

# Minutes of a meeting of the COUNCIL on Monday 20 February 2017

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## Members:

Councillor Altaf-Khan (Lord Mayor)	Councillor Brown (Sheriff)
Councillor Cook	Councillor Abbasi
Councillor Anwar	Councillor Azad
Councillor Brandt	Councillor Chapman
Councillor Clarkson	Councillor Coulter
Councillor Curran	Councillor Fooks
Councillor Fry	Councillor Gant
Councillor Goddard	Councillor Goff
Councillor Haines	Councillor Hayes
Councillor Henwood	Councillor Hollingsworth
Councillor Iley-Williamson	Councillor Kennedy
Councillor Landell Mills	Councillor Lloyd-Shogbesan
Councillor Lygo	Councillor Malik
Councillor Munkonge	Councillor Paule
Councillor Pegg	Councillor Pressel
Councillor Price	Councillor Rowley
Councillor Sanders	Councillor Simm
Councillor Simmons	Councillor Sinclair
Councillor Smith	Councillor Tanner
Councillor Tarver	Councillor Taylor
Councillor Thomas	Councillor Tidball
Councillor Turner	Councillor Upton
Councillor Wade	Councillor Wilkinson
Councillor Wolff	

## Apologies:

Councillor Humberstone sent apologies.

## **77. Apologies for absence**

Councillor Clarkson submitted apologies for lateness.

## **78. Declarations of interest**

On Minute 84, Councillors Abbasi and Malik declared that the taxi licensing fees and charges related to their disclosable pecuniary interests (employment and holding of licences). They left the room for the duration of that debate and decision then re-joined the meeting and took part in the debate at Minute 85.

## **79. Announcements relating to items on this agenda**

There were no announcements from the Lord Mayor, the Sheriff, Leader or senior officers.

With the permission of the Lord Mayor, Councillor Tanner apologised to Council and to the public unreservedly for ill-considered remarks he had made about homeless people and beggars in the city in a radio interview, and apologised for the resulting offence he gave.

The Lord Mayor acknowledged this.

## **80. Agreement of procedure for debate on the medium term financial strategy and budget**

**Council agreed** for Minute 85 the stages of debate and the times permitted for each of these in the procedure as detailed in the constitution and set out in the agenda.

## **81. Public addresses and questions that relate to matters for decision at this meeting**

Council heard an address from Neo (Homeless Man) about the need to reopen Lucy Faithfull House to provide spaces for homeless people.

The text of his submitted speech is appended to these minutes.

Councillor Rowley, Board Member for Housing, responded.

In summary, he thanked the speaker and thanked the Iffley Open House residents for meeting with him. He explained the difficulties in providing support for homeless people with no local connection in the current legal and funding climate. The council provided funding to support those it could and sought to secure support from the appropriate local authorities for those with no qualifying connection to Oxford. All places in Lucy Faithfull House had been replaced with supported housing. While he appreciated the need for such housing, for these and other reasons, he could not support the Green group's amendment to use a one-time saving to incur a continuing cost.

## **82. Report of the Council's Chief Finance Officer on the robustness of the 2017/18 budget**

Council considered a report from the Head of Financial Services on the soundness of the financial proposals before Council. The Head of Financial Services drew attention to the key points and to the levels of the Council's reserves and balances.

**Council resolved** to note the report and its implications.

## **83. Scrutiny Response: Budget 2017/2018**

Council considered the report and recommendations of the Finance Panel of the Scrutiny Committee to the City Executive Board meeting on 9 February and the Board's response.

**Council resolved** to note the report and the response.

## **84. Licensing and Gambling Acts and General Purposes Licensing Committees recommendations on fees and charges**

Councillors Abbasi and Malik, having declared this related to their disclosable pecuniary interests, withdrew from the council chamber for the duration of this item.

Council considered the recommendations of the Licensing and Gambling Acts and General Purposes Licensing Committees on fees and charges included in the budget before Council as part of appendix 7.

**Council resolved to:**

1. agree the recommendations of the Licensing and Gambling Acts Committee (Appendix 7, relevant Community Services Fees and Charges); and
2. agree the recommendations of the General Purposes Licensing Committee in respect of fees for other licensable activities (Appendix 7, relevant Community Services Fees and Charges); and
3. agree the recommendations of the General Purposes Licensing Committee in respect of fees for miscellaneous activities (Appendix 7, relevant Planning and Regulatory Fees and Charges).

## **85. Budget 2017/2018: Medium Term Financial Strategy 2017-18 to 2020-21 and 2017-18 Budget**

Councillor Goddard arrived shortly after the start of this item and Councillor Clarkson arrived during the second amendment debate.

Council had before it and considered:

- The budget submitted to the City Executive Board for consideration on 9 February 2017;

- The recommendations from the City Executive Board from that meeting;
- The Liberal Democrat group's submitted amendments published with the briefing note;
- The Green group's submitted amendments published with the briefing note;
- The Deputy Leader's submitted amendment on behalf of the Executive Board published with the briefing note;
- Two amendments from the Liberal Democrat group submitted at the meeting;
- Two amendments from the Green group submitted at the meeting.

Councillor Turner, seconded by Councillor Price, moved the City Executive Board recommendations and an amendment to these. This was agreed and included at (9) in the decision below.

#### **a) Alternative budget proposals**

Councillor Fooks, seconded by Councillor Gant, moved and seconded the Liberal Democrat group amendments circulated before the meeting.

After debate these were put to the vote.

With more councillors voting against than for, the Liberal Democrat amendments were not carried.

Councillor Simmons, seconded by Councillor Thomas, moved and seconded the Green group amendments circulated before the meeting.

After debate these were put to the vote.

With more councillors voting against than for, the Green group amendments were not carried.

#### **b) Further amendments to the City Executive Board budget as proposed and amended**

1. Councillor Thomas, seconded by Councillor Simmons, moved and seconded an amendment: *each year from 2017/18 to 2020/21 to use £50,000 of the vacancy factor identified in LibDem substantive budget amendment to provide additional transitional support to Children's Centres within the city.*

Councillor Turner proposed a further amendment: *each year from 2017/18 to 2020/21 to use £30,000 and provide support through the small grants budget to allow flexibility.* This was accepted by the proposer.

The S151 officer confirmed this was feasible but there were risks in using the vacancy factor this way. After debate this was put to the vote.

With more councillors voting for than against, the amendment was carried:

*to use £30,000 of the vacancy factor identified in LibDem substantive budget amendment to provide additional transitional support to Children's Centres within the city, provided through the small grants budget.*

2. Councillor Simmons, seconded by Councillor Gant, moved and seconded an amendment: *reduce the size of the communications team from 6 to 4, draw down*

*the disabled transport reserve and invest in a new fraud officer to generate sufficient on-going revenue to fund a range of small initiatives in opposition budget amendments.*

The S151 officer confirmed this was feasible. After debate this was put to the vote.

With more councillors voting against than for, the amendment was not carried.

3. Councillor Gant, seconded by Councillor Fooks, moved and seconded an amendment: *from 2017/18 onwards to use £20,000 of the vacancy factor identified to fund additional ESOL teaching.*

The Leader stated that while he would not support this he would be open to providing additional funds if there was a proven need. The S151 officer confirmed this was feasible but there were risks in using the vacancy factor this way. After debate this was put to the vote.

With more councillors voting against than for, the amendment was not carried.

4. Councillor Landell Mills, seconded by Councillor Goff, moved and seconded an amendment: *in 2017/18 only to make the £40,000 disabled transport contingency available for community initiatives.*

The S151 officer confirmed this was feasible. Councillor Hollingsworth stated that he planned to ensure the reserve was used for its intended purpose or released for other uses within the next financial year. After debate the amendment was put to the vote.

With more councillors voting against than for, the amendment was not carried.

### **c) Decision on the City Executive Board budget as amended**

After debate, the recommendations of the City Executive Board and two agreed amendments including the details of the medium term financial strategy, budget, capital programme, HRA, fees and charges and other matters as set out in the papers for the City Executive Board meeting and with the amendment agreed above, were put to the vote.

Council agreed to accept an amendment from the Green group to vary the procedure for voting to take three separate named votes: on the General Fund capital programme, the HRA capital programme, and the remainder of the recommendations.

In accordance with procedure rules and as required by law named votes were taken.

### **Council resolved by assent to:**

- a. note that the City Executive Board agreed to recommend to Council the budget published as part of the agenda for their meeting on 9 February with amendments as set out below;
- b. note the implications (contained in this budget) of the City Executive Board's decision on [15 December 2016](#) to make an investment to expand the [commercial waste fleet collection capacity](#) by adding an additional refuse collection vehicle (RCV) to the vehicle replacement programme and place an order for this vehicle

now and creating two permanent posts, one driver and one loader, to crew the additional RCV;

In accordance with legislative requirements, named votes were taken:

Recommendation 1 (c): General Fund capital programme

For the recommendations in the report – Councillors Abbasi, Anwar, Azad, Brown, Chapman, Clarkson, Cook, Coulter, Curran, Fry, Haines, Hayes, Henwood, Hollingsworth, Iley-Williamson, Kennedy, Lloyd-Shogbesan, Lygo, Malik, Munkonge, Paule, Pegg, Pressel, Price, Rowley, Sanders, Simm, , Sinclair, Smith, Tanner, Tarver, Taylor, Tidball, Turner, Upton. (37)

Against the recommendations in the report – Fooks, Gant, Goddard, Goff, Landell Mills, Wade, Wilkinson. (7)

Abstentions – Altaf-Khan, Brandt, Simmons, Thomas, Wolff. (5)

Recommendation 1 (c): Housing Revenue Account capital programme

For the recommendations in the report – Councillors Abbasi, Altaf-Khan, Anwar, Azad, Brandt, Brown, Chapman, Clarkson, Cook, Coulter, Curran, Fooks, Fry, Gant, Goddard, Goff, Haines, Hayes, Henwood, Hollingsworth, , Iley-Williamson, Kennedy, Landell Mills, Lloyd-Shogbesan, Lygo, Malik, Munkonge, Paule, Pegg, Pressel, Price, Rowley, Sanders, Simm, Simmons, Sinclair, Smith, Tanner, Tarver, Taylor, Thomas, Tidball, Turner, Upton, Wade, Wilkinson, Wolff. (47)

Against the recommendations in the report – None.

Abstentions – None.

Recommendations from the City Executive Board 1(a), 1(b), 2-7, and the agreed amendments to the budget at 8 and 9:

For the recommendations in the report – Councillors Abbasi, Altaf-Khan, Anwar, Azad, Brandt, Brown, Chapman, Clarkson, Cook, Coulter, Curran, Fry, Haines, Hayes, Henwood, Hollingsworth, Iley-Williamson, Kennedy, Lloyd-Shogbesan, Lygo, Malik, Munkonge, Paule, Pegg, Pressel, Price, Rowley, Sanders, Simm, Simmons, Sinclair, Smith, Tanner, Tarver, Taylor, Thomas, Tidball, Turner, Upton, Wolff. (40)

Against the recommendations in the report – Councillors Fooks, Gant, Goddard, Goff, Landell Mills, Wade, Wilkinson. (7)

Abstentions – None.

**Council resolved after the named votes as above to:**

1. **approve** the 2017-18 General Fund and Housing Revenue Account budgets and the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account Medium Term Financial Plan as set out in Appendices 1-10, noting:
  - a) the Council's General Fund Budget Requirement of £21.055 million for 2017/18 and an increase in the Band D Council Tax of 1.99% or £5.67 per annum representing a Band D Council Tax of £290.19 per annum;

- b) the Housing Revenue Account budget for 2017/18 of £44.285 million and a reduction of 1% (£1.06/wk) in social dwelling rents from April 2017 giving a revised weekly average social rent of £105.65 as set out in Appendix 4;
  - c1) the General Fund Capital Programme as shown in Appendix 6;
  - c2) the Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme as shown in Appendix 6;
2. **agree not to implement** the voluntary 'Pay to Stay' policy for Council house tenants (para 28 of the report refers);
  3. **agree** the fees and charges shown in Appendix 7 with the amendment to waive the fees for:
    - Interment of a child – who at the time of death was less than 1 month (Resident); and
    - Interment of a child - who at time of death was prior to 12th birthday (Resident).
  4. **delegate authority** to the Section 151 Officer in consultation with the Board Member for Finance, Asset Management and Public Health the decision to determine whether it is financially advantageous for the Council to enter into a Business Rates Distribution Agreement as referred to in paragraphs 16-17 of the report;
  5. **agree** an additional loan of up to £75,000 for working capital to Oxwed (Oxford West End Development Company) as highlighted in paragraph 41 of the report;
  6. **agree** provision of a loan facility to Oxford City Housing Ltd of up to £61 million (paras 39-40 of the report) an extra £48.75 million over the next four years, subject to the provision of; and agreement to a business plan by the Company;
  7. **agree** to retain the additional £200,000 pension provision to cover potential increased liability to the Council arising from TUPE transfer of staff to a Local Authority wholly owned company for Direct Services;
  8. **agree** the allocation of reserves in respect of Grenoble Road planning fees (an additional £220k) and responding to proposals for local government reorganisation and on a devolution deal (in the order of £75k) in accordance with the recommendation at paragraph 30 of the Report of the Council's Chief finance Officer (Minute 82); and
  9. **agree** to use £30,000 of the vacancy factor identified in LibDem substantive budget amendment to provide additional transitional support to Children's Centres within the city, provided through the small grants budget.

## 86. Council Tax 2017/18

Council considered a report setting out the necessary calculation to enable Council to set the 2017/18 Council Tax for Oxford City. As there were no changes to the budget requirements as a result of the decision at Minute 85 these were unchanged.

In accordance with legislative requirements, a named vote was taken:

For the recommendations in the report –

Abbasi, Altaf-Khan, Anwar, Azad, Brandt, Brown, Chapman, Clarkson, Cook, Coulter, Curran, Fooks, Fry, Gant, Goddard, Goff, Haines, Hayes, Henwood, Hollingsworth, , Iley-Williamson, Kennedy, Landell Mills, Lloyd-Shogbesan, Lygo, Malik, Munkonge, Paule, Pegg, Pressel, Price, Rowley, Sanders, Simm, Simmons, Sinclair, Smith, Tanner, Tarver, Taylor, Thomas, Tidball, Turner, Upton, Wade, Wilkinson, Wolff (47)

Against the recommendations in the report – None

Abstentions – None.

**Council resolved to** approve for 2017/18:

1. The City Council's precept and Council Tax requirement of £13,163,986 including Parish precepts and £12,949,098 excluding Parish precepts.
2. The average Band D Council Tax figure (excluding Parish Precepts) of £290.19, a **1.99%** increase on the 2016/17 figure of £284.52. Including Parish Precepts the figure is £295.00, a 2.06% increase (paragraphs 3 & 4 of the report).
3. A contribution of £10,000 to Old Marston Parish Council in recognition of the additional expenditure that the Parish incurs as a consequence of maintaining the cemetery (paragraphs 11 and 12 of the report).
4. The amount of £561,275 to be treated as Special Expenses (paragraph 15 of the report).
5. The Band D Council Taxes for the various areas of the City (excluding the Police and County Council's precepts) as follows:

Littlemore	£326.64
Old Marston	£320.16
Risinghurst and Sandhills	£310.16
Blackbird Leys	£288.43
Unparished Area	£292.58
6. These figures include the Parish Precepts and special expensing amounts as appropriate; in addition to the City-wide Council Tax of £277.61.

**Council resolved to note:**

7. Oxfordshire County Council's precept and Band D Council Tax as set out in paragraph 18 of the report.
8. The Police and Crime Commissioner for the Thames Valley's precept and Band D Council Tax as set out in paragraph 19 of the report, and

The overall average Band D equivalent Council Tax of £1,810.87 including Parish Precepts (subject to confirmation of the Band D figures for the County Council and Police and Crime Commissioner – as set out in paragraphs 18 and 19 of the report).

## **87. Treasury Management Strategy 2017/18**

Council considered a report submitted to the City Executive Board on 9 February setting out the Council's Treasury Management Strategy for 2017/18 together with the Prudential Indicators for 2017/18 to 2019/20.



**Council resolved to:**

1. **approve** the Treasury Management Strategy 2017/18, and adopt the Prudential Indicators for 2017/18 – 2019/20 as set out in paragraphs 7 to 37 and Appendix 2 of the report;
2. **approve** the Borrowing Strategy at paragraphs 7 to 18 of the report;
3. **approve** the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Statement at paragraphs 19 to 22 of the report which sets out the Council's policy on charging borrowing to the revenue account; and
4. **approve** the Investment Strategy for 2017/18 and investment criteria as set out in paragraphs 23 to 37 and Appendix 1 of the report.

## **88. Sale of properties to Oxford City Housing Limited**

Council considered a report submitted to the City Executive Board on 9 February asking for authorisation for the transfer of 5 properties to the company.

The Board Member for Housing explained that the low valuation reflected the proposed requirement that rent charged for the properties be set at the level of housing benefit payable in perpetuity.

**Council resolved to:**

1. **make available in 2016-17** a state aid compliant loan facility for Oxford City Housing Limited to enable the company to purchase the 5 properties identified in this report; the loan being for £742,606 which includes the purchase price and the associated costs of acquisition.
2. **include** the provision of the loan facility mentioned above as an additional expenditure item in the 2016/17 capital programme, funded by the associated capital receipt received from the disposal.

## **89. Annual update on the Corporate Plan 2016-2020**

Council considered a report submitted to the City Executive Board on 9 February which seeks approval of the 2016 annual update report on the Corporate Plan 2016-20.

The Leader explained that the Board had agreed amendments to the document to correct numerical errors and officers had authority to make further necessary changes to ensure the accuracy of the document.

**Council resolved to** note the annual update of the Corporate Plan 2016-20.

**The meeting started at 5.00 pm and ended at 8.50 pm**

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**To:** Council

**Date:** 20 February 2017

**Title of Report:** Public addresses and questions that relate to matters for decision – as submitted by the speaker

## Introduction

1. One address made by a member of the public to the Council on the budget, registered by the deadline in the Constitution, is below.
2. This report will be republished after the Council meeting as part of the minutes pack. This will list the full text of speeches delivered as submitted, summaries of speeches delivered which differ significantly from those submitted, and any further responses.

## Address by Neo - Speech regarding Green Party Budget Amendment to re-open Lucy Faithfull

Thank you for the opportunity this evening to speak to you about homelessness in Oxford and the importance of re-opening Lucy Faithfull House.

My name is Neo. I am homeless, and I speak tonight not just for myself but on behalf of all those sleeping rough who – for various reasons - are unable to access local services.

For the last few weeks myself and local volunteers have been housing and taking care of homeless people at Iffley Open House. The public support has been immense and we feel that it's time for a change.

I have a simple question for you tonight: why do the doors to Lucy Faithful house remain locked whilst people sleep in doorways?

I want to share with a few statements from residents and volunteers at Iffley Open House:

Lewis Lock says *"I have one week left as a resident of Iffley Open House. Please, please vote for the budget amendment to re-open Lucy Faithfull House. We need more homeless accommodation not less"*.

Luke Bolt says *"I'm a homeless resident of Iffley Open House. I'm asking you to vote to re-open Lucy Faithfull House. You can make a real difference to people like me with just one vote."*

Miranda Shaw – one of our volunteers says *"I believe from my experience as a local resident of Oxford that we have a serious responsibility to do everything we possibly*

*can to provide safe spaces for all people to be able to live in. Whether that is refugees, local people who have hit hard times, young, old - anyone. We have a responsibility - all of us - as a community to do everything that we can to look after one another. After all, homelessness can happen to any of us."*

I know that reopening Lucy Faithfull house is the right thing to do if we have the possibility of doing that. We must do everything we can collectively do to support our community in whatever ways we can.

If local people and students can house 20 homeless people for 2 months, through creative solutions then, surely the council can come up with a creative solution or just agree to use the money that has been ring-fenced for this sort of emergency for the purpose it is intended for.

After all, what do we pay our taxes for - if not to provide support structures for those who need them? We know that people want to support each other from the overwhelming amounts of donations, volunteers, money and time that people have given from Oxfordshire, London and further afield. Everyone wants you to do the right thing. You have a mandate from the public to use this money in this way. You have the money to do it. So do it!

We know that a short amount of time can make a huge difference to people to be able to change their patterns or find a different path. Having a safe place to call home, to be able to apply for work and to get a bank account could be the difference between starting a new life and staying on the streets and then surviving or not surviving.

Former city councillor Elise Benjamin – another of our volunteers says: *"I have witnessed first-hand the difference having somewhere warm and dry can have on someone's life. Simply by providing a roof over someone's head they are in a better position to move on with their lives, finding work, accommodation, and going back to full time education, as is the case with residents at Iffley Open House. I have also seen evidence that people are being made homeless on an almost daily basis in Oxford"*.

Iffley Open House will close soon and we face a race against time to ensure that no-one ends up back on the streets. This is why we need more accommodation, not less.

Oxford has a growing homelessness problem and urgent action is needed to provide some shelter in order to help people get back on their feet. By re-opening Lucy Faithfull House you will be sending out a message that Oxford cares about people over profits. Rejecting the Green budget amendment will simply confirm what many residents fear, that you would rather sell off the Lucy Faithfull site than provide vital support for people in need."

Please do the right thing and support the amendment to re-open Lucy Faithfull House.