

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting held on Tuesday, 12 January 2010 commencing at 10.00 am and finishing at 4.39 pm

Present:

Councillor Tony Crabbe – in the Chair

Councillors:

Alyas Ahmed	Janet Godden	Anne Purse
M. Altaf-Khan	Patrick Greene	G.A. Reynolds
Alan Armitage	Tim Hallchurch MBE	David Robertson
Lynda Atkins	Pete Handley	Rodney Rose
Marilyn Badcock	Jenny Hannaby	John Sanders
Mike Badcock	Tony Harbour	Larry Sanders
Maurice Billington	David Harvey	Don Seale
Norman Bolster	Steve Hayward	Bill Service
Ann Bonner	Mrs J. Heathcoat	Dave Sexon
Liz Brighouse OBE	Hilary Hibbert-Biles	Chip Sherwood
Iain Brown	Sarah Hutchinson	Roz Smith
Nick Carter	Ray Jelf	Val Smith
Louise Chapman	Peter Jones	Richard Stevens
Jim Couchman	Lorraine Lindsay-Gale	Lawrie Stratford
Roy Darke	A.M. Lovatt	John Tanner
Arash Fatemian	Kieron Mallon	Alan Thompson
Anda Fitzgerald-O'Connor	Charles Mathew	Melinda Tilley
Jean Fooks	Keith R. Mitchell CBE	Nicholas P. Turner
Mrs C. Fulljames	David Nimmo-Smith	Carol Viney
Anthony Gearing	Neil Owen	Michael Waine
Michael Gibbard	Zoé Patrick	David Wilmshurst
John Goddard	Susanna Pressel	

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.

1/10 MINUTES

(Agenda Item 1)

RESOLVED: that the Minutes of the meeting of Council held on 3 November 2009 be approved and signed, subject to the following amendment to Minute 86/09 shown by strikethrough and in italic type:

Member	Item	Nature
Brighouse	Item 14 (Motion from Councillor Hutchinson)	Personal – Father in sheltered accommodation where the warden service has been <i>may be</i> withdrawn

On Minute 85/09 (Apologies for Absence), the Chairman reported that he had seen Councillor Shouler recently; Councillor Shouler looked better and had thanked him for his letter conveying Council's best wishes.

On Minute 94/09 Question 3 (Questions on Notice from Members of the Council), Councillor Fooks said that the meeting of the Transport Decisions Committee due to be held on 7 January 2010 had been cancelled and matters due to be considered at that meeting would now be considered at the meeting on 11 February 2010. This would be 11 weeks from the meeting held in November and she asked when an additional meeting to consider the deferred matters would be convened. Councillor Rose agreed to respond to her in writing.

2/10 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

(Agenda Item 2)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Belson, Hudspeth, Lilly, Malik, Shouler, Dr Skolar, Strangwood and D Turner.

3/10 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

(Agenda Item 3)

The following declarations of interest were made:

Member	Item	Nature
Stevens	Item 14 (Motion from Councillor Richard Stevens)	Personal – member of Downs Syndrome Oxford
Rose	Item 8 (Members' Allowances)	Personal and prejudicial – Board Member (Oxfordshire County Council's representative) on South East Fire and Rescue Control Centre
Hibbert-Biles	Item 10 (Oxfordshire Children and Young People's Plan 2010-13)	Personal - member of West Oxfordshire District Council and represents the district councils on Oxfordshire Children and Young People's Trust and Oxfordshire Children and Young People's Executive Board

4/10 OFFICIAL COMMUNICATIONS

(Agenda Item 4)

The Chairman reported as follows:

- (i) Honorary Alderman Margaret Ferriman, who was a County Councillor for Banbury (Hardwick and Neithrop Divisions), had been made a MBE for services to community relations; she had helped found the Banbury District Racial Equality Council and was its current chairman;
- (ii) Councillor Elizabeth Ann Ducker, Leader of South Oxfordshire District Council, had been made a MBE for services to local government;
- (iii) Mrs Jean Heath had been made a MBE for services to Chadlington Primary School as a volunteer helper.

Council asked the Chairman to send their congratulations.

(iv) Thanks to Staff and Community

“On behalf of all members I wanted to express my appreciation of the efforts displayed by staff of Oxfordshire County Council since the snow arrived last week. Throughout this difficult period, they have gone to remarkable lengths to get in and to help us to keep the county functioning. In many instances, those unable to make the journey are turning to their communities and helping to support neighbours when the snow has prevented them from getting out.

During these periods the media will always tend to focus on those staff keeping our highways clear. We should also be aware of those who work tirelessly behind the scenes, whether in front-line services in the community such as social care or behind the scenes in the support services that keep the front-line working. Many staff have made extremely difficult journeys throughout the week. They all make huge contributions to the continued successful functioning of the council.

I would also like to thank colleagues in district councils and other agencies and the army who have all been working closely together throughout the week. Close work with voluntary agencies such as Age Concern also allowed ensured county resources to be targeted more effectively.

Our schools have also made major efforts to stay in touch with pupils throughout the week and to re-open quickly so that students could attend to take examinations yesterday.

Over this difficult week, stories have emerged of people taking great care to ensure that those more vulnerable are cared for. Such stories range from simple milk or prescription runs to emergency hospital relays and even in one case to enable a wedding to take place. Farmers have also been very helpful with their efforts to clear the snow. They show the true character of our county and those who live here.

I'd ask you to join me in expressing our sincere appreciation of the dedication displayed by our staff, colleagues and local residents."

Council concurred with his sentiments.

5/10 APPOINTMENTS - STANDARDS COMMITTEE

(Agenda Item 5)

The Council was advised that the Standards Committee had considered at its meeting on 10 December 2009 a report on membership of the Committee. The Committee had been advised that Regulation 4 of the Standards Committee (England) Regulations 2008 stated 'an Authority must ensure that ... where it is operating executive arrangements ..., only one Member of its Standards Committee is a Member of the Executive'. There had been recent debate as to whether or not this provision required the appointment of a Cabinet Member or whether this was a matter of discretion for the Council. The Committee had also been advised that the Leader of the Council had added 'governance' to the Deputy Leader's Portfolio of responsibilities.

RESOLVED: (on a motion by the Chairman and seconded by the Vice-Chairman and carried by 52 votes to 7) to increase the Councillor membership of the Standards Committee to 7 Members and to agree the appointment of the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Governance to the Committee (currently Councillor Robertson).

6/10 PETITIONS AND PUBLIC ADDRESS

(Agenda Item 6)

Mr D Pratley presented 4 petitions opposing proposed controlled parking zones, including Magdalen Road. The petitions were referred to the Transport Decisions Committee.

7/10 MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES

(Agenda Item 8)

The Council had before them a report by the Monitoring Officer (CC8).

RESOLVED: (on a motion by Councillor Mitchell and seconded by Councillor Robertson and carried by 53 votes to 8) that:

- (a) An allowance of £2,000 per annum should be payable to the councillor serving as the Oxfordshire Corporate Director on South East Fire and Rescue Control Centre Ltd during 2009/10. This allowance should be backdated to 1 April 2009, but not linked to the existing index. This special responsibility allowance to be reviewed for 2011/12.
- (b) The indexation currently applied to the basic allowance and special responsibility allowances for councillors be lifted to allow the freezing of these allowances for 2010/11. This arrangement to be reviewed for 2011/12.

- (c) A full review of allowances to be undertaken in 2010. The Council to be invited to express its views to the Panel as to what specifically it wishes to be considered in that review.

(Councillor Rose left the room for this item.)

8/10 FINANCIAL PROCEDURAL RULES

(Agenda Item 9)

The Council had before them a report by the Monitoring Officer and Assistant Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer (CC9).

RESOLVED: (on a motion by Councillor Mitchell and seconded by Councillor Robertson and carried by 45 votes to 11) to approve the amendments to the Financial Procedure Rules, as set out in paragraphs 3 – 10 of the report.

9/10 OXFORDSHIRE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S PLAN 2010-13

(Agenda Item 10)

The Council was advised that, at its meeting on 15 December 2009, Cabinet had considered a report, together with the full draft Plan, which outlined the outcome of the formal consultation and the priorities, aims and objectives of the plan. Copy of the Plan was attached as an Annex (CC10).

Cabinet had endorsed the Plan and had recommended its approval by Council, alongside all other partners in advance of the final approval by the Oxfordshire Children and Young People's Trust at its meeting in January.

Councillor Chapman moved and Councillor Waine seconded the adoption of the recommendation. In moving the report, Councillor Chapman thanked Sian Rodway for her work on the Plan.

Councillor Brighouse moved and Councillor V Smith seconded the following amendment shown in italic type:

“Council is RECOMMENDED to:

- (a) approve the Children and Young People's Plan, subject to any final editorial adjustments by the Oxfordshire Children and Young People's Trust Board in consultation with the Director for Children, Young People & Families; *and*
- (b) *include in the Delivery Plan the Setting up of Action Groups in the 9 Deprived Small Areas. Such action groups to include the elected members for the area and to encourage more effective stakeholder engagement, better use of resources and "place shaping" in these the County's most disadvantaged areas.*”

After debate, the amendment was lost by 50 votes to 10.

RESOLVED: (nem con) to approve the Children and Young People's Plan, subject to any final editorial adjustments by the Oxfordshire Children and Young People's Trust Board in consultation with the Director for Children, Young People & Families.

10/10 REPORT OF THE CABINET

(Agenda Item 11)

Council was advised that paragraph 7 of the report was within the Cabinet Portfolio for Growth & Infrastructure and not Transport Implementation.

The Chairman reported that he had agreed, under Rule 18 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules, that the decision by the Leader of the Council to grant a lease to Thame United Football Club in respect of land owned by Oxfordshire County Council should be exempt from Call-In as it was deemed urgent and any delay would seriously prejudice the Council's interests in that the decision of the Thame Town Council the following day - and the financial viability of the scheme itself - was dependent on the decision of the County Council and the matter needed to be determined as soon as possible so that the commencement of the works might start by February 2010 in order to qualify for funding from a number of bodies including the Football Association.

RESOLVED: to note that paragraph 7 of the report was within the Cabinet Portfolio for Growth & Infrastructure and not Transport Implementation and to note the report by the Chairman.

11/10 QUESTIONS WITH NOTICE FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

(Agenda Item 12)

14 questions with notice were asked. Details of the questions and answers and the supplementary questions and answers, where asked and given, are set out in the Annex to the Minutes.

12/10 ORDER OF BUSINESS

RESOLVED: to vary the order of business to enable item 14 and subsequent items, if appropriate, to be considered before item 13 as Council was running ahead of time but did not wish to start consideration of item 13 until after the lunch break.

13/10 MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR RICHARD STEVENS

(Agenda Item 14)

Councillor Stevens moved and Councillor Hutchinson seconded the following motion:

"This Council recognises the vital importance of respite care for children with disabilities and their carers. Council also acknowledges that caring for children with disabilities can entail significant financial investment by the families involved, and notes the concerns raised in the Oxford Mail on 11 December 2009 that Oxfordshire residents fear the loss or reduction of respite care funding. Council recognises that high quality respite care services for children with disabilities are the hallmark of a civilised society and therefore asks the Cabinet to pledge its support for respite care for children with disabilities by:

- (a) ensuring that funding for such services will not be reduced; and
- (b) ensuring that respite care for children with disabilities will not be the subject of "streamlining" or efficiency measures the results of which are not reinvested back directly into such services; and
- (c) providing reassurance to the carers of children with disabilities who rely on such respite care services that current service levels will be maintained or increased."

After debate, the motion was lost by 44 votes to 20.

14/10 MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR ZOÉ PATRICK

(Agenda Item 15)

Councillor Patrick moved and Councillor Purse seconded the following motion:

"This Council notes:

- (a) the national concessionary bus pass scheme was intended to help elderly people and those with disabilities lead a more active life;
- (b) the scheme does not currently help those elderly people and those with disabilities who find it hard to access commercial bus services and who rely on community transport schemes;
- (c) the new national bus passes, unlike many of the old "local schemes" cannot be used to fund trips with community transport providers;
- (d) the e-petition on the 10 Downing Street website for which this motion seeks support: <http://petitions.number10.gov.uk/commtransport/>.

This Council asks the Cabinet:

- (a) to write to the Department of Transport to ask that legislation is changed to allow use of national concessionary bus passes with regulated community transport providers;
- (b) to encourage councillors and members of the public to support the e-petition on the issue of community transport."

After debate, the motion was lost by 50 votes to 9.

15/10 MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR VAL SMITH

(Agenda Item 16)

Councillor V Smith moved and Councillor Brighthouse seconded the following motion:

“This Council values our youth services and takes seriously the representations we have received from many young people and others; we share their opposition to proposals to cut and reduce youth services in the County.

Council asks the Cabinet to consider carefully how it will provide and support sufficient positive activities for young people in Oxfordshire, taking close account of both local needs and its legal obligation to provide sufficient positive activities for young people.

We welcome the increases we have seen from the government both in resources for play facilities and in ring-fenced money to protect vulnerable young people and those at risk of dropping out or getting involved in crime. We appreciate the breadth of the services provided by the County's dedicated youth workers - and thank all for whom this is a calling as well as a job.

We recognise the provision the service makes for many ages, many needs and all social classes - and value the provision in all parts of our County.

We underline our commitment to young people in the County and to protecting our youth services. We oppose any cuts in youth provision and youth workers and call on the Cabinet instead to bring forward proposals to extend the youth service - an investment in everybody's future.”

After debate, the motion was lost by 44 votes to 17.

16/10 THEMED DEBATE - EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

(Agenda Item 13)

The Council had before them a report by Councillor Liz Brighthouse, Leader of the Labour Group (CC13).

Councillor Brighthouse moved and Councillor Stevens seconded the adoption of the recommendation.

During the debate, the following suggestions were made:

Schools and Governing Bodies

- It is important that care is taken to recruit charismatic, talented, and committed head teachers within Oxfordshire who understand the

importance of employing smart new teachers, who, with the support of a strong head teacher, are equipped to make a difference in the lives of their pupils;

- Head teacher time in the classroom is set at a very low 3 hours. Could consideration be given to raising this? A particularly inspirational head teacher could raise an average teacher to one who is equally as inspirational;
- Governing Bodies should support those talented teachers who give children in primary schools their initial thirst for knowledge. Few governors realise the key role they have in raising educational achievement;
- Governors to ensure in particular that looked after children, children on the Action Plus, SEN, CAPs and Safeguarding programmes, persistent absentees, those at risk, excluded children and young carers are sufficiently supported, perhaps by following a sample as they proceed through their schooling;
- At least one suitably inspired adult should be supporting the child, particularly the vulnerable child, as it proceeds through its schooling, particularly its primary schooling;
- Educational attainment could rise if more attention is given to increasing home/school links when a child begins to exhibit problems in the classroom;
- The child with a chaotic background would benefit from 'one to one' learning, perhaps with other students sitting alongside them. This would be a new form of discipline for the child;
- To acknowledge that educational achievement is as important as educational attainment and each should receive equal recognition within Oxfordshire. Some young people will never reach the points of attainment due to a disability or to Special Educational Needs. Data is available on a national basis making it possible to compare the two to show how communities can develop these themes;
- Consideration could be given to the question of whether it is a good use of time and resources to test children once during the last year of their primary schooling and then immediately again when they enter their secondary school;
- Schools should ensure that children leaving primary schools are ready for their secondary schooling;
- The application of discipline in schools in a consistent manner by strong head teachers would assist children to discipline themselves;
- The attainment levels of the most able children could be raised, given the right support;
- Increased numbers of male teachers to be recruited to act as role models for children who do not have a father figure within the household.

Local Authorities

- Every Oxfordshire councillor should take on a school governor role, be an active member of that Governing Body and engage with their school. Oxfordshire governors are well supported by an effective 'Governor Services' unit who give clear guidance and training to all governors and

schools who seek it. Members are in a prime position, indeed all governors are, with the help of Governor Services and advisers, to challenge their school if it is deemed necessary and exercise accountability to their local community;

- Members who are governors could be encouraged to disseminate their knowledge and expertise of the Council and its operation, and of their local communities by not serving too long on one governing body before moving on to another within their area. This might also enable them to challenge more effectively;
- An Annual Meeting of the Governing Body could be held at which parents and governors could be given the 'bigger picture', about how the directorate is structured in terms of support for disadvantaged pupils, together with information on policies and strategies, such as the Anti-Bullying Strategy;
- The Council could take steps to encourage its partners/stakeholders to take a greater part in raising attainment levels and their challenge;
- More publicity and outreach is required to publicise the benefit to the child of the Children's Centres. It is important to work with the authority's partners to alert people to this;
- The Council should challenge Cabinet members and Education Officers on examples of best practice found from other schools and other local authorities; and ask how this information is disseminated;
- To approach the Ministry of Defence with a request that children affected by the movement of troops across an area should not be moved to another school without thought being given to how this could be avoided; given the adverse effects this can have not only on the affected children's school career, but on the viability of the school;
- The role of the Council needs to be about accountability leading to good outcomes for Oxfordshire's most vulnerable children. This could be achieved via the use of national and local data, targeting and by the increased utilisation of self evaluation processes;
- The local authority could make a difference by increased focus on areas of the greatest deprivation, as highlighted in the report of the Director of Public Health. Children living in poverty with a disability could be targeted, for example;
- The levels of educational attainment could be improved by putting resources into breaking the cycle of deprivation in particular areas. For example, 30% of children living in East Oxford achieve grades A – C at GCSE, in West Oxfordshire the level rises dramatically to 70%;
- The Council to continue to support fully the action being taken to address the educational needs of children with emotional and behavioural difficulties, for example the work of the Head Teacher of the Virtual School for Children Looked After;
- Deprivation can also exist where people are 'asset rich and cash poor';
- In recent years this Council has put a significant amount of effort into raising the bar of educational attainment. Bearing in mind that there are a number of measures currently being employed, some of which are already bearing fruit, and one which has achieved national recognition, this authority should consider how it might take the lead in this area, how it could challenge, not only locally but nationally if deemed necessary;

- Children's Centres could assist in laying down the core skills, the foundations prior to entry into infant/primary schooling. The PEERS Project stressed the importance of neural and language development at an early stage, via talk and play. Proactive early years intervention would reduce fire fighting for teachers and bring many other benefits, particularly for deprived children;
- The Council to find a way of safely opening up the school to the positive aspects of what the whole community could offer the child and the family, but at the same time ensuring that the school is focusing only on the child's educational needs;
- Research has shown that children from better supported homes, starting their education at 3 years old, overtake those children who are less supported at age 5/6 years. Therefore, to target only the most deprived children might not be the solution. An earlier start to schooling could also raise attainment levels;
- If a young person is in a place where they feel safe and secure they will learn and achieve. There are groups of children who do not have a sound family support network to draw upon and thus there is a need to intervene earlier, perhaps via some project work;
- More investment in the county's education services is required, particularly during this recession, in order to give hope for the future;
- To avoid the loss of children with high ability from Oxfordshire's state schools, early selection is required in order that they be given challenge and inspiration and to avoid these children becoming 'lost in the system';
- Good accommodation is essential for effective learning, hence the importance of continuing focus on the 'Building Schools for the Future' project;
- Increased facility should be given within the school curriculum for those children who wish to learn a trade or take up an apprenticeship;
- Extra curricular activities such as music via the County Music Service and via school choral societies help to build up confidence. This could lead to more engagement in school activities and increased educational attainment. District and parish councils are able to offer the use of sports clubs and leisure centres and encourage involvement in sponsored events;
- Blame should not be apportioned should a child's educational attainment be not achieved, but instead, focus should be placed on the intention to make a difference
- Whatever action the Council takes within the educational attainment area, it should be aiming to level up and not down.

RESOLVED: (nem con) to note the paper and to suggest ways in which greater involvement by all stakeholders can be encouraged and supported.

17/10 MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR JOHN TANNER

(Agenda Item 17)

Councillor Tanner moved and Councillor J Sanders seconded the following motion:

“This Council believes that the County Council's parking policies are unfair to the residents of Oxford.

The Council is concerned that we made an excessive profit of £559,000 from Pay & Display and Residents Parking in Oxford last year.

The Council calls on the Cabinet:

- (a) to scrap parking charges for Oxford residents who wish to park in their own street;
- (b) to fund residents' parking schemes from Pay & Display or Park & Ride charges;
- (c) not to encourage drivers to park on pavements;
- (d) to act against drivers who park their cars illegally on double yellow lines;
- (e) to request the police to act against drivers who obstruct the pavement or park dangerously at street corners.”

After debate, the motion was lost by 44 votes to 9.

18/10 MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR RICHARD STEVENS

(Agenda Item 18)

Councillor Stevens moved and Councillor Tanner seconded the following motion:

"This Council notes ULT's withdrawal from the proposals to make Oxford School an academy and calls on Cabinet to find a way forward for the school which commands confidence amongst parents, pupils and the wider community. Noting that continued uncertainty about the school's status has the potential to disrupt continued good progress at Oxford School, Council further asks the Cabinet to consult widely and urgently on options that meet the need of present and future students of Oxford School, including a Co-operative Trust solution."

After debate, the motion was lost by 36 votes to 19.

..... in the Chair

Date of signing 2010