

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting held on Tuesday, 14 September 2021 commencing at 10.30 am and finishing at 3.35 pm.

Present:

Councillor John Howson– in the Chair
Councillor Susanna Pressel – Vice-Chair

Councillors:

Juliette Ash	Donna Ford	Calum Miller
Brad Baines	Andrew Gant	Jane Murphy
Hannah Banfield	Stefan Gawrysiak	Michael O'Connor
David Bartholomew	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
Nigel Champken-Woods	Damian Haywood	Judy Roberts
Mark Cherry	Charlie Hicks	David Rouane
Andrew Coles	Tony Ilott	Geoff Saul
Yvonne Constance OBE	Bob Johnston	Les Sibley
Ian Corkin	Liz Leffman	Nigel Simpson
Imade Edosomwan	Nick Leverton	Roz Smith
Duncan Enright	Dan Levy	Ian Snowdon
Mohamed Fadlalla	Dr Nathan Ley	Dr Pete Sudbury
Arash Fatemian	Mark Lygo	Bethia Thomas
Neil Fawcett	Kieron Mallon	Michael Waine
Ted Fenton	Ian Middleton	Liam Walker
Nick Field-Johnson	Freddie van Mierlo	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 and schedule of business, copies of which are attached to the signed Minutes.

48/21 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

(Agenda Item 1)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Tim Bearder, Councillor Kevin Bulmer, Councillor Michele Paule and Councillor Alison Rooke.

49/21 MINUTES

(Agenda Item 3)

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 13 July 2021 were approved and signed as an accurate record.

50/21 OFFICIAL COMMUNICATIONS

(Agenda Item 4)

Council welcomed Councillor Mark Cherry.

Council sent best wishes to the High Sherriff who had been unwell.

Council thanked staff for their contribution to Oxford Open Doors. County Hall had received over 850 visitors to the building throughout the weekend.

Council congratulated Marjorie Glasgow on her appointment as Lord Lieutenant and paid tribute to the outgoing Lord Lieutenant, Sir Tim Stevenson.

The Chair thanked Council for their contributions for his Charity walk, which had raised over £1000.

Council paid tribute and held a minute's silence in memory of former County Councillor Peter Fisher.

51/21 APPOINTMENTS

(Agenda Item 5)

Council AGREED the following appointments:

Horton Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Councillor Mark Cherry to replace Councillor Geoff Saul

Performance & Corporate Services O&S Committee

Councillor Ian Corkin to replace Councillor David Bartholomew.

Audit & Governance Committee

Councillor Eddie Reeves to replace Councillor Jane Murphy

52/21 PETITIONS AND PUBLIC ADDRESS

(Agenda Item 6)

Council received the following Petitions and Public Address:

A Petition on presented by Mr Peter West on behalf One Headington, 90 plus Headington businesses asking the County Council to shelve future

plans for the installation of Low Traffic Neighbourhood (LTN) barriers in Headington.

A Petition presented by Mr Gregory O'Broin on behalf of residents of Appleford requesting that the County Council redesign and move the elevated flyover road and bridge to provide adequate distance from Appleford dwellings, to move the short section of carriageway by 200 meters and to provide reasonable mitigation along its entire length.

Ms Joan Stewart addressed the Council in support of Agenda Item 20 Motion by Councillor Jane Hanna), on the basis that she believed that there were deep flaws in the Health and Care Bill, many of which would directly affect local democracy; would not improve Oxfordshire's healthcare; would not address the stark inequalities across the county, but instead would inflict lasting damage on local democracy and local accountability and did not merit the name 'integration'. She urged the Council to support the Motion.

53/21 QUESTIONS WITH NOTICE FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

(Agenda Item 8)

20 questions with Notice were asked. Details of the questions and answers and supplementary questions and answers will be set out in the Annex to the minutes.

In relation to question 1 (Question from Yvonne Constance to Councillor Tim Bearder) Councillor Enright undertook to ask Councillor Bearder to provide Councillor Constance with a written response on when Swindon and OCC would manage traffic away from works on A420 and not through it.

In relation to question 2 (Question from Councillor Yvonne Constance to Councillor Duncan Enright) Councillor Enright undertook to provide Councillor Constance with a written reply answering whether there was a start date for construction.

In relation to question 6 (Question from Councillor Andrew Coles to Councillor Tim Bearder) Councillor Enright undertook to notify Councillor Tim Bearder that the invitation to visit the residents of Burwell Drive was still open.

In relation to question 10 (Question from Councillor Eddie Reeves to Councillor Tim Bearder) Councillor Enright undertook to ask Councillor Tim Bearder to provide a written answer to Councillor Reeves as to whether the Cabinet Member would push through LTNs if the majority of residents vote against it.

In relation to question 11 (Question from Councillor Nick Field Johnston to Councillor Pete Sudbury) Councillor Sudbury undertook to consult with the Leader and provide a written answer to Councillor Field Johnson answering what the current status was with discussions with the 6 MPs.

In relation to question 15 (Question from Councillor Brad Baines to Councillor Tim Bearder) Councillor Enright undertook to ask Councillor Tim Bearder to provide a written answer detailing what the plans were for further school streets.

In relation to question 16 (Question from Councillor Brad Baines to Councillor Duncan Enright) Councillor Enright undertook to ask Councillor Tim Bearder to provide a written answer to Councillor Baines on what role the expanded green zone ZEZ will have in tackling congestion caused by visitors wanting to park at the Westgate.

54/21 REPORT OF THE CABINET

(Agenda Item 9)

Council received the report of the Cabinet.

In relation to paragraph 4 of the report (Question from Councillor David Bartholomew to Councillor Calum Miller) Councillor Miller undertook to provide a written answer quantifying the financial risks of the Kennington Bridge Scheme and explain how they will be catered for.

In relation to paragraph 4 of the report (Question from Councillor Yvonne Constance to Councillor Calum Miller) Councillor Miller undertook to provide a written answer outlining what the ambitions were for the Active Travel Fund.

In relation to paragraph 6 of the report (Question from Councillor Brad Baines to Councillor Tim Bearder) Councillor Duncan Enright undertook to pass on Councillor Baine's request to implement an active travel 'mini holland' in South Oxford.

In relation to paragraph 9 of the report (Question from Councillor Brad Baines to Councillor Liz Leffman) Councillor Leffman undertook to look again at the performance indicators and KPIs. She urged the scrutiny committees to let her know how they thought it could be improved.

In relation to paragraph 9 of the report (Question from Councillor Nick Field-Johnson to Councillor Liz Leffman) Councillor Leffman undertook to look at an opt-in service for members receiving paper copies of Committee Papers.

55/21 TREASURY MANAGEMENT 2020/21 OUTTURN

(Agenda Item 10)

Council had before it a report which set out the Treasury Management performance in the financial year 2020/21 in compliance with the CIPFA Code of Practice. The report included Debt and Investment activity, Prudential Indicator Outturn, Investment Strategy, and interest receivable and payable for the financial year.

Councillor Miller moved and Councillor Pressel that the report be noted. In moving the report the Cabinet Member for Finance, Councillor Miller thanked the Treasury Management Team for their work.

RESOLVED: (nem con) to note the Council's Treasury Management Activity in 2020/21.

56/21 REVIEW OF POLITICAL BALANCE ON COMMITTEES

(Agenda Item 11)

The Council was required by the Local Government & Housing Act 1989 to review the political balance on its committees on an annual basis and then in any circumstances set out in Regulations under the 1989 Act. Following the May 2021 elections and the subsequent formation of political groups on the Council, the political balance was formally reviewed at the Annual Council Meeting on the 18 May. Since that time, Cllr Mark Cherry had been confirmed as the duly elected member for the Banbury Ruscote Division. As a result, the Monitoring Officer has formally received notification from Cllr Cherry and from the Leader of the Labour & Co-operative Party Group, that Cllr Cherry has become a member of that Group.

Following the addition to the Labour & Co-operative Party Group, The Council had before it a report which set out a further review of political balance now needed to occur to reflect the relative proportion of each Group with regards to seats on the Council and given that more than a month had elapsed since the last review of political balance. The review also reflected that the Conservative-Independent Alliance Group now had one fewer member than previously.

RESOLVED: (on a Motion by Councillor John Howson, seconded by Councillor Susanna Pressel and carried nem con)

- (a) to note the revised political balance on committees shown in Annex 2 to the report;
- (b) to make the consequential appointments to the Committees named in paragraph 11 and as listed in paragraph 13 and Annex 3 (to follow), to give effect to the wishes of the respective Group Leaders.

57/21 DISPENSATION FROM ATTENDING MEETINGS

(Agenda Item 12)

Under the Local Government Act 1972 Section 85 (1), councillors who did not attend a meeting of the Council during a six-month period would cease to be a member of the Council unless the Council had approved a dispensation before the expiry of that period. Council had before it a report which sought approval to grant such a dispensation to Cllr Alison Rooke who, for reason of ill-health, was unlikely to be able to attend a meeting of the Council prior to April 2022.

Councillor John Howson moved and Councillor Susanna Pressel seconded that the recommendations set out on the face of the Agenda and the report be adopted. In moving the recommendation, Councillor Howson indicated that he would be writing to Councillor Rooke to send best wishes on behalf of Council. Councillor Leffman paid tribute to Councillor Rooke as Chair of their Group and added her very best wishes.

RESOLVED: (nem con)

- (a) approve a dispensation for Cllr Alison Rooke from the statutory requirement to attend a meeting of the Council within a six month period from the last noted attendance;
- (b) approve that the dispensation last up to and including 30 April 2022.

58/21 MOTION BY COUNCILLOR ANDREW GANT

(Agenda Item 13)

Councillor Andrew Gant moved and Councillor Kate Gregory seconded the following Motion:

“Council notes and approves that there has been a general move away from gender-specific job titles in recent decades. This has taken different forms in different contexts, but a common thread is that where a simple alternative to a gender-specific nomenclature exists, it has been widely adopted. Such an instance is the replacement of “Chairman” with “Chair”.

Council notes and approves that the vast majority of other councils have made this change, either formally or by natural evolution and habit.

Council regrets that its own working practices haven’t kept up with this shift, making it appear old-fashioned, reactionary, exclusive, out of touch and showing a damaging lack of awareness of changes in society as a whole. Council also believes it will be easier and more efficient for officers to work to one standard in preparing meeting agendas, etc

Council therefore:

Resolves that with immediate effect the chairs of council and all committees and other bodies will be referred to in writing and verbally as “Chair”. The word “Chairman” will not be used.

Resolves to ask the Monitoring Officer to incorporate this change in the constitution at the earliest opportunity and to change the currently in-use painted board in the Council Chamber at the earliest convenient opportunity (but not to alter the other, completed boards, which are a historical record).

Councillor Yvonne Constance moved and Councillor Donna Ford seconded the following amendment to the Motion as shown in bold italics and strikethrough below:

“Council notes and approves that there has been a general move away from gender-specific job titles in recent decades. This has taken different forms in different contexts, but a common thread is that where a simple alternative to a gender-specific nomenclature exists, it has been widely adopted. Such an instance is the replacement of “Chairman” with “Chair”.

Council notes and approves that the vast majority of other councils have made this change, either formally or by natural evolution and habit.

Council regrets that its own working practices haven’t kept up with this shift, making it appear old-fashioned, reactionary, exclusive, out of touch **among certain sections of the community** and showing a ~~damaging~~ **perceived** lack of awareness of changes in society as a whole. Council also believes it will be easier and more efficient for officers to work to one standard in preparing meeting agendas, etc

Council therefore:

Resolves that with immediate effect the chairs of council and all committees and other bodies will be referred to in writing and verbally as “Chair”. The word “Chairman” will not be used **unless the person in question politely so requests**.

Resolves **subject also to the outcome of the Council’s constitutional review**, to ask the Monitoring Officer to incorporate this change in the constitution at the earliest opportunity and to change the currently in-use painted board in the Council Chamber at the earliest convenient opportunity (but not to alter the other, completed boards, which are a historical record).

Following debate, the motion was put to the vote and was lost by 37 votes to 20.

The substantive Motion was then put to the vote and was carried by 38 votes to 20.

RESOLVED: (by 38 votes to 20)

“Council notes and approves that there has been a general move away from gender-specific job titles in recent decades. This has taken different forms in different contexts, but a common thread is that where a simple alternative to a gender-specific nomenclature exists, it has been widely adopted. Such an instance is the replacement of “Chairman” with “Chair”.

Council notes and approves that the vast majority of other councils have made this change, either formally or by natural evolution and habit.

Council regrets that its own working practices haven’t kept up with this shift, making it appear old-fashioned, reactionary, exclusive, out of touch and showing a ~~damaging~~ lack of awareness of changes in society as a whole.

Council also believes it will be easier and more efficient for officers to work to one standard in preparing meeting agendas, etc

Council therefore:

Resolves that with immediate effect the chairs of council and all committees and other bodies will be referred to in writing and verbally as "Chair". The word "Chairman" will not be used.

Resolves to ask the Monitoring Officer to incorporate this change in the constitution at the earliest opportunity and to change the currently in-use painted board in the Council Chamber at the earliest convenient opportunity (but not to alter the other, completed boards, which are a historical record).

59/21 MOTION BY COUNCILLOR DONNA FORD

(Agenda Item 14)

Councillor Donna Ford moved and Councillor Edie Reeves seconded the following Motion:

"This Council recalls the new administration's flagship policy document entitled '*A Fair Deal for Oxfordshire – Shaping our priorities*' (the Policy Document) that was approved by Cabinet on 20 July, having been considered at an extraordinary meeting of Performance Scrutiny on 16 July.

This Council notes that the administration has been in place for four months and notes the aim of the Policy Document as a statement of intent in respect of its prospective policies relative to those of the outgoing administration.

Accordingly, this Council resolves that the administration reports to members by the date of its next meeting with a schedule of policies under active consideration and/or implementation by the previous administration that have since been:

1. Continued in their entirety by the new administration without amendment or qualification.
2. Continued substantively but varied to reasonably reflect the incoming administration's own aims and objectives.
3. Changed substantively by the new administration, but reflecting the outgoing administration's original aims and objectives; and
4. Discontinued altogether.

This Council resolves to keep such schedule reasonably up-to-date during the new administration's term of office and further requests that the administration report to members by the date of this Council's next meeting with a clear set of key performance indicators in respect of its priorities in the Policy Document to ensure that there is reasonable ongoing scrutiny of its performance and delivery of election promises."

Following debate, the Motion was put to the vote and was lost by 38 votes to 20.

RESOLVED: Motion lost by 38 votes to 20.

60/21 MOTION BY COUNCILLOR HANNAH BANFIELD

(Agenda Item 15)

Councillor Hannah Banfield moved and Councillor Sally Povolotsky seconded the following Motion:

“Oxfordshire County Council condemns the use of ‘Fire and Rehire’ by any employers in the County of Oxfordshire and calls upon the Members of Parliament representing Oxfordshire’s residents (Anneliese Dodds, John Howell, Layla Moran, David Johnson, Robert Courts and Victoria Prentis) to support Barry Gardiner’s Private Member’s Bill and do all in their power to make this practice unlawful.

Oxfordshire County Council resolves not to procure any goods or services from companies that have sought to gain commercial advantage by using or threatening to use this unscrupulous practice.”

Councillor Kieron Mallon moved and Councillor Eddie Reeves seconded the following amendment to the Motion as shown in bold italics and below:

“Oxfordshire County Council condemns the use of ‘Fire and Rehire’ by any employers in the County of Oxfordshire and calls upon the Members of Parliament representing Oxfordshire’s residents (Anneliese Dodds, John Howell, Layla Moran, David Johnson, Robert Courts and Victoria Prentis) to support Barry Gardiner’s Private Member’s Bill ***or such other appropriate legislation*** and do all in their power to make this practice unlawful.

Oxfordshire County Council resolves, ***where lawful***, not to procure any goods or services from companies that have sought to gain commercial advantage by using or threatening to use this unscrupulous practice.”

Following debate, the amendment was put to the vote and was lost by 34 votes to 21, with 2 abstentions.

The substantive Motion was then put to the vote and was carried nem con.

RESOLVED: (nem con)

“Oxfordshire County Council condemns the use of ‘Fire and Rehire’ by any employers in the County of Oxfordshire and calls upon the Members of Parliament representing Oxfordshire’s residents (Anneliese Dodds, John Howell, Layla Moran, David Johnson, Robert Courts and Victoria Prentis) to support Barry Gardiner’s Private Member’s Bill and do all in their power to make this practice unlawful.

Oxfordshire County Council resolves not to procure any goods or services from companies that have sought to gain commercial advantage by using or threatening to use this unscrupulous practice.”

61/21 MOTION BY COUNCILLOR EDDIE REEVES

(Agenda Item 16)

Councillor Eddie Reeves moved and Councillor Jane Murphy seconded the following Motion:

“This Council notes that public services – locally and nationally – have been impacted immensely by the pandemic.

This Council acknowledges that the Government has spent more public money than any in the nation’s history to secure the livelihoods of hard-working people, and the futures of the public, private and voluntary sector organisations who employ them. Without prejudice to any outcome, this Council recognises that local government reform may be considered again in due course. In Oxfordshire, members can either work together to shape that reform or have it imposed from Whitehall.

This Council notes that analyses have been commissioned from EY (2016), PwC (2017) and Grant Thornton (2016-7) by local authorities across Oxfordshire in addition to options appraisals conducted by Councils themselves.

This Council further notes that a Government White Paper on devolution is expected imminently, pursuant to which more power and control of public finances may be tied to reform.

This Council restates its aim for Oxfordshire to be a beacon of local government excellence irrespective of its political leadership and notes that members have historically worked well together in the interests of residents.

Accordingly, this Council resolves to ask the Cabinet set up a Cabinet Advisory Group to review the evidence of recent years and, without prejudice to its findings, put forward a preferred view to the Leader should local government reform be mandated by Government, or the new administration wish to secure further powers and public money from Government that are contingent on reform.”

Following debate, the Motion was put to the vote and was lost by 34 votes to 20, with 1 abstention.

RESOLVED: The Motion was lost by 34 votes to 20, with 1 abstention.

62/21 MOTION BY COUNCILLOR GLYNIS PHILLIPS

(Agenda Item 17)

Councillor Glynis Phillips moved and Councillor Neil Fawcett seconded the following Motion:

“Local Government has endured central government cuts of more than 50% since 2010. Oxfordshire County Council staff have been at the forefront of continuing to provide a range of services and support during the COVID pandemic. Our staff have worked to keep our communities safe, our schools open, cared for vulnerable and older people and continued to safeguard children.

A 1.75% pay increase (2.75% for those on the lowest pay point) is not enough and with inflation at 3.8% this is real terms pay cut.

This Council asks the Leader of the Council to write to all Oxfordshire MPs requesting that they contact the Chancellor of the Exchequer to provide the necessary funding for a substantial and fairer pay offer.”

Councillor Eddie Reeves moved and Councillor David Bartholomew seconded the following Amendment to the Motion as shown in bold italics below:

“Local Government has endured central government cuts of more than 50% since 2010. Oxfordshire County Council staff have been at the forefront of continuing to provide a range of services and support during the COVID pandemic. Our staff have worked to keep our communities safe, our schools open, cared for vulnerable and older people and continued to safeguard children.

A 1.75% pay increase (2.75% for those on the lowest pay point) is not enough ***for our lower paid staff*** and with inflation at 3.8% this is real terms pay cut.

This Council asks the Leader of the Council to write to all Oxfordshire MPs requesting that they contact the Chancellor of the Exchequer to provide the necessary funding for a substantial and fairer pay offer ***to those members of staff who are (i) not already paid the Oxford Living Wage and/or (ii) who earn less than the median wage in Oxfordshire and cannot work from home.***”

Following debate, the amendment by Councillor Reeves was put to the vote and was lost by 35 votes to 19.

The substantive Motion was then put to the vote and was carried by 35 votes to 17.

RESOLVED: (by 35 votes to 17)

“Local Government has endured central government cuts of more than 50% since 2010. Oxfordshire County Council staff have been at the forefront of continuing to provide a range of services and support during the COVID pandemic. Our staff have worked to keep our communities safe, our schools open, cared for vulnerable and older people and continued to safeguard children.

A 1.75% pay increase (2.75% for those on the lowest pay point) is not enough and with inflation at 3.8% this is real terms pay cut.

This Council asks the Leader of the Council to write to all Oxfordshire MPs requesting that they contact the Chancellor of the Exchequer to provide the necessary funding for a substantial and fairer pay offer.”

63/21 MOTIONS BY COUNCILLOR BRAD BAINES, COUNCILLOR KIERON MALLON AND COUNCILLOR JANE HANNA

(Agenda Item 18)

The time being after 3.30 pm, these Motions were considered dropped in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 13.5.8.

..... in the Chair

Date of signing