

CABINET

MINUTES of the meeting held on Tuesday, 9 March 2010 commencing at 2.00 pm and finishing at 2.43 pm

Present:

Voting Members: Councillor Keith R. Mitchell CBE – in the Chair

Councillor Louise Chapman
Councillor Jim Couchman
Councillor Ian Hudspeth
Councillor Michael Waine
Councillor Rodney Rose

Other Members in Attendance: Councillor David Turner (for Agenda Item 4E)

Officers:

Whole of meeting Chief Executive, Director of Environment & Economy,
Head of Transport, G. Cawte (Transport)
S. Whitehead (Legal & Democratic Services)

The Committee considered the matters, reports and recommendations contained or referred to in the agenda for the meeting, and decided as set out below. Except insofar as otherwise specified, the reasons for the decisions are contained in the agenda and reports, copies of which are attached to the signed Minutes.

20A/10 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received on behalf of Councillors Heathcoat and Robertson.

21/10 PETITIONS AND PUBLIC ADDRESS

(Agenda Item. 3)

The following request to address the meeting under agenda item 4E had been agreed:

Councillor David Turner, Shadow Cabinet Member for Transport.

22/10 TRANSPORT SERVICES CONTRACT AWARD

(Agenda Item. 4)

Cabinet considered a report (CA4E) seeking approval of the successful tenderer and to confirm that a contract can be entered into.

Cabinet noted that the term contracts for Engineering Consultancy Services have come to the end of their contract period. Cabinet were aware of the work that had been undertaken to reshape the Transport Service to integrate with a private sector provider of Transport related services.

Cabinet further noted that it had been planned to start the whole of the new contract on 1st July 2010 but it has not been possible to negotiate an extension for the highway works element which would end on 31st March 2010.

Councillor David Turner, Shadow Cabinet Member for Transport, asked a series of questions: How would performance against the objectives set out in paragraph 5 be benchmarked and monitored? Who would be the final arbiter in the event of conflict between Council and contractor staff working together? In relation to service improvements what was meant by 'better co-ordination of resources and more focussed communications through the local control centre' and would Area Committees have a role in Area Stewardship? How confident was the Council that the savings could be achieved without loss of quantity or quality of service?

In his introductory remarks, the Cabinet Member for Growth & Infrastructure emphasised that in evaluating the bids received, quality had counted for 60%. The Board would have control over the performance. He thanked everyone who had worked on the process so far, including Finance and Human Resources and, in particular, the Transport Team led by Steve Howell, Head of Transport and Grant Cawte, Group Manager Contracts.

Cabinet received a presentation from the Head of Transport that outlined the bid objectives, highlighted the partnering aspects of the contract, explained the performance framework, detailed service improvements and set out the results of the evaluation process. With regard to the questions from Councillor Turner, the Head of Transport detailed the split between operational and strategic indicators of performance and the element that partnership played in achieving performance. The contractor would be rewarded if the whole service worked. He explained the use of local control centres where the operational end of the business would be managed. The Council was looking to dedicate a number of key staff to Area Stewardship. A team of people would work locally with County Councillors and District and Parish Councillors. There would be a local budget but linked to contract objectives.

In relation to the arbitration of disputes, the County Council would always be the final arbiter.

There was confidence that the savings could be achieved whilst maintaining quantity and improving quality.

During discussion Cabinet Members considered the need to balance rural and urban needs and to balance loud calls for local action against fairness across the County and contract objectives. In welcoming the apprenticeship

elements of the contract Cabinet was given assurances that UNISON had been involved and had had good input throughout its development. Responding to a query about who should be contacted, it was noted that the service would be totally integrated so that it should not matter whether Councillors were contacting the contractor or Council staff. The Cabinet Member for Growth & Infrastructure encouraged all Councillors to use the contact centre for operational queries as calls could be logged and properly tracked.

Cabinet noted the information contained in the annex containing exempt information.

RESOLVED: to approve the signing of a contract with Atkins to provide Oxfordshire County Council's transport and highway work within the terms of the contract.

..... in the Chair

Date of signing