

Minutes of a meeting of the COUNCIL on Monday 19 February 2018

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Committee members:

Councillor Fooks (Lord Mayor)	Councillor Altaf-Khan (Sheriff)
Councillor Abbasi	Councillor Azad
Councillor Brandt	Councillor Brown
Councillor Chapman	Councillor Clarkson
Councillor Cook	Councillor Gant
Councillor Goddard	Councillor Goff
Councillor Haines	Councillor Hayes
Councillor Henwood	Councillor Hollingsworth
Councillor Humberstone	Councillor Iley-Williamson
Councillor Kennedy	Councillor Ladbrooke
Councillor Lloyd-Shogbesan	Councillor Lygo
Councillor Munkonge	Councillor Paule
Councillor Pressel	Councillor Price
Councillor Rowley	Councillor Sanders
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(s) Simm, Anwar, Curran, Fry, Landell Mills and Malik sent apologies.

90. Apologies for absence

Apologies are noted in the attendance.

Councillor Humberstone submitted apologies for lateness.

91. Declarations of interest

On Minute 98, Councillor Abbasi declared that the taxi licensing fees and charges related to his disclosable pecuniary interests (employment and holding of licences). He left the room for the duration of that debate and decision then re-joined the meeting and took part in the debate at Minute 99.

92. Announcements relating to items on this agenda

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

93. Agreement of procedure for debate on the medium term financial strategy and budget

Council agreed for Minute 99 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.

94. Public addresses and questions that relate to matters for decision at this meeting

Council heard an address opposing the extension of the Seacourt Park and Ride from Barbara Witkowski, Oxfordshire Badger Group.

Council had before them an address opposing car park charges in Headington submitted by Elaine Bellenger from Monaco in Headington who was unable to attend.

The text of both submitted speeches is available in the briefing note.

Councillor Turner, Board Member for Finance and Asset Management, thanked the speaker and responded to both submitted addresses.

In summary, he said that the issues raised about Seacourt Park and Ride were more relevant to planning than to the allocation of a budget for proposed work. The charges for Headington and St Leonard's' car parks had been changed as a result of the consultation responses. However the points raised in both addresses would be borne in mind during the debate.

95. Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel

Council considered the report of the Head of Law and Governance and the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel.

Councillor Brown, Leader of the Council, proposed and Councillor Price, Board Member, seconded the recommendations.

Council accepted recommendations 2-6 below but debated the justification and appropriateness of the additional payment to the non-statutory Deputy Leader.

On being put to the vote, voting separately on recommendation 1 and then recommendations 2-6:

Council resolved to

1. agree that the non-statutory Deputy Leader should receive a Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) from 1 January 2018 at the rate of one full SRA (1 x Basic Allowance) in accordance with paragraphs 17-23 of the report from the IRP;
2. agree that if a qualifying member in receipt of an SRA wishes to take a leave of absence from the duties for which they receive the SRA due to maternity or adoption leave they will continue to receive half of the SRA to which they are entitled for a period of up to six months in accordance with paragraphs 26-31 of the report from the IRP;
3. delegate to the Committee and Member Services Manager authority to pay the costs of making reasonable adjustments for any Councillor with a disability who makes an application to him up to £1,000 in any one year (1 April – 31 March) in accordance with paragraphs 24-25 of the report from the IRP;
4. delegate authority to the Head of Law & Governance to exercise her discretion if a member with a disability requires reasonable adjustments in excess of £1,000 in any year;
5. authorise the Head of Law and Governance to amend the existing Members' Allowances scheme in accordance with the above recommendations and to incorporate it into the Council's Constitution; and
6. thank the Independent Remuneration Panel for its work.

96. 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 including risks and to the levels of the Council's reserves and balances and contingencies.

Council resolved to note the report and its implications.

97. Scrutiny Response: Budget 2018/2019

Council considered the report and recommendations of the Finance Panel of the Scrutiny Committee to the City Executive Board meeting on 13 February and the Board's response. Councillor Simmons, Finance Panel member, explained the Panels' approach to scrutinising the budget and formulating their recommendations, the majority of which were accepted by the Board. He thanked panel members and the Chair, Councillor Fry, for their work.

Council resolved to note the report and the response.

98. Licensing and Gambling Acts and General Purposes Licensing Committees recommendations on fees and charges

Councillors Abbasi, having declared this item related to his 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, and a change to the recommendations proposed by officer in light of an impending review of charges for licensing sex establishment.

Councillor Cook proposed the recommendations from the Licensing and Gambling Acts Committee and Councillor Clarkson proposed the recommendations from the General Purposes Licensing Committee with amendments.

Council resolved to:

1. **agree** the licence fees and charges for 2018/19 as set out in 9a, 9b and 9c and in Item 10 Appendix 7, and in the corrections to the budget published at 10d (relating to specific Community Services Fees and Charges),
2. and to **delegate** the setting of fees and charges for sex establishments to the Head of Law and Governance and the Head of Financial Services on conclusion of the review into these charges.

99. Budget 2017/2018: Medium Term Financial Strategy 2019-20 to 2021-22 and 2018-19 Budget

Councillors Goddard and Humberstone arrived shortly before the start of this item and Councillor Abbasi re-joined the meeting for this item.

Council had before it and considered:

- The report of the Head of Finance and the budget and medium term financial strategy submitted to the City Executive Board for consideration on 13 February 2018;
- The minutes of 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 Head of Finance's comments on the amendments circulated at the meeting;
- An additional recommendation from the Executive Board published with the briefing note;
- Technical corrections to the budget made after the publication of the agenda published with the briefing note;
- Three individual amendments submitted and circulated at the meeting;

Councillor Turner, seconded by Councillor Brown, moved the City Executive Board recommendations.

a) Opposition Group amendments to the budget

Councillor Gant, seconded by Councillor Wade, moved and seconded the Liberal Democrat group amendments.

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.

After debate these were put to the vote.

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

b) Further individual amendments to the City Executive Board budget as proposed

1. Councillor Wilkinson, seconded by Councillor Altaf Khan, moved an amendment: *mitigate Headington and St Leonards car park increase to 0-1 hour £1.70 and 1-2 hours £2.20 for one year (2018-19), thus stepping the increase in charges to bring these into line with other suburban car parks in order to mitigate resistance and collate usage data, consult and carry out business impact assessments.*

To be funded by reducing the car park resurfacing budget by £52k.

The S151 officer confirmed this was feasible although reducing the resurfacing programme may result in problems requiring a higher future expenditure.

After debate this was put to the vote.

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

2. Councillor Thomas, seconded by Councillor Simmons, moved an amendment: *allocate funds for a trial in 2018/19 to open up SWEP (severe weather emergency protocol) any night when the temperature drops below zero rather than just when the forecast is below zero for 3 nights, to avoid the need for rough sleepers to sleep on the streets in sub-zero conditions, the trial will be reviewed prior to the 2019/20 budget to see if the initiative needs to be made permanent.*

To be funded by £75,000 from homelessness reserves.

The S151 officer confirmed this was feasible, subject to verification of the cost and having regard to pressures on homelessness service provision.

Councillor Turner said in response that the additional funding in the homelessness reserve (resolution 5 below) would be used to support and extend services and the City Executive Board would consider options in more detail including the need to

extend winter provision. Options could include extending SWEP (which was expensive and challenging to operate on short notice), other cold-weather provision, increased year round provision, extending and improving the referrals to the churches' pilot scheme, or other effective methods of increasing support would be considered.

After debate this was put to the vote.

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

3. Councillor Goddard, seconded by Councillor Gant, moved an amendment: *to fund a non-clinical mental health practitioner for young people as described in the Liberal Democrat amendments for one year in the first instance, to engage in a small but meaningful way with an important and on-going issue,*

To be funded by £26,000 from the car park resurfacing budget.

The S151 officer confirmed this was feasible although reducing the resurfacing programme may result in problems requiring a higher future expenditure.

After debate this 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

After debate, the recommendations of the City Executive Board including the details of the medium term financial strategy, budget, capital programme, HRA, fees and charges and other matters as set out in the published agenda and briefing note for this meeting were put to the vote.

In accordance with legislative requirements, a recorded vote was then taken:

For the City Executive Board recommendations to Council – Councillors Abbasi, Azad, Brown, Chapman, Clarkson, Cook, Hayes, Henwood, Hollingsworth, Humberstone, Iley-Williamson, Kennedy, Ladbrooke, Lloyd-Shogbesan, Lygo, Munkonge, Paule, Pressel, Price, Rowley, Sanders, Sinclair, Smith, Tanner, Tarver, Taylor, Tidball, Turner, Upton (29)

Against the City Executive Board recommendations to Council – Councillors Altaf-Khan, Haines, Wade (3)

Abstentions – Councillors Brandt, Fooks, Gant, Goddard, Goff, Simmons, Thomas, Wilkinson, Wolff (9)

Council resolved after the named vote above to:

- 1) **Approve** the 2018-19 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 with corrections at 10d of this agenda, noting
 - a) the Council's General Fund Budget Requirement of £23.369 million for 2018/19 and an increase in the Band D Council Tax of 2.99% or £8.67 per annum representing a Band D Council Tax of £298.86 per annum

- b) the Housing Revenue Account budget for 2018/19 of £43.241 million and a reduction of 1% (£0.85/wk) in social dwelling rents from April 2018 giving a revised weekly average social rent of £104.58 as set out in Appendix 4
 - c) the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme as shown in Appendix 6
- 2) **Agree** the fees and charges shown in Appendix 7 (*noting the decision taken separately at Item 9*)
 - 3) **Delegate authority to** the Section 151 Officer in consultation with the Board Member for Finance and Assets 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 12-14 below.
 - 4) **Agree** to increase the long term empty property premium from 50% to 100% at the earliest opportunity so as to encourage long term empty properties back into use.
 - 5) that the additional award of Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction Scheme Administration Grant of £193k for 2018/19 **is allocated as follows** :
 - i. Additional one off resources on the Housing Benefit Service - £100k
 - ii. Homelessness reserve - £93 k

100. Council Tax 2018/19

Council considered a report setting out the necessary calculation to enable Council to set the 2018/19 Council Tax for Oxford City. As there were no changes to the budget requirements as a result of the decision above these were unchanged from those in the report.

Councillor Turner proposed and Councillor Brown seconded the recommendations.

In accordance with legislative requirements, a recorded vote was then taken:

For the recommendations to Council – Councillors Abbasi, Altaf-Khan, Azad, Brandt, Brown, Chapman, Clarkson, Cook, Fooks, Gant, Goddard, Goff, Haines, Hayes, Henwood, Hollingsworth, Humberstone, Iley-Williamson, Kennedy, Ladbrooke, Lloyd-Shogbesan, Lygo, Munkonge, Paule, Pressel, Price, Rowley, Sanders, Simmons, Sinclair, Smith, Tanner, Tarver, Taylor, Thomas, Tidball, Turner, Upton, Wade, Wilkinson, Wolff (41)

Against the recommendations and abstentions - none.

Council resolved to approve for 2018/19:

1. The City Council's precept and Council Tax requirement of £13,556,751 including Parish precepts and £13,336,276 excluding Parish precepts.
2. The average Band D Council Tax figure (excluding Parish Precepts) of £298.86 a 2.99% increase on the 2017/18 figure of £290.19. Including Parish Precepts the figure is £303.80, a 2.98% increase (see paragraphs 2 to 6).

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 (see paragraphs 12 and 13).
4. The amount of £577,644 to be treated as Special Expenses (see paragraph 16).
5. The Band D Council Taxes for the various areas of the City (excluding the Police and County Council's precepts) as follows:

Littlemore	£336.08
Old Marston	£329.75
Risinghurst and Sandhills	£318.77
Blackbird Leys	£297.30
Unparished Area	£301.32

These figures include Parish Precepts and special expensing amounts as appropriate; in addition to the City-wide Council Tax of £285.92.

Council resolved to note:

6. Oxfordshire County Council's precept and Band D Council Tax as set out in paragraph 19 in the report.
7. The Police and Crime Commissioner for the Thames Valley's precept and Band D Council Tax as set out in paragraph 20 in the report, and
8. The overall average Band D equivalent Council Tax of £1,912.27 including Parish Precepts (subject to confirmation of the Band D figures for the County Council and Police and Crime Commissioner).

101. Treasury Management Strategy 2018/19

Council considered a report submitted to the City Executive Board on 13 February setting out the Council's Treasury Management Strategy together with the Prudential Indicators.

Councillor Turner moved and Councillor Brown seconded the recommendations.

Council resolved to:

1. **approve** the Treasury Management Strategy 2018/19 as set out in paragraphs 7 to 43 and the Prudential Indicators for 2018/19 – 2021/22 as set out in Appendix 2 of the report;
2. **approve** the Borrowing Strategy at paragraphs 12 to 22 of the report;
3. **approve** the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Statement at paragraphs 23 to 24 of the report which sets out the Council's policy on charging borrowing to the revenue account; and
4. **approve** the Investment Strategy for 2018/19 and investment criteria as set out in paragraphs 25 to 39 and Appendix 1 of the report.

102. Annual update on the Corporate Plan 2018

Council considered a report submitted to the City Executive Board on 13 February which seeks approval of the annual update report on the Corporate Plan 2016-20.

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

The meeting started at 5.00 pm and ended at 9.00 pm

Chair

Date: Monday 23 April 2018

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Papers circulated at meeting and available online before the meeting but not in the printed briefing note

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Head of Finance – Section 151 Comments on Lib Dem Group Alternative Budget for 2018-19 to 2021/22

Date 13-02-18

I have reviewed the budget submitted by the Liberal Democrat party as an alternative to the Labour Administrations budget and can conclude that it is arithmetically correct and could be implemented if voted through.

On the Administrations HRA budget there are reduced revenue contributions spent on works to form car parking verges of £400k the changes for which have also been reflected in the capital programme.

On the Capital Budget an additional £2.015 million of schemes have been included with £5.084 million deleted. The additional spend relates largely to the extension of the capital scheme for the purchase of homes for homeless families, the revenue saving for which has been included in the General Fund Revenue Account. The deleted capital expenditure refers specifically to the Seacourt Park and Ride extension and the deletion of annual expenditure included within the HRA Great Estates programme on car parking verges, this in turn would release resources of an equivalent value to be used to fund the additional items of spend or be returned to resources.

On General Fund Revenue the main features of additional cost relates to loss of additional income at Seacourt Park and Ride in line with the proposal to cancel the scheme together with a number of service based changes. There are also a number of service based savings including the reversal of the proposals for changes to car parking charges at Headington. Savings in revenue contributions to capital by utilising the capital resources underspent have also been used.

Nigel Kennedy

Head of Financial Services (Section 151 Officer)

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Head of Finance – Section 151 Comments on Green Group Alternative Budget for 2018-19 to 2021/22

Date 13-02-18

I have reviewed the budget submitted by the Green party as an alternative to the Labour Administrations budget and can conclude that it is arithmetically correct and could be implemented if voted through subject to observations below.

On the Administrations HRA budget there are reduced revenue contributions spent on works to car parking verges of £200k which have been replaced with similar equivalent spend on energy efficiency initiatives and environmental improvements to grass verges. These changes have also been reflected in the capital programme.

On the Capital Budget an additional £4.470 million of schemes have been included with £4.484 million deleted. A detailed business case would be required to substantiate the plans for the additional schemes especially for the additional £1.5 million of monies included for the scheme at East Oxford Community Centre and Cave Street the viability and planning approvals for which are yet to be determined . The deleted capital expenditure refers to the Seacourt Park and Ride extension, car parks resurfacing and the car parking verges funded through the HRA Great Estates Budget. This in turn would release resources of an equivalent value to be used to fund the additional spend.

On revenue the main features of additional cost relates to increased budget for homelessness, loss of additional income at Seacourt Park and Ride in line with the proposal to cancel the scheme, reinstating the reversal of £45k voluntary sector grants and extending the contribution to PCSO's from 1 to 4 years. There are a number of additional savings with the most significant being increasing park and ride charges from £2 to £3 per day, the late night licence levy and savings from Salix capital funding.

Nigel Kennedy

Head of Financial Services (Section 151 Officer)

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