

# CABINET

**MINUTES** of the meeting held on Tuesday, 19 October 2021 commencing at 2.00 pm and finishing at 4.30 pm

**Present:**

**Voting Members:** Councillor Liz Leffman – in the Chair  
Councillor Liz Brighthouse OBE (Deputy Chair)  
Councillor Glynis Phillips  
Councillor Neil Fawcett  
Councillor Tim Bearder  
Councillor Duncan Enright  
Councillor Calum Miller  
Councillor Jenny Hannaby  
Councillor Mark Lygo

**Cabinet Member On-line:** Councillor Dr Pete Sudbury

**Other Members in Attendance:**

Councillors Robin Bennett, Andrew Coles, Ian Corkin, Nick Field-Johnson, Donna Ford, Andrew Gant, Andy Graham, Freddie van Mierlo, Jane Murphy, Sally Povolotsky, Roz Smith, Pete Sudbury

**Officers:**

Whole of meeting Yvonne Rees (Chief Executive); Lorna Baxter, Director for Finance; Anita Bradley, Director for Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer; Colm Ó Caomhánaigh

*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.*

**94/21 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

(Agenda Item. 1)

There were no apologies for absence. Councillor Pete Sudbury was self-isolating and unable to attend in person. He participated online.

**95/21 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

(Agenda Item. 2)

There were no declarations of interest.

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### **96/21 MINUTES**

(Agenda Item. 3)

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 September 2021 were approved and signed with the addition of Councillor Andrew Coles to the list of Other Councillors Attending.

### **97/21 QUESTIONS FROM COUNTY COUNCILLORS**

(Agenda Item. 4)

No questions had been submitted.

### **98/21 PETITIONS AND PUBLIC ADDRESS**

(Agenda Item. 5)

The Chair had agreed to the following speakers:

Item 6 – Business Management and Monitoring Report:  
Councillor David Bartholomew

Item 7 – Capital Programme Monitoring Report:  
Councillor David Bartholomew

Item 8 – Budget and Business Planning Report:  
Councillor David Bartholomew

Item 10 – Local Transport and Connectivity Plan:  
City Councillor Sajjad Malik  
Robin Tucker, Oxfordshire Cycling Network  
Francois van de Merwe, Little Milton Parish Council  
Danny Yee  
Councillor Freddie van Mierlo  
Councillor Robin Bennett

Item 11 – National Bus Strategy:  
Mark Hull  
Danny Yee  
Councillor Andrew Coles

Item 12 – Countywide 20mph Policy and New Approach:  
Councillor Jonny Bidgood, Sonning Common Parish Council  
Councillor Freddie van Mierlo  
Councillor Andy Graham  
Councillor Andrew Coles

### **99/21 BUSINESS MANAGEMENT & MONITORING REPORT - AUGUST 2021**

(Agenda Item. 6)

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Cabinet considered the report setting out Oxfordshire County Council's (OCC's) progress towards Corporate Plan priorities for 2021/22 – August 2021 with a focus on the latest performance and risk position (August 21).

Councillor David Bartholomew, Shadow Cabinet Member for Finance, addressed the financial aspects of the report. He asked for clarification on Paragraph 15 where it said that the report was “on an exception basis”. He made the following observations:

- Home to School Transport was listed as one of the biggest risks and yet it was also noted that “more efficient transport solutions should materialise and result in ongoing cost reductions”. This appeared to be a contradiction.
- The regional Memorandum of Cooperation which was aimed at controlling the costs of agency social workers had not continued. He asked if this would lead to spiralling costs.
- He noted that £7.9m of reserves were earmarked for future cost pressures in Adult Social Care and asked what implications this might have for next year's adult social care precept.
- He asked for a more expansive explanation of the £1m overspend under Environment and Place in the next report.

Councillor Calum Miller, Cabinet Member for Finance, thanked Councillor Bartholomew for his observations and said that he would take on board the suggestions for future reports. In relation to the reserves earmarked for Adult Social Care, these had already been budgeted to meet future cost pressures.

Councillor Miller drew particular attention to the significant pressures under Children's Services. Capital infrastructure plans were under review in order to take account of significant inflationary pressures. It was also essential that the savings under Adult Social Care and Environment & Place were achieved. He moved the recommendations.

Councillor Liz Brighouse, Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Young People's Services, noted that Home to School Transport had been a perennial issue, made more difficult recently by the scarcity of drivers. It was long overdue a review.

Councillor Brighouse stated that the Memorandum of Cooperation on agency social workers simply was not working. The Council was looking to find ways of training its own.

#### **RESOLVED:**

- a) to note August business management and monitoring report.**
- b) to approve the virement set out in Annex C-2b;**
- c) to approve the transfer of the Tax Income Guarantee Scheme grant to the Business Rates Reserve as set out in Annex C paragraph 77**

## 100/21 CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING REPORT - AUGUST 2021

(Agenda Item. 7)

Cabinet had before it the second monitoring report and Capital Programme update for 2021/22 which set out the monitoring position based on activity to the end of August 2021. It also provided an update to the Capital Programme overview approved by Council in July 2021 taking into account additional funding and new schemes.

Councillor David Bartholomew, Shadow Cabinet Member for Finance, drew attention to the £44m underspend in infrastructure projects which was ascribed to increased design activity. He did not believe this was an adequate explanation and asked how the position had changed so much in the three months since the last report.

Councillor Bartholomew also noted that an underspend of £0.5 million on Climate Action seemed strange as this issue had been prioritised by the administration. He welcomed the completion of the broadband project leaving £1.5m not required and congratulated the officers he had worked with on this project.

Councillor Duncan Enright, Cabinet Member for Travel and Development Strategy, responded that as the financial year progressed it became clearer which infrastructure projects would slip into next year as design work continued.

Councillor Tim Bearder, Cabinet Member for Highway Management, described the infrastructure programme as an impossibly massive task set up by the previous administration on a very small budget.

Councillor Calum Miller, Cabinet Member for Finance, confirmed that this administration was examining the commitments made by the previous administration with concern as they prepared the capital budget for the next financial year, due in February 2022.

Councillor Miller summarised the report as showing a reduction in predicted spending of £48.6m this year but an increase of £7.6m in the projected spend over the 10 years. The Council was obliged to make a provision in relation to possible costs relating to the proposed Free School for Faringdon which was still under discussion. He moved the recommendations which were seconded by Councillor Bearder.

### **RESOLVED to:**

- a) **Agree that the following scheme should be added to the capital programme:**
  - **a provisional budget allocation of £1.2m towards a new Free School in Faringdon for pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).**

**b) Approve the updated Capital Programme at Annex 2.**

**101/21 BUDGET & BUSINESS PLANNING REPORT - 2022/23 - OCTOBER 2021**

(Agenda Item. 8)

Cabinet considered the first in the series of reports on the budget and business planning process for the forthcoming year which provided context and background information ahead of Council setting a budget for 2022/23; a medium term financial strategy to 2025/26 and capital programme to 2031/32 in February 2022.

Councillor David Bartholomew, Shadow Cabinet Member for Finance, commented that he believed that the inflation figures mentioned in Paragraph 10 were now out of date given the impact of the pandemic. He again suggested that it might be possible to avoid the proposed 2% increase in the Adult Social Care precept next year, given the amount earmarked in reserves. He expressed concern that the plans for consultation on the budget might amount to over-consultation and questioned whether the benefits would merit the costs.

Councillor Calum Miller, Shadow Cabinet Member for Finance, described the report as setting out the framework for the first budget by the new administration as well as their Corporate Plan. He disagreed with Councillor Bartholomew's suggestion that increases in inflation were due primarily to the pandemic. He believed that the disruption to supply chains as a result of the policies of the current government had a large impact as well.

Councillor Miller agreed that the increased pressures on councils outlined in paragraph 23 as a result of new policies announced for Adult Social Care on 7 September were very significant and unless the government provided more financial support the Council would have to think hard about how to meet the costs.

Councillor Miller also noted that there would be a deep review of the capital programme inherited from the previous administration and the capital budgets will be set out as part of the Medium Term Financial Framework. He moved the recommendations.

**RESOLVED to:**

- a) endorse the report;**
- b) approve the budget and business planning process for 2022/23; and**
- c) approve a four-year period for the medium-term financial strategy to 2025/26 and ten-year period for the capital programme to 2031/32.**

## **102/21 OXFORDSHIRE'S HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPING STRATEGY**

(Agenda Item. 9)

Cabinet considered the first county-wide Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, marking a commitment to inter-agency and cross sector partnership working to prevent homelessness and end rough sleeping in the county.

Councillor Jenny Hannaby summarised the report. This strategy sat above the individual councils' strategies and would strengthen the resolve to work together.

Those who were homeless were often the poorest in society with very little in the way of possessions. Being homeless could make it more difficult for them to access employment and assistance for other issues. The aim was to get a roof over their heads and then work with them and perhaps help to get them into employment again.

Cabinet Members added the following comments:

- The pandemic had shown that having people homeless and sleeping rough was a societal choice.
- The councils, health partners and voluntary sector worked well together during the pandemic and that will need to continue for this strategy to work.
- Rough sleeping was the visible side of homelessness but was only the tip of the iceberg of those living in insecure circumstances.
- It could be seen from the strategy that officers had done a particularly good job in understanding the issues behind homelessness.
- The strategy should be reviewed in a year and should go before a scrutiny committee.

The Chair commented that the close partnership between the County Council and Cherwell District Council formed the basis of this and it showed how councils could do much more together than acting individually.

**RESOLVED: to agree Oxfordshire's draft homelessness and rough sleeping strategy 2021-2026 (annex 1).**

## **103/21 LOCAL TRANSPORT AND CONNECTIVITY PLAN (LTCP)**

(Agenda Item. 10)

Cabinet had before it a report updating the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP) on which it was proposed to undertake public consultation. It also included context about the supporting data (Annex 2), draft Freight and Logistics Strategy (Annex 3), draft Innovation Framework (Annex 4), draft Active and Healthy Travel Strategy (Annex 5), Bus Service Improvement Plan and the Integrated Sustainability Appraisal (Annex 6).

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Before considering the report Cabinet heard a number of speakers. City Councillor Sajjad Malik sent his apologies.

Robin Tucker, Co-chair, Coalition for Healthy Streets and Active Travel, welcomed the LTCP, along with the Bus Service Improvement Plan and new 20mph policy. His group's main issue with previous LTPs had been that they were not implemented and he hoped that this would not be the downfall of this one.

On the Active Travel strategy, Robin Tucker proposed deleting the section on Dual Choice Networks which, he said, had been widely rejected elsewhere. He also urged Members not to rewrite Oxfordshire Cycling Standards when there were good national standards.

Connecting Oxford was an essential part of the Bus Plan, because it both frees up the roads so buses can move, and it gives people the incentive to switch mode.

Francois van der Merwe, Chairman, Little Milton Parish Council, drew Members' attention to their campaign for a weight limit through the village because of long-standing unacceptable levels of HGV traffic despite there being a viable alternative route.

The previous freight plan and action points, despite classifying the A329 as "Local Access Route", failed to implement a viable strategy for the A329 around Little Milton. Having a plan, strategies and action points was useless if not solving problems. He called for the political will and backing from this Cabinet and Council to help solve this long-standing issue. He asked that Little Milton be included with the likes of Burford, Henley and Chipping Norton as specific areas of interest when it comes to solving HGV traffic issues.

Councillor Tim Bearder, Cabinet Member for Highway Management, expressed concern that improvement to the B4015 which the Council must make to cater for housing development might make the situation worse for Little Milton. The issue of freight movement was something that Cabinet was alive to and a holistic approach was needed.

Danny Yee welcomed the Plan. He believed that the only way to improve bus, cycling and walking travel around the city was to reduce the space provided for private cars. He urged the prioritisation of junction redesign as most of the recent cycling accidents in the city had taken place at junctions.

The changes were needed to alleviate transport poverty, address the climate emergency, reduce air pollution and congestion and make the city a better place to live in. He advocated the inclusion of two more bus gates as well as the completion of existing Low Traffic Neighbourhood plans.

Councillor Freddie van Mierlo welcomed the Plan but believed that the strategy in regard to HGVs needed to be strengthened. The provision of a

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map for HGV routes was welcome but he pointed to inconsistencies between the map and the accompanying table. Restrictions that were not legally enforceable were being largely ignored. He believed that an external agency should be employed to provide the expertise needed.

Councillor van Mierlo expressed disappointment that the strategy did not provide money for enforcing restrictions. Some larger towns might be able to self-finance these but smaller villages could not. He also called for better hygiene facilities and conditions for hard-pressed HGV drivers.

Councillor Tim Bearder responded that the government was about to provide local authorities with the powers to enforce restrictions. It might take a year to introduce but he assured Members that Oxfordshire would be at the vanguard in their use.

Councillor Pete Sudbury, Cabinet Member for Climate Change Delivery and Environment, added that it was impossible to provide enough road space to cater for the expected car-ownership in 100,000 extra homes planned for the county. Electric vehicles were not a climate-compatible solution. Oxfordshire needed to take the lead in reducing emissions and energy use and this strategy was a good start.

Councillor Robin Bennett gave his experience of travelling in from a rural community to this meeting. He stressed the importance of secure bicycle parking at modal hubs – especially for electric bicycles which can be very expensive. He noted that there were good active travel plans for new housing developments but existing developments needed to be addressed too.

Councillor Bennet noted the proposal in the Bus Improvement Plan for cheaper hubs but he felt that the one at Berinsfield was particularly important and should be a high-specification transport hub to show what can be done.

Councillor Duncan Enright, Cabinet Member for Travel and Development Strategy, thanked all of the contributors as well as officers and members of the previous administration for their work on the strategy. He welcomed the supportive comments on active travel and noted the debate as to whether separate cycling routes might be needed for confident and less confident cyclists.

Councillor Enright also welcomed the focus on freight and noted that the importance of East-West Rail for freight was often underestimated. He welcomed recognition in the strategy of mobility hubs, shared transport options and cycle freight. He moved the recommendations.

Councillor Glynis Phillips welcomed the views of the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee and asked that they be incorporated into the consultation. Councillor Enright agreed and also emphasised the importance of input from locality meetings and the Cabinet Advisory Group on Transport.

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Councillor Neil Fawcett noted that rail travel in Oxfordshire had doubled in the last 24 years despite the poor rail infrastructure. The Council needed to consider how to bring sufficient influence on the government and Network Rail to ensure the county had the necessary rail infrastructure for the development plans already in place.

### **RESOLVED to:**

- a) **endorse the content of the LTCP document, and the supporting strategies as the basis for public consultation, commencing in November 2021 for a period of 6 weeks, and**
- b) **delegate the decision on the final LTCP document, including graphical format to the Corporate Director for Environment and Place in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Highways Management and Cabinet Member for Travel and Development Strategy.**

## **104/21 NATIONAL BUS STRATEGY - PROPOSAL FOR AN OXFORDSHIRE BUS IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

(Agenda Item. 11)

Cabinet received a report which supported the increased priority and investment to promote buses and the need for much closer joint working in the forthcoming Enhanced Partnership, recognising the requirements for increased Council staffing and budget to support this area.

Mark Hull, Labour party Candidate for Oxford's Summertown Ward, presented a submission on behalf of the Oxford North and Greater Marston branches of the Labour Party. The biggest concern many people had about Oxford's buses was their price. Urban bus services had become both dear and scarce, except along a few main roads.

Mark Hull pointed to what happened in London in the 1980s when Ken Livingstone increased the frequency of buses and the underground while simultaneously lowering fares. This created revenue gains for London Transport that offset the increased costs of more frequent services. To reduce the potential costs and risks of radical proposals he also urged the Council to try revenue-sharing models in which risks and profits were shared in pre-agreed ratios between the Council and the operator. His groups also proposed electric shuttle buses inside the hospital campuses and a free school bus service.

Danny Yee welcomed the Plan and the proposals to be introduced in Oxford by summer 2023 including bus gates and the workplace parking levy. He was concerned that public engagement on these plans needed to be much better. He believed that the backlash on Low Traffic Neighbourhoods illustrated this. The plans represented the biggest changes to Oxford in centuries and the Council needed to explain the benefits better in order to resist the protests from those who feel their livelihood is under threat.

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Councillor Andrew Cole declared an interest in that he was an employee of Stagecoach and a founder member of West Oxfordshire Community Transport. He asked the Cabinet Member to consider retaining the 100% concessionary fare rebate for community and not-for-profit operators. He described them as a life-line for many routes such as the Witney town routes in his division.

Cabinet Members raised a number of issues:

- Councillor Bearder should respond to the comments of the Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee.
- There had been little opportunity to consult on the proposals.
- The delegation in recommendation c) was to sign off on this bid only. The decisions on how to spend whatever funds are ultimately allocated would still come back to Cabinet.
- For some people it was impossible to get to their nearest bus stop. The Council needed to work with bus companies to ensure that transport is as inclusive as possible.
- The plans should not be seen as radical but are absolutely necessary. When you make transport services quick, safe and frequent, people switch to them.
- Public transport for rural villages had been decimated and there was too much focus on urban areas in the proposals.

Councillor Tim Bearder, Cabinet Member for Highway Management, responded that it was Cabinet's aspiration to retain the concessionary rebates but central government would also have a say on the matter. He agreed to respond to the scrutiny committee's helpful comments and he was sympathetic with the dissatisfaction at the lack of consultation on the bid but the government, as with the Active Travel bid, had set a very short deadline.

Councillor Bearder agreed with many of the comments. The plan was ambitious. Oxfordshire's pro-rata share of the fund would be around £25m but this bid represented projects costed at £50m. He regretted that the government funding on buses at £3b was much less than the spending of £27b on roads. He moved the recommendations.

#### **RESOLVED to:**

- a) approve the Bus Service Improvement Plan, including the bidding list of schemes and other interventions proposed for inclusion in the document, to be submitted to Government by the end of October 2021, subject to further refinement before submission.**
- b) support the increased priority and investment to promote buses and the need for much closer joint working required in the forthcoming Enhanced Partnership, recognising the requirements for increased Council staffing and budget to support this area.**

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- c) **delegate authority to the Corporate Director Environment and Place to make any necessary changes to the Bus Service Improvement Plan in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Highways Management and the Cabinet Member for Travel and Development Strategy.**

### **105/21 COUNTYWIDE 20MPH POLICY AND NEW APPROACH**

(Agenda Item. 12)

Cabinet was requested to approve of a new countywide 20mph speed restriction approach in areas that have traditionally mainly been 30mph limits. To accommodate this change there was a requirement for a new 20mph speed policy and the development of a new procedure to aid implementation.

Councillor Jonny Bidgood of Sonning Common Parish Council welcomed the new policy which he described as a 'sea change' in attitude to motor transport in residential areas. He was promoting the idea of a cycleway from his village to Reading and saw the reduction of speed limits as essential in promoting active travel.

Councillor Andy Graham welcomed the proposal and noted that many local communities and parishes had been campaigning for this. It was not just a question of safety but of quality of life. He hoped that those who had already developed local schemes would not be disadvantaged and that there would be sufficient officer support available to ensure this roll-out.

Councillor Andrew Coles recalled how it had proven impossible to get the previous administration to agree to expand the 20mph limit in Witney despite local support. There had been a fatal accident seven years ago which shook the community and it was recommended that the speed limit on the road be reduced to 20mph but that still has not happened. He welcomed the proposal.

Cabinet Members commented as follows:

- It was important to note that there was community and cross-party support for this.
- Police statistics showed that this speed reduction significantly reduces the number of fatalities and serious accidents.
- How will the schemes be implemented in parts of the city that are not parished? Local Members would not have the resources to carry out a local consultation.
- Will those parishes that are prepared to fund the measures be prioritised?
- The Police and Crime Commissioner has assured that the police will support these new speed limits.

Councillor Tim Bearder, Cabinet Member for Highway Management, welcomed the enthusiasm for this proposal. He believed it was likely that more officer support would be provided if the demand required it. He

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thanked all those involved in the working group which will continue to support this project.

Councillor Bearder added that the Council was not in a position to fund extra measures such as chicanes or ramps but he hoped that parishes, towns and the city could do that. He agreed to feed the comments of the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee into the process. With regard to non-parished areas of the city, he believed that the City Council would be best placed to come up with a solution. He moved the recommendations.

#### **RESOLVED to:**

- a) **approve the update of the County Council's Speed Limit Policy statement as attached at ANNEX A.**
- b) **approve the criteria for consideration of 20mph at ANNEX B and the Funding Prioritisation Framework at ANNEX C to manage funding requests and the overall programme.**
- c) **endorse the proposed approach to implementing 20mph speed restrictions across Oxfordshire which better reflects local requirements and aspirations.**

#### **106/21 REVIEW OF THE OXFORDSHIRE MINERALS & WASTE LOCAL PLAN PART 1 - CORE STRATEGY**

(Agenda Item. 13)

Cabinet considered the Minerals and Waste Local Plan Part 1 of 2: the Core Strategy which will guide all future Minerals and Waste development across the County to 2031. Councillor Pete Sudbury, Cabinet Member for Climate Change Delivery and Environment, addressed his comments jointly to this item and the following item which was related.

Councillor Sudbury acknowledged the excellent work of the Council's officers and the Cabinet Advisory Group in this very technical area. He noted the good practice of inviting a critical friend – in this case, Northamptonshire – to review the decision-making.

The Council had a statutory requirement under the National Planning Policy Framework to assure the supply of certain materials for a specified number of years ahead. Currently there was not an assurance of the supply of crushed rock for 10 years and this required a revision of the policy. What had been recommended on this item and the next was the minimum required to satisfy those statutory requirements. He moved the recommendations.

**RESOLVED: to endorse the proposed progression of the Minerals and Waste Local Plan and to delegate to the Corporate Director, Environment and Place, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Climate Change Delivery and Environment, the final production of consultation documents relating to the Core Strategy review.**

**107/21 MINERALS & WASTE DEVELOPMENT SCHEME**

(Agenda Item. 14)

Councillor Pete Sudbury, Cabinet Member for Climate Change Delivery and Environment, had addressed this item, which set out the Council's programme for preparing the Minerals and Waste Local Plan, in his comments on the previous item.

**RESOLVED to:**

- a) **approve the Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Development Scheme (Twelfth Revision) October 2021 at Annex 1, in order to have effect from 1<sup>st</sup> November 2021.**
- b) **delegate any final detailed amendment and editing to the Corporate Director Environment and Place, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Environment.**

**108/21 DELEGATED POWERS - AUGUST 2021**

(Agenda Item. 15)

**RESOLVED to: note the executive decisions taken under delegated powers, set out in paragraph 4.**

**109/21 FORWARD PLAN AND FUTURE BUSINESS**

(Agenda Item. 16)

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 .....