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WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet

Held in the Council Chamber at 2.00 pm on **Wednesday, 17 August 2022**

PRESENT

Councillors: 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).

Also present Councillors: Alaa Al-Yousuf, Colin Dingwall, Ted Fenton, Gill Hill, Norman MacRae MBE and Michelle Mead.

Officers: Andrew Brown (Business Manager, Democratic Service), Elizabeth Griffiths (Chief Finance Officer, Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer), Susan Sale (Monitoring Officer), Heather McCulloch (Community Wellbeing Manager), Michelle Ouzman and Janet Eustace (Democratic Services).

46 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 17 July were approved and signed by the Chair.

47 Apologies for Absence

Councillors: Andy Graham and Duncan Enright.

48 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest received.

49 Participation of the Public

The Monitoring Officer read a question which had been submitted by Sharone Parnes:

‘Does the Leader of the District Council think that the collapse of the 2050 local plan will mean that Oxfordshire is going to lose at least £30 million of infrastructure funding this year - which would obviously raise concerns related to development policy - and, as the growth Deal was conditional on a joint 2050 plan, does the Leader expect there is likely to be a 'clawback' of the previous £120 million awarded to Oxfordshire; and will the £60 million for affordable housing be clawed back along with the £5million for producing the plan?’

The Chair advised that a written reply would be provided and appended to the Minutes of the Meeting.

50 Receipt of Announcements

The Chair announced that Councillor Andy Graham, Leader of the Council, would be taking some time out of his role on the Council for personal medical reasons. Councillor Graham was looking forward to returning to his role as Leader and the Council wished him well with his recovery. Councillor Duncan Enright, who is the Deputy Leader, will take on the role of Leader of Council from Monday 22nd August until Councillor Graham returns which is expected to be in a few weeks' time.

The Chair announced details of Cabinet on Tour. The meetings will be held in towns across the district:

- 14 September - Charlbury.
- 16 November – Chipping Norton.
- 11 January – Woodstock.
- 22 March – Carterton.
- 19 April – Eynsham.

All the meetings will start at 2.00pm and will be open for residents to attend without pre-booking. Each meeting will have a specific agenda item for public participation where residents can raise topics important to them.

Councillor MacRae asked about the parking arrangements at the various venues.

51 Revised Draft Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

Councillor Rylett, Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning, introduced this item.

Councillor Rylett explained that the Council was in the process of preparing a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) on the topic of developer contributions which would clarify the amount the developers will be expected to pay. The SPD was aimed at a broad audience and subject to the agreement of Members, would be published for a further six weeks of public consultation. After consideration of the responses, Members would be asked to formally adopt the SPD.

In answer to a question from Councillor Al-Yousef, Councillor Rylett confirmed the document contained no new policies. Councillor Al-Yousef also expressed concerns that the cost of new infrastructure was passed on to those purchasing houses undermining the Council's efforts to provide affordable homes. He asked that future drafts of the document acknowledge this.

Councillor Saul, Cabinet Member for Housing and Community Safety, reminded the meeting that strict tests were applied to s106 payments which were set at a level such as to ensure the feasibility of any new development.

Resolved that Cabinet:

- a) Note the content of the report including the consultation summary report;
- b) Agree that the revised draft Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) is published for a six-week period of public consultation; and
- c) Authorise the Planning Policy Manager to make any minor factual/typographical amendments to the revised draft SPD, in liaison with the relevant Cabinet Member, prior to the public consultation taking place.

52 West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2041 - Initial Issues and Scoping Consultation

The Chair introduced this item. The Council was updating its Local Plan and was seeking early views from local residents and businesses on potential areas of focus. The new Plan would cover the 20-year period 2021 – 2041 for adoption by 2024. The consultation would have a strong digital focus to reach as broad and diverse an audience as possible and a wide range of stakeholders would be encouraged to participate.

Councillor Rylett added that the Plan would recognise the priorities of the new administration in particular tackling the climate and ecological emergency and promoting healthy, safe, strong and inclusive communities.

Councillor Mead asked about the cost of producing the new Plan and whether any of the data which had already been gathered would be reused. She also asked how the Council would consult those who do not have access to social media and whether businesses would be consulted. Councillor Al-Yousuf asked whether the Plan would be based on evidence rather than political decisions. He warned of the need to avoid a hiatus where no Plan is in place.

The Chair said that existing data would be used where valid and that the existing Plan would continue until the new Plan had been adopted. He undertook to provide details of the cost of producing a new Plan and the cost abandoning the joint 2050 Plan. He confirmed that more traditional methods of consultation would be in place for those not using social media.

Councillor Fenton asked why the start date for the Plan predated the adoption. Councillor Rylett thought that this was because Plans normally cover a 20 year period but would be ask Officers to confirm.

Resolved by Cabinet that:

- a) note the intention to review the West Oxfordshire Local Plan commencing with an initial Issues and Scoping Consultation
- b) agree to a programme of engagement that would help to inform the scope of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan alongside the West Oxfordshire Council Plan.

53 Domestic Abuse Contract Renewal

Councillor Geoff Saul, Cabinet Member for Housing and Community Safety, introduced this item.

The existing Oxfordshire Domestic Abuse Services (ODAS) contract comes to an end in March 2023. Oxfordshire County Council is planning to advertise the tender with a view to it being awarded in December 2022 for an April 2023 start. Oxfordshire County Council is seeking ongoing funding from West Oxfordshire District Council but there are some issues around the funding formula with WODC currently contributing a disproportionately large sum. It was proposed to offer a contribution of £23,650 towards the new contract.

Councillor MacRae welcomed the continuation of the service but queried whether more emphasis could be given to support of men and gay and transgender people. Councillor Mead also supported the service and asked whether it could be referred to the Future Oxfordshire Partnership. It was confirmed by the Chief Finance Officer that funding would be allocated in the budget setting process.

Resolved by Cabinet that:

- a) note the duty the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 places on local authorities in England to provide accommodation based support to victims of domestic abuse and their children in refuges and other safe accommodation; and
- b) agree funding towards the Oxfordshire Domestic Abuse contract to start on 1st April 2023.

54 New Council Initiatives Funding Allocations

The Chair introduced this item. The priorities for resources from the New Initiatives Fund include the de-carbonisation of the Council's vehicle fleet. An additional £75,000

was proposed to purchase two new road sweepers for Chipping Norton and Woodstock. Other emerging priorities include:

- Helping the most vulnerable residents with the cost of living crisis
- Community based environmental schemes
- Youth initiatives
- Business support to towns and villages.

Councillor MacRae asked what the lead time would be for the purchase of the new sweepers; whether they would be able to cope with the terrain in Chipping Norton; whether Woodstock and Chipping Norton might share a vehicle and details of where the sweepers were on which days.

Councillor Arciszewska, Cabinet Member for Environment, said that the vehicles were in use 5 days a week and that officers had advised that the two existing vehicles needed replacing. She said she would ask officers to respond to the other matters raised.

Resolved by Cabinet that:

- a) confirm its approach to allocating funds from the new reserve approved by Council in July 2022 and any delegated arrangements;
- b) approve an allocation of £75,000 from the reserve for the purchase of the two electric sweepers in 2022/23;
- c) ask officers to investigate a longer term plan to decarbonise the vehicle fleet used by the Council and its partners and report back later in the year.

The Meeting closed at 2.45 pm

CHAIR

APPENDIX

Public Participation

Question submitted by Sharone Parnes:

Thank you for the kind opportunity to put the following Question to Cabinet. (I do so independently as an individual town councillor, and not on behalf of Woodstock Town Council). At Woodstock Town Council's meeting last week [August 9th], Cllr Graham was asked the following question but responded: "you're asking the wrong person, really; because that's not the County Council. That's not my role here". Cllr Graham's attendance in Woodstock was in the capacity of the town's County Council representative, and he explained: "It's a WODC question". As such, I would now be very grateful for his response through WODC's Cabinet, as Leader of West Oxfordshire District Council. (I have slightly modified the original question primarily to respectfully reflect the Leader's capacity at WODC).

Does Leader of the District Council think that the collapse of the 2050 local plan will mean that Oxfordshire is going to lose at least £30 million of infrastructure funding this year - which would obviously raise concerns related to development policy - and, as the growth Deal was conditional on a joint 2050 plan, does the Leader expect there is likely going to be a 'clawback' of the previous £120 million awarded to Oxfordshire; and will the £60 million for affordable housing be clawed back along with the £5million for producing the plan?

Answer provided by Giles Hughes, Chief Executive, West Oxfordshire District Council:

£30 million of funding from the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal is currently outstanding from Government. There is some risk to this funding as a consequence of the ending of the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 work programme. There does not appear to be a risk that other infrastructure or affordable housing funding that has been spent will be clawed back. If the £30 million outstanding is lost then that will unfortunately affect the delivery of infrastructure across Oxfordshire.

West Oxfordshire District Council will continue to engage constructively with the other Oxfordshire Councils, with other key stakeholders, and with our communities as we now focus on developing a new Local Plan. This will include work on a new Infrastructure Delivery Plan for the District to make sure that any new planned development is supported by infrastructure.

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