

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting held on Tuesday, 18 February 2014 commencing at 10.00 am and finishing at 3.35 pm.

Present:

Councillor Tim Hallchurch MBE – in the Chair

Councillors:

Anne Purse	Patrick Greene	Zoé Patrick
Jamila Azad	Jenny Hannaby	Glynis Phillips
David Bartholomew	Nick Hards	Susanna Pressel
Mike Beal	Neville F. Harris	Laura Price
Maurice Billington	Mrs Judith Heathcoat	G.A. Reynolds
Liz Brighthouse OBE	Hilary Hibbert-Biles	Alison Rooke
Kevin Bulmer	Simon Hoare	Rodney Rose
Nick Carter	John Howson	Gillian Sanders
Louise Chapman	Ian Hudspeth	John Sanders
Mark Cherry	Bob Johnston	Les Sibley
John Christie	Richard Langridge	Roz Smith
Sam Coates	Stewart Lilly	Lawrie Stratford
Yvonne Constance	Lorraine Lindsay-Gale	John Tanner
Arash Fatemian	Sandy Lovatt	Melinda Tilley
Neil Fawcett	Mark Lygo	Michael Waine
Jean Fooks	Kieron Mallon	Richard Webber
Anthony Gearing	Charles Mathew	David Williams
Janet Godden	David Nimmo Smith	David Wilmshurst
Mark Gray	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.

1/14 MINUTES

(Agenda Item 1)

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 10 December 2013 were approved and signed.

Matters Arising

Annex 1 to the Minutes – (Question from Councillor Gill Sanders to Councillor Nimmo Smith) Councillor Nimmo Smith apologised that the question had not been answered and undertook to get a written response to Councillor Sanders.

2/14 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

(Agenda Item 2)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Atkins, Dhesi, Mrs Fulljames, Handley and Val Smith.

3/14 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST - SEE GUIDANCE NOTE

(Agenda Item 3)

Members noted the advice of the Monitoring Officer in relation to the Declaration of Interests.

4/14 OFFICIAL COMMUNICATIONS

(Agenda Item 4)

The Chairman reported as follows:

Flooding - Council passed on sincere thanks to the large number of County Council staff who had worked very long hours – often through the night and, sometimes in extremely inhospitable weather conditions, including staff in highways, social care, fire and rescue, emergency planning, communications and many other services.

With the Commonwealth Games being held in Glasgow this year, local authorities, civic dignitaries, charity and community groups across the country would be marking the occasion with flag raising ceremonies. On Monday 10 March the Chairman would raise a flag at County Hall at 10.00 am.

Pam Johnston, who was a County Councillor for the Hinksey Division 1981 – 1993, died in January 2014 and Tony Stockford who was a County Councillor for the Blackbird Leys Division 1989 – 2001, died in January 2014. Councillors Godden, Brighouse, Purse, Johnston and Mallon paid tribute to the former County Councillors. The Council then observed a Minute's Silence in their memory.

5/14 APPOINTMENTS

(Agenda Item 5)

RESOLVED: to note the following appointments following nominations by the Leader of the Conservative Independent Alliance to:

- (i) replace Councillor Caroline Newton with Councillor Lawrie Stratford on the Education Scrutiny Committee;
- (ii) replace Councillor Caroline Newton with Councillor David Bartholomew on the Audit & Governance Committee.

6/14 PETITIONS AND PUBLIC ADDRESS

(Agenda Item 6)

The following petitions were received by the Chairman of the Council:

Ms Karen Waggott, on behalf of residents of Didcot seeking local councillors and developer Taylor Wimpey to save Didcot West's archaeological sites for future generations. The sites included Iron Age and Bronze Age villages, setting of a 9000 year old Neolithic pot, Mesolithic and Neolithic camps, pond barrow and Roman villa.

The petition was referred to the Director of Environment & Economy.

Mrs Barbara Gatehouse on behalf of the Chinese Centre expressing their extreme concern that many non-English speaking Chinese would suffer if the Oxfordshire Chinese Community & Advice Centre (OCCAC) funding ceased to bilingual advice work. They urged the County Council to rethink its position and award OCCAC their current level of funding for the Chinese Advice Centre, on the basis that should the Chinese bilingual advice service close, no other organisation within the County will be able to meet the complex and differing social and linguistic needs of this very disadvantaged group of people.

The petition was referred to the Director for Social & Community Services.

Ms Sue Tanner on behalf of the Oxfordshire Support fund asking that the County Council abandon its plan to drastically reduce funding to the Support Fund and all of its grants to Advice Centres on the basis that if this funding was cut the most vulnerable people in society would be punished and pushed into destitution.

The petition was referred to the Director for Social & Community Services.

The following public addresses were received by the Council:

Mr Fishbourne, Chair of Trustees at Refugee Resource, urged the Council not to cut to Refugee Resource funding and in particular the post trauma counselling service on the basis that refugees could not seek this support elsewhere and that the Council should give due regard to their legal duty under the Ethnic Minority Equality Act to provide this service.

Ms Lesley Dewhurst, Chief Executive of Oxford Homeless Pathways whilst acknowledging the staggered cuts, expressed great disappointment that there had been no softening of the cuts. She urged the Council to reconsider funding as the long term impact of cuts would mean increased homelessness, drugs abuse, social disorder and purpose built hotels lying empty.

Ms Fran Bennett, Treasurer and Trustee of Agnes Smith Advice Centre, Blackbird Leys urged the Council to reject the cuts to the support funding on the basis that it was the last resort for crisis grants.

Ms Audrey Irons, Operations Manager for Connection, the floating support team spoke against the cuts to the service on the basis that the floating support team helped over 1000 people in Oxfordshire with housing related services.

Ms Gill Tishler, Oxford City Advice Bureau urged the Council not to withdraw funding for Advice Centres which provided timely advice for many disabled residents in Oxford.

7/14 REPORT OF THE REMUNERATION COMMITTEE TO OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL ON THE COUNCIL'S PAY POLICY

(Agenda Item 7)

The Council had before them the report of the Remuneration (CC7) on the Council's Pay Policy Statement, including the introduction of local bargaining on pay and terms and conditions for Green Book and Senior Employees.

RESOLVED: (on a Motion by Councillor Hudspeth, seconded by Councillor Patrick and carried nem con) to:

- (a) receive the report of the Remuneration Committee;
- (b) approve the revised Pay Policy Statement at Annex 2 to this report.

8/14 SERVICE & RESOURCE PLANNING 2014/15 - 2017/18

(Agenda Item 8)

The Council had before them the Report by the Chief Finance Officer (CC8) including the Leader of the Council's overview (Section 1), Budget Strategy and Capital Programme (Section 2) and the Directorate Business Strategies (Section 3). The recommendations set out in the report were made subject to the Chief Finance Officer's statutory report on the robustness of the budget estimates and adequacy of financial reserves as set out in Section 4.

The Council also had before it budget proposals in the form of: Amendments by the Labour Group to the Cabinet's Revenue Budget, Amendments by the Liberal Democrat Group to the Cabinet's Revenue Budget and Amendments by the Green Group to the Cabinet's Revenue Budget (CC8 Labour), (CC8 Liberal Democrat), and (CC8 Green) respectively (additional Papers 1).

Councillor Hudspeth moved and Councillor Fatemian seconded the Cabinet's recommendations on Service & Resource Planning 2014/15 – 2017/18 (CC8). In moving the motion, Councillor Hudspeth paid tribute to Lorna Baxter and her staff for all their work in preparing the budget.

Councillor Brighthouse moved and Councillor Hards seconded an amendment to the Cabinet's budget as set out in the Additional Papers 1 (CC8 Labour). Councillor Brighthouse paid tribute to Lorna Baxter and her team.

Following debate, the amendment was lost by 30 votes to 15, with 12 Abstentions.

Councillor Patrick moved and Councillor Roz Smith seconded an amendment to the Cabinet's budget as set out in Additional Papers 1 (CC8 Liberal Democrat). In moving her amendment, Councillor Patrick paid tribute to Lorna Baxter and the finance team.

During debate, Councillor Hoare moved and Councillor Stratford seconded that 'the Question be now put'. Accordingly, this was put to the vote and was carried by 33 votes to 5.

The amendment was then put to the vote and lost by 43 votes to 11, with 3 Abstentions.

Councillor Williams moved and Councillor Coates seconded an amendment to the Cabinet's budget as set out in the Additional Papers 1 (CC Green). Councillor Williams paid tribute to Lorna Baxter and her team for their help and support.

During debate, Councillor Cherry moved and Councillor Hoare seconded that 'the Question be now put'. Accordingly, this was put to the vote and was carried by 34 votes to 7.

The amendment was then put to the vote and was lost by 53 votes to 2, with 2 Abstentions.

During debate, the Chairman moved and Councillor Purse seconded that 'the Question be now put'. Accordingly, this was put to the vote and was carried by 26 votes to 12.

The substantive motion was then put to the vote and was carried by 30 votes to 27.

RESOLVED: to:

- (a) approve the updated Financial Strategy as set out in section 2.1;
- (b) (in respect of revenue) approve:
 - (1) a medium term plan for 2014/15 to 2017/18 as set out in section 2.2 (which incorporates changes to the existing medium term financial plan as set out in section 2.3);
 - (2) a budget for 2014/15 as set out in section 2.4;
 - (3) the planned level of balances and reserves as set out in section 2.7.2;

(4) the council tax and precept calculations for 2014/15 set out in section 2.5 and in particular:

- (i) a precept of £277,733,607;
- (ii) a council tax for band D equivalent properties of £1,208.41;

(5) the use of Dedicated Schools Grant (provisional allocation) for 2014/15 as set out in section 2.8;

(6) virement arrangements to operate within the approved budget for 2014/15 as set out in section 2.9;

(c) (in respect of treasury management) approve:

(1) the Treasury Management Strategy Statement for 2014/15 as set out in section 2.6;

(2) that any further changes required to the 2014/15 strategy be delegated to the Chief Finance Officer in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Member for Finance;

(3) the continued delegation of authority to withdraw or advance additional funds to/from external fund managers to the Treasury Management Strategy Team;

(4) the Treasury Management Policy Statement as set out at Appendix E of section 2.6;

(d) approve the Prudential Indicators as set out in Appendix A of section 2.6;

(e) approve the Minimum Revenue Provision Methodology Statement as set out in Appendix B of section 2.6;

(f) (in respect of capital) approve:

(1) the updated Asset Management Plan in section 2.10.1;

(2) the Transport Asset Management Plan in section 2.10.2;

(3) a Capital Programme for 2013/14 to 2017/18 as set out in section 2.11;

(g) approve the directorate business strategies as set out in section 3.1 to 3.6.

..... in the Chair

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Date of signing