

WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

Record of decisions taken at the meeting of the Cabinet held via video conferencing on Wednesday 18 November, 2020 at 2.00pm.

PRESENT

Councillors: Michele Mead (Leader); Toby Morris (Deputy Leader); Suzi Coul, Marilyn Davies, Jeff Haine, David Harvey and Norman MacRae MBE.

Also in Attendance: Councillors Richard Bishop, Jill Bull, Mike Cahill, Laetisia Carter, Nathalie Chapple, Julian Cooper, Derek Cotterill, Harry Eaglestone, Duncan Enright, Hilary Fenton, Ted Fenton, Steve Good, Andy Graham, Liz Leffman, Dan Levy, Martin McBride, James Mills, Geoff Saul and Harry St John.

Officers: Frank Wilson (Executive Director, Finance); Jon Dearing (Group Manager, Resident Services); Bill Oddy (Group Manager – Commercial Development); Mandy Fathers (Business Manager for Operational Support and Enabling); Chris Hargraves (Planning Policy Manager); Scott Williams (Business Manager Waste); Maria Wheatley (Parking Manager); Vanessa Scott (Climate Change Manager); Martin Holland (Business Manager Contracts); Keith Butler (Head of Democratic Services) and Amy Bridgewater-Carnall (Senior Strategic Support Officer).

60. NOTICE OF DECISIONS

RESOLVED: That the record of the decisions taken at the meeting held on 21 October 2020, copies of which had been circulated, be approved and signed as a correct record.

61. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Rosa Bolger.

62. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Bishop and Harvey declared interests in Item 11 Community Facility Grants because they were members of Combe Parish Council and Witney Town Council respectively, and both organisations had applied for grants.

63. PARTICIPATION OF THE PUBLIC

Mr John White, Mayor of Burford, spoke in that capacity in relation to agenda item 8, Face to Face Customer Access Review. He stated that there were inaccuracies in the report, offered differing statistics for the Burford Visitor Information Centre and outlined his reasons for believing that the centre should remain open. A copy of his submission is attached as Appendix A to the original copy of these minutes.

Oxfordshire County Councillor, Hilary Biles, addressed Members in relation to agenda item 9, Approval of the Approach to Community Recycling (Bring Sites) in West Oxfordshire. She outlined the reasons that she felt the bring sites at New Street and Albion Street should remain open and requested that the decision be deferred for further information and consideration. A summary of her submission is attached as Appendix B to the original copy of these minutes.

64. RECEIPT OF ANNOUNCEMENTS

64.1 Covid Numbers in WODC

Councillor Mead was pleased to be able to advise Members that there were signs that the number of Covid cases in West Oxfordshire was declining. Although still early days, it was hoped that this was a step in the right direction and the Council would continue to promote the message of 'Hands, Face, Space'.

In response to a question from Councillor Graham, the Leader advised that she did not have the exact numbers but would circulate further information once it had been received.

64.2 Business Grants

Councillor Morris asked fellow Members to promote the Business Grants to any business affected by the second lockdown. He recommended that businesses apply and advised that, even if a business had been successful in the first round of grants, this was not an automatic process and businesses would need to apply again.

64.3 Thanks to Ubico

Councillor MacRae thanked Ubico for their hard work in tidying up the Memorial Gardens for the Remembrance Weekend, which many residents had attended to pay their respects.

64.4 Clinically Vulnerable Residents

Councillor Coul advised that officers and Members were in the process of contacting over four thousand clinically vulnerable residents in West Oxfordshire in light of the second lockdown. She passed her thanks on to everyone for their support in making this achievable.

65. LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME (LDS) UPDATE

The Cabinet received and considered the report of the Planning Policy Manager, updating Members and providing them with information on which planning policy documents the Council intended to prepare, and when.

A Local Development Scheme (LDS) was required under section 15 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and must specify the documents which would comprise the Local Plan for the area. It was a requirement to publish the LDS and keep it up to date, with revisions annually or as necessary.

WODC's most recent LDS was approved in May 2020, however, a number of issues had arisen since then resulting in further revisions being required.

An updated version of the LDS, covering the period November 2020 to November 2023 was attached at Annex A to the report and the changes were summarised in paragraphs 2.2 to 2.10 of the report.

Councillor Haine introduced the report, highlighted the key changes and proposed the recommendations as laid out. This was seconded by the Leader, Councillor Mead.

Councillor St John queried the dates for the revision of the Local Plan and was advised of the need to carry out a review every five years. In response to a question from Councillor Graham regarding the Infrastructure Delivery Plan, Councillor Haine advised that he did not have the details to hand but would include Councillor Graham in the response he was due to circulate to Councillors Cooper and Poskitt.

Having been proposed and duly seconded, Cabinet agreed the recommendations.

DECISION: That the updated Local Development Scheme attached at Annex A to the report be approved.

REASONS: To ensure transparency and enable effective engagement, provide information on Neighbourhood Planning.

OPTIONS: None appropriate.

66. SAFEGUARDING POLICY AND PROCEDURES

The Cabinet received and considered the report of the Group Manager for Resident Services, which introduced new Safeguarding Policy and Procedures for approval and adoption.

The Care Act 2014 placed a duty on local authorities with regards to people's wellbeing and providing services, information and advice. The Council also discharged a number of functions that impacted on the lives of adults and as a consequence had a significant role to play in safeguarding adults along with the provision of their welfare.

Through the implementation of this Policy the Council would ensure there was a corporate-wide policy on safeguarding covering all council services, providing a clear strategic direction and clear lines of accountability. It was noted that a similar policy would be adopted for Publica Group Ltd and internal consultation and engagement would be undertaken as necessary to ensure effective implementation and delivery.

A copy of the Safeguarding Policy and Procedures was attached as an appendix to the report.

The Cabinet Member for Housing, Councillor Davies, outlined the report, reminded Members of the importance of safeguarding and proposed the recommendations as laid out.

This was seconded by Councillor MacRae who reminded Members that safeguarding was relevant to all members of society.

In response to a question from Councillor Graham, Councillor Davies agreed that the policy would be reviewed annually and appropriate training rolled out.

Having been proposed and duly seconded, Cabinet agreed the recommendations.

DECISION: the Safeguarding Policy and Procedures attached at Annex A to the report be approved and adopted.

REASONS: To assist with the delivery of excellent modern services, whilst supporting and building prosperous and inclusive local communities and facilitating healthy lifestyles and better wellbeing for everyone.

OPTIONS: Members could choose to not to adopt the Policy or amend the content if considered necessary.

67. FACE TO FACE CUSTOMER ACCESS REVIEW

The Cabinet received and considered the report of the Group Manager for Resident Services, which proposed some changes to the Council's face to face offer to better reflect the demand on all access channels.

The Council currently supported five face to face customer access points at Elmfield, Woodgreen, Witney Town Centre Shop (TCS), Burford Visitor Information Centre (VIC) and Witney Shop Mobility. The report suggested that as more customers continued to access services digitally, the footfall at face to face access points had been declining for some time.

In addition, the need to keep residents and staff safe as part of the Covid response had led to a review of the data relating to face to face customer service provision. Section 2 of the report detailed a review of each of the contact centres.

The report also outlined the steps required to reopen the Witney Town Centre Shop, the proposal to remove the payment kiosk and rearrange the interior to make the space safe once Covid restrictions were lifted. An appendix to the report also detailed the data collected in relation to the Witney TCS reception footfall.

Section 3 of the report detailed the financial implications including savings relating to the removal of the payment kiosk, grant funding of the Shop Mobility Services and a one-off cost for providing Covid screening at the Witney TCS.

The Cabinet Member for Resources, Councillor Morris introduced the report and thanked the Mayor of Burford for attending the meeting and highlighting the concerns raised by Burford residents, which he would review. He reiterated the intention to re-open the Witney TCS as soon as the current lockdown concluded and advised that discussions regarding the Witney Shop Mobility service were progressing. Councillor Morris agreed that tourism was an important part of the

economy of West Oxfordshire and felt it was correct to include the VIC's within the review. He therefore proposed the recommendations as laid out.

This was seconded by Councillor Harvey who agreed that the Council was right to review the use and costings of services.

Councillor Enright welcomed the review and highlighted the importance of finding out what was and was not important to residents. He therefore hoped that the review would include some level of public consultation.

Councillor Cotterill addressed Members and reiterated the comments made by the Mayor of Burford. He felt it was important to retain the VIC in order to provide information to foreign tourists who may not access the information digitally and requested that the poster on display in the window be addressed because it contained inaccurate information. Councillor Morris agreed that this would be looked at.

In response to a query from Councillor St John, Councillor Morris agreed to share the staffing costs related to the Witney Town Centre Shop.

Having been proposed and duly seconded, Cabinet agreed the recommendations.

DECISIONS:

- (a) That the intention to reopen the Witney Town Centre Shop (TCS) as soon as the current lockdown concludes be noted;
- (b) That a formal project be instigated to establish the Community Hub options referred to in paragraph 2.14 of the report;
- (c) That the future of the Visitor Information Centre service (at Witney TCS and Burford) forms part of the current Tourism Review, with services remaining suspended;
- (d) That the payment kiosk at the Witney TCS be removed; and
- (e) That the Witney Shop Mobility service remains suspended and the possibility of grant funding another organisation to deliver the service be explored.

REASONS: To provide efficient and value for money services whilst delivering quality front line services.

OPTIONS: Members could choose to retain the current arrangements, however this may not best meet the customer's needs.

68. APPROVAL OF THE APPROACH TO COMMUNITY RECYCLING (BRING SITES) IN WEST OXFORDSHIRE

The Cabinet received and considered the report of the Business Manager Waste, which updated Members on the issues being experienced at the community recycling sites in West Oxfordshire and sought approval for their permanent removal.

The report explained that 'Bring' site provision had been part of the waste service offered by West Oxfordshire District Council for over fifteen years with fifteen recycling bring sites in the District, three of which were on private caravan/camping parks. A list of all the sites and their facilities were attached as an appendix to the report.

The sites varied in size and offered residents the opportunity to recycle mixed recycling and glass, amongst other things but it was felt that due to the effective kerbside collection service provided, the negatives of policing the sites outweighed the positives in the amount and quality of material received.

The report cited a number of problems experienced at the sites including recycling material frequently being left outside the bins, non-recyclable items being left including mattresses, large waste electricals and increasingly hazardous waste. Significant costs were also being spent on clearing material being left and it was felt that this resource could be redeployed on other street cleansing activities.

Members were asked to consider approving the permanent removal of the community recycling (bring site) facilities and increase the standard number of items for the bulky waste collection from 3 to 4, with the fee remaining at £27.68 in the 2021-22 financial year. It was noted that closure of the sites would be handled in a structured and managed way, with effective communication in order to mitigate the issues being experienced with high levels of contamination, fly tipping and misuse.

The report noted the risk that recycling performance could decrease by 6.7% if the bring sites were removed from service and that some material did not transfer into the kerbside service, but, on balance, the anticipated benefits both financial,

reputational and in building in greater capacity for the UBICO operation, looked to outweigh this.

The financial implications were detailed in full in section three of the report and included a breakdown of the operational costs, costs of fly-tipping clearance, the income streams relating to recycling and the proposal to retain the fee for bulky waste as currently set.

The Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee had considered the report at their meeting on 1 October 2020 and an extract of the minutes from that meeting were attached as Annex B to the report. The Committee had made the following recommendations:

- (a) That the risks and financial, and performance related implications of removing the community recycling (bring site) facilities are noted;
- (b) That Cabinet take into account that the permanent removal of the community recycling (bring site) facilities should not take place until the location of each site has been considered in relation to the travel time needed to reach alternative sites, the option of CCTV has been explored and more focus has been placed on prosecuting fly-tippers and carrying out enforcement. However, effective communication was necessary in order to mitigate the issues being experienced with high levels of contamination, fly tipping and misuse; and
- (c) The Committee considered that residents should be consulted prior to the closure of sites.

Councillor MacRae introduced the report and expressed his thanks to Councillor Biles and the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee for their input. He proposed a minor amendment to recommendation c) to include the words 'as soon as is practicable' and provided Members with photographic evidence of the misuse of the sites and the difference in appearance once a site had been cleared. He reiterated the provision of the comprehensive kerbside collection service and responded to the proposals put forward by the scrutiny committee.

With regards to the suggestion of CCTV, Councillor MacRae reminded Members of the cost implications of installing this along with the resource requirements. He reported that there was no statutory obligation to consult with residents and he had

received positive feedback from Hanborough Parish Council since clearing their nearest site.

Councillor MacRae concluded by commending the work of officers and reminded Members that communication was key in this process.

This was seconded by Councillor Coul who advised that she had attended the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and was satisfied that the queries raised had been answered.

Councillor Cooper queried the reference to 'Narrow support' in section 3.1 of the report and was advised that this referred to the additional cost incurred when access was needed along streets that were too narrow for the refuse vehicles.

Councillor Leffman urged Councillor MacRae to consider the distance that some residents would need to travel to a recycling centre if the bring sites were closed.

Some Members felt that it was not acceptable to remove a service without proper consultation, however, the Cabinet Member and officers assured them that the service was still being provided via the kerbside collection. Officers also confirmed that larger cardboard boxes could be broken down and left by the side of the blue bins for collection during the weekly collections.

In response to a question from Councillor Graham, officers confirmed that there were 400 blue bins in stock and larger households were able to request extra capacity bins.

Councillor Saul queried the lack of a feasibility exercise and felt that increasing the bulky waste collection number from three to four was not commensurate. He suggested that the cost of this service should be reduced, the frequency of collections increased or households could be entitled to a set number of free collections per year.

Following comments made about the distance needed to travel, lower income families and those without transport, Councillor MacRae reminded Members that the sites were also being used to illegally dispose of trade waste.

Some Members welcomed the removal of the sites which appeared cleaner and more in keeping with their areas and reiterated the message that residents should be encouraged to 'reduce' their waste in line with Climate Change initiatives.

Having been proposed and duly seconded, Cabinet agreed the recommendations.

DECISIONS:

- (a) That the risks and financial, and performance related implications of removing the community recycling (bring site) facilities be noted, as set out in this report;
- (b) That approval be given for the permanent removal of the community recycling (bring site) facilities, in a structured and managed way, with effective communication in order to mitigate the issues being experienced with high levels of contamination, fly tipping and misuse; and
- (c) That approval be given for the bulky waste collection standard number of items to be increased from 3 to 4 as soon as is practicable, with the fee remaining at £27.68 in the 2021-22 financial year.

REASONS: To ensure the Council continues to deliver excellent modern services whilst ensuring the financial sustainability of the Council.

OPTIONS: Members could decide to retain all or some of the sites whilst acknowledging the issues being experienced and the potential increase in costs by having to service the sites more frequently.

69. OXFORDSHIRE PARK AND CHARGE AND OFF STREET PARKING ORDER

The Cabinet received and considered the joint report of the Parking Services and Climate Change Managers, which set out the Council owned car park locations selected as part of Tranche One of the Oxfordshire Park and Charge project; and detailed the requirement to make a number of variations to the Off-Street Parking Order.

Since April 2020, Council-owned car parks have been considered for their suitability for Electric Vehicle Charging Points (EVCP) under the Oxfordshire Park & Charge project and against Innovate-UK selection criteria: the focus of the project being to provide off-street charging access to those people without their own parking and charging facilities at home.

Following successful site surveys of various locations, six Council owned car parks had been selected as part of Tranche One of the project. A map detailing the location of the sites was provided at section 2.9 of the report along with a table

outlining the number of EVCP's, parking bays allocated to EVCP's and the total number of parking places available at each site.

The delays incurred due to Covid and the expected completion timeframe for Tranche One were outlined along with the proposal to communicate with Town and Parish Councils to advise of the works.

Alongside this, there was a need to update and renew the West Oxfordshire Off-Street Parking Order 2007 to incorporate the management and regulation of any potential electrical vehicle charging bays in any of the car parks. Other areas of land had also been identified as suitable and needed to be included in the Order including Langdale Gate, Marriotts Close, Woolgate and the front car park at Woodgreen Council offices. Following the successful refurbishment of Marriotts Multi Story Car Park the owners had proposed a variation to the waiting restrictions to extend and simplify the lengths of stay per level.

Councillor MacRae presented the report and welcomed the opportunity to move the project forwards. This was seconded by Councillor Harvey who supported the work undertaken by officers and Members of the Climate Action Working Group in ensuring the Council could meet its target to become a net zero carbon council.

In response to a question from Councillor Cooper regarding Woodford Way in Witney, Councillor Harvey explained that any future residential developments would also require the capability to install EVCP's.

Councillor Leffman queried when Charlbury Car Park would be included in the project and was advised that Councillor Harvey would investigate and respond accordingly.

Further queries were responded to relating to the timescales, the separate, delayed WODC project with Chargemaster and how it was hoped to move this forwards with other partners and Publica.

Following a query from Councillor Graham, Councillor Harvey clarified the statistics relating to electric vehicle ownership but advised that this was a rapidly changing scenario and future numbers were difficult to predict.

Having been proposed and duly seconded, Cabinet agreed the recommendations.

DECISIONS:

- (a) That the information provided on locations for electric vehicle charging points (EVCP) in Council-owned car parks included as part of Tranche One of the Oxfordshire Park & Charge in West Oxfordshire be noted;
- (b) That the front Car Park at the Council Offices Woodgreen, Witney, be added to the Off-Street Parking Order, to enable enforcement and regulation of the scheduled electrical vehicle charging bays;
- (c) That the request to simplify the maximum waiting times at Marriotts Walk Multi Story Car Park, Witney be agreed, with the maximum waiting times to be as set out in the table under paragraph 3.3 of the report; and
- (d) That the Group Manager for Resident Services be authorised, following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Environment, (i) to carry out public consultation on the West Oxfordshire District Council Off-Street Parking (Consolidated) Order 2020 by notice of proposal; and either (ii) if it is unopposed, to make the Order or (iii) to review and consider any representations and make a final decision on the Order.

REASONS: To protect the environment whilst supporting the local economy; to work with communities to meet the current and future needs of residents; to provide efficient and value for money services whilst delivering quality front line services.

OPTIONS: Members could choose not to deliver EVCP infrastructure through the Park and Charge project and could retain the Parking Order as it is but this would leave it outdated and un-enforceable.

70. COMMUNITY FACILITIES GRANTS

The Cabinet received and considered the report of the Business Manager Contracts, which detailed the applications received for grant aid from the Community Facilities Grants Scheme.

Councillors Bishop and Harvey left the meeting for the duration of this item having previously declared interests.

It was noted that this was the second round of funding and six applications had been received. These were detailed in full at Annex A to the report along with the amount

requested, funding breakdown and a summary of the work that the grant would be used for.

The six organisations and associated costs were:

Filkins & Broughton Poggs Parish Council	£8,400
Combe Village Hall & Recreation Ground	£6,647
Glympton Village Hall	£8,212
Chipping Norton Theatre	£12,934
Bampton Community Archive	£48,750
Witney Town Council	£39,952

Councillor Coul presented the report and stated how vital this funding was to organisations, especially during the recovery phase since Covid-19. She was pleased to propose the recommendations as laid out and this was seconded by Councillor Morris.

Councillor Mills was pleased to support the recommendations and reminded Members of the value that groups such as the Bampton Community Archive gave to the local community.

Having been proposed and duly seconded, Cabinet agreed the recommendations.

DECISION: That grants be awarded in accordance with the recommendations set out in Annex A to the report.

REASONS: To work with communities to meet the current and future needs and aspirations of residents.

OPTIONS: Members could choose to offer differing levels of grant aid but within the budgets established for these purposes.

71. APPOINTMENT OF REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

The Cabinet received and considered the report of the Head of Democratic Services, which requested the consideration of the appointment of representatives to specified

outside bodies, following recent changes in the roles and membership of the Cabinet.

Councillor Mead introduced the report and it was noted that Councillor Mills would retain his appointment to South East England Councils, contrary to recommendation (b) in the report which would be removed. Subject to this amendment, she proposed the recommendations as laid out.

This was seconded by Councillor Morris.

Councillor Mills addressed Members, thanked the Leader for allowing him to retain his appointment to South East England Councils and outlined some of the work they carried out.

Having been proposed and duly seconded, Cabinet agreed the recommendations.

DECISIONS:

- (a) That it be noted that Councillor Michele Mead has replaced Councillor James Mills as the appointee to the Oxfordshire Partnership Board; the LGA General Assembly; the Oxfordshire Leaders Group; and the Oxfordshire Growth Board;
- (b) That Councillor Suzi Coul be appointed to West Oxfordshire Local Advisory Board (GLL Better); Oxfordshire Community Foundation: Adviser to Grants Panel; and Community First (Oxfordshire), as replacement for Councillor Michele Mead; and
- (c) That Councillor Merilyn Davies be appointed to Oxfordshire Safer Communities Partnership; Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel; and West Oxfordshire Community Safety Partnership, as replacement for Councillor Norman MacRae.

REASONS: To ensure the Council is represented appropriately on Outside Bodies following the recent changes in Leadership of the Council and Cabinet Membership.

OPTIONS: The Cabinet could choose to amend the appointments as it sees fit.

72. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED: That, in view of the likely disclosure of exempt information, as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, (information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person), the public be excluded from the meeting for the remaining item of business.

73. ACQUISITION OF EMERGENCY (MOVE ON) ACCOMMODATION

The Cabinet received and considered the report of the Group Manager for Resident Services, which proposed the funding and acquisition of Emergency Homeless Accommodation within the District.

The Homeless Reduction Act 2017 introduced new legal duties on Housing Authorities to prevent homelessness occurring. The homeless hostel in Chipping Norton supported the Council's duty with some capacity, but the property was not sufficient in size to meet all the Council's needs. As a consequence officers were reliant on other forms of temporary accommodation, such as motel and bed and breakfast establishments.

The opportunity to purchase a privately owned property had become available and, having been recently refurbished, was already available to use for multiple occupations.

The total estimated costs of the acquisition were outlined in section 2.7 of the report and the cost of supporting residents in emergency accommodation, such as bed and breakfast or motels, was also highlighted.

The Cabinet Member for Housing, Councillor Davies presented the report and, in proposing the recommendations, thanked officers for their work in bringing this forward.

The proposal was seconded by Councillor Morris.

Having been proposed and duly seconded, Cabinet agreed the recommendations.

DECISIONS:

- a) That the acquisition of the property be approved subject to:
 - i. completion of due diligence being carried out by Legal and Property Services;
 - ii. confirmation of the financing arrangements set out in paragraph 3.4 of the report or, if varied, achieving a minimum business case return as per the recently approved Recovery Investment Strategy;
 - iii. sign off of the detailed Heads of Terms by the Chief Finance Officer in consultation with Cabinet Member for Housing and Cabinet member for Resources;

- b) Council be requested to add the sum detailed in the report to the 2020/21 Capital Programme to cover all costs of acquisition and remedial works to bring the accommodation up to appropriate standards; and
- c) Council be recommended to approve any consequential adjustments to the prudential indicators and borrowing limits to support the acquisition.

REASONS: To facilitate healthy lifestyles and better wellbeing for everyone whilst supporting and building prosperous and inclusive local communities; and to deliver excellent modern services whilst ensuring financial sustainability.

OPTIONS: The Council could continue with existing arrangements or source alternative solutions.

The meeting closed at 3.45 pm

Leader of the Council