

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting held on Tuesday, 17 February 2015 commencing at 10.00 am and finishing at 4.35 pm.

Present:

Councillor Anne Purse – in the Chair

Councillors:

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

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.

90/14 MINUTES

(Agenda Item 1)

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 9 December 2014 were approved and signed.

91/14 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

(Agenda Item 2)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Louise Chapman and Zoe Patrick.

92/14 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

(Agenda Item 3)

Members noted the advice of the Monitoring Officer in relation to the Declarations of Interest.

93/14 OFFICIAL COMMUNICATIONS

(Agenda Item 4)

The Chairman reported as follows:

Flowers had been sent to Councillor Zoe Patrick on behalf of the Council and the Chairman would write to Councillor Patrick to convey Council's best wishes.

Council Congratulated David Etheridge, Chief Fire Officer Oxfordshire County Council who had been awarded an OBE for services to the community in Oxfordshire and Katherine Powley, County Network Coordinator and Streetworks Manager Oxfordshire County Council who had been awarded an MBE for services to the community in Oxfordshire.

94/14 PETITIONS AND PUBLIC ADDRESS

(Agenda Item 6)

The Council received a Petition from Mr Rodda calling on Oxfordshire County Council, South Oxfordshire District Council and the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership to recognise the benefits to their communities of a Third Bridge, and to work with Reading and Wokingham Councils and the Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership on drawing up agreed plans and a timetable which would then be the basis of bids for any available Government funds."

95/14 PAY POLICY STATEMENT - REMUNERATION COMMITTEE REPORT TO COUNCIL ON 17 FEBRUARY 2015

(Agenda Item 7)

The Council had before them the report of the Remuneration Committee (CC7) which updated the Council's Pay Policy Statement and set out future proposals of the Remuneration Committee in relation to this area.

RESOLVED: (on a Motion by Councillor Hudspeth, seconded by Councillor Fawcett 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.

96/14 SERVICE & RESOURCE PLANNING 2015/16 - 2018/19

(Agenda Item 8)

The Council had before it the report by the Chief Finance Officer (CC8) which set out the Leader of the Council's overview (Section 1), Corporate Plan (Section 2), Budget Strategy and Capital Programme (Section 3) and the Directorate Business Strategies and Performance Indicators (Section 4). 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 (Section 5).

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

Councillor Hudspeth moved and Councillor Stratford seconded the Cabinet's recommendations on Service & Resource Planning 2015/16 – 2017/18. 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 thanked Lorna Baxter and her team and the Directors and Deputy Directors for their help and support.

Following debate, the amendment was put to the vote and was lost by 44 votes to 17.

Councillor Williams moved and Councillor Coates seconded an amendment to the Cabinet's budget as set out in the Additional Papers 1 (CC8 Green). Councillor Williams paid tribute to Lorna Baxter and her team for their help and support.

The amendment was then put to the vote and was lost by 59 votes to 2.

Following a lengthy debate, the substantive motion was put to the vote and was carried by 33 votes to 28.

In accordance with the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014, Regulation 2 (that the votes at key budget decision meetings by local authorities are recorded), a copy of the named votes are attached to the Minutes at Annex 1.

97/14 CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND HEAD OF PAID SERVICE

(Agenda Item 9)

The County Council faced very serious funding challenges, with all political parties signalling that they expected to have to make significant spending

cuts after the general election. Over recent years local government had delivered enormous savings but it was anticipated that it would be expected to bear much of the brunt of these further cuts, as health and education and others were protected.

The view of the Leader of the Council was that a new operating model was needed to address these issues, in order to enable the Council to continue to deliver the outcomes residents deserved and ensure value for money for tax payers.

The Leader therefore proposed that the traditional model of a Chief Executive and separate Directorates needed to be modernised to reduce costs and embrace a more distributed model of managerial leadership with closer working between officers and councillors, and building on our existing partnerships.

It was considered that removing the paid post of Chief Executive and redistributing its responsibilities, including the statutory role of Head of Paid Service would achieve both savings and a more streamlined, distributed management structure more fitted to the challenges facing the Council in the future.

This Council considered a report (CC9) which sought Full Council's approval for the removal of the post of Chief Executive and the consequent dismissal by redundancy of the current post holder, and Head of Paid Service.

Councillor Hudspeth moved and Councillor Rose seconded the recommendations as set out in the report and on the face of the Agenda.

Councillor Brighthouse moved and Councillor Fawcett seconded the following amendment:

- (a) ~~*note that no objections from Cabinet Members have been received, and so agree the removal of the post of Chief Executive from the Council's organisational structure;*~~
- (b) ~~*agree the dismissal by redundancy of the current Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service, Joanna Simons, on the terms outlined in this report; and, in consequence,*~~
- (c) ~~*ask the Remuneration Committee to submit recommendations to Council as to the appointment of a Head of Paid Service;*~~
- (d) ~~*agree to receive a further report, following decisions by Cabinet under paragraph 16 above, detailing other consequential appointments, delegations and organisational matters, for Council consideration;*~~
- (e) ~~*authorise the County Solicitor to make any consequential amendments to the Constitution as a result of these decisions;*~~
- (f) ~~*thank Joanna Simons for her dedicated service to the Council as Chief Executive over the last ten years.*~~

.....

- (a) defer the decision to remove the post of Chief Executive from the Council's organisational structure;**
- (b) ask the Audit & Governance Committee to examine the issues raised by the Leader in this report, including those related to Governance, Finance and Management and risk assess any change from the traditional model which has served Oxfordshire well since 1974. The resulting report to be considered by the Cabinet;**
- (c) agree to receive a report from the Cabinet on all of the consequential matters before taking this important, far-reaching and potentially expensive decision.**

Following debate, the amendment was put to the vote and was lost by 34 votes to 27.

The substantive motion was then put to the vote and was carried by 33 votes to 27, with 1 abstention.

..... in the Chair

Date of signing