

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting held on Tuesday, 21 May 2024 commencing at 10.30 am and finishing at 12.00 pm

Present:

Councillor Alison Rooke – in the Chair

Councillors:

Mark Lygo	Neil Fawcett	Ian Middleton
Juliette Ash	Ted Fenton	Freddie van Mierlo
Brad Baines	Nick Field-Johnson	Calum Miller
Hannah Banfield	Donna Ford	Michael O'Connor
David Bartholomew	Andrew Gant	Glynis Phillips
Tim Bearder	Andy Graham	Susanna Pressel
Robin Bennett	Kate Gregory	Eddie Reeves
Felix Bloomfield	Jane Hanna OBE	G.A. Reynolds
Liz Brighthouse OBE	Jenny Hannaby	Judy Roberts
Kevin Bulmer	Damian Haywood	David Rouane
Nigel Champken-Woods	Charlie Hicks	Geoff Saul
Mark Cherry	John Howson	Les Sibley
Andrew Coles	Tony Ilott	Nigel Simpson
Ian Corkin	Bob Johnston	Roz Smith
Imade Edosomwan	Liz Leffman	Ian Snowdon
Trish Elphinstone	Nick Leverton	Dr Pete Sudbury
Duncan Enright	Dan Levy	Bethia Thomas
Mohamed Fadlalla	Dr Nathan Ley	Michael Waine
Arash Fatemian	Kieron Mallon	Liam Walker

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.

37/24 ELECTION OF CHAIR FOR THE 2024-25 COUNCIL YEAR

(Agenda Item 1)

The Right Reverend Gavin Collins, Bishop of Dorchester, opened the meeting with a prayer.

Before nominations were invited for the office of Chair of the Council, Councillor Felix Bloomfield (the retiring Chair) thanked all staff at County Hall, the Democratic Services and Facilities Management Teams and his Vice-Chair, Councillor Rooke, for their support over the year. It was noted

that over £8,000 had been raised for the Chair's chosen charities over the year, and the retiring Chair thanked all for their support.

The Monitoring Officer invited nominations for the office of Chair of the Council for the 2024/25 Council Year. Council Leffman moved, and Councillor Brighouse seconded that Councillor Alison Rooke be elected as Chair of the Council for the 2024/25 Council Year. There being no other nominations and no dissent, Councillor Rooke was duly declared elected.

RESOLVED: (unanimously) that Councillor Alison Rooke be elected as Chair for the 2024/25 Council Year.

(Councillor Alison Rooke in the Chair).

38/24 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR FOR THE 2024-25 COUNCIL YEAR

(Agenda Item 2)

The Chair called for nominations for the office of Vice-Chair.

Councillor Brighouse moved and Councillor Cherry seconded that Councillor Mark Lygo be elected as Vice-Chair of the Council for the 2024/25 Council Year. There being no other nominations, Councillor Mark Lygo was duly declared elected Vice-Chair of the Council for the 2024/25 Council Year.

RESOLVED: (unanimously) that Councillor Mark Lygo be elected Vice-Chair for the 2024/25 Council Year.

39/24 MINUTES

(Agenda Item 3)

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 April 2024 were approved and signed as a correct record with the following amendment:

Minute 25/24, on Page 9 should be headed "Motions by Members of the Council".

40/24 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

(Agenda Item 4)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Gawrysiak, Murphy and Povolotsky.

The Chair acknowledged the resignation of Councillor Richard Webber who had represented the Sutton Courtenay & Marcham division since 2013. Councillor Liz Leffman thanked Councillor Webber for his service for both the County Council and for the Vale of the White Horse District Council and wished him well.

41/24 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST - SEE GUIDANCE NOTE

(Agenda Item 5)

There were no declarations of interest relating to items for decision at this meeting.

42/24 OFFICIAL COMMUNICATIONS

(Agenda Item 6)

The Chair announced that 15 firefighters who had served residents for a combined total of 300 years were presented with His Majesty The King's long service and good conduct medals by the Deputy Lord Lieutenant in a special ceremony on Tuesday 30 April at Blenheim Palace. It was noted that the Chair's events were listed in Annex 1 to the Schedule of Business.

43/24 APPOINTMENTS

(Agenda Item 7)

There were none received.

44/24 PETITIONS AND PUBLIC ADDRESS

(Agenda Item 8)

Petition

Patricia Ciccone presented a petition signed by 489 people on school transport on behalf of Europa School parents. The petition asked that Council reverse the Council's policy of pushing families out of public-school transport and buses and into cars. It was highlighted that Europa School was a state school that offered bilingual education, which made it very appealing to the local diverse parent community and called on the Cabinet Member responsible and Leader of the Council to start listening to residents in Oxfordshire and stop creating blockers to mass transport options and engaging youth in using buses.

The Chair advised that the petition would be referred to the relevant Chief Officer for response.

45/24 REPORT OF THE CABINET

(Agenda Item 9)

Council received the report from Cabinet.

In response to a question from Councillor Brad Baines, the Deputy Leader of the Council with Responsibility for Climate Change, Environment & Future Generations, agreed that in order to mainstream any future framework for future generations and tackle the deterrents of ill health and wellbeing, principles should be embedded in policy design, rather than adopted as an impact assessment for only some large projects as required by the relevant budget line.

In response to a question from Councillor Roz Smith, Councillor Pete Sudbury advised that the reason the Council chose to lead on climate change was to encourage others to do the same.

In response to a question from Councillor Charlie Hicks, Councillor Pete Sudbury advised that whilst not in his portfolio responsibility, further information would be provided on progress made on issuing climate bonds that had been agreed at the last Climate and Finance Conference.

In response to a question from Councillor Glynis Phillips, Councillor Neil Fawcett, Cabinet Member for Community & Corporate Services, advised that the objective of the proposed Managed Service Recruitment Contract was to provide a partnership that would incorporate actions towards reducing agency spend.

In response to a question from Councillor Susanna Pressel, Councillor Neil Fawcett advised that whilst not an item on the agenda, he would provide further information on the assessment of the current HR contract with Hampshire.

In response to a question from Councillor Duncan Enright, Councillor Dan Levy, Cabinet Member for Finance, agreed that the system for obtaining national government funding had many complexities and that it was beneficial to work with the local community in sourcing and financing projects of benefit to them.

In response to a question from Councillor Charlie Hicks, Councillor Dan Levy answered that opportunities for new financing models for future capital programmes would always be explored from national government funding, however there were no immediate plans at this time.

In response to a question from Councillor Brad Baines, Councillor Dan Levy advised that he would confirm the total amount of the capital programme allocated to the delivery of projects attached to S106 contributions and the proportion of these that had been delivered to timetable.

In response to a question from Councillor Duncan Enright, Councillor Andrew Gant, Cabinet Member for Transport Management, agreed that it was just as important that the Council's policies were understood by residents in order for them to be implemented to good effect, and he would undertake to ensure that greater understanding was provided to ensure that the Council lived up to its aspirations in delivering its Vision Zero Strategy.

In response to a question from Councillor Calum Miller, Councillor Andrew Gant agreed to explore the safe transport of freight vehicles in all wards, as it was key to understanding how other road users interacted with freight vehicles safely in delivering the Council's Vision Zero Strategy.

In response to a question from Councillor Mark Cherry, Councillor Andrew Gant agreed that additional funding was needed for the county's highway network and highlighted the pothole crisis in the county that was caused by inefficient central government funding initiatives.

In response to a question from Councillor Susanna Pressel, Councillor Andrew Gant advised that he would seek to obtain the information resulting from the Police and Crime Commissioner's review of ensuring that speed cameras were adjusted to recognise the 20 mph speed limit areas.

In response to a question from Councillor David Rouane, Councillor Andrew Gant advised that whilst he welcomed any initiative that would improve road safety and highlighted the safety measures within the Council's Vision Zero Strategy that sought to minimise the interactions between vehicles and cyclists, he did not feel that the national government's road safety initiatives targeted at cyclists were appropriate for mitigating road safety.

In response to a question from Councillor Kieron Mallon, Councillor Andrew Gant advised that he was not aware that the national figures for reporting deaths caused by cyclists were recorded incorrectly and did not believe that this was the case.

46/24 CABINET MEMBERSHIP AND DELEGATION OF CABINET FUNCTIONS

(Agenda Item 10)

Under the Council's constitution, the Leader of the Council was required to inform the Annual Meeting of the Council of the delegations made in relation to the functions of the Cabinet. Council received the report from the Leader of the Council.

The Leader noted one change to the published report: 'Responsibility for Gypsies and Travellers' moved to Finance from Public Health, Inequalities & Community Safety.

On being moved by the Leader of the Council and seconded by Councillor Pete Sudbury, Deputy Leader with responsibility for Climate Change, Environment & Future Generations, the recommendation was put to the vote of which there were five abstentions and 1 against.

RESOLVED to note the names, addresses and electoral divisions of the people appointed to the Cabinet by the Leader of the Council for the coming year and their respective portfolios as amended.

47/24 AUDIT & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT

(Agenda Item 11)

Council had before it the Annual Report of the Audit & Governance Committee which summarised the work that had been undertaken both as a committee and through the support of the Audit Working Group in 2023/24. Councillor Roz Smith, Chair of the Audit & Governance Committee, moved and Councillor Brad Baines, Deputy Chair of the Audit & Governance Committee, seconded that Council receive the report.

In response to a question from Councillor Susanna Pressel, Councillor Roz Smith confirmed that the Council had its own internal fraud team which had shown exemplary work in providing detailed reports of all fraud investigations to the committee.

RESOLVED: (unanimously) to note the contents of the Annual Report of the Audit & Governance Committee 2023/24.

48/24 COMMITTEES AND REVIEW OF POLITICAL BALANCE

(Agenda Item 12)

The Council was required by the Local Government & Housing Act 1989 to review the political balance on its committees on an annual basis. The Council had before it a report which set out how the rules operate and sought approval for adjustments which were necessary to achieve the balance across and within committees to comply with the rules.

Council noted the list of committee appointments in the revised Annex 1 attached to the Schedule of Business and two further appointments to vacancies proposed at the meeting:

- Planning & Regulation Committee: Councillor Bob Johnston
- Thames Valley Police & Crime Panel: Councillor Roz Smith

On being moved by Councillor Alison Rooke, seconded by Councillor Mark Lygo and being put to the vote:

RESOLVED (unanimously) to:

- a) note how the rules to political proportionality have been applied to the appointment of Council committees.**
- b) appoint members to the committees of the Council and other bodies listed at Annex 1 as amended.**

49/24 SCHEME OF DELEGATION TO OFFICERS

(Agenda Item 13)

The Council is required annually to agree the scheme of delegation of Council responsibilities to Officers for inclusion in the Council's Constitution.

In response to a question from Councillor Calum Miller, the Monitoring Officer confirmed that any changes to the Council's Constitution as outlined in part 7.2, 6.4(t) would comply with the law and any changes made would be reported to the relevant Member body.

On being moved by Councillor Alison Rooke, seconded by Councillor Mark Lygo and put to the vote:

RESOLVED (unanimously) to approve the Scheme of Delegation to Officers as it relates to Council functions.

50/24 COMMITTEE DATES 2024-25

(Agenda Item 14)

Council had before it a schedule of committee dates for the 2024/25 Council Year which had been approved at its meeting on 6 November 2023. Since that meeting, the Overview & Scrutiny Committee for Education & Young People had been formed with five dates proposed, and the dates for the Delegated Decisions by the Cabinet Member for Finance changed as highlighted in the Annex to the report.

On being moved by Councillor Alison Rooke, seconded by Councillor Mark Lygo and put to the vote:

RESOLVED (unanimously) to:

- a) approve the schedule of meetings for the 2024-25 Council Year for the Education & Young People Overview & Scrutiny Committee in Annex 1;**
- b) note the changed dates for Delegated Decisions by the Cabinet Member for Finance in Annex 1;**
- c) note the other dates as approved by Council on 7 November 2023 in Annex 1.**

..... in the Chair

Date of signing