

CABINET

MINUTES of the meeting held on Tuesday, 19 September 2023 commencing at 11.00 am and finishing at 5.30 pm

Present:

Voting Members: Councillor Liz Leffman – in the Chair
Councillor Liz Brighthouse OBE (Deputy Chair)
Councillor Tim Bearder
Councillor Duncan Enright
Councillor Andrew Gant
Councillor Kate Gregory
Councillor Calum Miller
Councillor Michael O'Connor
Councillor Dr Pete Sudbury

Other Members in Attendance:

Councillors David Bartholomew, Ted Fenton, Donna Ford, John Howson, Kieron Mallon, Eddie Reeves and Judy Roberts

Officers:

Whole of meeting Martin Reeves (Chief Executive), Stephen Chandler, Executive Director (People, Transformation and Performance, Lorna Baxter (Director of Finance), Anita Bradley (Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer), Ansaf Azhar (Corporate Director Public Health & Community Safety), Bill Cotton (Corporate Director Environment & Place) Anne Coyle (Interim Corporate Director of Children's Services), Karen Fuller (Interim Corporate Director Adult Social Care), Colm Ó Caomhánaigh (Democratic Services Manager)

The Cabinet 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.

99/23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

(Agenda Item. 1)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Glynis Phillips.

100/23 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

(Agenda Item. 2)

In relation to Item 7, Councillor Gant stated that, while submissions have been received from neighbourhood forums in his division, he has had no involvement in the discussions around them.

In relation to Item 7, Councillor Miller stated that he was a volunteer coach with Gosford All Blacks Rugby Club.

101/23 MINUTES

(Agenda Item. 3)

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 July 2023 were approved and signed as a correct record by the Chair.

102/23 QUESTIONS FROM COUNTY COUNCILLORS

(Agenda Item. 4)

There were none received.

103/23 PETITIONS AND PUBLIC ADDRESS

(Agenda Item. 5)

Item 7 Proposal from OUFC to OCC as Landowner

David Robey

Roger Dicks

Paul Peros

Janine Bailey

Tim Williams

Niall McWilliams

Jonathon Clarke

Gemma Sims

Ian Salisbury

Suzanne McIvor

Paul Buckley

Chris Robins

John Hill

Chris Brennan

Cllr Ian Middleton

Cllr Liam Walker

8 Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO)

Cllr John Howson

9 Time for Change: Improving Educational Opportunity for All Oxfordshire's Children and Young People - A report by the Oxfordshire Education Commission

Claire Brenner

Cllr John Howson

12 Capital Programme Approvals

Cllr John Howson

17 OCC Fire & Rescue Service Property and Emergency Response Strategy
Cllr John Howson

104/23 APPOINTMENTS

(Agenda Item. 6)

RESOLVED to confirm the following appointments:

Rural Services Network (Category A Outside Body)

Nominated Member: Councillor Leffman

Nominated substitute: Councillor Gregory

South East Employers (Category A Outside Body)

Councillor Phillips

Councillor Gregory

Thames Valley Fire Control Service

Councillor Gregory to replace Councillor Hannaby

Member Champions

Future Generations: Councillor Hicks

Public Transport: Councillor Povolotsky

**105/23 PROPOSAL FROM OXFORD UNITED FOOTBALL CLUB TO
OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL AS LANDOWNER -
SEPTEMBER 2023**

(Agenda Item. 7)

Cabinet had before it a report regarding the approach by Oxford United Football Club (OUFC) to the County Council (OCC) requesting that the Council transfer, by way of a 250-year lease, c.18 hectares (44.48 acres) of land, known as 'land at Stratfield Brake, Kidlington' for the development of a new 18,000 capacity football stadium with ancillary leisure and commercial facilities to include, hotel, retail, conference, and training/community grounds.

Councillor Kieron Mallon, Chair of the Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee presented the Committee's report and recommendations on these proposals.

The Chair then invited a number of speakers to address the Cabinet on the substantive report and recommendations.

Councillor Calum Miller, Cabinet Member for Finance, introduced the report.

The Chief Executive presented the report and referred to the various views that had been expressed on the proposals.

During discussion, members made the following points:-

- The need to pay particular attention to whether freehold or leasehold terms be agreed in view of the financial and reputational risks to the Council
- The need to lock in the covenant to ensure the ongoing use of the land for the purposes set out in the report
- The importance of environmental considerations in the development of the new site
- The roles of the Football Club and the land under consideration as Community assets
- The social value of football in bringing generations and communities together
- The need to take account of the large volume of correspondence and representations received on the proposals
- The need to consider local traffic considerations
- Concerns about the residual green belt and biodiversity of the adjoining land
- The need to demonstrate the benefits to be realised from the proposals in line with the Council's strategic priorities

Councillor Miller, Cabinet Member for Finance, thanked all those involved in the compilation of the report and the speakers who had attended the meeting to express their views. He referred to the background to the proposals arising from the need for Oxford United to find an alternative site from 2026 and the extensive work on the technical proposals and community engagement that had been undertaken which had led to the recommendations presented to this meeting.

Members then considered the detailed recommendations in the report and, in particular, whether to proceed on the basis of entering a leasehold agreement with the Football Club. Following discussion, Cabinet agreed to make amendments to the recommendations in the report.

Councillor Miller moved and Councillor Bearder seconded the amended recommendations and they were approved.

RESOLVED, 8 voting in favour and 1 abstention to:-

- (a) Note the feedback from the stakeholder engagement exercise undertaken in April and May 2023 (set out in Annex 2) and the public engagement exercise undertaken between 9 June and 23 July 2023 (set out in Annex 3).**
- (b) Accept the report from the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee.**
- (c) Agree to proceed with a leasehold disposal of the land located to the east of Frieze Way/south of Kidlington roundabout known as the Triangle, based on the heads of terms which are to be negotiated with Oxford United Football Club (OUFC).**

The leasehold disposal would be subject to:

- i. The receipt of planning consent**
 - ii. The production by OUFC of a net zero carbon plan [fully costed with clear timescales and outcomes, from design, construction and full operation of the stadium]**
 - iii. A clear and detailed set of proposals that show how OUFC will meet the commitments made to date to meet the Council's strategic priorities to the satisfaction of the Cabinet Member for Finance and Property**
 - iv. Obtaining a best value assessment of the leasehold disposal in accordance with the requirements of s123 Local Government Act 1972**
 - v. Restrictive covenants to ensure that the land remains limited to use for stadium and sports purposes for the term of the lease**
- (d) Delegate authority to the Director of Finance, in consultation with the Chief Executive and the Cabinet Member for Finance and Property, to negotiate and agree the final heads of terms**
- (e) Delegate authority to the Director of Finance, in consultation with the Head of Legal and Deputy Monitoring Officer, to conclude negotiations with the club and complete all necessary legal documentation for the leasehold disposal**
- (f) Delegate authority to the Cabinet Member for Finance and Property, in consultation with the Director of Finance, to write to the club to outline requirements relating to the net zero carbon plan, a clear and detailed set of proposals and details of the restrictive covenants set out in (c) above.**

106/23 TIME FOR CHANGE: IMPROVING EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL OXFORDSHIRE'S CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE - A REPORT BY THE OXFORDSHIRE EDUCATION COMMISSION (TO FOLLOW)

(Agenda Item. 9)

Cabinet considered a report from the independently-chaired Oxfordshire Education Commission which had been established in Autumn 2022 to consider how the Council, collectively with all state-funded schools, other education settings, and partners including children and families, could plan to sustain improving outcomes for all Oxfordshire children.

Gail Tolley, the independent Chair of the Commission, presented the report. She introduced other members of the Commission who were present at the meeting and summarised the background to the findings of the Commission's work which had led to the recommendations before the Cabinet. There had been extensive engagement with children, young people, parents, schools and community organisations in the County which had provided valuable evidence along with various data insights and

information on performance. The Commission had identified a need for incremental change and collaborative working to achieve excellent outcomes for Oxfordshire's children and young people.

The Executive Director (People, Transformation and Performance) thanked Gail Tolley and commission members for their work and reiterated the need for the recommendations to be incorporated with other areas for improvement including SEND.

Councillor Liz Brighthouse, Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Young People's Services responded to the report and expressed support for the need to step up to the challenges facing the Council and for an action plan to be put in place to monitor progress on improvements.

During discussion, members commented on:-

- the disparity of outcomes for children from different backgrounds and communities in the County
- the need for positive action to be taken in response to the Commission's findings
- evidence that children performed better when they walked or cycled through green spaces to school
- the importance of early years child development in the context of health and wellbeing

Councillor Brighthouse moved and Councillor Enright seconded the recommendations and they were approved.

RESOLVED to note the report of the Oxfordshire Education Commission.

107/23 REPORT FINDINGS BY THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND SOCIAL CARE OMBUDSMAN (LGSCO)

(Agenda Item. 8)

Cabinet received a report on the findings of a case investigated by the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman concerning the the Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND) Service.

Councillor Liz Brighthouse, Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Young People's Services introduced the report and offered the Council's sincere apologies to those involved in this case. She referred to the measures the Council needed to take to improve the SEND service.

The Executive Director (People, Transformation and Performance) explained the background to the case and outlined the steps being taken to realise improvements to services provided by the Children's Services Directorate.

He explained details of the considerable performance improvements that had been made during the past year.

During discussion, members made the following points:-

- Improvements to systems and processes involved in SEND cases should be prioritised.
- The importance of work with partners, particularly those in the health sector, in delivering an improved SEND service

Councillor Brighthouse moved and Councillor Sudbury seconded the recommendations and they were approved.

RESOLVED to:

- a) note the findings of the Ombudsman's investigation;**
- b) note the procedures when consulting for new education placements for children with Education, Health, and Care plans; and to**
- c) consider whether additional actions are presently needed to improve the timely completion of Education, Health, and Care plans.**

108/23 REPORTS FROM SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

(Agenda Item. 10)

Councillor Kieron Mallon, on behalf of Councillor Eddie Reeves, Chair of the Performance and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee, presented the reports and recommendations on:-

LGA Peer Review on Comms
Consultation and Engagement Strategy
Business Transformation Programme
EDI Strategy and Action Plan
Workforce Strategy
Workforce Report and Data Q4 2022/23

Cabinet received the reports and will respond in due course.

109/23 BUSINESS MANAGEMENT & MONITORING REPORT - JULY 2023

(Agenda Item. 11)

Cabinet had before it a report on the July 2023 performance, risk, and finance position for the council.

Councillor Calum Miller, Cabinet Member for Finance, presented the report and referred, in particular, the current position on performance indicators and the projected financial outturn. He also referred to the demands and inflationary pressures facing the local government sector as a whole.

During discussion, members commented on the financial pressures in particular service departments and the budget reductions which would be required in future years' budgets.

Councillor Miller moved and Councillor Enright seconded the recommendations and they were approved.

RESOLVED to :-

- a) **note the report and annexes.**
- b) **approve the virement in Annex B-2a.**
- c) **note the use of £0.5m one – off funding (over the next two years) held in the COVID-19 reserve to further extend capacity needed within the Complaints and Freedom of Information (FOI) team within the Customer Service Centre.**

110/23 CAPITAL PROGRAMME APPROVALS - SEPTEMBER 2023

(Agenda Item. 12)

Cabinet had before it a report setting out requests for changes to the Capital Programme requiring Cabinet approval that will be incorporated into the agreed programme and included in the next quarterly update to the Capital Programme in October 2023.

Councillor Miller, Cabinet Member for Finance, introduced the report and answered a number of questions.

RESOLVED to:

- a) **approve the release of the £1m approved budget to complete Stage 0 of the Didcot Central Corridors South and Vale Programme.**
- b) **approve the release of £1.55m to progress with Stage 1 of the expanded Zero Emission Zone scheme and to approve the forward funding of £0.55m from the Budget Priority Reserve.**
- c) **approve a budget increase of £1.495m to a revised budget of £6.99m for Benson Relief Road to enable implementation of construction work, funded from additional S106 contributions and Growth Deal Funding and to forward fund the scheme in advance of secured S106 contributions.**
- d) **agree a revised budget of £24.1m to the A44 Corridor Improvements between and including Peartree to Cassington Road roundabout, an additional £4.1m funded from Growth Deal as detailed in paragraph 13.**
- e) **agree the inclusion of £0.95m for a programme of works into the Capital Programme, to upgrade two Gypsy and Traveller sites (utility buildings), funded from the agreed capital proposals (February 2023) in earmarked reserves.**

111/23 PAN-REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP FOR THE OXFORD-CAMBRIDGE AREA

(Agenda Item. 13)

Cabinet had before it a report providing additional information on the pan-regional partnership for the Oxford to Cambridge area which had been proposed by local authorities and other regional partners, with support from the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.

Councillor Liz Leffman, Leader of the Council, presented the report and referred to the priorities of the new partnership relating to the environment and sustainable development which aligned with the strategic objectives of the County Council.

During discussion, members commented on the merits of joining the partnership, the role it will have in influencing policy and decision-making and the question of representation from the County Council.

Councillor Leffman moved and Councillor Enright seconded the recommendations and they were approved.

RESOLVED, 5 voting in favour and 3 against, to confirm that the County Council will be a participant in the pan-regional partnership for the Oxford to Cambridge area.

112/23 PROPOSAL TO DISPOSE OF REWLEY ROAD SITE

(Agenda Item. 16)

Cabinet considered a report on proposals for the disposal of the Rewley Road site in Oxford and the implications for the Property and Asset Strategy agreed by Cabinet in November 2022 which set out the council's long-term vision for its estate along with a set of objectives aligned with delivering the council's strategic plan priorities. This included a road map for Oxford city centre accommodation and the rationalisation of office and operational accommodation across the county.

Councillor Calum Miller, Cabinet Member for Finance, introduced the report. He explained the reasons for the proposed disposal and referred, in particular, to the implications of the proposals for the fire station located on the site.

Councillor Miller moved and Councillor Gregory seconded the recommendations and they were approved.

RESOLVED to:-

a) agree to the disposal of the Rewley Road site, as set out in exempt Annex 1, subject to negotiating and agreeing final heads of terms.

b) delegate authority to the Director of Finance, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance and Property, to negotiate and agree the final heads of terms which will be substantially in accordance with the details set out in exempt Annex 1.

c) delegate authority to the Director of Finance, in consultation with the Head of Legal and Deputy Monitoring Officer, to conclude negotiations and complete all necessary legal documentation and any other steps necessary to implement the scheme as set out in the report.

113/23 OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE PROPERTY AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE STRATEGY FOR OXFORD CITY AND CARTERTON.

(Agenda Item. 17)

Cabinet had before it a report on the proposed Property and Emergency Response Strategy for Oxford City and Carterton which had been developed to support the redevelopment of Rewley Road fire station (as set out in the proposal to dispose of Rewley Road agenda item), the renovation of Slade Park Fire Station, an offsite training facility in the Oxford and the new build of a fire station and training facility at Carterton. The strategy set out the County Council's approach to the redevelopment of its fire stations and training facilities in Oxford and Carterton.

Councillor Kate Gregory, Cabinet Member for Community Services and Safety, introduced the report and explained the objectives of the strategy and the benefits that would be realised for the Fire Service.

During discussion, a member referred to the dependency relating to parking by Fire Service staff and the implications for any future parking schemes in the city centre. The Executive Director (People, Transformation and Performance) assured members that the intention was that this dependency would not impact on any parking schemes in Oxford.

RESOLVED to approve the Property and Emergency Response Strategy for Oxford City and Carterton as set out in the report.

114/23 HOUSEHOLD WASTE RECYCLING CENTRE STRATEGY 2023 - 2043

(Agenda Item. 14)

Cabinet had before it a report on the proposed Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) Strategy which had been developed to deliver the Council's obligations under the overarching Oxfordshire Resources and Waste Partnership (ORWP) Waste Strategy and to set out the Council's vision to improve the way the it manages the infrastructure and services offered at the Council's household waste sites.

Councillor Pete Sudbury, Cabinet Member for Climate Change Delivery and Environment, introduced the report. The Director of Planning, Environment and Climate Change and the Waste Strategy Manager explained the objectives of the strategy and answered a number of questions.

Councillor Sudbury moved and Councillor Enright seconded the recommendations, and they were approved.

RESOLVED to approve the Household Waste Recycling Centre Strategy 2023-2043 as set out in the report.

115/23 LOCAL AGGREGATE ASSESSMENT FOR 2022

(Agenda Item. 15)

Cabinet had before it a report on the annual Local Aggregates Assessment (LAA) which set the level of mineral provision for the County Council as the Minerals Planning Authority, to ensure an appropriate supply for Sand and Gravel and Crushed Rock.

Councillor Pete Sudbury, Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Delivery, introduced the report. The Principal Planner explained the background to the report and the factors taken into account to ensure the Council met its obligations in order to meet the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework.

A member commented that the Council would benefit from the same level of reporting on other utilities.

Councillor Sudbury moved and Councillor Enright seconded the recommendations, and they were approved.

RESOLVED to:-

- a) approve the Local Aggregate Assessment presented in Annex 2;**
- b) authorise the Corporate Director of Environment and Place in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Climate Change Delivery and Environment to review and publish Oxfordshire's Recycled and Secondary Aggregate findings for 2022 once complete;**
- c) authorise the Corporate Director of Environment and Place in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Climate Change Delivery and Environment to make any revisions and publish the Oxfordshire Local Aggregate Assessment for the calendar year 2022 on the Council website.**

116/23 FORWARD PLAN AND FUTURE BUSINESS

(Agenda Item. 18)

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