

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting held on Tuesday, 4 November 2014 commencing at 10.00 am and finishing at 12.40 pm.

Present:

Councillor Anne Purse – in the Chair

Councillors:

Lynda Atkins	Mark Gray	David Nimmo Smith
Jamila Azad	Patrick Greene	Neil Owen
David Bartholomew	Pete Handley	Zoé Patrick
Mike Beal	Jenny Hannaby	Glynis Phillips
Maurice Billington	Nick Hards	Susanna Pressel
Liz Brighthouse OBE	Neville F. Harris	Laura Price
Kevin Bulmer	Steve Harrod	Alison Rooke
Nick Carter	Mrs Judith Heathcoat	Rodney Rose
Louise Chapman	Hilary Hibbert-Biles	Gillian Sanders
Mark Cherry	Simon Hoare	John Sanders
John Christie	John Howson	Les Sibley
Sam Coates	Ian Hudspeth	Roz Smith
Yvonne Constance	Bob Johnston	Lawrie Stratford
Surinder Dhesi	Richard Langridge	John Tanner
Arash Fatemian	Stewart Lilly	Melinda Tilley
Neil Fawcett	Lorraine Lindsay-Gale	Michael Waine
Jean Fooks	Sandy Lovatt	Richard Webber
Mrs C. Fulljames	Mark Lygo	David Williams
Anthony Gearing	Kieron Mallon	David Wilmshurst
Janet Godden	Charles Mathew	

The Council 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.

63/14 ELECTION OF THE VICE CHAIRMAN FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE 2014/15 COUNCIL YEAR

(Agenda Item 1)

RESOLVED:

- (a) to elect Councillor John Sanders as Vice-Chairman for the remainder of the 2014/15 Council Year;
- (b) to write to former Councillor Smith with thanks for her work whilst Vice Chairman and with the best wishes of Council.

64/14 MINUTES

(Agenda Item 2)

RESOLVED: the Minutes of the Meeting held on 9 September 2014 were approved and signed.

65/14 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

(Agenda Item 3)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Hallchurch and Councillor Reynolds.

66/14 OFFICIAL COMMUNICATIONS

(Agenda Item 5)

The Chairman reported as follows:

The 4624 Squadron at Brize Norton received the Freedom of the County and had given to the County Council an embroidered Squadron Crest which could be seen in the Members Board Room.

The Minerals and Waste Development Plan was currently making its way through Cabinet on route to Council. The intention was that it would be considered by Cabinet in November and then Council in December. However by December there would still be some evidence outstanding and therefore Council agreed that an extraordinary meeting of full Council be held at 10.00 am on 27 January 2014 with the express purpose of agreeing the Minerals and Waste Development Plan.

67/14 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

(Agenda Item 4)

The Chairman noted that some members may have concerns that by expressing firm views in the debate at Agenda Item 12 they may be later unable to take part in any subsequent decisions relating to fracking. She indicated that the County Solicitor and Monitoring Officer had advised as follows:

S25 of the Localism Act 2011 makes it clear that all Councillors should be entitled to speak on behalf of their communities without necessarily precluding themselves from local decision making. In effect, expressions of a view on a particular local planning issue should not of itself be treated as evidence of a closed mind.

68/14 PETITIONS AND PUBLIC ADDRESS

(Agenda Item 7)

Mr Mobbs, Independent Environmental Consultant spoke against fracking. He urged the Council not to take any decision on this issue on the basis of

the reports submitted as they were not Oxfordshire appropriate; he noted gas had been in Oxfordshire at a depth of 200m and stated that it had been found to be dangerous in the USA when drilling at that depth; that there would not be enough capacity to deal with the waste disposal impact; water pollution would be an issue and referring to paragraph 5.4 on national emissions he stated that there was no evidence to back up the assertion that the impact would be relatively small.

Dr Evelyne Godfrey, Archaeological Scientist, spoke on the County Council responsibilities under the European Landscape Convention (ELC) which should be referenced during any debate on fracking. She highlighted aspects of the Convention that stressed the contribution that landscape had on cultural life, on the creation of jobs; on well-being and on quality of life. She urged the Council to have due regard to ELC in order to be properly prepared for any application on fracking.

69/14 QUESTIONS WITH NOTICE FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

(Agenda Item 9)

12 questions with notice were asked. Details of the questions and answers and the supplementary questions and answers (where asked) are set out in Annex 1 to the Minutes.

70/14 REPORT OF THE CABINET

(Agenda Item 10)

The Council received the report of the Cabinet.

In relation to paragraph 14 (Frideswide Square Construction Works) (Questions from Councillors Tanner, Pressel and Godden) Councillor Nimmo Smith undertook to circulate information relating to measures to ensure the safety of vulnerable pedestrians in the shared areas, measures to assist cyclists to navigate the Square and measures to ensure that buses were aided to cross it safely.

In relation to paragraph 16 (2014/15 Financial Monitoring & Business Strategy Delivery Report) (Question from Councillor Smith) Councillor Stratford, undertook to provide a written response concerning the inclusion of £1.7m developer funding as a contribution towards the expansion of Cheney Academy. The question related to basic need.

71/14 REQUESTS FOR VIREMENTS AND THE USE OF RESERVES

(Agenda Item 11)

Under the Council's Financial Regulations, Council approval was required for temporary virements of £0.500m or more and where they represented a change in policy and the one-off transfer of funds of £0.500m or more between revenue and capital budgets.

Council had before them virements from the Financial Monitoring & Business Strategy Delivery Report to Cabinet on 21 October 2014 which required

approval in accordance with the Financial Regulations and the Virement Rules for 2014/15.

RESOLVED: (on a motion by Councillor Stratford, seconded by Councillor Hudspeth and carried nem con) to:

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- (a) approve the release of £2.751m contingency to Children's Social Care (CEF2-3) within CE&F on a one – off basis;
 - (b) agree that that £1.500m one – off funding from the Older People and Physical Disability Pooled Budget reserves will be used to offset part of the in – year pressure across the pools (SCS1) including the Learning Disabilities Pool;
 - (c) approve the request to release £0.500m one – off funding from the Efficiency Reserve to SCS1-4 for the Adult Social Care Improvement Programme;
 - (d) approve the transfer of £1.193m from the Carry Forward reserve to the Budget Reserve; and
 - (e) approve a £0.850m contribution to capital from the Early Years Dedicated Schools Grant funding to increase capacity for two year olds.

72/14 THEMED DEBATE - FRACKING

(Agenda Item 12)

At its Meeting on 1 July 2014, the County Council had agreed a Motion from Councillor John Sanders in the following terms:

"Oxfordshire has been identified as one of the areas where there could be a potential to frack for shale gas. Rightly many residents particularly in the north of the County are concerned about the implications for their communities. This Council believes that its members need to have the opportunity to discuss the issues and asks that a Themed Debate is organised in the near future to allow that to happen."

Accordingly, The Council had before them two briefing papers on fracking and shale gas extraction in Oxfordshire.

Following a lengthy debate the Council:

RESOLVED:

- (a) to note the report and comments;
- (b) that a summary of members' comments and of the issues raised would be circulated to all members and made available on the County Council web site.

..... in the Chair

Date of signing

2014