

Minutes of a meeting of **COUNCIL** on Thursday 13 February 2020

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Council members:

Councillor Simmons (Lord Mayor)	Councillor Altaf-Khan (Deputy Lord Mayor)
Councillor Goddard (Sheriff)	Councillor Arshad
Councillor Azad	Councillor Aziz
Councillor Bely-Summers	Councillor Brown
Councillor Chapman	Councillor Clarkson
Councillor Cook	Councillor Corais
Councillor Curran	Councillor Djafari-Marbini
Councillor Donnelly	Councillor Fry
Councillor Gant	Councillor Garden
Councillor Haines	Councillor Harris
Councillor Hayes	Councillor Henwood
Councillor Hollingsworth	Councillor Howlett
Councillor Humberstone	Councillor Kennedy
Councillor Landell Mills	Councillor Lloyd-Shogbesan
Councillor Lygo	Councillor Malik
Councillor McManners	Councillor Munkonge
Councillor Pressel	Councillor Rowley
Councillor Rush	Councillor Linda Smith
Councillor Roz Smith	Councillor Tanner
Councillor Tarver	Councillor Taylor
Councillor Tidball	Councillor Turner
Councillor Upton	Councillor Wade
Councillor Wolff	

Apologies:

Councillors Gotch, Iley-Williamson and Simm sent apologies.

The minutes show when Councillors who were absent for part of the meeting arrived and left.

82. Declarations of interest

Councillor Malik declared that the decisions at Minute 88 affected his declared disclosable pecuniary interest (DPI) and he would leave the meeting and take no part in the debate on these items.

Relevant Dispensations: The Standards Committee on 1 September 2018 agreed a set of general dispensations for all councillors, including but not restricted to:

- determining an allowance (including special responsibility allowances), travelling expense, payment or indemnity given to Members;
- where the Member (or spouse or partner) holds a tenancy or lease with the Council as long as the matter does not relate to the particular tenancy or lease of the Member (their spouse or partner);
- setting the Council Tax or a precept under the Local Government and Finance Act 1992 (or any subsequent legislation).

83. Announcements relating to items on the agenda

The Lord Mayor reminded Council of:

- arrangements for his charity fundraiser evening on 15 March;
- that he would ask Council to defer consideration of item 10 (Council Tax) on the agenda, then to adjourn the meeting and reconvene on 24 February at 6.00pm to set the Council Tax.

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

Council noted the procedure and times permitted for each stage in the budget debate (Item 9 on the agenda) as detailed in the Council's Constitution.

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

There were no addresses or questions.

86. Report of the Council's Chief Finance Officer on the robustness of the 2020/2021 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. He reported that on 6 February the Government announced the final financial settlement for 2020-21 which confirmed the figures in the provisional financial settlement. This however would not be ratified by the House of Commons until their debate re-scheduled from 12 February to 24 February. He did not expect that the final financial settlement would change.

Council resolved to note the report and its implications in setting its budget for 2020/21 and the indicative budgets for 2021 to 2024.

87. Scrutiny Response: 2020/2021 Budget

Council considered the report and recommendations of the Budget Review Group of the Scrutiny Committee to the Cabinet meeting on 12 February and the Cabinet's response. Councillor Fry, Chair of the Budget Review Group, drew attention to the key findings in the report including the very small percentage of business rates retained by the council (8%); that the council had to fund 100% of any discretionary rate relief; and the very large amount spent on homelessness prevention despite the lack of stable central funding.

In response to a question from Councillor Gant, Councillor Turner confirmed that in his introduction to the budget report, the sum of £18m referred to covered both committed and uncommitted capital spending.

Council resolved to note the report and Cabinet's responses to the recommendations.

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

Councillor Malik having declared this item related to his disclosable pecuniary interest, withdrew from the council chamber for the duration of this item.

Councillors Cook and Clarkson, Chairs of the Licensing Acts Committee and the General Purposes Licensing Committee, moved the recommendations from their respective committees.

On being seconded and put to the vote these were agreed.

Council resolved to agree the licence fees and charges for 2020/21 as set out in in the appendices to the reports to the committees and repeated in the budget book at Appendix 7 (relevant Community Services Fees and Charges and relevant Planning and Regulatory Fees and Charges).

89. Budget 2020/21 and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2021/22 to 2023/24

*Councillor Malik re-joined the meeting at the start of this item.
Councillors Corais and Munkonge arrived at this point.*

Council had before it and considered:

- The report of the Head of Finance to Cabinet on 12 February 2020 setting out the outcome of the budget consultation and seeking agreement of the Council's Budget for 2020/21 and the Medium Term Financial Strategy for the following 3 years;
- The additional recommendation agreed at that meeting: *Agree the additional unbudgeted amount of RSI grant of £840k for 2020-21 is added to the Council's Homelessness earmarked reserve.*

- 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 published with the briefing note;
- One individual amendment submitted and circulated at the meeting

Councillor Turner, seconded by Councillor Brown, moved agreement of the Budget for 2020/21 and the Medium Term Financial Strategy and the seven recommendations from Cabinet.

a) Liberal Democrat group amendments to the budget

Councillor Arshad arrived during this section of the debate.

Councillor Roz Smith, seconded by Councillor Wade, moved 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.

b) Green group amendments to the budget

Councillor Wolff, seconded by Councillor Simmons, moved 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.

c) Individual amendment to the Cabinet budget as proposed

Councillors Garden and Roz Smith left the meeting during this section of the debate. Councillor Hayes left the chamber for the duration of this part of the debate as this affected his DPI as the charity he worked for was involved with the group referred to in the amendment.

Councillor Turner left the chamber for the duration of this part of the debate as the amendment specifically referred to his Special Responsibility Allowance.

Councillor Wade, seconded by Councillor Gant, moved an amendment: *award £5,000 in-year revenue spending to support the Art Bus, a project of the Art Room funded by stopping the additional Special Responsibility Allowance to the non-statutory deputy leader for one year from 1 April of as soon as possible thereafter.* This was to support the new venture and bring the benefit of art therapy to children across the city.

The S151 officer confirmed the proposals were arithmetically correct.

The Leader in responding to the amendment reminded councillors that this worthwhile project could be funded through their ward budgets or the by applying for a council grant.

After debate the amendment was put to the vote.

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

d) Decision on the Cabinet budget

Councillors Hayes and Turner returned to the chamber. Councillor Djafari-Marbini arrived during the debate on this item.

After a debate, the recommendations of the Cabinet agreed at their meeting on 12 February including the details of the medium term financial strategy, budget for 2020/21, capital programme, HRA, fees and charges and other matters as set out in the published agenda and briefing note for this meeting, and the additional recommendation as set out above, were put to the vote.

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

For the Cabinet recommendations to Council:

Councillors Arshad, Azad, Aziz, Bely-Summers, Brown, Chapman, Clarkson, Cook, Corais, Curran, Djafari-Marbini, Donnelly, Fry, Haines, Hayes, Henwood, Hollingsworth, Howlett, Humberstone, Kennedy, Lloyd-Shogbesan, Lygo, McManners, Malik, Munkonge, Pressel, Rowley, Rush, Simmons, Linda Smith, Tanner, Tarver, Taylor, Tidball, Turner, Upton, Wolff (37).

Against the Cabinet recommendations to Council; Councillors Gant, Harris, Wade (3).

Abstentions: Councillors Altaf-Khan, Goddard, Landell Mills (3).

Council resolved in accordance with the named vote to:

1. **approve** the 2020-21 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 of the report, noting:
 - a) the Council's General Fund Budget Requirement of £24.183 million for 2020/21 and an increase in the Band D Council Tax of 1.99% or £6.13 per annum representing a Band D Council Tax of £313.92 per annum subject to confirmation of the referendum levels contained in paragraphs 5 and 6 of the report;
 - b) the Housing Revenue Account budget for 2020/21 of £44.455 million and an increase of 2.70% (£3.06/wk) in social dwelling rents from 1 April 2020 giving a revised weekly average social rent of £105.32 as set out in Appendix 5 of the report;
 - c) the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme as shown in Appendix 6 of the report;
2. **agree** the fees and charges shown in Appendix 7 of the report;
3. **delegate** to the Section 151 Officer in consultation with the Cabinet 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 13-15 of the report;

4. **approve** a loan facility of up to £500k for working capital to the Council's Joint Venture, Oxford West End Development Ltd (OxWed) at terms to be agreed by the Council's Section 151 Officer as referred to in paragraph 37 of the report; and
5. **approve** the payment into the County Council Pension Fund of £5 million as referred to in the Consultation Budget and paragraph 21 of the report;
6. **note** the changes to Business Rates reliefs and discounts for 2020-21 as referred to in paragraph 12; and
7. **agree** the additional unbudgeted amount of RSI grant of £840k for 2020-21 is added to the Council's Homelessness earmarked reserve.

90. Council Tax 2020/21

Council noted that the relevant legislation required the decision to set the Council Tax must be taken after the Police and Crime Commissioner for Thames Valley had set his precept following debate of his budget at the 14 February meeting of the Police and Crime Panel.

Accordingly the Lord Mayor proposed and Council agreed to

- adjourn the debate on this item to a meeting of Council at 6.00pm on 24 February (the reserve meeting date) (11.19 j of the Constitution refers)
- move to the next business on the agenda (11.19 h of the Constitution refers).

91. Treasury Management Strategy 2020/21

Councillor Tidball left the meeting during the debate on this item.

Council considered the report of the Head of Financial Services, submitted to Cabinet on 12 February 2020, presenting the proposed Treasury Management Strategy for 2020/21 together with the Prudential Indicators for 2020/21 to 2024/25.

Councillor Turner, Cabinet Member for Finance and Asset Management, presented the report and moved the recommendations, which were agreed on being seconded and put to the vote.

Council resolved to approve:

1. the Treasury Management Strategy 2020/21 as set out in paragraphs 18 to 64 and the Prudential Indicators for 2020/21 – 2024/25 as set out in Appendix 2 of the report;
2. the Borrowing Strategy at paragraphs 26 to 38 of the report;
3. the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Statement at paragraphs 39 to 41 of the report which sets out the Council's policy on charging borrowing to the revenue account; and
4. the Investment Strategy for 2020/21 and investment criteria as set out in paragraphs 42 to 63 and Appendix 1 of the report.

92. Capital Strategy 2020/21 – 2024/25

Council considered the report of the Head of Financial Services, submitted to Cabinet on 12 February 2020, presenting the proposed Capital Strategy for approval. Councillor Turner, Cabinet Member for Finance and Asset Management, presented the report and moved the recommendations. These were agreed on being seconded and put to the vote.

Council resolved to approve the Capital Strategy set out at Appendix A of the report.

93. Corporate Strategy 20-24 - final draft for approval

Council considered the report of the Assistant Chief Executive, submitted to Cabinet on 12 February 2020, on the post consultation draft of the Council's Corporate Strategy for 2020 to 2024 ("Council Strategy 2020–2024"). Councillor Brown, Leader of the Council, presented the report and moved Cabinet's recommendations to Council. These were agreed on being seconded and put to the vote.

Council resolved to:

1. **adopt** the Council Strategy 2020-2024 attached as Appendix 1 to the report;
2. **delegate** authority to the Head of Corporate Policy, Partnerships and Communications in consultation with the Council Leader to make further minor amendments as required prior to its publication in March 2020;
3. **note** that Key Performance Indicators agreed by Cabinet will be inserted as a schedule in the Council Strategy.

94. Review of polling places

Council considered the report of the Head of Law and Governance asking for approval of the schedule of polling districts and polling places (shown at Appendix A to the report) for the administrative area of the City Council as required by the Electoral Administration Act 2006. Councillor Brown, Leader of the Council, presented the report and moved the recommendations. These were agreed on being seconded and put to the vote.

Council resolved to:

1. **approve** the schedule of polling districts and polling places (shown at Appendix 1 of the report) for the administrative area of the City Council;
2. **delegate** to the Returning Officer the power to make changes to polling places and polling stations in emergency situations; and
3. **request** the Returning Officer to investigate the suggested alternative polling places and report back to Council as necessary following the May 2020 elections.

The meeting started at 5.00 pm and ended at 8.45 pm

Lord Mayor

Date:

