillor Sobia Afridi was unavailable to speak.

Councillor Liz Brighthouse, Chairman of the Performance Scrutiny Committee, summarised the response from the scrutiny committee's discussion of the Revised Budget which was included in the Addenda.

Councillor Steve Harrod responded that the consultation on the Youth Fund will now take place mostly online which will be much less costly. It will be delayed by Covid but they are not cutting back on level or detail. He expects the feedback to be available by Christmas.

Councillor Mark Gray added that it had already been decided that the full £200,000 was not needed. It is out to tender now. It will not be in time for the 2021/22 budget but some provision will be made for it.

Councillor Lorraine Lindsay-Gale responded on the SEND issue. There was now a new management team in place for Education and she was pleased to announce a new appointment of an SEND Manager who is coming with great experience in the area.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Brighthouse for the feedback from the Performance Scrutiny Committee which will be taken into account before the revised budget goes to Full Council. He also thanked staff members for the additional work required during the pandemic but also for keeping normal services going.

While the Government had provided extra funding, there was still a shortfall and they would continue to lobby for more support. It was vital that the Council should be in a strong financial position, especially if there is a second spike in Covid.

Councillor David Bartholomew introduced the report and summarised the main provisions.

Councillor Gray asked if there was more information available on the income guarantee scheme announced about six weeks before. Councillor Bartholomew responded that there will be a claim made in September which is expected to be paid in October and then there will be further claims made in December and April.

Cabinet Members highlighted some points in their portfolios as follows:

- Councillor Ian Corkin noted that some of the additional costs arose from the customer service centre dealing with shielding residents which included making 12,000 proactive calls to vulnerable residents. This was assisted by staff from the library service. There has recently been a 30%

increase in calls relating to adult social services and it is anticipated that there will be an impact on children's services when schools reopen.

- Councillor Judith Heathcoat stated that the revised budget will still enable the fire service to maintain safety and efficiency. The delay of one year in renewal of engines will not have a major impact as there is flexibility in the contract.
- Councillor Steve Harrod applauded officers for finding ways to reduce costs without making any cuts to services but by redesigning.
- Councillor Lorraine Lindsay-Gale referred to the proposal not to fill the School Improvement Advisor position until March next year. She said that this was a post they had been unable to fill and they were confident that existing officers could cope with the workload.
- Councillor Lawrie Stratford noted that an announcement was imminent from the Minister regarding the future of Public Health and they were still awaiting details on Test and Trace. He stated that some of the savings in his area were the result of being unable to deliver some services as many are face-to-face. They will continue to support care homes but if they need more money there must be clarity on where it is going. The latest figures show that Delayed Transfers of Care are currently just 10% of the figure three years ago.

Councillor Heathcoat added that in relation to vacancies across all services there was currently a pause while directors examine how we deliver services going forward.

RESOLVED: to

- a) approve the creation of the Council Tax Collection Fund Reserve and **RECOMMEND COUNCIL TO:**
- b) approve the savings set out in Annex 1
- c) approve the revised revenue budget for 2020/21 set out in Annex 2

72/20 DISPOSAL OF DEVELOPMENT SITES TO OXFORD CITY COUNCIL
(Agenda Item. 9)

It was agreed that there was no necessity to go into private session on this item.

Councillor David Bartholomew summarised the report. It was proposed to agree a transaction with Oxford City Council regarding surplus properties owned by the County Council which could be used for affordable housing. Also, included was the old swimming pool at Blackbird Leys which will be transferred to become part of a regeneration plan.

Councillor Laurie Stratford described the proposal as a win-win situation for both councils and a good example of partnership working. He congratulated all involved.

The Chairman agreed that the Council should do everything in its power to provide for better housing.

RESOLVED: to

- a) Agree the principle of off-market sales to the City Council, as a named purchaser, of the following properties:
 - Part of Northfield Hostel for delivery of 100% affordable housing
 - Former Depot Site at Lanham Way for delivery of 100% affordable housing
 - Former Blackbird Leys Swimming Pool for incorporation into the regeneration scheme
- b) To declare the Former Blackbird Leys Swimming Pool surplus to requirements.
- c) Delegate authority to the Director for Property, Investment and Facilities Management and the Director of Law and Governance to agree appropriate terms.

73/20 EXEMPT MINUTES

(Agenda Item. 10)

The exempt minutes of the meeting held on 21 July 2020 were approved and signed as a correct record.

..... in the Chair

Date of signing