

# OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**MINUTES** of the meeting held on Tuesday, 28 March 2023 commencing at 10.30 am and finishing at 3.45pm

## **Present:**

Councillor Susanna Pressel – in the Chair

Councillors:

Felix Bloomfield	Donna Ford	Freddie van Mierlo
Juliette Ash	Andrew Gant	Calum Miller
Brad Baines	Stefan Gawrysiak	Michael O'Connor
Hannah Banfield	Andy Graham	Glynis Phillips
David Bartholomew	Kate Gregory	Sally Povolotsky
Tim Bearder	Jane Hanna OBE	Eddie Reeves
Robin Bennett	Jenny Hannaby	G.A. Reynolds
Liz Brighthouse OBE	Damian Haywood	Judy Roberts
Nigel Champken-Woods	Charlie Hicks	Alison Rooke
Mark Cherry	John Howson	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	Michael Waine
Neil Fawcett	Kieron Mallon	Liam Walker
Ted Fenton	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.*

## **7/23 MINUTES**

(Agenda Item 1)

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 February 2023 were approved as a correct record.

## **8/23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

(Agenda Item 2)

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Bulmer, Field-Johnson, Murphy and Thomas.

## **9/23 OFFICIAL COMMUNICATIONS**

(Agenda Item 4)

The Chair welcomed Councillor Trish Elphinstone (Rose Hill & Littlemore) and Martin Reeves, Chief Executive, to their first meeting of the Council.

The Chair reported the following:-

- The Council had won a gold award for its commitment to LGBTQ+ inclusion at work, and has also secured a spot on Stonewall's Top 100 list which recognises exceptional employers who are committed to supporting their LGBTQ+ staff and customers.
- Jamie Kavanagh of ICT Services secured 2<sup>nd</sup> place in the CS "Future Data Leader of the Year Awards. He was highly commended in a field of over 100 data professionals from across the UK.

## **10/23 APPOINTMENTS**

(Agenda Item 5)

Council noted the following appointments:-

Cllr Elphinstone to be appointed to the vacancy on Audit and Governance Committee

Cllr Elphinstone to replace Councillor Edosomwan on People Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Cllr Povolotsky to replace Cllr Gregory on People Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Cllr Gregory to replace Cllr Povolotsky on Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee

### Shadow Cabinet changes

Cllr Fenton had replaced Cllr Bulmer, shadowing Cllr Hannaby, Cabinet Member for Cabinet Member for Community Services and Safety

Cllr Constance had replaced Cllr Fenton, shadowing Cllr Sudbury, Cabinet Member for Climate Change Delivery and Environment

**11/23 PETITIONS AND PUBLIC ADDRESS**

(Agenda Item 6)

Richard Parnham addressed the Council on the Citizens Jury recommendation regarding environmental cycling across disused University land. He had attended Cabinet previously where the recommendation had given this suggestion a low priority score. Mr Parnham asked that the Council should ask the Cabinet to give this proposal further consideration in view of its priority to encourage active travel.

Mark Boule spoke in support of the motion by Councillor Walker. Mr Boule questioned how 20 minute neighbourhoods had been made a priority of the Council. Mr Boule argued that investment should be made in the infrastructure of the areas affected. Mr Boule also questioned the policy regarding the issue of passes and areas affected by traffic filters and was of the view that local authorities should not be dictating the mode of transport to be used by residents.

Clinton Pugh explained that he was a local trader affected by the Cowley LTN scheme. Mr Pugh referred to his previous address to the Council's Cabinet and the accusation by a Cabinet member of lying. Mr Pugh argued that the Council had misled the public on the traffic control measures introduced in Oxford City and said that the Cabinet should resign.

The Monitoring Officer stated that she had investigated the code of conduct complaint referred to by the speaker in accordance with the Council's established procedures.

Anne Gwinnett, addressed the Council in support of the motion by Councillor Walker. Ms Gwinnett said that the Council had hidden evidence from its data sources that the proposals would increase the volume of traffic in certain areas and that there was significant opposition to the Council's proposals. Ms Gwinnett said that the Council was not listening to residents and that a further study was required

Asha Gill addressed the Council in support of the motion by Councillor Reeves. Ms Gill said that a campaign had been launched in support of the Spare seats scheme and opposition to the withdrawal of a number of seats in the scheme. Ms Gill argued that this contradicted a number of the Council's policies and that the campaign group had not been asked to contribute to the Council's review of school transport chaired by Councillor Graham.

Ken Pelton spoke in support of the motion by Councillor Walker. Mr Pelton was a resident of Noke where residents were severely impacted by the closure of Marston Ferry Road resulting in additional travel distances into Oxford. They would only receive 25 permits per annum. In his view, the consultation was poorly organised, not supported by data and should be rerun as proposed in the motion. The large sums being spent on traffic filters should be spent on improving the traffic infrastructure outside Oxford city.

Sarah Singleton spoke in support of the motion by Councillor Reeves. She said that the Council should consider the disproportionate effect on rural areas of the County and sectors of the community including key workers, single parents and parents of pupils on free school meals of the ongoing reductions in the spare seats scheme. Ms Singleton considered that rural pupils' attendance at local and catchment area schools had become a matter of affordability. The alternative solutions would not be in place by September.

Charlotte Cusworth also addressed the Council on the motion by Councillor Reeves. Ms Cusworth explained the impact of the reduction of the scheme for her own personal circumstances and, in particular, the income from her own business. Ms Cusworth said it was not viable to move her son to another school or move house to an area where he could travel to school independently.

Pete Walker referred to the letter that had been sent to parents about the withdrawal of part of the spare seats scheme. Mr Walker argued that the proposals for alternative solutions were inadequate and the cost of providing taxis greatly exceeded that for seats on buses. Mr Walker considered that the Council had side-lined the full cost recovery scheme which would enable the provision of seats to be maintained. Mr Walker considered that there had been misleading information provided to parents and communication had been totally inadequate.

## **12/23 PROCEDURAL MOTION**

Councillor Bartholomew moved and Councillor Reeves seconded a procedural motion, in accordance with section 14.1 (iii) of the Council Procedure Rules, to change the order of business to bring forward the motions on notice by Councillor Walker (item 18 on the agenda) and Councillor Reeves (item 19 on the agenda) so that these would be the first two motions to be debated.

Following debate, the procedural motion was put to the vote and was lost by 34 votes to 21 with 1 abstention.

## **13/23 QUESTIONS WITH NOTICE FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

(Agenda Item 7)

Ms Jamila Azad had given written notice of the following question to Cllr Andrew Gant

Can the Council explain how the proposed ANPR cameras in Cowley will mitigate against the increase in NO<sub>2</sub> pollution in Cowley (relative to the rest of Oxford) since the Crowley LTN ANPR cameras were installed?

Councillor Gant replied:-

The ANPR cameras are not proposed to mitigate air quality but to allow enforcement and exemptions for buses and/or emergency service vehicles.

Mr Matthew Webb had given written notice of the following question to Cllr Andrew Gant:-

Can the council please provide any revenue estimates for the proposed Cowley LTN ANPR cameras for their first and second year of operation?

Councillor Gant replied:-

For each proposed Cowley LTN ANPR site, the projected revenue estimates are expected to be:

Year 1 - £59,568 (per site)

Year 2 - £99,280 (per site)

These figures are estimates based on income from similar sites. However, with expectations that residents would observe the Traffic Order we are hopeful that the projected estimates would be lower and any funds potentially raised would be reinvested in further initiatives to promote Active Travel. The consultation for the ANPR cameras ends on 17 April 2023 and a decision on the way forward will be made by the County Council in the summer.

Mr Saj Malik had given notice of the following question to Cllr Andrew Gant:-

How many of the emergency services in Oxfordshire have made representations to you (Andrew Gant) that they want ANPR cameras to replace planters in Cowley?

Cllr Gant replied:-

The LTN team have held regular meetings with stakeholders, including the emergency services during the stages of the Cowley LTN scheme. I have met with representatives of the emergency services on many occasions, both in meetings and on-site within Cowley.

In addition, as part of the preparation of the mitigations to the Cowley scheme, I requested and held individual one-to-one meetings with a senior representative of each of the emergency services to discuss their operational requirements. These discussions naturally form an important part of planning the scheme of mitigations and the proposals for ANPR at three sites, currently out for consultation.

Ms Jenny Wells had given notice of the following question to Cllr Andrew Gant:-

I would like to ask Andrew Gant why the council has targeted East Oxford and Cowley for the implementation of the LTNs in Oxford?

Cllr Gant replied

There are many key factors that recommend an area for a low-traffic neighbourhood. These include poor air quality, high traffic volumes, urban density, a high number of vulnerable road users, and a lack of green space.

Areas where there are a high number of schools, lower than average access to public transport, and a higher number of road traffic accidents may be suitable for LTN trials.

The eastern area of Oxford has a high population of young families and a mix of primary and secondary schools, as well as a large number of children travelling through to schools in other parts of the city, and outside the city.

Around 36% of households in the eastern area of Oxford do not own a car; the area needs better cycling and walking connections and safer roads for all users.

All of the above were factors taken into consideration before trialling Low Traffic Neighbourhoods firstly in Cowley, followed by east Oxford.

Ms Yasmin Qureshi had given notice of the following question to Cllr Andrew Gant:-

Can the council explain how the proposed ANPR cameras in Cowley will mitigate against the significant increases in traffic on Rose Hill and Henley Avenue which has occurred since the LTNs were installed?

Councillor Gant replied:-

A formal decision on whether or not to install ANPR cameras within the Cowley LTN areas is due to be made by the Cabinet Member for Highways Management at a meeting later in 2023. Officers will make recommendations based on a range of factors, including feedback received and monitoring data.

Mr Ian Yeatman had given notice of the following question to Cllr Andrew Gant:-

My father is 88 and registered disabled. Can the council explain how Oxfordshire County Council's proposal to exclude blue badge and / or carers from the proposed Cowley LTN ANPR scheme is compliant with its public sector equality duty?

Cllr Gant replied:-

The consultation period for the ANPR is still open (closes April 18) and we encourage everybody to respond online at the link provided: [Oxford: Cowley LTNs - ANPR Camera Enforcement & Littlemore Road Exemption](#)

[Amendment | Let's Talk Oxfordshire](#). Or through a paper copy, which you can order by calling 01865 816000. The exemptions form part of the consultation and all responses will be considered as part of the reporting process.

A statutory Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) is conducted to assess the projected impacts of the LTNs on all groups with protected characteristics (such as disability, age and gender).

Dr Erdem Pulcu had given notice of the following question to Cllr Andrew Gant

East Oxford residents were promised meaningful improvements to the LTN scheme by Spring 2023. Currently, the bollards and planters continue to block Crowell Rd, segregating Littlemore from Cowley centre grocery shopping access. This specific location was opposed by more than 60% of responders to the original consultation. Now, the word on the street says there is another consultation going on, for installation of ANPR cameras in this location. Why is this consultation not being distributed in Littlemore, which remains the most negatively affected area, in paper format?

Cllr Gant replied:-

Our online survey for this exercise is open for everyone to respond and we understand that our proposals do have a far wider stakeholding audience than the streets the proposals concern. Alongside formal notifications and online media from the county council, we will write to those addresses located on those streets and adjoining or boundary roads to promote the survey and provide links to it.

We do not distribute paper copies to all addresses as this would be unfeasible in terms of cost and carbon footprint. However we are happy to, and do, provide limited numbers of hard copy surveys to groups and individuals who cannot easily access the survey online.

For anyone who needs a printed copy of a survey or require information in an alternative format, they are invited to email us ([activetraveloxfordcity@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:activetraveloxfordcity@oxfordshire.gov.uk)) or call our customer services team or call the council's customer services team on (01865 816000).

Mr Richard Parnham had given notice of the following question to Cllr Andrew Gant:-

Is the council aware of provisional city council data, that appears to show that full-year average NO2 pollution levels rose above legal limits during 2022 - on both Hollow Way and Oxford Road / Between Towns Road i.e. after the Cowley LTNs were installed

Cllr Gant replied:-

We continue to monitor air quality and traffic dispersal on arterial roads and roads connecting to the low-traffic neighbourhoods. Low-traffic neighbourhoods are just one aspect of the wider programme that is supporting healthier, more sustainable travel, as outlined in the [Local Transport and Connectivity Plan](#).

There is more detail about how we capture and analyse the data on our website: <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/roads-and-transport/connecting-oxfordshire/low-traffic-neighbourhoods/east-oxford-ltn-air-quality>"

Mr Peter West had given notice of the following question to Cllr Andrew Gant:-

Is OCC now in possession of the traffic filters modelling analysis for the A40/B4150 Marsh lane junction Cherwell drive/Marsh Lane/Marston Road/Headley Way Junction and can he provide data for the following periods?

- i) AM peak data
- (ii) PM peak data
- (iii) the weekend off-peak data

Cllr Gant replied:-

The county council has published a Forecasting Report which provides details of transport modelling of various traffic filter scenarios. This was published ahead of and to support the Cabinet decision in November 2022.

The transport model used to forecast the effects of the traffic filters covers Oxfordshire in some detail and also extends in less detail to the rest of the United Kingdom. A model of this kind is good at estimating overall changes in people's travel patterns and mode choices, but there is more uncertainty in forecasts of changes on individual roads and junctions, and these more detailed outputs are inherently less reliable. This is one reason why the county council has decided to introduce the scheme as a trial in the first instance.

Please note, the transport model represents AM peak and PM peak hours and an average inter-peak hour during an average weekday. There are no model forecasts for a weekend (AM, PM or off-peak).

The following tables show the estimated 2024 total traffic levels approaching the two junctions for the AM and PM peak hours. As above, there is more uncertainty in forecasts of changes in traffic at this level. The Do Minimum (DM) scenario is without the traffic filters; the Do Something (DS) scenario is



with the traffic filters (and is the scheme that was consulted on and referred to as TF1 in the Forecasting Report).

**Marsh Lane/Cherwell Drive Junction (total traffic approaching junction)**

AM peak		PM peak	
DM (no TF)	DS (with TF)	DM (no TF)	DS (with TF)
1730	1497	2030	1819

**Marston Road/Cherwell Drive/Headley Way Junction (total traffic approaching junction)**

AM peak		PM peak	
DM (no TF)	DS (with TF)	DM (no TF)	DS (with TF)
1678	1500	1969	1763

Ms Bernadette Evans had given notice of the following question to Cllr Andrew Gant:-

Why was the Traffic Filters Business Impact Assessment, produced by Steer, released ahead of the Steer Atkins Oxford Trial Traffic report when the BIA forecast the impact on businesses of the traffic filters but without using any traffic reduction data?

Cllr Gant replied:-

The Business Impact Assessment report, and separately, Transport and Traffic Forecasting report, were published on the same day, 21<sup>st</sup> October 2022.

The assessment of business impacts is a qualitative assessment that considers the scale and nature of potential effects of the trial traffic filters on different types of business across Oxford. This included consideration of changes in travel times e.g. from reduced/increased congestion and/or rerouting as result of traffic filters, as well as impacts on deliveries and servicing, and the catchment of and demand for a business' services, for example.

Mr Edward Glover had given notice of the following question to Cllr Andrew Gant:-

Given the increased speed and volume of traffic, why has the newly restored (2022) traffic awareness monitor on Henley Avenue been removed?

The strips were installed to monitor the impact of the Quickways cycle routes and the LTNs, where there are no Vivacity cameras for this purpose. They are set to record cycles and motor vehicle numbers and traffic speeds. The strips are put down for two weeks and this was the third measurement of four, with the final recording to take place in June 2023 before a comparative monitoring report is produced against baseline data taken before their implementation.

## **14/23 QUESTIONS WITH NOTICE FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL**

(Agenda Item 8)

21 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 (Cllr Yvonne Constance to Cllr Andrew Gant) Cllr Gant undertook to provide a written response on the specific issues concerning the footpath used by pupils at King Alfred's School in Wantage.

In relation to question 2 (Cllr Donna Ford to Cllr Calum Miller) Cllr Miller undertook to provide a written response on the dispute resolution costs relating to the Children's Service department.

In relation to question 6 (Cllr John Howson to Cllr Calum Miller) Cllr Miller undertook to provide a written response on any adjustments made to the County Hall building by the previous administration.

In relation to question 13 (Cllr Sally Povolotsky to Cllr Andrew Gant) Cllr Gant undertook to provide a detailed response on the repair project including projected timings.

In relation to question 17 (Cllr Ian Middleton to Cllr Calum Miller) Cllr Miller undertook to meet with Cllr Middleton on options for the Glebe House site.

## **15/23 REPORT OF THE CABINET**

(Agenda Item 9)

Council received the report of the Cabinet.

In relation to a question from Cllr Jane Hanna, Cllr Mark Lygo confirmed that he would be submitting a further report to the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee on provision of primary care services and information provided to the County's residents.

**16/23 ANNUAL REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH**

(Agenda Item 10)

Directors of Public Health had a statutory duty to publish an annual report on a subject of their choice that they feel demonstrates the state of health within their community.

Council had before it the report relating to the period 2022-23 which focussed on the theme of excess weight.

Following debate it was:-

**RESOLVED** (on a motion by Councillor Mark Lygo, seconded by Councillor Liz Leffman, and carried unanimously, 55 votes in favour, 0 against and 0 abstentions) to note the Director of Public Health Annual Report and to take every opportunity to support actions and initiatives that will progress related work.

**17/23 AMENDMENTS TO THE COUNCIL'S CONSTITUTION**

(Agenda Item 11)

Council had before it a report relating to the need to update the current Employment Procedure Rules set out in Part 8.4 of the Council's Constitution. There were delegations in Scheme of Delegations for the Head of Paid Service regarding the appointment and dismissal of Chief Officers that contravened legislation governing the appointment and dismissal of chief officers. New delegations had been drafted to enable the Head of Paid Service to make Interim appointments of Chief Officers and appoint senior officers in the Council, who are for these purposes known as Deputy Chief Officers.

**RESOLVED** (on a motion from Councillor Susanna Pressel, seconded by Councillor Felix Bloomfield, and carried unanimously, 55 votes in favour, 0 against and 0 abstentions) to approve the proposals for amendment to the Employment Procedure Rules Part 8.4 as set out in annex 2 to the report.

**18/23 APPOINTMENT OF INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, PEOPLE, TRANSFORMATION AND PERFORMANCE**

(Agenda Item 12)

Council had before it a report referring to the establishment of a temporary appointment to provide additional strategic capacity in the senior leadership team. In accordance with the Council's constitution, the salary designation for the post required the approval of the full Council.

Following debate it was:-

**RESOLVED** (on a motion by Councillor Liz Leffman, seconded by Liz Brighthouse, 40 voting in favour and 15 abstentions) to approve a spot salary designation of £167,000 for the post of Interim Executive Director, People, Transformation & Performance.

## **19/23 COUNCILLOR ALLOWANCES 2022-23**

(Agenda Item 13)

The Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) recommendations on a new members' allowances scheme were accepted by Council on 2 November 2021 and became effective on 1 April 2022. The recommendations included linking future increases to the Local Government pay award for employees each year.

Council had before it report proposing an increase to members' allowances arising from the recent pay award for Local Government employees.

Following debate it was:-

**RESOLVED**, (on a motion by Councillor Liz Leffman, seconded by Councillor Liz Brighthouse, 38 voting in favour and 17 abstentions) to:-

- a) increase the Basic Allowance and Special Responsibility Allowances by 5.3%, with effect from 1 April 2023, in line with the percentage rise in employee costs for Oxfordshire County Council arising from the 2022-23 Local Government pay award
- b) add the following special responsibility allowance omitted from the report:-

Chair of Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

<u>Current</u>	<u>5.3% uplift</u>
£7,200.00	£7,584.00

## **20/23 ELECTORAL REVIEW: DIVISION PATTERNS**

(Agenda Item 14)

Council had before it a report on the second phase of the Local Government Boundary Commission's electoral review of Oxfordshire proposing arrangements for setting the boundaries for each County Division.

Following debate it was:-

**RESOLVED** (on a motion by Councillor Stefan Gawrysiak, seconded by Councillor Neil Fawcett and carried unanimously, 55 voting in favour, 0 against and 0 abstentions) to submit the annexed report on Division patterns to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England. This set out proposed boundaries and names for the County Divisions in each of the five

District areas: Cherwell, Oxford City, South Oxfordshire, Vale of White Horse and West Oxfordshire

**21/23 TREASURY MANAGEMENT - QUARTER 3**

(Agenda Item 15)

**RESOLVED** (on a motion by Councillor Calum Miller, seconded by Councillor Liz Leffman and carried unanimously, 55 voting in favour, 0 against and 0 abstentions) to note the council's treasury management activity in the third quarter of 2022/23.

**22/23 MOTION BY COUNCILLOR CHARLIE HICKS**

(Agenda Item 16)

Councillor Charlie Hicks moved and Councillor Robin Bennett seconded the following motion:

Council believes that it is vital to consider the wellbeing of Future Generations in all decision-making in the Council, as set out in the Alliance's guiding principles.

Therefore, Council requests the Cabinet to undertake the following as soon as reasonably practicable:

- Review how all decision-making and commissioning of services will consider the wellbeing of future generations and put in place appropriate internal controls to ensure this happens,
- Consider the need for any additional internal roles to support this work (e.g. a future generations commissioner for Oxfordshire)
- Implement a 'Future Generations impact assessment' section in all officer reports for elected decision-makers, and
- Set up an Oxfordshire Youth and Future Generations Advisory Council

- Requests that the Future Council Governance Group, as part of its remit, develop recommendations on how to structure political decision-making in the council in a way which best considers the impact of decisions on future generations, including exploring the role of deliberative and participatory processes (including citizens' assemblies) as part of routine council governance and decision-making.

- Asks that all of the above be done in consultation with people and organisations who have experience of delivering future generations work in UK political institutions, including the application of future generations principles, defined as "acting in a manner which seeks to ensure that the

needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”, and the development of wellbeing goals, with a view to creating equivalent goals for Oxfordshire.

Following debate, the motion was carried unanimously (55 voting in favour, 0 against and 0 abstentions).

**RESOLVED** (55 to 0):

Council believes that it is vital to consider the wellbeing of Future Generations in all decision-making in the Council, as set out in the Alliance’s guiding principles.

Therefore, Council requests the Cabinet to undertake the following as soon as reasonably practicable:

- Review how all decision-making and commissioning of services will consider the wellbeing of future generations and put in place appropriate internal controls to ensure this happens,
  - Consider the need for any additional internal roles to support this work (e.g. a future generations commissioner for Oxfordshire)
  - Implement a ‘Future Generations impact assessment’ section in all officer reports for elected decision-makers, and
  - Set up an Oxfordshire Youth and Future Generations Advisory Council
- Requests that the Future Council Governance Group, as part of its remit, develop recommendations on how to structure political decision-making in the council in a way which best considers the impact of decisions on future generations, including exploring the role of deliberative and participatory processes (including citizens’ assemblies) as part of routine council governance and decision-making.
- Asks that all of the above be done in consultation with people and organisations who have experience of delivering future generations work in UK political institutions, including the application future generations principles, defined as “acting in a manner which seeks to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”, and the development of wellbeing goals, with a view to creating equivalent goals for Oxfordshire

**23/23 MOTION BY COUNCILLOR CALUM MILLER**

(Agenda Item 17)

Councillor Calum Miller moved and Councillor Robin Johnston seconded the following motion:

The government recommitted in the 2022 Autumn Statement to the delivery of East West Rail (EWR). In 2021, EWR consulted on a series of proposals to address the fact that increased train frequency would, in due course, require the level crossing at London Road, Bicester, to be closed. The Chief Executive of EWR told a meeting of local elected representatives on 13 January that EWR would publish its proposals for the whole line by June.

This Council:

- Strongly supports East West Rail as it will increase opportunities for lower carbon travel and support sustainable growth and jobs;
- Notes that the closure of the London Road would sever the road connection between the south-east of Bicester and the town centre;
- Believes that it must be a priority, working with Cherwell District Council and East West Rail, to find a sustainable, funded solution that continues to provide suitable rail crossings for cars, cycles and pedestrians at or near London Road;
- Recognises that the next three months are critical to ensuring that this solution is adequately funded by EWR and national government, given that the new line is of national importance while the negative impact of closing London Road would fall on the local community in Bicester;
- Resolves to ask the Leader to write to the Chief Executive of East West Rail, stating this Council's support for new railway crossings at or near London Road, suitable for cars, cycles and pedestrians.

Following debate the motion was put to the vote and was carried unanimously (55 voting in favour, 0 against and 0 abstentions):-

**RESOLVED** (55 to 0):

The government recommitted in the 2022 Autumn Statement to the delivery of East West Rail (EWR). In 2021, EWR consulted on a series of proposals to address the fact that increased train frequency would, in due course, require the level crossing at London Road, Bicester, to be closed. The Chief Executive of EWR told a meeting of local elected representatives on 13 January that EWR would publish its proposals for the whole line by June.

This Council:

- Strongly supports East West Rail as it will increase opportunities for lower carbon travel and support sustainable growth and jobs;
- Notes that the closure of the London Road would sever the road connection between the south-east of Bicester and the town centre;
- Believes that it must be a priority, working with Cherwell District Council and East West Rail, to find a sustainable, funded solution that

continues to provide suitable rail crossings for cars, cycles and pedestrians at or near London Road;

- Recognises that the next three months are critical to ensuring that this solution is adequately funded by EWR and national government, given that the new line is of national importance while the negative impact of closing London Road would fall on the local community in Bicester;
- Resolves to ask the Leader to write to the Chief Executive of East West Rail, stating this Council's support for new railway crossings at or near London Road, suitable for cars, cycles and pedestrians.

## **24/23 MOTION BY COUNCILLOR LIAM WALKER**

(Agenda Item 18)

Councillor Liam Walker moved and Councillor Ian Snowdon seconded the following motion:

This Council recognises the deep concerns around the recent information that it did not release specific traffic impact data in relation to the Oxford bus filters consultation.

Given this revelation this Council now calls on the Cabinet to authorise officers to conduct a new six-week consultation for the Oxford bus filters trial with all information made available to the public, including a clear 'support or oppose' question.

Following debate the motion was put to the vote and was lost by 38 votes to 17.

## **25/23 MOTION BY COUNCILLOR EDDIE REEVES**

(Agenda Item 19)

Councillor Eddie Reeves moved and Councillor Yvonne Constance seconded the following motion:

Oxfordshire's Spare Seats programme has offered children a safe and affordable bus to school for c. 35 years.

This Council apologises unreservedly for its decision to send 'withdrawal' letters to parents under its Spare Seats scheme without parental or wider public consultation. The wording of its withdrawal letters caused significant anxiety and distress to parents in predominantly rural areas, with up to 235 children affected in the short term and as many as 1,384 students in the medium term.

To date, the Council has defended its decision on the basis that it has no legal obligation to operate the scheme, adding that its continuation: *"reinforces children travelling to schools further away than their nearest school"*.



This Council restates its commitment to the Spare Seats scheme and to the underlying principles of safeguarding parental choice, tackling climate change, encouraging social mixing and ensuring children's safety.

This Council requests the Cabinet to write to all parents/guardians whose children benefit from the scheme to reassure them that this Council is giving active consideration to improving Spare Seats and/or encouraging replacement community transport services to ensure that there is no loss of services to parents and pupils.

This Council requests the Cabinet to provide a written explanation to members of this Council surrounding the withdrawal letters and to work with the Chair(s) of relevant committee(s) to ensure that members can discharge their democratic duties as scrutineers of Council policy.

Councillor Andy Graham moved and Councillor Kate Gregory seconded the following amendment to the Motion as shown in bold italics and strikethrough below:

~~Oxfordshire's Spare Seats programme has offered children a safe and affordable bus to school for c. 35 years. This Council apologises unreservedly for its decision to send 'withdrawal' letters to parents under its Spare Seats scheme without parental or wider public consultation. The wording of its withdrawal letters caused significant anxiety and distress to parents in predominantly rural areas, with up to 235 children affected in the short term and as many as 1,384 students in the medium term.~~

~~To date, the Council has defended its decision on the basis that it has no legal obligation to operate the scheme, adding that its continuation: "reinforces children travelling to schools further away than their nearest school".~~

**Council recognises that a recent letter sent to the parents/guardians of 235 children regarding possible withdrawal of spare seats has caused anxiety. It notes that officers are working to identify commercial or community alternatives for those who are not offered a spare seat from September.**

**Council recognises that national policy on home to school transport has been followed by all administrations over the past c35 years, and that we continue to provide transport in line with national policy. Council notes that no authority has a legal obligation to operate the spare seats scheme, but recognises the successful efforts of officers over many years in working with schools and parents to identify alternatives where spare seats become unavailable**

~~This Council restates its commitment to the Spare Seats scheme and to the principles of safeguarding parental preference, tackling climate change, encouraging social mixing and ensuring children's safety. **The School Transport Working Group has published a review of the scheme and Council asks that its recommendations be assessed by the People Scrutiny Committee as rapidly as possible and its recommendations communicated to the Cabinet**~~

~~This Council requests the ~~Cabinet~~ **Director of Children's Services** to write to all parents/guardians whose children benefit from the scheme to reassure them that this Council is ~~giving active consideration to improving Spare Seats~~ **committed to providing spare seats wherever possible** and/or encouraging replacement community transport services to ensure that there is no loss of services to parents and pupils. ~~This Council requests the Cabinet to provide a written explanation to members of this Council surrounding the withdrawal letters and to work with the Chair(s) of relevant committee(s) to ensure that members can discharge their democratic duties as scrutineers of Council policy.~~~~

Following debate, the amendment by Councillor Andy Graham was put to the vote and was carried by 36 votes to 15.

The substantive motion, as amended, was carried by 36 votes to 15.

**RESOLVED** (36 to 15):-

~~Oxfordshire's Spare Seats programme has offered children a safe and affordable bus to school for c. 35 years. ~~This Council apologises unreservedly for its decision to send 'withdrawal' letters to parents under its Spare Seats scheme without parental or wider public consultation. The wording of its withdrawal letters caused significant anxiety and distress to parents in predominantly rural areas, with up to 235 children affected in the short term and as many as 1,384 students in the medium term.~~~~

~~To date, the Council has defended its decision on the basis that it has no legal obligation to operate the scheme, adding that its continuation: "reinforces children travelling to schools further away than their nearest school".~~

**Council recognises that a recent letter sent to the parents/guardians of 235 children regarding possible withdrawal of spare seats has caused anxiety. It notes that officers are working to identify commercial or community alternatives for those who are not offered a spare seat from September.**

**Council recognises that national policy on home to school transport has been followed by all administrations over the past c35 years, and that we continue to provide transport in line with national policy. Council notes that no authority has a legal obligation to operate the spare seats scheme, but recognises the successful efforts of officers over many years in working with schools and parents to identify alternatives where spare seats become unavailable**

~~This Council restates its commitment to the Spare Seats scheme and to the principles of safeguarding parental preference, tackling climate change, encouraging social mixing and ensuring children’s safety.~~ **The School Transport Working Group has published a review of the scheme and Council asks that its recommendations be assessed by the People Scrutiny Committee as rapidly as possible and its recommendations communicated to the Cabinet**

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**26/23 MOTION BY COUNCILLOR DONNA FORD**  
(Agenda Item 20)

The time being 3.55 pm, this Motion was considered dropped in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 15.1

**27/23 MOTION BY COUNCILLOR FREDDIE VAN MIERLO**  
(Agenda Item 21)

The time being 3.55 pm, this Motion was considered dropped in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 15.1

..... in the Chair

Date of signing .....

