

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting held on Tuesday, 20 February 2024 commencing at 10.30 am and finishing at 8.00 pm

Present:

Councillor Felix Bloomfield – in the Chair

Councillors:

Alison Rooke	Donna Ford	Michael O'Connor
Juliette Ash	Andrew Gant	Glynis Phillips
Brad Baines	Stefan Gawrysiak	Sally Povolotsky
Hannah Banfield	Andy Graham	Susanna Pressel
David Bartholomew	Kate Gregory	Eddie Reeves
Tim Bearder	Jane Hanna OBE	G.A. Reynolds
Robin Bennett	Jenny Hannaby	Judy Roberts
Liz Brighthouse OBE	Damian Haywood	David Rouane
Kevin Bulmer	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	Dan Levy	Dr Pete Sudbury
Duncan Enright	Dr Nathan Ley	Bethia Thomas
Mohamed Fadlalla	Mark Lygo	Michael Waine
Arash Fatemian	Kieron Mallon	Liam Walker
Neil Fawcett	Ian Middleton	Richard Webber
Ted Fenton	Freddie van Mierlo	
Nick Field-Johnson	Calum Miller	

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.

1/24 MINUTES

(Agenda Item 1)

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 December 2023 were approved as a correct record.

2/24 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

(Agenda Item 2)

Apologies were received from Councillors Champken-Woods, Constance, Leverton and Murphy.

3/24 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST - SEE GUIDANCE NOTE

(Agenda Item 3)

There were no declarations of interest.

4/24 OFFICIAL COMMUNICATIONS

(Agenda Item 4)

Charlotte Stacey, Information Services Manager, was awarded a British Empire Medal in the New Year Honours for her services to the community.

The full list of Oxfordshire residents who received honours is in Annex 1 of the Schedule of Business.

Chair's events

- Princess Royal Visit 4th January the Oxford Farming Conference.
- Attended Wallingford school assembly to deliver the winner of the Christmas card competition gift.
- 11th February at the Ashmolean Museum opening the One World Family Festival.
- 20th February Charity cake sale in the Common Hall, all money will be going to the ten chosen charities.
- 15th March Chair's drinks fundraiser evening at County Hall

Invitations received:

- 6th February Civic Party invitation from Christ Church.
- 11th February Cherwell District - Chairman's Sunday lunch and auction
- 15th February Oxfordshire Scouts and Guides show 2024.
- 18th February Civic Service for Henley on Thames.
- 18th February Lunar New Year celebrations at Oxford Town Hall.
- 19th February The Romanes Lecture.
- 1st March Lord Mayor of Didcot's Charity Dinner.
- 7th March celebration and launch of the Didcot Powerhouse Fund 2023 impact report.
- 13th March Mamma Mayor – Mayor of Henley's fundraising dinner
- 16th March fundraising quiz from the Chair of SODC.

Alan Brown CBE DL, who was county chief executive from 1973-1988, sadly passed away on the 13 December at the age of 95. He leaves a wife, Marie, and two daughters.

Also in December our former Chief Education Officer Sir Tim Brighouse passed way at the age of 83. Sir Tim served in the role from 1978 to 1989.

5/24 APPOINTMENTS

(Agenda Item 5)

Council approved the following changes to Committees:

Education & Young People Overview & Scrutiny Committee:

Cllr Corkin to replace Cllr Simpson

Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee:

Cllr Simpson to replace Cllr Constance

Council noted a change made by the Leader of the Council to one of the Cabinet positions:

Deputy Leader of the Council, Councillor Pete Sudbury, is now responsible for Climate Change, Environment & Future Generations. The detailed responsibilities for this portfolio are as follows:

- climate change mitigation
- climate adaptation and resilience
- lead flood authority including Oxford flood alleviation
- planetary boundaries and circular economy
- ecology, nature recovery and enhancement
- future generations
- minerals strategy, waste disposal and recycling centres
- Countryside operations and volunteers
- ecology/archaeology/heritage
- water strategy including Thames Water (TW) reservoir
- energy strategy
- tree strategy
- highways verge and vegetation management strategy

6/24 PETITIONS AND PUBLIC ADDRESS

(Agenda Item 6)

The following requests to speak were agreed by the Chair:

Lyndsey Caldwell
Tammy Heavens
Amanda Edwards-Day
Philippa Jackson Gibbons
Edward Hayter
David Henwood
John Center
Bernadette Evans
Richard Parnham
Sharon Jeacock
Claire Brenner

The text of any speeches supplied to the Council are attached to the minutes.

7/24 PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2024/25

(Agenda Item 7)

The Localism Act 2011 ('the Act') requires all councils to agree and publish a Pay Policy Statement every financial year. The statement, attached to the report, had been recommended for approval by the Remuneration Committee at its meeting on 17 January 2024.

The recommendation was moved by Councillor Neil Fawcett, Cabinet Member for Community & Corporate Services, and seconded by Councillor Liz Leffman.

Members of the Remuneration Committee informed Council that there had been agreement at their meeting that, in future reports to Council seeking approval of a salary for a chief officer, it should be stated if a pay rise was likely to be applied in the months following the appointment.

The recommendation was approved unanimously.

RESOLVED to consider and approve the 2024/25 Pay Policy Statement following approval at Remuneration Committee on 17 January 2024.

8/24 BUDGET AND BUSINESS PLANNING 2024/25 - 2026/27

(Agenda Item 8)

Council had before it the Cabinet's proposed budget for 2024/25, medium term financial plan to 2026/27 and capital programme to 2033/34, together with a number of strategies and policies that the Council was required to approve for the 2024/25 financial year.

Amendments had been submitted by the Conservative Independent Alliance and by the Labour & Cooperative Group. The Chair decided to hear the debate on the Cabinet proposals first, followed by the debate on the amendments from the Conservative Independent Alliance and finally the debate on the amendments from the Labour & Cooperative Group. The Chair proposed that the meeting then be adjourned for discussions between the groups to formulate proposals that would achieve majority support.

The Cabinet recommendations were proposed by Councillor Liz Leffman, Leader of the Council, and seconded by Councillor Dan Levy, Cabinet Member for Finance. The recommendations were debated.

The amendments in Addenda 1 were proposed by Councillor Eddie Reeves, Leader of the Opposition, and seconded by Councillor David Bartholomew, Shadow Cabinet Member for Finance. The amendments in Addenda 1 were debated.

The amendments in Addenda 2 were proposed by Councillor Liz Brighouse, Leader of the Labour & Cooperative Group, and seconded by Councillor

Brad Baines, the group's spokesperson on Finance. The amendments in Addenda 2 were debated.

The Chair proposed an adjournment at 5.10pm.

The meeting resumed at 7.10pm.

The following Members had left the meeting: Councillors Fadlalla, Haywood, Reynolds and Simpson.

A new proposal, with amendments published in Addenda 4, was proposed by Councillor Liz Leffman and seconded by Councillor Liz Brighthouse. The new proposal was debated and put to a vote.

Councillors voting for the proposal (37):

Baines, Banfield, Bennett, Brighthouse, Cherry, Coles, Edosomwan, Elphinstone, Enright, Fawcett, Gant, Gawrysiak, Graham, Gregory, Hanna, Hannaby, Hicks, Howson, Johnston, Leffman, Levy, Ley, Lygo, Middleton, van Mierlo, Miller, O'Connor, Phillips, Pressel, Roberts, Rooke, Rouane, Saul, Smith, Sudbury, Thomas, Webber.

Councillors voting against the proposal (0)

Councillors abstaining (18):

Ash, Bartholomew, Bearder, Bloomfield, Bulmer, Corkin, Fatemian, Fenton, Field-Johnson, Ford, Ilott, Mallon, Povolotsky, Reeves, Sibley, Snowdon, Waive, Walker.

RESOLVED to:

- a. **have regard to the statutory report of the Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer set out in Amended Section 3.1 in approving recommendations b to d below;**
- b. **(in respect of the budget and medium term financial strategy – at Section 4) approve the following:**
 - (1) **the council tax and precept calculations for 2024/25 [at Cabinet Section 4.3] and in particular:**
 - (i) **a precept of £498,633,415;**
 - (ii) **a council tax for band D equivalent properties of £1,820.56;**
 - (2) **a budget for 2024/25 [at Amended Cabinet Section 4.4 which incorporates the changes set out in Labour & Co-operative Group Section 4.2];**
 - (3) **a medium term financial strategy for 2024/25 to 2026/27 [at Amended Cabinet Section 4.1 (which incorporates changes to the existing medium term financial strategy as set out in**

Cabinet Section 4.2 and amended by Labour & Co-operative Group Section 4.2)];

- (4) the Financial Strategy for 2024/25 [at Cabinet Section 4.5];**
- (5) the Earmarked Reserves and General Balances Policy Statement 2024/25 [at Amended Cabinet Section 4.6 which incorporates Labour & Co-operative Group Section 4.6]. This includes:**
 - (i) the Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer's recommended level of General Balances for 2024/25 [at Amended Cabinet Section 4.6], and**
 - (ii) the planned level of Earmarked Reserves for 2024/25 to 2026/27 [at Amended Cabinet Section 4.6.1 which incorporates Labour & Co-operative Group Section 4.6].**

c. (in respect of capital – at Section 5) approve:

- (1) the Capital & Investment Strategy for 2024/25 to 2033/34 including the Prudential Indicators and Minimum Revenue Provision Methodology Statement [at Amended Cabinet Section 5.1 which incorporates Labour & Co-operative Group Section 5.3];**
- (2) a Capital Programme for 2023/24 to 2033/34 [at Amended Cabinet Section 5.4 which includes new capital proposals set out in Cabinet's Section 5.3 which incorporates Labour & Co-Operative Group Section 5.3].**

d. (in respect of treasury management – at Section 5) approve:

- (1) the Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy for 2024/25 [at Cabinet Section 5.2] including the Treasury Management Prudential Indicators and the Specified Investment and Non-Specified Investment Instruments.**
- (2) that any further changes required to the 2024/25 Treasury Management Strategy be delegated to the Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Member for Finance.**

..... in the Chair

Date of signing