

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting held on Tuesday, 8 February 2022 commencing at 10.30 am and finishing at Time Not Specified

Present:

Councillor John Howson – in the Chair

Councillors:

Susanna Pressel	Neil Fawcett	Freddie van Mierlo
Brad Baines	Ted Fenton	Calum Miller
Hannah Banfield	Donna Ford	Jane Murphy
David Bartholomew	Andrew Gant	Michael O'Connor
Tim Bearder	Andy Graham	Glynis Phillips
Robin Bennett	Kate Gregory	Sally Povolotsky
Felix Bloomfield	Jane Hanna OBE	Eddie Reeves
Liz Brighouse OBE	Jenny Hannaby	G.A. Reynolds
Kevin Bulmer	Damian Haywood	Judy Roberts
Nigel Champken-Woods	Charlie Hicks	Geoff Saul
Mark Cherry	Tony Ilott	Les Sibley
Andrew Coles	Bob Johnston	Nigel Simpson
Yvonne Constance OBE	Liz Leffman	Roz Smith
Ian Corkin	Dan Levy	Ian Snowdon
Imade Edosomwan	Dr Nathan Ley	Dr Pete Sudbury
Duncan Enright	Mark Lygo	Bethia Thomas
Mohamed Fadlalla	Kieron Mallon	Michael Waine
Arash Fatemian	Ian Middleton	Richard Webber

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.

1/22 MINUTES

(Agenda Item 1)

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 December 2021 were amended as follows:-

1. Cllr Donna Ford added to the list of members present and voting
2. Minute 89/21 – “**RESOLVED:** (on a motion from Councillor Liz Brighouse, seconded by Councillor Duncan Enright and carried nem con)”

3. Minute 91/21- in the third paragraph of the resolution “Working with local firms, the Road Haulage Association and neighbouring authorities, the Council will establish a Regional Network o well-serviced HGV through routes, and bring in measures to assist or encourage”

and approved as a correct record.

2/22 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

(Agenda Item 2)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Ash, Field-Johnson, Gawrysiak, Leverton, Rouane and Walker

The Chair reported dispensations for Councillors Paule and Rooke

3/22 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST - SEE GUIDANCE NOTE

(Agenda Item 3)

The Chair reported that the Corporate Director of Adults and Housing Services and the Director of Law and Governance had declared interests in Items 9 and 10 on the agenda, respectively, and would not attend for those items.

4/22 OFFICIAL COMMUNICATIONS

(Agenda Item 4)

The Chair expressed gratitude, on behalf of the Council, to Deborah Miller for her long service as Committee Officer and wished her well for the future.

The Chair remarked on the 70th anniversary of Her Majesty The Queen’s accession to the throne and the celebrations for the Platinum Jubilee. He referred to her devoted service to this country and the Commonwealth during her long reign.

Council paid tribute and held a minute’s silence in memory of former Councillor Douglas Spencer

5/22 APPOINTMENTS

(Agenda Item 5)

Council noted the following appointments:

Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Councillor Yvonne Constance OBE to replace Councillor Jane Murphy

Pension Fund Committee

Councillor Sally Povolotsky to replace Councillor Richard Webber

Councillor Eddie Reeves to replace Councillor Nicholas Field-Johnson

6/22 PETITIONS AND PUBLIC ADDRESS

(Agenda Item 6)

Council received the following Petition and Public Address:

Petition

Ms Petia Rayner presented a petition of some 500 signatures on behalf of Risinghurst Community Association, calling on Stagecoach and Oxford Bus Company to work with Oxfordshire County Council to reinstate the No 9 to 30 minute bus services in Risinghurst

Public Address

Mr Richard Parnham addressed the council on the increase in car parking charges in certain streets in Jericho. He expressed concern that the proposed increases in charges did not clearly appear in the budget papers before the Council at this meeting and on the negative effects for local residents, businesses and the tourism economy in Oxford.

Mr Graham Jones addressed the council urged the Council to review the proposed increases in car parking charges in Jericho which he considered would be met with considerable customer resistance. The proposals would adversely affect the economic recovery in Oxford. He recognised the Council's desire to improve air quality in the city but consideration should also be given to the impact on local businesses, the effects of reduced bus services and the needs of those who were not able to use buses to access the city because of their disability, and on cyclists and walkers who needed to go to the city in inclement weather.

Ms Emily Scaysbrook addressed the council and said that she wanted to raise concerns about the proposed parking charge increases from both a business and environmental perspective. She suggested that many people would not pay the high charges in Jericho when they could pay much less at the Westgate Centre. The overall traffic around the Westgate Centre would also affect the air quality in an already very busy area. The increase in charges would negatively affect independent businesses in Jericho and shift footfall to national chains in the Westgate Centre. She suggested that more evidence regarding the economic and environmental impact of these increases needed to be considered before the changes were introduced

Ms Bernadette Evans addressed the council and referred to the negative impact on 54 independent businesses in Jericho, many of which have been established for many years. These businesses had no alternative sources of income. She suggested that many residents would be deterred from shopping in Jericho in view of these charges and the lack of public transport infrastructure in the area.

Mr Alex Hollingsworth, an Oxford City Councillor, addressed the Council. He said that he had always supported measures to reduce car use in Oxford. But considered that the changes in Walton Street were not carefully and deliberately designed. He said that the likely impact of the charges would be to reduce revenue and it as not logical to make one small suburb of Oxford the most expensive place to park in the city.

The Director of Law and Governance advised the council that the proposals in the budget papers concerning the proposed increases in parking revenue were lawful.

7/22 OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL AND CHERWELL DISTRICT COUNCIL SECTION 113 AGREEMENT

(Agenda Item 7)

Council had before it a report by the Chief Executive Officer regarding the Section 113 agreement with Cherwell District Council.

Councillor Liz Brighouse OBE, Deputy Leader, presented the report. She referred, in particular, to the benefits of the partnership over a number of years but that it was now recommended that the partnership be discontinued and ongoing joint arrangements be reviewed for a future working relationship and outlined how these arrangements would be progressed.

Councillor Liz Leffman, Leader of the Council, seconded the motion and reserved her right to speak.

A number of members then spoke on the proposals contained in the report,

Some members questioned the need for the partnership to be dissolved and the cost implications and suggested that this was a politically motivated decision which would not be to the benefit of the residents of the County and employees of the Council.

Councillor Miller, Cabinet Member for Finance, responded to these concerns and assured members of the financial arrangements being put in place within these proposals.

Councillor Leffman praised the partnership between Oxfordshire County Council and Cherwell District Council over the last 3.5 years and added that her understanding was that the administration at Cherwell District Council had decided to sever the agreement, leading to a mutual decision to decouple. She expressed disappointment that opposition group members had refused to second or support the proposals at Council and reiterated that there would be ongoing joint working arrangements to the benefit of both authorities. Councillor Corkin challenged the accuracy of the statement from Councillor Leffman that Cherwell District Council had initiated the severance of the S.113 agreement leading to the mutual decision to decouple stating this to have been initiated by the County Council.

RESOLVED, with 37 voting in favour and 18 abstaining, to:

- a. terminate the s.113 partnership with Cherwell District Council;**
- b. Formally notify Cherwell District Council of Oxfordshire County Council's decision to give 6 months' notice of its intention to terminate the s.113 Agreement dated 31 August 2018 regarding joint working between the two authorities;**
- c. Agree the ongoing role of the Joint Shared Services and Personnel Committee (JSSP) in providing suitable oversight and decision-taking concerning the termination of the s.113 Agreement.**
- d. Adopt a revised Terms of Reference for the JSSP at Appendix 1 of this report.**
- e. Disband the Partnership Working Group and note the conclusion of its business.
- f. Instruct the Interim Chief Executive of Oxfordshire County Council subject to Council agreeing Recommendation 1.1 to work alongside Cherwell District Council officers to establish a Joint Officer Transition Working Group
- g. Note the responsibility for agreeing the transition plan rests with Cabinet.**
- h. Adopt the Financial Principles for the termination of the s.113 Agreement as set out in Section 8.3 of this report.**
- i. Agree amendments to the existing dispute resolution process set out in section 4.2 of this report
- j. Request that the Monitoring Officer undertakes a review of the existing Scheme of Delegation to ensure that decision making is both effective and efficient.*
- k. Delegate responsibility to the Monitoring Officer to undertake amendments to the Council's Constitution to reflect the resolutions arising from this report to Council.**
- l. Agree to keep the best interests of its mutual residents at the centre of its decision making, endeavouring to ensure that such actions will not be to their detriment.**

Councillor Leffman then expressed thanks, on behalf of the County Council, to Yvonne Rees who had been joint Chief Executive Officer, for her contribution to her work and dedicated public service, much of which had taken place during the pandemic, which had been to the benefit of all residents of the County.

Council had before it a report of the Remuneration Committee which updated the Council's Pay Policy Statement and an Annex updating members on the Gender Pay Gap.

RESOLVED (on a motion by Councillor Leffman and seconded by Councillor Brighthouse and carried nem con) to:

- a. **Approve the Pay Policy Statement 2022/23 (Annex A).**
- b. **Approve the Gender Pay Gap Report (Annex B)**

9/22 APPOINTMENT OF INTERIM CHIEF EXECUTIVE

(Agenda Item 9)

Council had before it a joint report by the Director of Law and Governance and Director of Human Resources relating to the Remuneration Committee's recommendation on the appointment of an interim Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service

Councillor Liz Leffman, Leader of the Council, Councillor Brighthouse, Deputy Leader, and Councillor Eddie Reeves spoke in favour of the recommendations and wished the Interim Chief Executive well in his new role.

RESOLVED (on a motion from Councillor Leffman and seconded by Councillor Brighthouse and carried nem con) to:

- a) **Agree the recommendation of the Remuneration Committee to appoint Stephen Chandler as interim Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service with effect from 9 February 2022.**
- b) **To delegate authority to the Director of Human Resources to take any further action**
- c) **To delegate authority to the Monitoring Officer to make any consequential changes to the Constitution in light of appointment of the interim Chief Executive.**

Stephen Chandler, Interim Chief Executive, was admitted to the meeting and addressed members. Members congratulated Mr Chandler on his appointment.

10/22 APPOINTMENT OF RETURNING OFFICER

(Agenda Item 10)

RESOLVED to appoint Anita Bradley as the council's Returning Officer with effect from 9 February 2022 in accordance with Section 35 of the Representation of the People Act 1983.

11/22 BUDGET AND BUSINESS PLANNING 2022/23 - 2025/26

(Agenda Item 11)

Before the Council were the report and annexes setting out the Cabinet's proposed revenue budget for 2022/23, medium term financial plan to 2025/26, and capital programme to 2031/32, the Leader of the Council's overview and the schedule of business.

Councillor Leffman moved and Councillor Miller seconded the Cabinet's recommendations.

Following debate, the motion was put to the vote and carried by 35 votes to 18.

Voting was as follows:-

Councillors voting for the motion (35)

Baines, Banfield, Bearder, Bennett, Brighthouse, Cherry, Coles, Edosomwan, Enright, Fadlalla, Fawcett, Gant, Graham, Gregory, Hanna, Hannaby, Hicks, Howson, Johnston, Leffman, Levy, Ley, Lygo, Middleton, van Mierlo, Miller, O'Connor, Phillips, Povolotsky, Pressel, Roberts, Saul, Smith, Sudbury, and Webber

Councillors voting against the motion (18):-

Bartholomew, Bloomfield, Bulmer, Champken-Woods, Constance, Corkin, Fatemian, Fenton, Ford, Ilott, Mallon, Murphy, Reeves, Reynolds, Sibley, Simpson, Snowdon, Waine

Councillors abstaining on the motion (0)

It was accordingly

RESOLVED to:-

- a. adopt the Strategic Plan as set out in Section 2
- b. have regard to the statutory report of the Director of Finance (at Section 3) in approving recommendations c to e below;
- c. (in respect of the budget and medium term financial strategy – at Section 4) approve:
 - (1) the council tax and precept calculations for 2022/23 set out in Section 4.3 and in particular:
 - (i) a precept of £435,816,475;
 - (ii) a council tax for band D equivalent properties of £1,651.61;
 - (2) a budget for 2022/23 as set out in Section 4.4;

- (3) a medium term financial strategy for 2022/23 to 2025/26 as set out in Section 4.1 (which incorporates changes to the existing medium term financial strategy as set out in Section 4.2);
 - (4) the Financial Strategy for 2022/23 at Section 4.5;
 - (5) the Earmarked Reserves and General Balances Policy Statement 2022/23 at Section 4.6 including
 - (i) the Chief Finance Officer's recommended level of General Balances for 2022/23 (Section 4.6), and
 - (ii) the planned level of Earmarked Reserves for 2022/23 to 2025/26 (Section 4.6)
- d. (in respect of capital – at Section 5) approve:
- (1) the Capital & Investment Strategy for 2021/22 to 2031/32 including the Prudential Indicators and Minimum Revenue Provision Methodology Statement as set out in Section 5.1;
 - (2) a Capital Programme for 2021/22 to 2031/32 as set out in Section 5.5 which includes new capital proposals set out in Section 5.6 and the Property Strategy set out in Section 5.4; and
 - (3) the Investment Strategy for Property Investment for 2022/23 set out in Section 5.3.
- e. (in respect of treasury management) approve:
- (1) the Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy for 2022/23 at 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 2022/23 strategy be delegated to the Chief Finance Officer in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Member for Finance;

12/22 APPOINTMENT OF EXTERNAL AUDITORS
(Agenda Item 12)

Council had before it a report relating to the appointment of external auditors for 2023/24 to 2027/28

RESOLVED (on a motion by Councillor Calum Miller and seconded by Councillor Liz Leffman and carried nem con) to accept the Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA) invitation to 'opt in' to the sector led option for the appointment of external auditors for the period 2023/24 – 2027/28.

..... in the Chair

Date of signing