

## WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

### Minutes of the meeting of the **Cabinet**

Held in the Council Chamber at 2.00 pm on **Wednesday, 25 May 2022**

#### PRESENT

Councillors: Andy Graham (Leader), Duncan Enright (Deputy Leader), Joy Aitman (Cabinet Member for Stronger, Healthy Communities), Lidia Arciszewska (Cabinet Member for Environment), Dan Levy (Cabinet Member for Finance), Mathew Parkinson (Cabinet Member for Customer Delivery), Andrew Prosser (Cabinet Member for Climate Change), Carl Rylett (Cabinet Member for Planning and Sustainable Development), Geoff Saul (Cabinet Member for Housing and Social Welfare).

Officers: Elizabeth Griffiths (Chief Finance Officer, Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer), Giles Hughes (Chief Executive), Susan Sale (Monitoring Officer), Frank Wilson (Group Finance Director - Publica), Michelle Ouzman (Strategic support Officer) and Anne Learmonth (Strategic Support Officer).

#### **108 Notice of Decisions**

The notice of decisions taken at the meeting held on 20 April were approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

#### **109 Apologies for Absence**

There were no apologies for absence received.

#### **110 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest received.

#### **111 Participation of the Public**

There were no participation of the public received.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Andy Graham stated he was really keen on the members of the public attending and participating in committee meetings. He went on to say he was going to introduce a scheme, to encourage members of the public to attend in future.

#### **112 Receipt of Announcements**

The Leader of the council Councillor Andy Graham, welcomed everyone to the Cabinet Committee meeting especially those members of the public that had attended. He then went on to introduce the new cabinet membership and their roles:

Councillor Duncan Enright (Labour) Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Economic Development

Councillor Dan Levy (Lib Dem) Cabinet Member for Finance

Councillor Carl Rylett (Lib Dem) Cabinet Member for Planning and Sustainable Development

Councillor Mathew Parkinson (Lib Dem) Cabinet Member for Customer Delivery

Councillor Joy Aitman (Labour) Cabinet Member for Stronger, Healthy Communities

Councillor Geoff Saul (Labour) Cabinet Member for Housing and Social Welfare

Councillor Lidia Arciszewska (Lib Dem) Cabinet Member for Environment

Councillor Andrew Prosser (Green) Cabinet Member for Climate Change

The Chair had three key announcements:

1. The UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF), the Council had received a conditional £1m to be spent staggered over the next three years. The primary goal of the UK SPF is to increase pride of place and increase life chances across the UK, intended to reduce inequalities between communities. The Cabinet will be developing an investment plan to show how we propose to spend the allocation, following stakeholder engagement. This should come to the Cabinet in July for approval.
2. Food strategy, yesterday the cabinet at Oxfordshire County Council (OCC), endorsed the OCC food funding, and agreed to award grant funding of £32.500 to West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC). This money will be used to tackle the challenges in the health and wellbeing, climate and biodiversity, fair incomes of employment and sustainable food system. We look forward to working with the OCC and other partners on these issues.
3. Gardening communities funding, earlier in the week the Government announced funding to support gardening communities across England. WODC has received £50,000 which will be allocated to the Salt Cross Village, this will ensure an exemplar development with high quality of design.

The Chair stated that in future this is the item where any grants or funding that was received by Council, would be announced in order to keep residents informed and to be transparent.

### **113 Whistle-Blowing Policy**

Members received a Whistle-Blowing Policy report, from the Head of Service, Counter Fraud and Enforcement Unit, Emma Cathcart.

The Chair introduced the policy which was on pages 9-26 on the agenda and explained that it is in keeping with all councils following similar directives, the purpose of bringing it forward to cabinet is the recommendation to approve and adopt the policy, and the cabinet authorises the Chief Executive to approve future minor amendments to the policy, in consultation with the Counter Fraud and Enforcement Unit, Legal Services and the Leader of the Council. Other councils are adopting the same policy, it has been through committees prior to coming to this Cabinet, on that basis, the Chair asked the Cabinet if they were happy to approve.

**Resolved** the Cabinet approved as per recommendation in the report.

### **114 Discretionary Funding Policy - Energy Council Tax Rebate 2022**

Members received a report for Discretionary Funding Policy – Energy Council Tax Rebate, from Mandy Fathers the Business Manager for Operations and Enabling.

The Chair introduced the report, and read out the purpose from the report:

The Government has announced a package of support known as the Energy Bills rebate. There are two elements to the support. One being a mandatory scheme and the second being a discretionary scheme. The purpose of this report is to formally agree the criteria for the discretionary scheme and approve the Policy.

Councillor Dan Levy the Cabinet Member for Finance thanked the officers for putting the report together. Some residents that were not in Council Tax band A to D but were still deserving, needed help with their energy bills. These people need to be identified, some of which have already come forward and have been identified. However there were still people out there to be identified, there is a campaign to reach out using old fashioned contact

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methods, and new social media methods by early July. By the 23 July 2022 we are confident all those will be identified that are still in need, and monies can be distributed, as we would have the policy and process in place.

The Chair asked the Cabinet if they had any questions and are they in agreement to approve the policy.

**Resolved** the Cabinet approved the policy as stated in the original report.

### **115 Community Infrastructure Levy**

Members received a report for Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), from Chris Hargraves the Planning Policy Manager.

Councillor Rylett the Cabinet Member for Cabinet Member for Planning and Sustainable Development introduced the report and thanked the officers for the work that had been done. There were four options detailed within the report:

1. Progress Straight to Submission and Examination
2. Viability Evidence Partial Update
3. Commission New Viability Evidence and Prepare a new Draft Charging Schedule for Consultation
4. Continue to Defer Any Further Progress

The Cabinet is recommended to approve option two as laid out in the original report.

The Chair asked the Cabinet if the recommendation for option two be approved.

**Resolved** that option two within the original report was approved by Cabinet.

### **116 Disposal and development of land at Walterbush Road, Chipping Norton for**

#### **Custom Build Zero Carbon Homes**

The members received a report for Disposal and development of land at Walterbush Road, Chipping Norton for Custom Build Zero Carbon Homes, from Claire Locke, the Group Manager for Commissioning, Leadership and Management.

Councillor Saul the Cabinet Member for Housing and Social Welfare introduced the report, an exciting project to develop a former playground area on Walterbush road, chipping Norton, to develop eight custom built, zero carbon homes, which will also be affordable homes in perpetuity. Councillor Saul thought that officers had worked incredibly hard to come up with a scheme that meets so many of the councils aims and objectives. This deliver and promote additional affordable housing and using section 106 monies, it will promote custom built homes, of which affordable plots are in very short supply and gives us the ability to module built examples using our net zero carbon tool kit. There are already 13 on the custom build register, in Chipping Norton, and 19 across the district.

Councillor Saul then proposed that the Cabinet approves options set out in the original report.

Councillor St John asked if the Section 106 money was coming from unallocated Section 106 monies and if so how much is left in that fund, as he thought Section 106 money were allocated to specific sites.

Councillor Saul thought Section 106 monies that could not be spent to provide affordable homes on developers site, left the Council to apply for these funds to be used on other

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affordable housing schemes. He added he would ask officers how much was in the Section 106 pot and would get back to Councillor St John.

The Chair asked members if they approved the report's recommendations a) to f).

**Resolved** that the Cabinet approved the recommendations as set out in the original report.

### **117 Appointment of Representatives to Outside Bodies 2022/23**

The Chair introduced the updated copy of the outside bodies report.

The Chair stated he would page the report.

Councillor Al-Yousuf referred to number 11 as he was listed as the representative incorrectly, he had ended his three year term a year ago. This was noted to be amended.

The Chair noted number 7 should read London Oxford Consultative Committee. This was noted to be amended.

Councillor Enright the Cabinet Member for Economic Development noted number 31 the term in brackets to December 2020 should be deleted. This was noted to be amended.

The Chair explained that number 38 had three vacancies and that they were still in discussion and had yet to be appointed.

The Chair also wanted to add that representative to outside bodies was important, and that some were more statutory than others.

A process proposal is being drawn up on how to feedback from these meetings and who would be the contacts at these bodies. Also we are going to ask the chairs of the outside bodies to give a briefing to the Councillors so that they can be informed fully about the organisations purpose.

A further list of outside bodies that are not contained within the report being looked at today will be brought to a future Cabinet Committee meeting.

Therefore the Cabinet

**Resolved** that the current report with amendments be noted.

The Meeting closed at 2.22 pm

CHAIRMAN