

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting held on Tuesday, 14 September 2010 commencing at 10.00 am and finishing at Time Not Specified

Present:

Councillor Hilary Hibbert-Biles – in the Chair

Councillors:

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

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.

77/10 MINUTES

(Agenda Item 2)

RESOLVED: that the Minutes of the meetings of Council held on 15 June 2010 and 27 July 2010 be approved and signed.

78/10 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

(Agenda Item 3)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors, Belson, Carter, Fitzgerald-O'Connor, Goddard, Handley, Harbour, Harvey, Malik and Reynolds.

79/10 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST - SEE GUIDANCE NOTE

(Agenda Item 4)

The following declarations of interest were made:

Member	Item	Nature
Armitage	Item 19	Personal - member of the Planning & Regulation Committee
Hannaby	Item 19	Personal - member of the Planning & Regulation Committee
Catherine Mrs Fulljames	Item 8a	Personal – Question to Cabinet Member on waste management contract

80/10 OFFICIAL COMMUNICATIONS

(Agenda Item 5)

The Chairman reported as follows:

- (i) Council congratulated those that had been involved in the Open Doors event at County Hall that had raised £850 for charity and in particular thanked those who had provided cakes and Tim Stimpson, who had been largely responsible for the success of the event.
- (ii) Council congratulated Shipton-under-Wychwood Cricket Club (winners in 2002 and 2003) who had reached the final of the Village Knockout at Lord's on 12 September;
- (iii) Council congratulated the local MP and Prime Minister Rt Hon David Cameron MP and Mrs Samantha Cameron on the birth of a daughter – Florence Rose Endellion on 24 August;
- (iv) The father of the local MP and Prime Minister Rt Hon David Cameron MP had died suddenly on holiday on 8 September. Council agreed that condolences be sent.
- (v) Former Lord Lieutenant Sir Ashley Ponsonby had died on 15 June; and tributes were paid to him attesting to his sense of duty, impeccable good manners, kindness and sense of fun. Council agreed that the Chairman would send, on behalf of the Council, their thoughts and sympathy to his family.
- (vi) Former County Councillor Thomas Ian (Tom) Richardson had died on 8 September and tributes were paid to him recording his efforts on behalf of the Council and individuals and his willingness to

listen to others and to bring that knowledge to bear for the benefit of the Council and residents of Oxfordshire. Council agreed that the Chairman would send, on behalf of the Council, their thoughts and sympathy to his family.

81/10 PETITIONS AND PUBLIC ADDRESS

(Agenda Item 7)

Petitions

Mr Ben Johnson, Bicester & District Chamber of Commerce presented a petition on behalf of local traders and residents on a request to re-evaluate Bicester Market Square modernisation.

Councillor Skolar presented a petition on behalf of local residents regarding parking in Lower Shiplake.

Addresses

Dr. Ian F Groves, Ardley Against the Incinerator addressed Council speaking against the decision taken by Cabinet on 27 July 2010 to award the contract for the treatment of Oxfordshire's residual municipal waste to Viridor Waste Management Ltd.

Mrs Hazel Watt addressed Council on behalf of Bucknell Parish Council opposing the decision taken by Cabinet on 27 July 2010 to award the contract for the treatment of Oxfordshire's residual municipal waste to Viridor Waste Management Ltd.

Christine Brough, Carer addressed Council, speaking about the implications to carer's and their dependents of the decision taken by Cabinet on 20 July 2010 on revised carers commissioning intentions with in Oxfordshire.

82/10 REPORTS OF THE CABINET

(Agenda Item 8)

(a) Meetings of the Cabinet

The Council had before them the report of the Cabinet Meetings on 22 June, 20 & 27 July and 10 August 2010 (CC8(a)).

In relation to the Homes & Communities Agency Single Conversation: Local Investment Agreement referred to at paragraph 6 (Question from Councillor Purse) Councillor Hudspeth undertook to continue to report regularly to the Growth & Infrastructure Scrutiny Committee

In relation to queries on the Local Transport Plan 3 referred to at paragraph 7 (Questions from Councillors D Turner and Pressel) Councillor Hudspeth undertook to take matters up outside the meeting if details were passed to him.

In relation to paragraph 8 on developer contributions to service infrastructure and responding to a request from Councillor Anne Purse for information on the extent to which the scrutiny advice on this matter had been included in Council plans Councillor Hudspeth undertook to write separately.

In relation to paragraph 11 on an additional supplementary question from Councillor Larry Sanders concerning Oxford School, the Chairman requested that Councillor Larry Sanders write separately to Councillor Waine on this issue.

In relation to paragraph 12 on the Cogges Link Road Compulsory purchase and Side Roads Order (Question from Councillor Tanner) Councillor Rose undertook to supply a written answer to the supplementary question.

In relation to paragraph 14 on revised carers commissioning intentions with Oxfordshire (Question from Councillor Hannaby) Councillor Fatemian undertook to consider any written proposals put forward in relation to the future of carers' centres.

RESOLVED: to note the report.

(b) Partnership Working in Oxfordshire

The Council had before them a report on Partnership Working in Oxfordshire CC8(b).

In response to a question from Councillor Alan Armitage, Councillor Hudspeth undertook to include an item on supermarket waste reduction on a future agenda of the Oxfordshire Waste Partnership. In response to comments from Councillor D Turner he further indicated that he would welcome a presentation to Councillors from representatives of North Leigh Parish Council on their efforts in relation to the environment.

RESOLVED: to note the report.

83/10 TREASURY MANAGEMENT OUTTURN REPORT 2009/10

(Agenda Item 9)

The Council had before them the Treasury Management Outturn Report 2009/10 (CC9), together with an addenda set out as Annex 1 to the schedule of business.

Councillor Couchman moved and Councillor Mitchell seconded the recommendations set out in the report and addenda included as annex 1 to the schedule of business.

The Chairman responding to a point of order sought agreement from the meeting to consider the addenda. It was agreed 49 votes to 7 to accept the addenda for consideration.

The Chairman sought the view of the meeting on a proposal from Councillor Brighthouse seeking an amendment to the recommendations shown in bold italics, as set out in paragraph 5 of the addenda:

“to:

- (a) note the Treasury Management Activity in 2009/10;
- (b) agree the changes to the Specified and Non-Specified Investment instruments section of the Treasury Management Strategy; and
- (c) agree that any further changes required to the Annual Treasury Management Strategy & Annual Investment Strategy can be delegated to the Chief Finance Officer in consultation with the ~~*Leader of the Council and*~~ Cabinet Member for Finance & Property and *leaders of the Opposition and other groups.*”

Following a vote by a show of hands the amendment was lost (30 votes to 27).

Seven members by standing in their places required a named vote in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 15(a). Voting was as follows:

Councillors voting for the motion (45)

Councillors Ahmed, Marilyn Badcock, Mike Badcock, Billington, Bolster, Bonner, Brown, Chapman, Couchman, Crabbe, Fatemian, Mrs Fulljames, Gearing, Gibbard, Greene, Hallchurch, Hayward, Heathcoat, Hibbert-Biles, Hudspeth, Jelf, Jones, Lilly, Lindsay-Gale, Lovatt, Mallon, Mathew, Mitchell, Nimmo-Smith, Owen, Robertson, Rose, Seale, Service, Sexon, Shouler, Skolar, Strangwood, Stratford, Thompson, Tilley, Nicholas Turner, Viney, Waine and Wilmshurst

Councillors voting against the motion (10)

Councillors Atkins, Brighthouse, Darke, Hutchinson, Pressel, Purse, John Sanders, Val Smith, Stevens and Tanner

Councillors abstaining (9)

Councillors Altaf-Khan, Armitage, Godden, Hannaby, Patrick, Larry Sanders, Sherwood, Roz Smith and David Turner.

It was accordingly:

RESOLVED: to:

- (a) note the Treasury Management Activity in 2009/10;
- (b) agree the changes to the Specified and Non-Specified Investment instruments section of the Treasury Management Strategy; and
- (c) agree that any further changes required to the Annual Treasury

Management Strategy & Annual Investment Strategy can be delegated to the Chief Finance Officer in consultation with the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance & Property.

84/10 DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH ANNUAL REPORT

(Agenda Item 10)

The Council had before them the Annual Report by the Director of Public Health for Oxfordshire (CC10).

RESOLVED: (on a motion by Councillor Fatemian and seconded by Councillor Skolar) to approve and adopt the recommendations contained in the report.

85/10 POLICY FOR THE OPERATION OF PERSONAL BUDGETS FOR ADULT SOCIAL CARE

(Agenda Item 12)

Council considered a report (CC11) on the policy for the operation of personal budgets for adult social care.

Councillor Fatemian moved and Councillor Robertson seconded the recommendation contained in the report as amended by Councillor Hannaby in bold italics below:

“to approve the introduction of the Policy for the operation of personal budgets in Oxfordshire from October 2010 ***subject to monitoring that proper care is being delivered to vulnerable Oxfordshire residents.***”

RESOLVED: (nem con) to approve the introduction of the Policy for the operation of personal budgets in Oxfordshire from October 2010 subject to monitoring that proper care is being delivered to vulnerable Oxfordshire residents.

(In the absence of the Chairman, the Vice Chairman, Councillor Patrick Greene in the Chair)

86/10 QUESTIONS WITH NOTICE FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

(Agenda Item 12)

19 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.

87/10 THEMED DEBATE - WHAT SORT OF COUNCIL DO WE WANT?

(Agenda Item 14)

The Council had before it a report by the Leader of the Council CC13

Councillor Mitchell introduced the report highlighting the wider economic and political situation and the position relating to Oxfordshire. He stressed that it would be important to decide on priorities and posed a series of questions that the Council would need to consider such as the inclusion in those priorities of localities and vulnerable users and issues and opportunities around co-location.

He noted that capital was inextricably linked to revenue as there was no point in a building that was unstaffed.

During debate the following points were made:

1. Councillor Patrick commented that she felt that the title of the debate was misleading as she doubted that the discussion would lead to change. The Liberal Democrat Group would want to know that the Council supported the most vulnerable people. She accepted the need to prioritise and suggested the involvement of the private and voluntary sectors that could help to identify those in need. There was a need to address inequalities where possible and she would be pleased if Scrutiny could be involved in budget discussions.
2. There was support for co-location such as sharing school buildings. It was suggested that schools ICT suites be opened to the public at weekends.
3. There was a suggestion that opportunities should be taken to maximise income by careful sale of property assets. Councillor Couchman, Cabinet member for Finance & property supported this view and indicated that it was the intention to move ahead where practicable.
4. Councillor Tanner found the figures on debt misleading commenting that the countries level of debt as a percentage of GDP was amongst the lowest. He shared concerns over interest but noted that borrowing could sometimes be for the good. He believed that severe cuts would be damaging to the public sector. Councillor Stevens added that he believed that the deficit was doing some good for the people of Oxfordshire in terms of the economic situation. A member argued against the premise on which the measures were based. He believed that it was a financial gamble that would not be successful. Local circumstances should be taken in to account and Oxfordshire was vulnerable to a downturn due to the large public sector and high number of small businesses.
5. The current situation provided an opportunity to give responsibility back to communities encouraging pride and dignity through local choice.
6. There was some support for ensuring that in making the Council leaner and more efficient it also continued to become cleaner and greener.
7. The Council would need to go through a culture change where a budget was not spent simply because it was there. There needed to be a genuine challenge of existing thinking. Council publications were suggested as an area that could be reviewed.

8. There was a suggestion that spending on communications and media was an area in the current circumstances that could be reduced.
9. Whilst accepting the need to balance books some members were not convinced that the scale of reductions was necessary. It was right to prepare for future spending announcements from central Government but to wait on the actual figures before making decisions. It was pointed out that in the first of the Big Debates the public had not agreed with the premise of the level of cuts at the speed they were to be made.
10. It was noted that schools were becoming self managed and were largely in charge of their own destiny. The support the County Council could provide was limited and Governors would have a key role to play.
11. It was suggested that the current position was a time for neutral analysis rather than party politics and that now was a time to make use of everyone's talents.
12. A member suggested that the Fire Service should not be exempt from review.
13. The Council was faced with a huge financial challenge now and in the long term. There would be a need to be innovative and to engage with the voluntary and community sector. Excellent communication would avoid duplication and reference was made to the use of Mosaic by the Fire Service and Police.
14. The differing needs of rural and urban communities and the need for different solutions were highlighted. A member referred to the important work carried out by Town & Parish Councils.
15. A member referred to the importance of working with the City Council and other district Councils. The opportunities for shared facilities should be explored.
16. It was suggested that it would be useful to look back to previous budget debates that had suggested a variety of options including increased income through parking charges and opportunities around Park & Ride.
17. Reference was made to the success of the Shared Services project and it was suggested that this could be offered more widely. It could also provide a model for other services such as legal, human resources generally and treasury management.
18. The success of the Music Service was highlighted and there was a call to resist cutting it.
19. There was a call to protect services for children and to keep libraries where possible.
20. It was important to engage with young people when looking at priorities.
21. The importance of securing developer contributions was emphasised.
22. Members referred to individual schemes and projects that they would not wish to see cut. These included work to Rose Hill School and traffic control measures.

Councillor Mitchell responded to the points made. He stressed the importance of local member input and believed that there was a new

additional role of social entrepreneur. He stressed that it was important to work with UNISON in taking through the necessary changes.

RESOLVED: that the above summary of comments and issues raised be referred to members of the County Council as soon as possible before the next cycle of Scrutiny meetings.

88/10 MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR RICHARD STEVENS

(Agenda Item 15)

Councillor Stevens moved and Councillor Hutchinson seconded the following motion:

“This Council notes with concern the Cabinet's approval of the revised commissioning intentions for carers in Oxfordshire, as detailed in the report to Cabinet by the Director for Social & Community Services on 20 July. This Council further notes that the proposed changes may lead to the closure of the three independent charitable carers' centres in Oxfordshire (in Oxford, Banbury and Didcot), which provide welcome services (including outreach services) and which currently receive a significant proportion of their funding from Oxfordshire County Council.

Council calls on Cabinet to:

1. reconsider the proposed commissioning intentions, and in particular the proposal to replace some of the specialist services provided by the three carers' centres with a call centre function provided by the Council's "Customer Service Centre";
2. ask the Director for Social & Community Services to:
 - (i) explain why the report made to Cabinet on 20 July emphasised "reaching" or "identifying" carers rather than the quality of service provided to those carers most in need of support; and
 - (ii) provide evidence (including comparative evidence from other local authorities) on whether the carer contact targets mentioned in the report can really be achieved;
 - (iii) provide a detailed explanation of how the £243,600 projected to be saved from withdrawing funding from the carers' centres would, if the recommendations proceed, be reinvested in carers' services.”

Following debate, the motion was lost by 37 votes to 18, there being 2 abstentions.

89/10 MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR ALTAF-KHAN

(Agenda Item 16)

Councillor Altaf-Khan moved and Councillor Fooks seconded the following motion:

“This Council notes that:-

1. in 2008/9 in Oxfordshire only 20% of children eligible for free school meals achieved 5+ A*-C GCSEs including English and Mathematics, compared to 55% of children not eligible;
2. children eligible for free school meals in Oxfordshire do less well than in most similar authorities; in the best performing authority among our statistical neighbours, Bath & North East Somerset, 33% of children eligible for free school meals achieved 5 A*-C GCSEs including English and Mathematics;
3. the Pupil Premium would target disadvantaged pupils – those entitled to free school meals – more effectively than the present system. Nearly half of pupils receiving Free School Meals do not attend a deprived school or live in a deprived area. Area based targeting therefore misses a large proportion of disadvantaged pupils – including in many rural areas;
4. it is generally accepted that children achieve better in smaller classes as a lack of communication skills is a significant factor hampering the progress of some children at school.

The Council therefore requests the Cabinet Member for Schools Improvement to respond favourably to the current consultation on the pupil premium, asking the Government to ensure that schools with large numbers of children receiving free school meals receive a significant premium to support their pupils' learning needs in the form of extra funding from outside the schools' budget. This would then enable schools to employ more teachers in order to reduce class sizes, provide catch-up classes and where necessary provide other professional support.”

Councillor Brighouse moved and Councillor Smith seconded the following amendment shown in bold italics and strikethrough:

“This Council notes that:-

1. in 2008/9 in Oxfordshire only 20% of children eligible for free school meals achieved 5+ A*-C GCSEs including English and Mathematics, compared to 55% of children not eligible;
2. children eligible for free school meals in Oxfordshire do less well than in most similar authorities; in the best performing authority among our statistical neighbours, Bath & North East Somerset, 33% of children eligible for free school meals achieved 5 A*-C GCSEs including English and Mathematics;

3. the Pupil Premium would target disadvantaged pupils – those entitled to free school meals – more effectively than the present system. Nearly half of pupils receiving Free School Meals do not attend a deprived school or live in a deprived area. Area based targeting therefore misses a large proportion of disadvantaged pupils – including in many rural areas;
4. it is generally accepted that children achieve better in smaller classes as a lack of communication skills is a significant factor hampering the progress of some children at school.

The Council therefore requests the Cabinet Member for Schools Improvement to respond favourably to the current consultation on the pupil premium, asking the Government to ensure that schools with large numbers of children receiving free school meals, **and schools with other important indicators of social deprivation**, receive a significant premium to support their pupils' learning needs in the form of extra funding **in addition to that which is currently available through the DSG, Extended Services and the Go4It grants** ~~from outside the schools' budget~~. This would then enable schools to employ more teachers in order to reduce class sizes, provide catch-up classes and where necessary provide other professional support.”

Following debate the amendment was lost by 38 votes to 17 (there being 1 abstention).

Councillor Waine then moved and Councillor Crabbe seconded the following amendment shown in bold italic:

“This Council notes that:-

2. in 2008/9 in Oxfordshire only 20% of children eligible for free school meals achieved 5+ A*-C GCSEs including English and Mathematics, compared to 55% of children not eligible;
2. children eligible for free school meals in Oxfordshire do less well than in most similar authorities; in the best performing authority among our statistical neighbours, Bath & North East Somerset, 33% of children eligible for free school meals achieved 5 A*-C GCSEs including English and Mathematics;
3. the Pupil Premium would target disadvantaged pupils – those entitled to free school meals – more effectively than the present system. Nearly half of pupils receiving Free School Meals do not attend a deprived school or live in a deprived area. Area based targeting therefore misses a large proportion of disadvantaged pupils – including in many rural areas;
4. it is generally accepted that children achieve better in smaller classes as a lack of communication skills is a significant factor hampering the progress of some children at school.

The Council therefore requests the Cabinet Member for Schools Improvement to respond favourably to the current consultation on the pupil premium, asking the Government to ensure that schools with large numbers of children receiving free school meals **and the children of Service Personnel**, receive a significant premium to support their pupils' learning needs in the form of extra funding from outside the schools' budget. This would then enable schools to employ more teachers in order to reduce class sizes, provide catch-up classes and where necessary provide other professional support."

Councillor Altaf-Khan and Councillor Fooks accepted the amendment.

Following debate the motion, as amended was carried by 49 votes to 0 (there being 7 abstentions).

90/10 MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR ROZ SMITH

(Agenda Item 17)

Councillor Smith moved and Councillor Armitage seconded the following motion as amended by Councillor Brown in bold italic:

"Council notes that the financial situation left by the outgoing Labour Government will have a direct impact on Oxfordshire residents, and has already reduced the County Council's grants from Government and so the services it can provide.

Council recognises that the spending cuts have been carefully considered, with the decisive action needed to reduce the deficit tempered with fairness and concern for the poorest and most vulnerable in our society.

Council welcomes the measures in the budget protecting the poor and vulnerable, which will have the effect of lessening the financial strain on the County Council, including:

- Nearly 1 million low earners taken out of tax altogether
- £2 billion extra child tax credit to tackle poverty
- Restoration of the earnings link for pensioners that Labour failed to restore in 13 years
- 10% increase in Capital Gains Tax for top earners
- New tax on banks

Council further welcomes the freeing of councils from unnecessary and wasteful bureaucracy such as the Comprehensive Area Assessment and believes the resources now freed up from this can be used to more effectively align frontline services to reflect the priorities of Oxfordshire residents **and, therefore, asks the Leader of the Council to write to the Prime Minister congratulating him on his leadership of the government.**"

Following debate the motion as amended was carried by 48 votes to 10.

91/10 MOTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS ARMITAGE, BRIGHOUSE AND TANNER

(Agenda Item 18)

The time being 5.00 pm the meeting closed and the motions from Councillors Armitage, Brighouse and Tanner were considered dropped in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 15.1.

..... in the Chair

Date of signing