

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting held on Friday, 7 October 2022 commencing at 10.30 am and finishing at 3.30pm

Present:

Councillor Susanna Pressel – in the Chair

Councillors:

Juliette Ash	Stefan Gawrysiak	Eddie Reeves
Brad Baines	Jenny Hannaby	G.A. Reynolds
David Bartholomew	Damian Haywood	Judy Roberts
Tim Bearder	Charlie Hicks	Alison Rooke
Robin Bennett	John Howson	David Rouane
Liz Brighthouse OBE	Bob Johnston	Geoff Saul
Kevin Bulmer	Liz Leffman	Nigel Simpson
Mark Cherry	Nick Leverton	Roz Smith
Andrew Coles	Dr Nathan Ley	Ian Snowdon
Yvonne Constance OBE	Kieron Mallon	Dr Pete Sudbury
Imade Edosomwan	Ian Middleton	Bethia Thomas
Duncan Enright	Freddie van Mierlo	Liam Walker
Ted Fenton	Calum Miller	Richard Webber
Donna Ford	Michael O'Connor	
Andrew Gant	Glynis Phillips	

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.

61/22 MINUTES

(Agenda Item 1)

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 July 2022 were approved as a correct record

62/22 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

(Agenda Item 2)

Apologies were received from Councillors Bloomfield (Vice-Chair), Banfield, Champken-Woods, Corkin, Fadlalla, Fatemian, Fawcett, Field-Johnson, Graham, Gregory, Hanna, Levy, Lygo, Murphy, Paule, Povolotsky, Sibley and Waine

63/22 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST - SEE GUIDANCE NOTE

(Agenda Item 3)

Councillor Middleton declared a non-pecuniary interest in Item 17 – Motion by Councillor Nigel Simpson - as a resident in the locality but remained in the meeting.

64/22 OFFICIAL COMMUNICATIONS

(Agenda Item 4)

The Chair made a statement on the period of mourning for Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and the condolence books provided in the Common Hall at County Hall. She thanked all the staff who had assisted with this work including those who were involved in the presentation of the building during this period.

The Chair also referred to the proclamation of His Majesty King Charles III

The Council then paid tribute to the late Councillor David Markham and observed a minute's silence in his memory.

65/22 APPOINTMENTS

(Agenda Item 5)

Council noted the following appointments:-

Cllr Howson to replace Cllr Povolotsky on Pension Fund Committee

Cllr Mallon to replace Cllr Corkin on Performance Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Cllr Leverton to replace Cllr Ash on People Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Cllr Hannaby to replace Cllr Fawcett on Oxfordshire County Council Joint Consultative Committee for Uniformed Members of the Fire Service

Cllr Constance to replace Cllr Ford on Audit and Governance Committee

Cllr Ford to replace Cllr Corkin on Remuneration Committee

Cllr Levy to replace Cllr van Mierlo on Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Cllr van Mierlo to replace Cllr Levy on Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Shadow Cabinet

Leader – Cllr Reeves

Deputy Leader – Cllr Ford

Children, Education and Young People's
Services – Cllr Simpson

Corporate Services – Cllr Ford

Community Services and Safety – Cllr Bulmer

Highways Management – Cllr Walker

Finance – Cllr Bartholomew

Adult Social Care – Cllr Leverton

Travel and Development Strategy – Cllr
Snowdon

Climate Change Delivery and Environment –
Cllr Fenton

66/22 PETITIONS AND PUBLIC ADDRESS

(Agenda Item 6)

Public Address

Firas Modad addressed the Council regarding the invitation to a drag artist to participate at a children's story time event in the County Library at a cost of £12,000. He questioned the suitability of the individual concerned in view of the material published on his website and interviews given to the broadcast media. He expressed concern about the safeguarding measures in place at such events and suggested that, should the Council wish to use the story-time events to encourage diversity and inclusivity, there should be a more thorough vetting procedure for participants

Kate Robinson presented a petition of some 500 signatures in support of divesting the Local Government Pension Scheme from fossil fuels. She referred to the Council's policies which signposted residents to the Climate Action Oxfordshire website. The website encouraged various actions to mitigate the effects of climate change including moving money to ethical financial institutions. She suggested the investment portfolio of the Local Government Pension Scheme was in contradiction of these policies.

David Brown, a member of Yarnton Parish Council, spoke in support of the motion by Cllr Simpson regarding the Sandy Lane Rail Crossing. He referred to the importance of the road link with Kidlington and that the alternative route would involve longer distances by car with a negative environmental impact. He presented a survey of residents indicating

concern about these proposals and suggested that improved consultation was needed to take account of the concerns about their impact.

Students from Cherwell School addressed the Council about the impact of climate change on the lives and future prosperity of young people. They referred, in particular, to the significant changes to the natural environment in their lifetimes including the extreme temperatures experienced in the UK this year. They encouraged the Council to take more rapid action to encourage the sourcing of locally-produced goods and services and introduce further measures to reduce carbon emissions from vehicle use.

67/22 QUESTIONS WITH NOTICE FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

(Agenda Item 8)

34 Questions with Notice were asked. Details of the questions and answers and supplementary questions and answers will be set out in the Annex to the minutes.

In relation to question 3 (Question from Cllr Eddie Reeves to Cllr Calum Miller) Cllr Miller undertook to provide a written reply detailing the amount of funding from the Housing and Growth Deal and DLUCH for the A34 junction at Lodge Hill

In relation to question 5 (Question from Cllr Donna Ford to Cllr Jenny Hannaby) Cllr Hannaby confirmed that she would provide an update on the proposed relocation of Banbury Library

68/22 REPORT OF THE CABINET

(Agenda Item 9)

Council received the report of the Cabinet

In relation to a question from Cllr Brad Baines, Cllr Glynis Phillips updated members on the actions being taken resulting from the consultations with the Oxford "Street Voice Citizens' Jury.

In relation to a question from Cllr David Bartholomew, Cllr Calum Miller confirmed that there had been no impact to the Council's finances arising from the severance of the S113 agreement with Cherwell District Council

In relation to a question from Cllr Donna Ford, Cllr Calum Miller, said that the Council will continue to scrutinise the costs in Children's services in view of the projected overspend but explained the drivers behind these costs and the need to maintain services to children and families.

In response to a question from Cllr Donna Ford, Cllr Calum Miller explained that national factors had resulted in increased costs of services for children in care

In response to a question from Cllr Eddie Reeves, Cllr Calum Miller explained the reasons for increased agency costs including staff shortages particularly in professional services and care staff.

In response to a question from Cllr David Bartholomew, Cllr Calum Miller confirmed that a report on the Council's capital programme would be considered by Cabinet in due course

In relation to a question from Cllr Ian Snowdon, Cllr Calum Miller undertook to provide a written answer on the implications for the capital programme of the land acquisitions for the Watlington Relief Road and the Milton Heights Bridge

In response to a question from Cllr David Bartholomew, Cllr Liz Leffman said that the Council was reviewing the number of properties within its portfolio and the implications of introducing gender inclusive toilet facilities

In response to questions from Councillors John Howson and Bob Johnston, Cllr Duncan Enright explained the reasons for the response to the proposed rail freight interchange at Ardley

In relation to a question from Cllr Robin Bennett, Cllr Duncan Enright undertook to provide a written response on progress with the Didcot Town Scheme

69/22 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTORAL REVIEW FOR OXFORDSHIRE

(Agenda Item 10)

Council had before it a report regarding the forthcoming electoral review of Oxfordshire. The review would examine the number of councillors elected to the authority and the boundaries of the divisions which they represented. Significant variations had developed between the number of electors in each of the Council's divisions since the previous review in 2012.

RESOLVED (on a motion from the Chair and seconded by Councillor Liz Leffman and agreed nem con) to establish a cross-party group to oversee the work on the review, with the following membership drawn from each political group:-

Lib Dem Green Alliance (4) – Cllrs Bennett, Fawcett, van Mierlo and Rooke

Conservative Independent Alliance (3) – Cllrs Fenton, Mallon and Snowdon

Labour and Cooperative Party Group (2) – Cllrs Baines and Coles

Independent (1) – Cllr Gawrysiak

70/22 AMENDMENTS TO THE COUNCIL'S CONSTITUTION AND ITS PRESENTATION (INCLUDING RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CONSTITUTION WORKING GROUP)

(Agenda Item 11)

Council had before it a report detailing recommendations arising from the Cross Party Constitution Working Group's review of the Council's constitution. The recommendations contained in this report were approved by the Audit and Governance Committee at its meeting on 20 July 2022.

Councillor Roz Smith, Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee presented the report.

Following debate it was –

RESOLVED (on a motion from Councillor Roz Smith and seconded by Councillor Brad Baines and carried nem con) to approve:-

(a) The changes to the presentation of the Constitution on the Council's website referred to in paragraphs 4 to 8 of the report

(b) The video and diagram referred to in paragraphs 9 to 11 of the report for inclusion on the Council's website

(c) The proposals for the incorporation of all of the current Articles into the main body of the Constitution referred to in paragraphs 12 to 14 of the report

(d) The proposals for amendment to the Protocol on Members' Rights and Responsibilities, the Protocol on Member/Officer Relations, the Council Procedure Rules and the Contract Procedure Rules in the Constitution referred to in paragraphs 15 to 23 of the report

(e) The proposed new Part 2 of the Constitution relating to the Fire and Rescue Service referred to in paragraphs 26 to 28 of the report;

(f) A delegation to the Director of Law and Governance to make textual amendments to the Constitution to address any inconsistencies or correct any cross-referencing errors arising from or as a consequence of the amendments, along with updating job and group titles if those referred to in the Constitution are obsolete (insofar as the Director of Law and Governance does not already have such a delegation)

and

(g) note that the Code of Conduct it adopted on 5 April 2022 and the Current Scheme of Allowances referred to in paragraphs 24 to 25 of the report will be incorporated into the Constitution.

71/22 PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE CONSTITUTION OF THE PENSION FUND COMMITTEE

(Agenda Item 12)

Council had before it a report detailing a proposal from the Pension Fund Committee to amend their Constitution in respect of the training requirements of all Members. The proposal was approved by Audit and Governance Committee and recommended to Full Council for adoption.

RESOLVED (on a motion from Councillor Roz Smith and seconded by Councillor Brad Baines and approved nem con) to:

endorse recommendations a) to d) agreed by the Pension Fund Committee, and endorsed by the Audit & Governance Committee, as set out below.

- a) That the contents of the report be noted.
- b) That approval be given to amend the Governance Policy to mandate all Members of the Committee to complete training in line with the Training Policy as set out in paragraph 18 of the report.
- c) That approval be given to only named substitutes of the Committee being allowed where they have completed training in line with the Training Policy.
- d) That Council mandate the Director of Law & Governance to make the appropriate changes to the Terms of Reference and Constitution of the Pension Fund Committee to formalise the new governance arrangements

and endorse the following agreed by the Audit and Governance Committee:

- e) That when the Independent Remuneration Panel is next due to formally meet, a full review be undertaken of Members' responsibilities and commitments relating to their roles and the appropriateness of whether an additional allowance should be provided be considered in relation to specific roles

72/22 MOTION BY COUNCILLOR LIZ BRIGHOUSE

(Agenda Item 13)

Councillor Liz Brighouse moved and Councillor Damian Haywood seconded the following motion

“Councils across England have seen their deficits in Special Educational Needs and Disabilities rise. It currently stands at a record £2.4b. Oxfordshire’s deficit is roughly £20m and rising. Like other authorities, Oxfordshire will face catastrophic financial decisions when in 2023 the Government removes the ability of Local Authorities to keep this debt within a separate reserve budget. Unless removed by government, Oxfordshire will have to find ways to fund the deficit within its budget for 2023/24.

The deficits have built up after many years of rising demand for services and Central Government now needs to address the issue.

This Council asks the Leader to write to the Secretary of State for Education and the Chancellor asking that these debts be written off so that the reforms necessary in the Green Paper and in Oxfordshire’s own SEND Strategy, which will reduce costs, can be delivered without the strain of historic deficits”

Following debate, the motion was put to the vote and carried unanimously (42 votes 0)

73/22 MOTION BY COUNCILLOR ROZ SMITH

(Agenda Item 14)

With the consent of Council, Councillor Roz Smith moved and Councillor Ian Middleton seconded the following motion amended by the suggestion of Councillor Roz Smith below

This Council notes that:

This Government has consistently failed to ~~address~~ **prepare for** the cost-of-living crisis.

Oxfordshire households face spiraling costs with fuel and energy costs, especially affecting front line workers, logistics, farming and food production.

Energy & fuel rises impact on all this council's services and there is concern about budgeted schemes due to inflation, and availability of personnel and resources.

1 in 3 households reported their cost of living had risen, citing affordability of food and medicines as a major concern. Many households face a decision between “heat or eat”

This Council therefore declares a ‘Cost of Living Emergency ’and calls on the Government to:

Subsidize buses and trains, to ensure that people can travel for essential education and work.

~~Urgently review the energy cap to provide much greater protection to consumers, including a cap for off-grid homes.~~ **Invest in decarbonising energy in the UK to prepare for further energy shortages and sustainability.**

Immediately change taxation on fuel to transfer the risk of price changes to the Government pegged at long-term average prices.

Immediately reduce VAT to 17.5%

Restore the £20 Universal Credit supplement, previously cancelled by the Government.

Recognise Oxfordshire will need urgent additional funds to support homelessness, school transport, social care services, waste disposal, and a plethora of other council functions and programme deliveries affected by the increase in prices and inflation.

Council recommends to the Cabinet that this Council holds an urgent Cost-of-Living Summit to work towards a holistic and adaptive response to the emergency in Oxfordshire.

Councillor Eddie Reeves moved and Councillor David Bartholomew seconded the following amendment to the Motion as shown in bold italics and strikethrough below:-

This Council notes that:

~~This Governments~~ **internationally** ~~has consistently failed to address~~ **are grappling with** the cost of living crisis **induced by Russian aggression in Ukraine and exacerbated by the pandemic.**

Oxfordshire households face spiralling costs with fuel and energy costs, **rising Council Tax and other outgoings** especially affecting ~~front-line workers,~~ **hardworking families and businesses in the** logistics, **hospitality**, farming and food production **sectors.**

Energy & fuel rises impact on ~~all~~ this council's services and there is concern about ~~budgeted schemes~~ due to inflation, and ~~the~~ availability of personnel and resources.

~~4 in 3~~ **1/3** households reported **that** their cost of living ~~has~~ risen, citing affordability of food and medicines as a major concern. Many households face a decision between "heat or eat".

This Council ~~therefore~~ declares a 'Cost of Living Emergency' and **will actively consider applying reasonable levels of unspent reserves, including its underspent Budget Priority Reserve, to protecting those most in need from the worst effects of this emergency.**

This Council further calls on the Government to:

~~Subsidise buses and trains, to ensure that~~ **Help the Council to provide affordable public transport so that** people can travel for ~~essential~~ education and work.

~~Urgently r~~**Review** the energy cap to provide much greater protection to consumers, including a cap for **oil-heated and** off-grid homes.

~~Immediately c~~**Change** taxation on fuel to transfer the risk of price changes to the Government ~~pegged at long term average prices.~~

~~Immediately r~~**Reduce** VAT to 17.5% taxes.

Introduce measures to help those on Universal Credit and other benefits. ~~Restore the £20 Universal Credit supplement, previously cancelled by the Government.~~

Recognise Oxfordshire's ~~will~~ need **for urgent** additional funds to support **those services** ~~homelessness, school transport, social care services, waste disposal, and a plethora of other council functions and programme deliveries~~ **worst** affected by ~~the increase in process and~~ inflation.

This Council recommends to the Cabinet that ~~this Council holds an a~~ **cross-party urgent** Cost-of-Living Summit **be held** to work towards a holistic and adaptive response to the emergency ~~in Oxfordshire.~~

Following debate the amendment by Councillor Eddie Reeves was put to the vote and was lost by 30 votes to 12

The substantive motion as amended was carried by 30 votes to 12

RESOLVED (by 30 votes to 12):-

This Council notes that:

This Government has consistently failed to prepare for the cost-of-living crisis.

Oxfordshire households face spiraling costs with fuel and energy costs, especially affecting front line workers, logistics, farming and food production.

Energy & fuel rises impact on all this council's services and there is concern about budgeted schemes due to inflation, and availability of personnel and resources.

1 in 3 households reported their cost of living had risen, citing affordability of food and medicines as a major concern. Many households face a decision between “heat or eat”

This Council therefore declares a ‘Cost of Living Emergency ’and calls on the Government to:

Subsidize buses and trains, to ensure that people can travel for essential education and work.

Urgently invest in decarbonising energy in the UK to prepare for further energy shortages and sustainability.

Immediately change taxation on fuel to transfer the risk of price changes to the Government pegged at long-term average prices.

Immediately reduce VAT to 17.5%

Restore the £20 Universal Credit supplement, previously cancelled by the Government.

Recognise Oxfordshire will need urgent additional funds to support homelessness, school transport, social care services, waste disposal, and a plethora of other council functions and programme deliveries affected by the increase in prices and inflation.

Council recommends to the Cabinet that this Council holds an urgent Cost-of-Living Summit to work towards a holistic and adaptive response to the emergency in Oxfordshire.

74/22 MOTION BY COUNCILLOR EDDIE REEVES

(Agenda Item 15)

Councillor Eddie Reeves and Councillor David Bartholomew seconded the following Motion:-

“This Council notes that the Councillors’ Priority Fund policy is currently set to end on 31 March 2023 at the end of the financial year with the final tranche of members’ funding needing to be committed on or before 31 January 2023.

This Council notes the successes of the Councillors’ Priority Fund in ensuring that elected members can have a direct impact on their communities by facilitating community-action schemes, school safety projects, construction of pedestrian crossings and other meaningful measures.

Notwithstanding budgetary pressures and without prejudice to the Council’s budget consultation exercise, this Council asks that Cabinet gives full

consideration to maintaining the Councillors' Priority Fund at its current level for the forthcoming financial year”

Following debate the motion was put to the vote and was carried unanimously (42 votes to 0)

RESOLVED (unanimously):-

“This Council notes that the Councillors' Priority Fund policy is currently set to end on 31 March 2023 at the end of the financial year with the final tranche of members' funding needing to be committed on or before 31 January 2023.

This Council notes the successes of the Councillors' Priority Fund in ensuring that elected members can have a direct impact on their communities by facilitating community-action schemes, school safety projects, construction of pedestrian crossings and other meaningful measures.

Notwithstanding budgetary pressures and without prejudice to the Council's budget consultation exercise, this Council asks that Cabinet gives full consideration to maintaining the Councillors' Priority Fund at its current level for the forthcoming financial year”

75/22 MOTION BY COUNCILLOR YVONNE CONSTANCE

(Agenda Item 16)

Councillor Yvonne Constance moved and Councillor David Bartholomew seconded the following motion:-

“This Council notes that the Leader has acknowledged the challenging market conditions faced by Oxfordshire's excellent meat and dairy farmers

This Council further notes that local authorities have an important duty to engage positively and proportionately in public discourse.

Given the privileged position in which this Council finds itself and the potentially damaging effects of its motion dated 14 December 2021, this Council resolves to offer locally produced menus at Council-catered events, including meat, dairy, and vegan options, or to make alternative provisions for members, staff, and attendees to facilitate personal choice”

Following debate the motion was put to the vote and was lost by 28 votes to 13

76/22 MOTION BY COUNCILLOR NIGEL SIMPSON

(Agenda Item 17)

With the consent of Council, this motion was withdrawn

77/22 MOTION BY COUNCILLOR IAN MIDDLETON

(Agenda Item 18)

Councillor Ian Middleton moved and Councillor Andrew Gant seconded the following Motion:-

The Home Office announcement of its intention to reopen Campsfield House Immigration Detention Centre in Kidlington ignores local and national feeling on the treatment of refugees. It's also a cruel, ineffective, and costly backwards step for this government, for our country and for the people of Kidlington, Yarnton and Begbroke.

In the years before its closure in 2018, Campsfield House was used to detain nearly 30,000 migrants. During that time there were weekly demonstrations, protests, hunger strikes, two suicides, escapes and scores of legal challenges. It was finally closed following a damning inquiry into conditions.

The UK is ranked 20th in terms of asylum applications processed, and 19th for applications accepted. Two thirds of UK asylum seekers' claims are turned down, the highest refusal rate in Europe, with 41% of those decisions overturned on appeal.

Instead of criminalising people fleeing war, oppression and persecution, who have already suffered at the hands of people traffickers, the government should focus on achieving its own targets to deal with asylum claims promptly and fairly.

This Council therefore condemns the re-opening of Campsfield House and asks the Leader to write to the Home Secretary calling for:

1. The cancellation of the reopening of Campsfield House as a detention centre.
2. The creation of safe havens and more legal routes to apply for asylum in the UK.
3. The prioritisation of prompt and fair processing of asylum claims whilst introducing appropriate safeguards to allow asylum seekers to live and work in our communities in the meantime

Following debate, the motion was put to the vote and was carried by 27 votes to 8.

RESOLVED (27 votes to 8)

The Home Office announcement of its intention to reopen Campsfield House Immigration Detention Centre in Kidlington ignores local and national feeling on the treatment of refugees. It's also a cruel, ineffective, and costly backwards step for this government, for our country and for the people of Kidlington, Yarnton and Begbroke.

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- 3) The prioritisation of prompt and fair processing of asylum claims whilst introducing appropriate safeguards to allow asylum seekers to live and work in our communities in the meantime

78/22 MOTION BY COUNCILLOR JUDY ROBERTS

(Agenda Item 19)

With the consent of Council, this motion was withdrawn

79/22 MOTION BY COUNCILLOR NEIL FAWCETT

(Agenda Item 20)

With the consent of Council, this motion was withdrawn

80/22 MOTION BY COUNCILLOR BRAD BAINES

(Agenda Item 21)

Councillor Brad Baines moved and Councillor Mark Cherry seconded the following motion:-

“Council is concerned that the government’s Adult Social Care charging reforms are potentially hugely underfunded which will put implementation at risk as well as adding to existing pressures.

The UK wide health and social care levy will raise £36 billion over the next three years but only £5.4 billion is ring-fenced for social care reforms in England.

The implication of underfunding these reforms is to put even greater pressure on unpaid carers – including young carers – to increase waiting times for assessments and further delays in the provision of care.

Oxfordshire is one of six ‘trailblazing’ Councils in England who are implementing the reforms earlier than the rest of the country and this Council needs assurances from government that when the outcomes from the ‘trailblazing’ Councils are known that government funds the reforms in line with these costs.

Consequently, this Council calls on the Leader to write to the Secretaries of State for Health and Social Care and Levelling Up and Communities to request assurances of future funding in line with the aforementioned additional cost burden.”

Following debate the motion was put to the vote and carried by 27 votes to 7.

RESOLVED (27 votes to 7):-

Council is concerned that the government’s Adult Social Care charging reforms are potentially hugely underfunded which will put implementation at risk as well as adding to existing pressures.

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Consequently, this Council calls on the Leader to write to the Secretaries of State for Health and Social Care and Levelling Up and Communities to request assurances of future funding in line with the aforementioned additional cost burden.”

The motion was carried by 27 votes to 7

..... in the Chair

Date of signing