

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting held on Tuesday, 9 September 2014 commencing at 10.00 am and finishing at 3.50 pm.

Present:

Councillor Anne Purse – in the Chair

Councillors:

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

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.

49/14 MINUTES

(Agenda Item 1)

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 1 July 2014 were approved and signed.

50/14 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

(Agenda Item 2)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Chapman, Constance, Fooks and Mathew.

51/14 OFFICIAL COMMUNICATIONS

(Agenda Item 4)

The Chairman reported as follows:

In 2013, the County Council had awarded the status of Freedom of the County to 4624 Squadron, Royal Auxiliary Air Force, RAF Brize Norton This was in recognition of over thirty years of distinguished service, demonstrating sacrifice and commitment to the defence of the realm, and for dedicated support to local charities and communities and would be marked with a parade through the centre of Oxford on October 11 at 2.00 pm.

The event would begin with the squadron assembling at Keble Road. They would then march through pedestrian and non-pedestrian elements of the City centre. This would be followed by a reception at County Hall for all those involved.

At their Meeting on 1 July 2014, Council had agreed a motion to hold a themed debate on fracking. Council's agreement was sought, following agreement by the Chairman and Group Leaders to suspend Council Procedure Rule 2.2 (xi) and hold this themed debate in the afternoon of the November Council with normal Council business being held in the morning. Consequently, no motions would go to the November meeting and would go to the Meeting on 9 December instead. Council agreed to this proposal.

Arrangements were being put in place for an improved sound system and an electronic voting system in the Council Chamber in time for the next Council Meeting. Full details would be circulated in advance of the next meeting and there would be a demonstration for all members on how the system operated prior to the Meeting commencing.

52/14 APPOINTMENTS

(Agenda Item 5)

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Hudspeth had given notice that Councillor Fatemian was standing down as Cabinet Member for Finance and was to be replaced by Councillor Stratford and that Councillor Chapman was standing down as Cabinet Member for the Fire Service & Corporate Plan and that her portfolio duties would be taken over by Councillor Rose. The change having been duly notified took effect from Monday 1 September 2014.

RESOLVED: to note the changes above and to agree the following appointments:

- (i) Councillor Constance in place of Councillor Stratford on the Joint Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee;
- (ii) Councillor Hallchurch in place of Councillor Stratford on the Education Scrutiny Committee;
- (iii) Councillor Harrod in place of Councillor Stratford on the Performance Scrutiny Committee;

- (iv) Councillor Hoare in place of Councillor Stratford on the Audit & Governance Committee;
- (v) Councillor Azad in place of Councillor Dhesi on the Audit & Governance Committee.

53/14 ORDER OF BUSINESS

RESOLVED: to vary the order of business as indicated in these Minutes to allow the maximum amount of Council business to be considered.

54/14 QUESTIONS WITH NOTICE FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

(Agenda Item 8)

19 Questions with notice were asked. Details of the questions and answers and the supplementary questions and answers (where asked) will be set out in Annex 1 to the Minutes.

In relation to Question 3 (Question from Councillor Tanner to Councillor Rose) Councillor Rose gave a commitment to circulate the consultation document for the 2015 pension scheme to all members of the County Council.

In relation to Question 17 (Question from Councillor Howson to Councillor Rose) Councillor Rose undertook to investigate possible savings by providing more information on frequently asked questions on the Website.

55/14 TREASURY MANAGEMENT OUTTURN 2013/14

(Agenda Item 9)

The Council had before them a report by the Chief Finance Officer (CC9) which set out the Treasury Management activity undertaken in the financial year 2013/14 in compliance with the CIPFA Code of Practice. The report included Debt and Investment activity, Prudential Indicator Outturn, changes in Strategy and interest receivable and payable for the financial year.

RESOLVED: (on a motion by Councillor Stratford, seconded by Councillor Hudspeth and carried nem con) to note the Council's Treasury Management Activity in 2013/14.

56/14 PARTNERSHIPS UPDATE REPORT

(Agenda Item 10)

The Council had before them the Annual Partnerships Update Report (CC10) which set out some of the key activities over the past year of both the Oxfordshire Partnership and a number of the key formal partnerships within which the County Council played a part and were critical in progressing key countywide priorities, enabling partners to work across the themes of thriving communities and support for the most vulnerable.

Each partnership report addressed the following points: the current focus for the Partnership; the personnel (Chairman and supporting staff) of the Partnership; the Partnerships key achievements in the last year; the aims for the Partnership in the year ahead; the key challenges for the Partnership and how those would be addressed going forward.

RESOLVED: (on a motion by Councillor Hudspeth, seconded by Councillor Rose and carried nem con) to note the report.

57/14 DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH ANNUAL REPORT

(Agenda Item 11)

The Council had before them the 7th Annual Report by the Director of Public Health and the first since Public Health had returned to Local Government. The report looked at the Public Health Services that the County Council was now responsible for as set out in legislation and reflected on the opportunities afforded by the return of Public Health to Local Government.

RESOLVED: (on a motion by Councillor Hibbert-Biles, seconded by Councillor Hudspeth and carried nem con) to receive the report.

58/14 REPORT OF THE CABINET

(Agenda Item 12)

The Council received the report of the Cabinet.

In relation to paragraph 3 (Didcot Great Western Park – Primary School) (Questions from Councillors Hards and Howson) Councillor Carter gave an assurance to circulate details on the progress made on the Stage 2 Full Business Case in view of the fact that the planning application for the new school had been postponed.

In relation to paragraph 9 (Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan – Review of Statement of Community involvement) (Question from Councillor Hoare) Councillor Nimmo Smith gave an assurance to circulate an update on the Statement of Community Involvement.

In relation to paragraph 10 (2014/15 Financial Monitoring & Business Strategy Delivery Report – May 2014) (Questions from Councillors R Smith and Howson) Councillor Stratford undertook to provide the members with a written response on funding for the expansion of Cheney School with developer contributions, taking into account the fact that the school was an academy and was funded for Capital projects by Central Government.

He further undertook to provide Councillor Howson with a written response on the shortfall in funding for infant free school meals, including what steps, if any had been taken to draw it to the attention of the Department, asking if perhaps any other councils had underspent.

59/14 MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR DAVID WILLIAMS

(Agenda Item 16)

With the agreement of Council, Councillor Williams moved and Councillor Coates seconded the following motion as amended by Councillor Tanner in bold italics and strikethrough:

“This Council is concerned that the new system of voter self-registration with its involved system of self-identification documentation and declaration will significantly reduce the number of individuals registered to vote and thereby undermine the democratic process. With Oxfordshire having such a highly mobile population, especially in the City of Oxford, this new complex process is likely to erode the register rapidly and further reduce the already declining participation in County Council and other local elections.

The County Council will monitor the impact of the new system on elections involving county Councillors, consulting with all the Districts authorities and the City on this issue gathering data on forthcoming elections. ~~The County~~ ***This Council requests that the Cabinet*** will also, in conjunction with the other authorities, prepare a report on what measures may be adopted to enhance participation of potential voters noting the influence of self-registration. ~~This report to be considered by the County Cabinet Members at a later date with a view to commenting to the Electoral Commission and the Government of the day.”~~

Following debate, the Motion, as amended was put to the vote and was lost by 37 votes to 18, with 1 abstention.

60/14 MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR LIZ BRIGHOUSE

(Agenda Item 13)

Councillor Brighouse moved and Councillor Christie seconded the following motion:

“This Council is deeply concerned about the effect of the cuts and other fiscal policies on Oxfordshire County Council expenditure which are due to Central Government, disproportionately placing the deficit reduction on Local Government.

As we prepare to consider our budget for 2015/16 it asks the Leader to write to the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition pointing out the enormous damage which has been done, not only to services provided for the whole community and particularly those services provided for the most vulnerable but also to the workforce valiantly struggling to cope with increasing demand and expectation.”

Councillor Fatemian moved and Councillor Bartholomew seconded the following amendment shown in bold italics and strikethrough:

“This Council is deeply concerned about the effect of the cuts and other fiscal policies on Oxfordshire County Council expenditure which are due to Central Government, disproportionately placing the deficit reduction on Local Government.

As we prepare to consider our budget for 2015/16 it asks the Leader to write to the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition pointing out the ~~enormous~~ damage which has been done, ~~not only to services provided for the whole community and particularly those services provided for the most vulnerable but also to the workforce valiantly struggling to cope with increasing demand and expectation.~~

Any communication should also recognise the valiant efforts of the coalition government in taking the difficult but necessary measures to repair the considerable damage done to the nation's finances by the previous Labour Government.

Following debate, the amendment was put to the vote and was lost by 28 votes to 27.

The substantive motion the put to the vote and was carried by 30 votes to 0 with 24 abstentions.

RESOLVED: accordingly.

61/14 MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR JOHN HOWSON

(Agenda Item 14)

Councillor Howson moved and Councillor Patrick seconded the following motion:

“Council welcomes the introduction of free school meals for infant and reception class pupils in state-funded schools across the County from this September. This policy proposed by the Liberal Democrats as partners in the coalition government at Westminster is in support of the government's aim to drive up education standards in schools across England. Council also welcomes the additional funding provided to over 80 small schools across Oxfordshire in addition to the general capital funding for distribution to all maintained schools plus the separate capital funding for voluntary schools and academies.

Council congratulates staff in both schools and the local authority and its partners in achieving the introduction of this policy in under a year.”

Councillor Tilley moved and Councillor Waine seconded the following amendment as shown in bold italics and strikethrough:

“Council welcomes the introduction of free school meals for infant and reception class pupils in state-funded schools across the County from this September. This policy proposed by the Liberal Democrats as partners in the coalition government at Westminster is in support of the government's aim to drive up education standards in schools across England. Council ~~also welcomes~~ ***notes*** the additional funding provided ***has a shortfall of £0.873m that will mean the council will have to reduce its capital programme to***

~~**cover the shortfall.** to over 80 small schools across Oxfordshire in addition to the general capital funding for distribution to all maintained schools plus the separate capital funding for voluntary schools and academies.~~

Whilst recognising this policy has cost so much time and money, thus taking teaching staff away from working on the attainment of our children, Council congratulates staff in both schools and the local authority and its partners in achieving the introduction of this policy in under a year.”

Following debate, the amendment was put to the vote and was carried by 45 votes to 11.

With the consent of Council, Councillor Brighthouse withdrew her amendment set out in Annex 1 to the Schedule of Business.

Councillor Williams moved and Councillor Coates seconded the following amendment as shown in bold italics and strikethrough:

~~“Council welcomes the introduction of free school meals for infant and reception class pupils in state funded schools across the County from this September. This policy proposed by the Liberal Democrats as partners in the coalition government at Westminster is in support of the government’s aim to drive up education standards in schools across England. Council also welcomes the additional funding provided to over 80 small schools across Oxfordshire in addition to the general capital funding for distribution to all maintained schools plus the separate capital funding for voluntary schools and academies.~~ ***and calls on the Government to adopt the Green Party policy that ALL children in primary schools should receive a nutritional free school meal. Given that there is ample evidence that a nutritional, healthy school meal will help avoid obesity and drive up educational achievement this Council believes that provision should be open to all primary school children.***

Council welcomes the additional funding provided to over 80 schools across Oxfordshire in addition to the general capital funding for distribution to all maintained schools plus the separate capital funding for voluntary schools and academies.

The Council congratulates staff in both schools and the local authority and its partners in achieving the introduction of this policy in under within a year.”

Following debate, the amendment was put to the vote and was lost by 52 votes to 2.

The substantive motion, as amended was then put to the vote and was carried by 50 votes to 1, with 3 abstentions.

RESOLVED: (by 50 votes to 1, with 3 abstentions)

“Council welcomes the introduction of free school meals for infant and reception class pupils in state-funded schools across the County from this September. This policy proposed by the Liberal Democrats as partners in the coalition government at Westminster is in support of the government’s aim to drive up education standards in schools across England. Council notes the additional funding provided has a shortfall of £0.873m that will mean the Council will have to reduce its capital programme to cover the shortfall.

Whilst recognising this policy has cost so much time and money, thus taking teaching staff away from working on the attainment of our children, Council congratulates staff in both schools and the local authority and its partners in achieving the introduction of this policy in under a year.”

62/14 MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR GILL SANDERS

(Agenda Item 15)

Councillor Gill Sanders moved and Councillor Tilley seconded the following motion:

“This Council asks the Education Scrutiny Committee to consider asking those schools which currently do not, to provide school breakfast clubs for their pupils. In particular, it is asked to consider the impact this would have on raising attainment, improving absence rates and lateness and to investigate how sponsorship, alongside the Pupil Premium, might fund the breakfasts. This information should then be provided to all schools in the County.”

Councillor Roz Smith moved and Councillor Howson seconded the following Amendment shown in bold italic and strikethrough:

“This Council asks the Education Scrutiny Committee to consider ~~asking those schools which currently do not, to provide school breakfast clubs for their pupils. In particular, it is asked to consider~~ the impact this ***the provision of school breakfast clubs*** would have on raising attainment, improving absence rates, ~~and~~ lateness, and ***also*** to investigate how sponsorship, alongside the Pupil Premium, might fund the breakfasts. This information should then be provided to all schools in the County.”

Following debate, the amendment was put to the vote and was lost by 44 votes to 7.

The substantive motion was then put to the vote and was carried nem con.

RESOLVED: (nem con)

“This Council asks the Education Scrutiny Committee to consider asking those schools which currently do not, to provide school breakfast clubs for their pupils. In particular, it is asked to consider the impact this would have on raising attainment, improving absence rates and lateness and to

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investigate how sponsorship, alongside the Pupil Premium, might fund the breakfasts. This information should then be provided to all schools in the County.”

..... in the Chair

Date of signing