

Remote meeting

Minutes of a meeting of Council on Wednesday 17 February 2021

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Council members present:

Councillor Lygo (Lord Mayor)

Councillor Wolff (Sheriff)

Councillor Arshad

Councillor Aziz

Councillor Brown

Councillor Clarkson

Councillor Corais

Councillor Fry

Councillor Garden

Councillor Hayes

Councillor Hollingsworth

Councillor Humberstone

Councillor Kennedy

Councillor Lloyd-Shogbesan

Councillor McManners

Councillor Pressel

Councillor Simm

Councillor Linda Smith

Councillor Tanner

Councillor Taylor

Councillor Turner

Councillor Wade

Councillor Goddard (Deputy Lord Mayor)

Councillor Altaf-Khan

Councillor Azad

Councillor Bely-Summers

Councillor Chapman

Councillor Cook

Councillor Curran

Councillor Gant

Councillor Gotch

Councillor Henwood

Councillor Howlett

Councillor Iley-Williamson

Councillor Landell Mills

Councillor Malik

Councillor Munkonge

Councillor Rowley

Councillor Simmons

Councillor Roz Smith

Councillor Tarver

Councillor Tidball

Councillor Upton

Apologies:

Councillors Djafari-Marbini and Haines sent apologies.

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

73. Declarations of interest

Cllr Malik declared that the decisions at Minute 78 affected his declared disclosable pecuniary interest (DPI) and he would leave the meeting and take no part in the debate on this item.

74. Announcements

The Lord Mayor noted that this meeting was held on 'random acts of kindness' day.

He reported the death of former councillor David Penwarden, who represented Iffley from 2000 to 2002, and Cllr Goddard and Cllr Turner paid tribute.

The Leader of the Council announced:

- at the next Council meeting she had invited the new Chief Executive to give a presentation on constraints on the workforce arising from new tasks and duties and different ways of working as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic;
- this was the outgoing Chief Executive's last Council meeting. The Leader of the Council and other Group Leaders thanked him and paid tribute to his enthusiasm and hard work in taking forward the Council's strategic vision and work since May 2017.

75. Procedure for debate on the medium term financial strategy and budget

Council noted the procedure and the timings for debate on the budget at Minute 81

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

There were no addresses or questions.

77. Proposed changes to the Constitution 2020/21

Council considered the report of the Head of Law and Governance recommending changes to the Council's Constitution following an annual review of the Constitution overseen by a cross-party group, and the text of the revised Constitution.

Council noted that the changes would be introduced at two points:

- changes relating to the planning committees – for the start of the new council year in May
- all other changes – immediately

Cllr Chapman, Cabinet Member for Customer Focused Services, introduced the report, answered questions, and proposed the recommendations.

After debate the recommendations were agreed on being seconded and put to the vote.

Council resolved to:

1. Approve the list of proposed amendments to the Constitution detailed in Appendix 1 and highlighted in the draft Constitution at Appendix 2 of the report;
2. Adopt the revised Oxford City Council Constitution attached at Appendix 2 of the report;
3. Delegate authority to the Head of Law & Governance to amend the Constitution with effect from May 2021 to reflect the changes to the planning committees.
4. Delegate authority to the Head of Law and Governance to amend any further wording and/or numbering that is identified as being inconsistent with the changes approved by Council.

78. Licensing and Gambling Acts and General Purposes Licensing Committees - recommendations on fees and charges 2021/22

Cllr Malik having declared this item related to his disclosable pecuniary interest, left the virtual meeting for the duration of this item and returned to the meeting at the start of the next item.

Council considered the Licensing and Gambling Acts and General Purposes Licensing Committees' recommendation to approve fees and charges for the licensing functions falling within their remits, included in the budget papers at Item 10 Appendix 7 (Regulatory & Community Safety Fees and Charges), with the correction to the fees for a Street Café Licence (to £815pa) and for an annual Pavement Licence (Temporary) (to £100).

Cllr Cook and Cllr Clarkson, Chairs of the Licensing & Gambling Acts Committee and the General Purposes Licensing Committee, moved and seconded the recommendations from the two committees.

On being put to the vote these were agreed.

Council resolved to approve the fees and charges included in the budget papers at Item 10 Appendix 7 (Regulatory & Community Safety Fees and Charges), with the correction to the fees for a Street Café Licence (to £815pa) and for an annual Pavement Licence (Temporary) (to £100).

79. Report of the Council's Chief Finance Officer on the robustness of the 2021/2022 budget

Council considered a report from the Head of Financial Services on the robustness of the estimates made for the purposes of the calculations of the budget; and the adequacy of the proposed financial reserves. The Head of Financial Services drew attention to the challenging financial position of the council as a result of the economic and public health impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, with the council experiencing significant losses of income and increased expenditure resulting in a budget deficit of

around £29 million against the original 2020/21 budget forecast. He highlighted the impact on the levels of the Council's reserves and balances and contingencies.

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

80. Report of the Scrutiny Budget Review Group

Council considered the report and recommendations of the Budget Review Group of the Scrutiny Committee to the Cabinet meeting on 10 February and the Cabinet's response.

Cllr Fry, Chair of the Budget Review Group, outlined the key findings and recommendations in the report and Cllr Turner outlined Cabinet's responses. Both thanked all the officers involved in the budget scrutiny process.

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

81. Budget 2021/22 and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2022/23 to 2024/25

Cllr Arshad joined the meeting and Cllr Iley-Williamson left the meeting during the first part of the debate on this item.

Council had before it and considered:

- The report of the Head of Finance to Cabinet on 10 February 2021 setting out the outcome of the budget consultation and seeking agreement of the Council's Budget for 2021/22 and the Medium Term Financial Strategy for the following three years;
- Cabinet's recommendations as set out in the minutes of their meeting on 10 February 2021;
- 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;
- Three individual amendments submitted and circulated at the meeting.

Councillor Turner, seconded by Councillor Brown, proposed agreement of the Budget and the Medium Term Financial Strategy and the eight recommendations from Cabinet.

a) Liberal Democrat group amendments to the budget

Councillor Roz Smith, seconded by Councillor Wade, moved the Liberal Democrat group amendments.

After debate and immediately before the vote, a named vote was requested by more than 10 councillors.

For the amendments:

Councillors Altaf-Khan, Gant, Garden, Goddard, Gotch, Landell Mills, Roz Smith, Wade (8)

Against the amendments:

Councillors Arshad, Azad, Aziz, Bely-Summers, Brown, Chapman, Clarkson, Cook, Corais, Curran, Fry, Hayes, Henwood, Hollingsworth, Howlett, Humberstone, Kennedy, Lloyd-Shogbesan, Lygo, McManners, Malik, Munkonge, Pressel, Rowley, Simm, Linda Smith, Tanner, Tarver, Taylor, Tidball, Turner, Upton (32)

Abstentions: *Councillors Simmons, Wolff (2)*

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

b) Green group amendments to the budget

Cllr Simmons, seconded by Cllr Wolff, moved the Green group amendments.

After debate and immediately before the vote, a named vote was requested by more than 10 councillors.

For the amendments:

Councillors Altaf-Khan, Gant, Garden, Goddard, Gotch, Henwood, Landell Mills, Simmons, Roz Smith, Wade, Wolff (11)

Against the amendments:

Councillors Arshad, Azad, Aziz, Bely-Summers, Brown, Chapman, Clarkson, Cook, Corais, Curran, Fry, Hayes, Hollingsworth, Howlett, Humberstone, Kennedy, Lloyd-Shogbesan, Lygo, McManners, Malik, Munkonge, Pressel, Rowley, Simm, Linda Smith, Tanner, Tarver, Taylor, Tidball, Turner, Upton (31)

Abstentions: *(0)*

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

c) Individual amendment to the budget

Three individual amendments were then submitted to Council for consideration.

(1) Reinstatement of the cut to Green Flag accreditation.

Cllr Wade, seconded by Cllr Landell Mills, proposed the amendment. The S151 officer confirmed the proposals were arithmetically correct.

After debate the amendment was put to the vote.

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

(2) Delete payment to non-statutory second deputy leader and return funds to General Fund/reserves

The Monitoring Officer confirmed that this was covered by a general dispensation and related to future and not current recipients of special responsibility allowances. Nevertheless Cllr Hayes left the virtual meeting for the duration of the debate as it specifically referred to his special responsibility allowance.

The Monitoring Officer reminded Council that this amendment assumed a change to the councillors' allowances scheme. Such a change must be made only after taking advice from its Independent Remuneration Panel.

Cllr Gant, seconded by Cllr Garden, proposed the amendment. The S151 officer confirmed the proposals were arithmetically correct.

After debate the amendment was put to the vote.

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

(3) Additional income from re-introducing inflation linked car parking charges from Y2 (£200k over 3 years); additional expenditure on reversing cut to Oxford Living Wage £80k over 4 years) and top-up depleted homelessness reserve (£120k in third year)

The S151 officer confirmed the proposals were arithmetically correct.

Cllr Simmons moved the amendment, and the Lord Mayor proposed and the meeting agreed that this be put to the vote without debate.

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

d) Decision on the Cabinet budget

After a debate, the eight recommendations of the Cabinet as 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 to amend Appendix 7 as set out in Minute 78, were put to the vote.

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

For the Cabinet recommendations to Council as set out in the minutes of that meeting:

Councillors Arshad, Azad, Aziz, Bely-Summers, Brown, Chapman, Clarkson, Cook, Corais, Curran, Fry, Hayes, Henwood, Hollingsworth, Howlett, Humberstone, Kennedy, Lloyd-Shogbesan, Lygo, McManners, Malik, Munkonge, Pressel, Rowley, Simm, Linda Smith, Tanner, Tarver, Taylor, Tidball, Turner, Upton (32)

Against the Cabinet recommendations to Council: *Councillors Gant, Garden, Goddard, Wade (4)*

Abstentions: *Councillors Altaf-Khan, Gotch, Landell Mills, Simmons, Roz Smith, Wolff (6)*

With more councillors voting for than against, the resolution to approve the Cabinet recommendations and amendment to Appendix 7 was carried.

Council resolved in accordance with the recorded vote to:

approve the 2021-22 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 £23.648 million for 2021/22 and an increase in the Band D Council Tax of 1.99% or £6.25 per annum representing a Band D Council Tax of £320.17 per annum;
- b) the Housing Revenue Account budget for 2021/22 of £46.649 million and an increase of 1.50% (£1.57 per week) in social dwelling rents from 1 April 2021 giving a revised weekly average social rent of £105.32 as set out in Appendix 5;
- c) the intention to consult Council house tenants on the setting of the initial rent on all new social housing at 5% above the formula rent whilst applying formula rent to any new builds let prior to the end of the consultation period as indicated in paragraph (paragraphs 38- 45);
- d) the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme as shown in Appendix 6;
- e) the changes to fees and charges shown in Appendix 7 and in the addendum to the Appendix;
- f) the delegation 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 below;
- g) the payment into the County Council Pension Fund of £5 million as referred to in the Consultation Budget and paragraph 20 of the report;
- h) the inclusion of an additional loan facility of up to £1million on terms to be agreed by the Head of Financial Services, subject to the consideration and agreement of the Shareholder and Joint Venture Group (SJVG) and Cabinet of a report to Cabinet in March 2021, as referred to in paragraph 55 of the report, and a further £150k of revenue, from reserves, to be allocated in the 2021/22 budget.

82. Council Tax 2021/22

Cllr Tidball left the meeting at the start of this item.

Council considered the report of the Head of Financial Services setting out the necessary calculations to enable Council to set the 2021/22 Council Tax for Oxford City.

Cllr Turner, the Cabinet Member for Finance and Asset Management, proposed and Cllr Kennedy seconded the recommendations in the report.

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

For the resolution set out below:

Councillors Arshad, Azad, Aziz, Bely-Summers, Brown, Chapman, Clarkson, Cook, Corais, Curran, Fry, Gant, Garden, Goddard, Gotch, Hayes, Henwood, Hollingsworth, Howlett, Humberstone, Kennedy, Landell Mills, Lloyd-Shogbesan, Lygo, McManners, Malik, Munkonge, Pressel, Rowley, Simm, Simmons, Linda Smith, Tanner, Tarver, Taylor, Turner, Upton, Wade, Wolff (39).

Against the resolution: None (0)

Abstentions: Councillors Altaf Khan, Roz Smith (2)

With more councillors voting for than against, the resolution was carried.

Council resolved in accordance with the recorded vote to approve for the financial year 2021/22 recommendations 1 to 5 and to note points 6 to 8:

1. The City Council's precept and Council Tax requirement of £14,911,465 including Parish precepts and £14,633,631 excluding Parish precepts.
2. The average Band D Council Tax figure (excluding Parish Precepts) of £320.17 a 1.99% increase on the 2020/2021 figure of £313.92. Including Parish Precepts the figure is £326.25, a 2.0% increase (see paragraphs 2 to 6 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 (see paragraphs 9 and 10 of the report).
4. The amount of £632,859 to be treated as Special Expenses (see paragraph 13 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	£364.84
Old Marston	£354.03
Risinghurst and Sandhills	£343.15
Blackbird Leys	£325.38
Unparished Area	£322.86

These figures include Parish Precepts and special expensing amounts as appropriate; in addition to the City-wide Council Tax of £306.33.

and to note:

6. Oxfordshire County Council's precept and Band D Council Tax as set out in paragraph 17 of the report
7. The Police and Crime Commissioner for the Thames Valley's precept and Band D Council Tax as set out in paragraph 18 of the report, and
8. The overall average Band D equivalent Council Tax of £2,130.64 including Parish Precepts (subject to confirmation of the Band D figures for the County Council and Police and Crime Commissioner).

83. Council tax reduction scheme 2021/2022

Council considered the report of the Head of Financial Services seeking agreement for the principles of the new scheme.

Cllr Turner, the Cabinet Member for Finance and Asset Management, introduced the report and proposed the recommendations.

The recommendations were agreed on being seconded and put to the vote.

Council resolved to adopt the new Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2021/22 taking into account the changes to the income bandings as highlighted in paragraphs 11-16 of the report, and moving to an Income banded scheme for all Council Tax Reduction claimants.

84. Treasury Management Strategy 2021/22

Council considered the report of the Head of Financial Services presenting the Council's Treasury Management Strategy for 2021/22 together with the Prudential Indicators for 2021/22 to 2024/25.

Cllr Turner, the Cabinet Member for Finance and Asset Management, introduced the report, proposed the recommendations and answered questions.

The recommendations were agreed on being seconded and put to the vote.

Council resolved to approve:

1. The Treasury Management Strategy 2021/22 as set out in paragraphs 19 to 62 and the Prudential Indicators for 2021/22 – 2024/25 as set out in Appendix 2 of the report;
2. The Borrowing Strategy at paragraphs 27 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 2021/22 and investment criteria as set out in paragraphs 42 to 62 and Appendix 1 of the report.

85. Capital Strategy 2021/22 to 2024/25

Council considered the report of the Head of Financial Services presenting the Capital Strategy for approval.

Cllr Turner, the Cabinet Member for Finance and Asset Management, presented the report, answered questions and proposed the recommendations.

Cllr Simmons proposed and Cllr Turner accepted an amendment to also delegate authority to the Head of Finance, in consultation with the Cabinet Member, to make changes to the target in para 6.3.3 to align the capital strategy to those in the Council's net zero carbon strategy. Cllr Turner made a further amendment to include delegation of other minor amendments as may be necessary to amend the targets in the strategy to align with those agreed by the Council.

The recommendations as amended were agreed on being seconded and put to the vote.

Council resolved to approve the Capital Strategy 2021/22 to 2024/25 attached at Appendix A of the report and to delegate authority to the Head of Finance, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance and Asset Management, to make changes to the target in para 6.3.3 to align the capital strategy to those in the Council's net zero carbon strategy and to make any other minor amendments that may be necessary.

86. Review of the Statement of Licensing Policy

Council considered the report of the Head of Regulatory Services & Community Safety and the proposed updated Statement of Licensing Policy

Cllr Cook, the Chair of the Licensing & Gambling Acts Committee, proposed the recommendation without comment.

The recommendation was agreed on being seconded and put to the vote.

Council resolved to adopt the updated Statement of Licensing Policy to take effect in February 2021.

87. Programme approval and allocation for Public Sector Decarbonisation Funding

Council considered the report of the Transition Director seeking programme approval and delegations to enable capital grant spend of Public Sector Decarbonisation Funding for provision of heat pumps, thermal storage and battery storage at Oxford City Council sites and development of renewable energy to power to reduce council carbon emissions.

Cllr Hayes, the Cabinet Member for Green Transport and Zero Carbon Oxford, introduced the report, proposed the recommendation and answered questions.

The recommendation was agreed on being seconded and put to the vote.

Council resolved to allocate a capital budget of £10.923 million to enable capital grant spend of Public Sector Decarbonisation Funding.

88. Housing and Asset Management System Project Update and Funding Position

Council considered the report of the Head of Housing Services and Head of Financial Services presenting the current status of the Housing and Asset Management System, to describe the plan for completion, and seeking additional funds to achieve project go-live. The confidential appendix was noted but not discussed.

Cllr Rowley, the Cabinet Member for Affordable Housing, introduced the report, proposed the recommendation and answered questions about the plan for the full system implementation.

The recommendation was agreed on being seconded and put to the vote.

Council resolved to approve a capital budget for the additional expenditure of £264,296 required to complete the Housing and Asset Management System project.

The meeting started at 5.00 pm and ended at 10.00 pm

Lord Mayor

Date: Monday 22 March 2021

Decisions on items of business take effect immediately:

Details are in the Council's Constitution.