

CABINET

MINUTES of the meeting held on Tuesday, 19 January 2010 commencing at 2.00 pm and finishing at 4.20 pm

Present:

Voting Members: Councillor Keith R. Mitchell CBE – in the Chair
Councillor David Robertson
Councillor Jim Couchman
Councillor Ian Hudspeth
Councillor Louise Chapman
Councillor Michael Waine
Councillor Rodney Rose
Councillor Mrs J. Heathcoat

Other Members in Attendance: Councillor Patrick (Items 6,12 &13)
Councillor Hannaby (Item 10)

Officers:

Whole of meeting Chief Executive, S. Whitehead (Democratic Services)

Part of Meeting

Agenda Item

	Officer Attending
6.	Head of Strategy, Director for Community Safety & Shared Services and Chief Fire Officer
7.	K. Wilcox (Financial Planning), Katy Jurczynszyn (Financial Planning),
8.	Assistant Chief Executive & Chief Finance Officer, L. Baxter (Financial Planning), Director of Social & Community Services
9.	B. Threadgold (Corporate Core)
10.	Director for Social & Community Services
11.	A. Harper-Smith (Corporate Core)
12.	Head of Partnerships Working, C. Evans (Partnerships)

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.

1/10 MINUTES

(Agenda Item. 3)

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 December were approved and signed.

2/10 QUESTIONS FROM COUNTY COUNCILLORS

(Agenda Item. 4)

Councillor Fooks had given notice of the following question to the Cabinet Member for Transport Implementation:

"I have asked before about the frequency of meetings of the Transport Decisions Committee and been assured that the intention is to hold them approximately monthly. You will be aware that the meeting scheduled for January 7th, six weeks after the previous meeting, had eleven items on the agenda, some of which affect very large numbers of people, like the decision on the expansion of Thornhill Park and Ride, and some of more local concern, like the long-awaited proposal of parking restrictions in Waterways in my division, was cancelled due to the bad weather. The proposal is to defer all these items to the meeting to be held some five weeks later, on February 11th. Your Cabinet papers today show that there are another eleven items already on the agenda for that meeting. Can you reduce the delays to the items on the January agenda by holding an extra meeting well before February 11th, which would also ensure that the February meeting can conduct all its business in a reasonable time?"

Councillor Rose:

"It was unfortunate that the January meeting had to be cancelled but I am sure Cllr Fooks understands why this was the case and that on this one occasion we have a two month gap. Whilst I appreciate that there has been delay on making some decisions I have looked at the items and consider that these can all be dealt with at the February meeting."

Supplementary question:

"Would Councillor Rose agree that 11 weeks is closer to 3 months than 2 months and that it showed a lack of consideration for members of the public waiting for decisions to be taken?"

Councillor Rose replied that in the adverse weather conditions he had been concerned for members of the public who would be attending from all parts of the county for the items which included the County Speed Limit Review. He had not been prepared to postpone to a new date until the weather conditions had improved and the bad weather still continued. The earliest date now would be 28 January. The clerk had given assurances that the items for the next scheduled meeting could be completed in reasonable time, allowing each of the items proper consideration.

3/10 PETITIONS AND PUBLIC ADDRESS

(Agenda Item. 5)

The following requests to address the meeting had been agreed:

Item	Speaker
6. Comprehensive Area Assessment – Audit Commission Report	Councillor Patrick
10. Annual Report by the Care Quality Commission on Adult Social Care	Councillor Hannaby
12. Closer to Communities – Actions to Further Develop Corporate and Service engagement in Localities and Priority Places	Councillor Patrick
13. Member Champions	Councillor Patrick

4/10 COMPREHENSIVE AREA ASSESSMENT - AUDIT COMMISSION REPORT

(Agenda Item. 6)

Cabinet considered a report summarising Oxfordshire County Council's results in the recent Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA), an annual assessment of local public services in England.

Councillor Patrick, Leader of the Opposition commented that she had not found the report useful compared to the full report and queried why the full report was not available as part of the agenda. She accepted the areas that had been highlighted for action, but noted that there was no action plan so queried what would happen in respect of those areas.

Clare Buchanan, Performance Specialist for the Audit Commission presented the Audit Commission findings, referring in particular to the assessments carried out by the Children's Quality Commission (CQC), OFSTED and the assessment of the Fire Services. She highlighted the areas where the Council had performed well, that included political and managerial leadership and strong financial management; she noted major improvements in several areas including regeneration, public transport, community safety and recycling and composting; in terms of CQC and OFSTED the Council was performing well over all although there was a need to continue to address educational attainment. The Fire Services assessment had been very positive, building on previous strong performance. Areas for development included equalities, response times and retention of retained fire fighters.

Responding to the comments made, Cabinet expressed disappointment at the lack of green flags noting that the Council was the best in the country in terms of dealing with Youth Offending and queried what was needed to gain a green flag. The Fire Service too had an exceptional record. The Cabinet

Member for Safer & Stronger Communities noted that the issue with retained fire fighters was a national problem.

The Leader indicated that the full reports were available on the web site. The areas highlighted for development were already the focus of a great deal of work and action plans were in place.

Cabinet commented on the positive nature of the report and that staff should be proud of the work they did on residents' behalf.

RESOLVED: to:

- a) Celebrate Oxfordshire's areas of good performance from the 2009 assessment; and
- b) note the areas highlighted for follow up work next year.

5/10 FINANCIAL MONITORING - JANUARY 2009

(Agenda Item. 7)

The Cabinet received the eighth financial monitoring report for the 2009/10 financial year covering the period up to the end of November 2009 for revenue, balances, reserves and capital.

The in – year Directorate forecast was an overspend of £3.060m.

The current position for general balances showed an unchanged forecast of £14.088m and after taking into account the forecast Directorate overspend, the consolidated revenue balances forecast was £11.028m.

Cabinet noted the amended Annex 2a as referred to in the schedule of addenda, together with resultant changes to Annex 2e.

The Leader noted that there were consistent pressures around young unaccompanied asylum seekers, children's placements, pressures on pooled budgets and ICT. He added that better systems were enabling the delivery of the planned capital programme. Cabinet noted the action being taken as detailed by individual Cabinet Members.

Cabinet considered the supplementary report of the Leader, set out in the schedule to the addenda that outlined the impacts of the recent severe cold weather. He highlighted the help and co-operation across the County. Cabinet Members praised the efforts of staff and other agencies, particularly District Councils who had worked well together. The County Council had taken a lead role in directing efforts to where they were most needed. Councillor Rose was thanked for his role in informing the people of Oxfordshire through radio interviews and the local press. The outstanding performance of support staff such as Home Support Staff to continue to provide a service to the most vulnerable residents was recognised. The Cabinet Member for Schools Improvement referred to the more rigorous

guidelines for schools that had been put in place following last winter's bad weather and that as a result the majority of schools had been able to maximise their opening this time, in particular for young people taking exams.

Cabinet noted that the impact on the road maintenance budget as referred to in the report was only an early indication and was no more than an estimate of the immediate works that would be needed. The final impact would not be known until the inspection of the road network was completed.

RESOLVED: to:

- (a) note the report;
- (b) approve the virements as set out in Annex 2a;
- (c) approve the use of carry forward from 2008/09 to offset pressures in Legal and Democratic Services as set out in paragraph 51;
- (d) approve the write off of the bad debt of £110,685.71 in respect of a payment in advance to Sedgemoor Children's Services as set out in paragraph 57;
- (e) approve the updated Capital Programme as set out in Annex 8;
- (f) agree the deferral and phasing of the repayment of grant from Creation Theatre Company as set out in paragraphs 86 and 87; and

(In respect of the recent severe weather to):

- (g) recognise the efforts of all our staff at this difficult time;
- (h) recognise the assistance of our partners; and
- (i) consider any lessons that can be learnt as appropriate.

6/10 SERVICE & RESOURCE PLANNING REPORT FOR 2010/11 - 2014/15

(Agenda Item. 8)

Cabinet considered the third in a series on the Service and Resource Planning process for 2010/11 to 2014/15, providing councillors with information on budget issues for 2010/11 and the medium term. The report set out the latest information on the Council's financial position, included the Treasury Management Strategy for 2010/11 and considered the capital funding, including an updated Capital Programme.

Officers drew attention to additional information contained in the addenda and supplementary report by the Assistant Chief Finance Officer including an amendment to recommendation (e) and two additional recommendations.

Cabinet also considered a separate report by the Leader which set out the basis for the Cabinet's budget proposals to Council and Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for 2010/11 to 2014/15. This took into consideration comments on the draft budget proposals from the individual Scrutiny Committees in December 2009 as well as the latest information on the Council's financial position as outlined in the main report. It also took account of the public consultation on the budget which was undertaken during October 2009.

The Leader commented that local government finances were likely to be under pressure for the next 5-10 years and that the current proposals recognised that position. He noted a number of changes as a result of consultation, which included finding alternatives savings to those originally proposed for Youth Services. He highlighted a number of programmes including Building Schools for the Future and the Transformation agenda around Social & Community Services and referred to the financial impact on the Council with the transfer of concessionary fares. He noted with appreciation the stability provided by the public sector pay announcements by central government and flagged as a danger the impact of proposals for free social care for adults in a high level of need. He noted the impact of the recent severe weather. He commented that the proposed level of Council tax in the next year was higher than he would wish to see.

During discussion the Cabinet thanked the Assistant Chief Executive & Chief Finance Officer and her team for the huge amount of time and effort they had put in. Cabinet Members appreciated that they had received very good advice. Cabinet Members recognised that for them this had been a difficult budget with many challenges. The Director for Social & Community Services and the Cabinet Member for Adult Services supported the concerns around the free social care for adults.

RESOLVED: to:

- a) (in respect of revenue) RECOMMEND Council to approve:
- (1) a budget for 2010/11 and a medium term plan to 2014/15, based on the proposals set out by the Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance;
 - (2) a budget requirement for 2010/11;
 - (3) a precept for 2010/11;
 - (4) a council tax for band D equivalent properties;
 - (5) the use of unallocated LABGI funding as set out in Annex 5;
 - (6) virement arrangements to operate within the approved budget;
- (b) (in respect of treasury management) RECOMMEND Council to approve:
- (1) the Treasury Management Strategy Statement;
 - (2) Prudential Indicators from April 2010;
 - (3) that in relation to the 2010/11 strategy any further changes required be delegated to the Chief Finance Officer in consultation with the Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and leaders of the Opposition and Labour group.

- (c) RECOMMEND Council to approve the Minimum Revenue Provision Methodology Statement as set out in paragraphs 10 to 13 of Annex 7.
- (d) (in respect of capital) RECOMMEND Council to approve:
 - (1) the updated Capital Strategy and Corporate Asset Management Plan;
 - (2) a Capital Programme for 2010/11 to 2014/15;
 - (3) Prudential Indicators from April 2010.
- (e) delegate authority to the Leader of the Council, following consultation with the Chief Finance Officer, to make appropriate changes to the proposed budget;
- (f) The Cabinet is recommended to approve a supplementary estimate of £0.475m in respect of Highways Maintenance; and
- (g) given the amended submission date of 29th January 2010, authority to agree the revised Building Schools for the Future (BSF) Readiness to Deliver statement submission is delegated to the BSF Board.

At this point it was agreed to vary the order of the agenda.

7/10 REVISED DISABILITY EQUALITY SCHEME

(Agenda Item. 11)

Cabinet considered the proposed new Disability Equality Scheme.

The Cabinet Member for Safer & Stronger Communities stressed that the Council's commitment went beyond the statutory duty with high standards being set for the equal treatment of all. All the priorities had targets and outcome dates set out in the Delivery Plan. She highlighted the disability awareness training being delivered for bus drivers.

RESOLVED: to:

- (a) agree the revised Disability Equality Scheme (Annex 1 of the report); and
- (b) agree the revised 3-Year rolling schedule of statutory Equality Impact Assessments (Annex 2 of the report).

8/10 DRAFT CORPORATE PLAN 2010/11

(Agenda Item. 9)

Cabinet considered a draft of the Corporate Plan for the period 2010/11 to 2014/15 prior to its consideration by the full Council in February 2009. Comments by the Strategy & Partnerships Scrutiny Committee were set out in the schedule of addenda.

The Leader commented that the Plan was still developing and that he expected that consequential changes could still be needed following Council.

RESOLVED: subject to consideration of advice from the Strategy & Partnerships Scrutiny Committee to RECOMMEND the Council to approve the Medium Term Corporate Plan 2010/11-14/15 subject to the inclusion of consequential and editorial changes in the text as agreed by the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council.

9/10 ANNUAL REPORT BY THE CARE QUALITY COMMISSION ON ADULT SOCIAL CARE

(Agenda Item. 10)

Cabinet considered the 2008/9 report for Oxfordshire from The Care Quality Commission (CQC) providing an annual performance assessment of adult social care.

Councillor Hannaby, speaking as Shadow Cabinet Member for Adult Services added her thanks to those expressed earlier in the meeting to the Home Care Support Team, particularly those in her area, for their efforts to continue to provide a service during the recent snow. She felt that there was some disappointment with the report's assessment in certain areas and highlighted concerns over safeguarding. She noted that work was being undertaken on late discharges and hoped that progress could be maintained. She welcomed the strong working with partners and appreciated the work that was being done, feeling that there was the ability to improve further. Responding to questions she commented that she had no problems with the way things were progressing but that finance was always an issue.

The Cabinet Member for Adult Services agreed that there had been disappointment at the assessment of safeguarding. It had already moved up the agenda and he had felt that enough had been put in place to merit an assessment of performing well. The Director for Social & Community Services added that if they continued doing what they were doing then performing well should be achieved. On the personal budgets he felt that this report and the earlier CAA report had not been as positive as it could be. Key milestones had been agreed. The target of 10% would be reached by March 2010.

RESOLVED: to:

- (a) receive the report; and
- (b) review progress on the areas for development through the quarterly monitoring of the Directorate balanced scorecard.

10/10 CLOSER TO COMMUNITIES - ACTIONS TO FURTHER DEVELOP CORPORATE AND SERVICE ENGAGEMENT IN LOCALITIES AND PRIORITY PLACES

(Agenda Item. 12)

Cabinet considered a report seeking approval of proposals to further develop locality working.

Councillor Patrick, Leader of the Opposition, queried what criteria had been used to select the 6 priority areas identified in the report. She queried where the resources for the work were to be found. She had a concern that the focus on localities could lead to a duplication of effort by, for example, the splitting of transport depots.

The Leader responded that the 6 areas had been selected as those having a number of issues based on the experience of Cabinet Members. He accepted that there were not huge resources available and felt it would be interesting to see what could be achieved. The Head of Partnership Working gave assurances that the intention was not to split services up into 14 locality units. It was hoped that the actions would lead to better engagement with local areas.

RESOLVED: to:

- (a) approve the 14 proposed locality areas for further discussion with partner organisations; and
- (b) approve the recommendations for making progress on locality arrangements in the 6 priority places.

11/10 MEMBER CHAMPIONS

(Agenda Item. 13)

Cabinet considered a report seeking approval to the appointment of a new Member Champion for Locality Working.

Councillor Patrick, Leader of the Opposition, suggested that it might be better to have a number of member champions to cover each of the areas.

The Leader stated that the suggestion would be considered in the context of the proposal, which was about championing locality working rather than championing any particular area. It did not prevent any member from championing their area.

RESOLVED: to approve the concept of appointing a Councillor or Councillors as Member Champion(s) for Locality Working.

12/10 FORWARD PLAN AND FUTURE BUSINESS

(Agenda Item. 14)

The Cabinet considered a list of items for the immediately forthcoming meetings of the Cabinet together with the following addition:

Grounds Maintenance – Deputy Leader – 16 February 2010

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

13/10 DELEGATED POWERS OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

(Agenda Item. 15)

RESOLVED: to note the details below of executive decisions taken by the Chief Executive under the specific powers and functions delegated to her under the terms of Part 7.4 of the Council's Constitution.

<i>Date</i>	<i>Subject</i>	<i>Decision</i>	<i>Reason for Urgency</i>
14/12/09	Proposed transfer of staff and services to Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Mental Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust	Approved an exemption from the full tendering requirements of the Council's Contract Procedure Rules	To put an interim arrangement in place to ensure integrated and safe services pending the agreement of joint commissioning procurement arrangements.

..... in the Chair

Date of signing 2010