

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting held on Wednesday, 7 April 2021 commencing at 10.00 am and finishing at 2.45 pm

Present:

Councillor Les Sibley – in the Chair

Councillors:

John Howson	Stefan Gawrysiak	Glynis Phillips
Sobia Afridi	Mark Gray	Susanna Pressel
David Bartholomew	Pete Handley	Eddie Reeves
Dr Suzanne Bartington	Jane Hanna OBE	G.A. Reynolds
Tim Bearder	Jenny Hannaby	Judy Roberts
Maurice Billington	Neville F. Harris	Alison Rooke
Liz Brighouse OBE	Steve Harrod	Dan Sames
Paul Buckley	Damian Haywood	Gill Sanders
Kevin Bulmer	Mrs Judith Heathcoat	John Sanders
Nick Carter	Hilary Hibbert-Biles	Emily Smith
Mark Cherry	Ian Hudspeth	Roz Smith
Dr Simon Clarke	Tony Illott	Lawrie Stratford
Yvonne Constance OBE	Bob Johnston	Dr Pete Sudbury
Ian Corkin	Liz Leffman	Alan Thompson
Arash Fatemian	Lorraine Lindsay-Gale	Emma Turnbull
Neil Fawcett	Mark Lygo	Michael Waine
Ted Fenton	D. McIlveen	Liam Walker
Nicholas Field-Johnson	Kieron Mallon	Richard Webber
Mrs Anda Fitzgerald-O'Connor	Jeannette Matelot	
Mike Fox-Davies	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.

21/21 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

(Agenda Item 1)

Apologies were received from Councillors Hannah Banfield and Laura Price.

22/21 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST - SEE GUIDANCE NOTE

(Agenda Item 2)

Councillor Jenny Hannaby declared a personal interest in relation to Motion 7 by Councillor Reeves as Chairman of the Wantage Hospital League of Friends in the event that there was discussion on hospitals.

Councillor Fatemian sought advice from the Monitoring Officer on whether in relation to Motion 8 by Councillor Pressel he had a non-pecuniary prejudicial interest by reason of his employers being based in the Eastern Arc. The Monitoring Officer advised that Councillor Fatemian was not affected to any greater degree than any other member and in her opinion at this time it did not constitute a prejudicial interest. It was for Councillor Fatemian to decide whether he should abstain or not.

23/21 OFFICIAL COMMUNICATIONS

(Agenda Item 3)

Council noted the statement from the Chairman concerning the business to be conducted.

24/21 MOTION BY COUNCILLOR RICHARD WEBBER

(Agenda Item 6)

With the consent of Council Councillor Webber moved his motion amended at the suggestion of Councillor David Bartholomew as shown below in strikethrough and bold italics:

The Council's Procurement procedures have been the subject of concern for some time. At the latest Audit and Governance Committee meeting, the subject of a claim made over a breach of Procurement procedures by the Council was considered. This breach of procedure has cost the Council, and hence Oxfordshire taxpayers, £1.6 million in compensation and legal costs.

Council notes that the role of the Audit & Governance Committee is to ensure that the Council's procedures are robust, that taxpayer's money is controlled properly and that it is spent wisely.

The timeline provided to the Audit and Governance Committee meeting on this matter shows that the Portfolio Holder and the Chair of Audit and Governance were both aware of the breach and cost of out of court settlement in February 2020, ~~but and as an independent report was in progress, the Audit Working Group Committee was only informed in **December 2020**. January 2021. Council believes that by withholding this information from the Audit and Governance Committee for 11 months, the Executive failed to act in the interest of Oxfordshire taxpayers.~~

Council commits to ensuring that, in future, in the interests of transparency and good governance, any breaches of procedure are made known to members of the Audit and Governance Committee as soon as they are known to the Executive, and that committee members are allowed to see any

reports relating to such breaches of procedure (redacted as necessary), following any reasonable request from members of that committee and assuming there is no legal reason why such documents should be with-held.

The motion as amended was seconded by Councillor Buckley.

Following a debate, the motion as amended was agreed unanimously by 59 votes for, with none against and no abstentions,

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 17.4.1 seven councillors called for a named vote

Councillors voting for the motion (59)

Afridi, Bartholomew, Bartington, Bearder, Billington, Brighthouse, Buckley, Bulmer, Carter, Cherry, Clarke, Constance, Corkin, Fatemian, Fawcett, Fenton, Field-Johnson, Fitzgerald O'Connor, Fox-Davies, Gawrysiak, Gray, Handley, Hanna, Hannaby, Harris, Harrod, Haywood, Heathcoat, Hibbert-Biles, Howson, Hudspeth, Ilott, Johnston, Leffman, Lindsay-Gale, Lygo, Mallon, Matelot, Mathew, McIlveen, Phillips, Pressel, Reeves, Reynolds, Roberts, Rooke, Sames, Gill Sanders, John Sanders, Sibley, Emily Smith, Roz Smith, Stratford, Sudbury, Thompson, Turnbull, Waine, Walker and Webber.

Councillors voting against the motion (0)

Councillors abstaining on the motion (0)

It was accordingly:

RESOLVED: The Council's Procurement procedures have been the subject of concern for some time. At the latest Audit and Governance Committee meeting, the subject of a claim made over a breach of Procurement procedures by the Council was considered. This breach of procedure has cost the Council, and hence Oxfordshire taxpayers, £1.6 million in compensation and legal costs.

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known to the Executive, and that committee members are allowed to see any reports relating to such breaches of procedure (redacted as necessary), following any reasonable request from members of that committee and assuming there is no legal reason why such documents should be with-held.

25/21 MOTION BY COUNCILLOR EDDIE REEVES

(Agenda Item 7)

Councillor Reeves proposed and Councillor Mallon seconded the following motion:

“This Council fully recognises the value of the much-loved Horton General Hospital to the residents of Banbury and its surrounding catchment area, which uniquely covers four counties.

Local efforts to retain acute services at the Horton have been welcomed by Councils at all tiers in recent months and by community groups and residents alike. This Council’s position has always been that the Horton’s future should be as a fully functioning General Hospital complementing the world-class services at both the John Radcliffe Hospital and Churchill Hospital so as to build on Oxfordshire’s enviable reputation – both nationally and internationally – as a centre for excellence in healthcare. That remains unequivocally the case today.

This Council is encouraged that Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (OUHFT) and the Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (OCCG) have listened to the strong representations of residents, Councillors and community groups (notably, Keep the Horton General) in recent years and those of Victoria Prentis MP and this Council welcomes steps taken by both OUHFT and OCCG to develop a masterplan for the Horton without delay.

For its part, this Council resolves to do all it can to support the advancement of this vision and commits to reviewing options with Councils at other tiers with a view to supporting OUHFT and CCG-led redevelopment plans so as to deliver an improved facility on the hospital’s existing site or at a new and improved one within the Banbury area that is accessible to residents across the Horton’s unique four-county catchment area.”

Councillor Cherry proposed and Councillor Phillips seconded the following amendment shown in bold italics and strikethrough:

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~~this~~ **This** Council welcomes steps taken by both OUHFT and OCCG to develop a masterplan for the Horton without delay.

~~For its part, this~~ **This** Council resolves to do all it can to support the advancement of this vision and commits to reviewing options with Councils at other tiers with a view to supporting OUHFT and CCG-led redevelopment plans so as to deliver an improved facility on the hospital's existing site or at a new and improved one within the Banbury area that is accessible to residents across the Horton's unique four-county catchment area."

Following debate, the amendment was lost by 29 votes to 27 with 3 abstentions.

The substantive motion was then put to the vote and carried by 47 votes for with none against and 12 abstentions.

RESOLVED: (47 votes for, none against, 12 abstentions)

This Council fully recognises the value of the much-loved Horton General Hospital to the residents of Banbury and its surrounding catchment area, which uniquely covers four counties.

Local efforts to retain acute services at the Horton have been welcomed by Councils at all tiers in recent months and by community groups and residents alike. This Council's position has always been that the Horton's future should be as a fully functioning General Hospital complementing the world-class services at both the John Radcliffe Hospital and Churchill Hospital so as to build on Oxfordshire's enviable reputation – both nationally and internationally – as a centre for excellence in healthcare. That remains unequivocally the case today.

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26/21 MOTION BY COUNCILLOR SUSANNA PRESSEL

(Agenda Item 8)

Councillor Pressel proposed and Councillor John Sanders seconded the following motion:

"Officers are developing a small scheme for a workplace parking levy (WPL) across one section of East Oxford. If that scheme is approved, the revenue it generates will be spent on just one new bus route to serve only those commuters who would otherwise drive to work in that "eastern arc".

This is a step in the right direction, but we need to be far more ambitious. A larger scheme would do far more to help us achieve our climate action goals; and to reduce congestion and improve air quality; Crucially it would generate far more ring-fenced revenue to spend on better public transport to benefit all our residents as well as just a few commuters.

The WPL in Nottingham has so far raised more than £75 million (at least £10m each year), which the council has spent on public transport, including an electric bus network.

The Transport Act 2000 says that the regulations for WPLs are designed to be flexible. The only restriction on WPLs is that "a scheme may only be made if it facilitates the policies set out in the Local Transport Plan (LTP)". As a Standard Note from the House of Commons Library puts it: the regulations "aim to create maximum flexibility as to how and where the money raised is spent".

Council requests that the Corporate Director Environment & Place considers expanding the WPL scheme and developing a business case for Connecting Oxford that covers a much wider area and not just the "eastern arc".

Following debate, the motion was lost by 30 votes against to (28) 29 votes for.

27/21 MOTION BY COUNCILLOR STEFAN GAWRYSIAK

(Agenda Item 9)

With the consent of Council, Councillor Gawrysiak moved his motion as amended at the suggestion of Councillor Hibbert-Biles as shown below in bold italics:

The County Council will consider environmental weight restrictions across the County, particularly areas which are subject to significant levels of HGV traffic, prioritising the towns of Burford, Chipping Norton and Henley-on-Thames. However, the county council is very unlikely to have any funding available for this in the coming years so any schemes would need to be funded through development and/or by local communities, businesses and town/parish councils.

This policy clearly states that Henley is subject to significantly high levels of HGV traffic. Henley is also an AQMA area which means we have significant pollution.

Council calls upon the Corporate Director for Environment and Place to complete the necessary studies ***for an environmental weight restriction for Henley***, in the event that funding to cover the whole cost is secured through development and/or by local communities, businesses and town/parish councils and would not fall on the OCC.

The motion as amended was seconded by Councillor Webber.

Following debate, the motion as amended was carried by 40 votes for, with 3 against and 15 abstentions.

It was accordingly:

RESOLVED: (40 votes for, 3 votes against and 15 abstentions)

The County Council will consider environmental weight restrictions across the County, particularly areas which are subject to significant levels of HGV traffic, prioritising the towns of Burford, Chipping Norton and Henley-on-Thames. However, the county council is very unlikely to have any funding available for this in the coming years so any schemes would need to be funded through development and/or by local communities, businesses and town/parish councils.

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Council calls upon the Corporate Director for Environment and Place to complete the necessary studies ***for an environmental weight restriction for Henley***, in the event that funding to cover the whole cost is secured through development and/or by local communities, businesses and town/parish councils and would not fall on the OCC.

At 1.15pm there was a short adjournment with the meeting reconvening at 1.25 pm.

28/21 MOTION BY COUNCILLOR DAMIAN HAYWOOD

(Agenda Item 10)

Councillor Haywood proposed and Councillor Lygo seconded the following motion:

“It is a sad reality that up and down the country, roads around schools have become plagued with a surge of traffic concentrated over a 50-minute period at drop off and pick up times. This results in increased risks of collisions with vulnerable road users and other motorists, unlawful parking, traffic jams, road rage. People on foot and cycling are left with the feeling that roads are no place for them. This has implications for everyone especially children.

Statistics from the Department of Transport reveal that 14% of children killed on Great Britain’s roads in 2018 were during the morning school run (7-9am) and 23% after school between 3-5pm. Furthermore, Kings College London found that children are exposed to levels of NO₂ five times higher when travelling to school in the morning than while at school.

For the past 30 years, children have been progressively removed from the roads which have been abandoned to motor vehicles. This created a vicious circle: traffic makes the roads unsafe so parents will drive their children everywhere.

It’s time to create a virtuous circle by supporting families to switch to active travel by making it easier for parents and children to get to school in more environmentally friendly ways by restricting non-essential vehicles from roads surrounding schools at the start and finish of the school day. This Council asks the Corporate Director Environment and Place to develop a rolling programme of school streets across the County.”

Following debate, the motion was carried by 43 votes for, none against and 7 abstentions.

RESOLVED:

It is a sad reality that up and down the country, roads around schools have become plagued with a surge of traffic concentrated over a 50-minute period at drop off and pick up times. This results in increased risks of collisions with vulnerable road users and other motorists, unlawful parking, traffic jams, road rage. People on foot and cycling are left with the feeling that roads are no place for them. This has implications for everyone especially children.

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29/21 MOTION BY COUNCILLOR ARASH FATEMIAN

(Agenda Item 11)

Councillor Fatemian proposed and Councillor Fox-Davies seconded the following motion:

“This Council was profoundly disappointed to hear the view of Liberal Democrat MP Layla Moran who, when asked on BBC Question Time (18 February) about curbs on free speech in our universities, claimed that it “should not be a priority right now” only days after moderate academics had written compellingly about professional attacks suffered by them.

As a county with a number of first-class schools and colleges, excellent public libraries and two leading universities, and with a great many residents employed by this Council and others in the Education profession, this Council:

- i) Publicly deplores the position held by the MP for Oxford West and Abingdon;
- ii) reaffirms in the strongest possible terms that it believes in freedom of speech everywhere, particularly in our schools, colleges, public libraries and universities;
- iii) believes that students – whether at school, college or university – should be taught how to think, not what to think;
- iv) offers reassurance to students, teachers and academics throughout this county that we will continue to work with our schools, public libraries and other educational institutions to ensure that views can be expressed without fear of retribution or persecution;
- v) asks the Leader to write to all local MPs, schools, public libraries and higher and further education establishments in Oxfordshire clearly outlining this Council's stance;
- vi) asks the Leader to write to the MP in question, inviting her to reconsider the insensitive implications of her remarks, which serve only to condone abuse, rather than promote open, liberal and diverse debate.”

Following debate, the motion was lost by 25 votes against to 23 votes for.

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..... in the Chair

Date of signing