

Minutes of a meeting of Council on Monday 4 October 2021

Council members present:

Councillor Lygo (Lord Mayor)

Councillor Wolff (Sheriff)

Councillor Altaf-Khan

Councillor Aziz

Councillor Blackings

Councillor Chapman

Councillor Cook

Councillor Coyne

Councillor Djafari-Marbini

Councillor Fouweather

Councillor Gant

Councillor Hollingsworth

Councillor Jarvis

Councillor Latif

Councillor Miles

Councillor Munkonge

Councillor Pegg

Councillor Rowley

Councillor Roz Smith

Councillor Thomas

Councillor Upton

Councillor Waite

Councillor Goddard (Deputy Lord Mayor)

Councillor Abrishami

Councillor Arshad

Councillor Bely-Summers

Councillor Brown

Councillor Clarkson

Councillor Corais

Councillor Diggins

Councillor Dunne

Councillor Fry

Councillor Hall

Councillor Hunt

Councillor Landell Mills

Councillor Malik

Councillor Mundy

Councillor Nala-Hartley

Councillor Pressel

Councillor Linda Smith

Councillor Smowton

Councillor Turner

Councillor Wade

Apologies:

Councillors Haines, Hayes, Humberstone, Rehman and Tidball sent apologies.

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

35. Declarations of interest

There no declarations.

36. Minutes

Council agreed to approve the minutes of the ordinary meeting held on 26 July 2021 as a true and correct record.

37. Appointment to Committees

No changes notified.

38. Announcements

The Lord Mayor spoke about some of the events he had attended including the blessing of St Giles' Fair; events in the community, at University colleges, and further afield; and the 'riding of the franchise' walk along a section of the city boundary to mark the re-opening of the Museum of Oxford on 11 October.

The Deputy Lord Mayor outlined some of the events he had attended.

The Sheriff reported a successful round up and inspection of the Port Meadow cattle.

At the invitation of the Lord Mayor, the City Rector Rev Buckley spoke to the meeting.

The Leader of the Council reflected on women's and girls' loss of confidence in police forces following the conviction of Sarah Everard's murderer, and on the grievous loss of women's lives to violence, in particular remembering Sarah's family.

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

There were no addresses or questions.

40. Integrated Performance Report for Q1

Council considered the report of the Head of Financial Services and Head of Business Improvement submitted to Cabinet on 15 September on Finance, Risk and Corporate Performance matters as at 30 June 2021.

Cllr Turner, the Cabinet Member, introduced the report and answered questions on details of the financial forecasts. He proposed the recommendations for Council,

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

Council resolved to:

agree the addition of £10 million into the Capital programme as set out in paragraph 12 of the report (to establish a capital budget to enable payment of the monies set out in the agreement with Thomas White Oxford (TWO) to deliver infrastructure works to Northern Gateway funded by Housing Infrastructure Funds (HIF) from Homes England in accordance with the Constitution, under a resolution by Council).

41. A bid for government RSAP funding to support the Council's Homelessness Strategy

Council considered the report of the Executive Director of Housing submitted to Cabinet on 15 September seeking approval to proceed with the bid to Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government for funding from the Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme (RSAP) and to agree to include the required capital match funding in the Council's budget.

Cllr Blackings, the Cabinet Member, introduced the report, proposed the recommendations. The recommendation was agreed on being seconded and put to the vote.

Council resolved to agree to make budget provision for the required match funding of £2 million.

42. Decisions taken under Part 9.3 (b) of the Constitution

Council considered the report setting out the decisions made by the Chief Executive using the urgency powers delegated to the Chief Executive in Part 9.3 of the Constitution taken since the last report to Council.

Cllr Brown, the Leader of the Council, introduced the report and proposed that Council formally acknowledge notification of this decision.

Council resolved to note the decision taken.

43. Question on Cabinet Minutes: Minutes of meeting Wednesday 15 September 2021

Minute 38: Cllr Smowton asked whether the options in the consultation to reduce the maximum Council Tax support from 100% were discussed by Cabinet prior to the consultation launch.

Cllr Aziz replied that a wide range of options were included for consultation, but these would be debated by the Cabinet only after the consultation closed and public responses were considered.

Minute 46: Cllr Wolff asked why the Ice Rink and Rose Hill Community Centre were removed from the Decarbonisation Programme.

Cllr Turner replied that the costs of delivering all proposed schemes exceeded the available funding, and their removal would have the least impact on progress toward meeting the Council's 2030 zero carbon target while maximising the use of available grant to pay for decarbonisation measures and enabling works across the other four sites, and delivering the largest future carbon saving.

44. Questions on Notice from Members of Council

74 written questions were asked of the Cabinet Members and the Leader, and these and written responses were published before the meeting.

These along with summaries of the 31 supplementary questions and responses asked and given at the meeting are set out in the minutes pack.

Councillors Corais and Djafari-Marbini arrived near the start of this item.

The Lord Mayor left the meeting during this item to attend a civic event. The Deputy Lord Mayor took the chair for the remainder of this item until the Lord Mayor returned at the conclusion of the debate on Motion (b).

45. Scrutiny Committee update report

With the assent of Council, this item was taken before the break.

The Scrutiny Committee Chair Cllr Wade gave way to Cllr Gant, who as the Committee Chair for 2020/21 presented the 2020/21 Annual Scrutiny Report.

Cllr Gant introduced the report and summarised the work of the main committee; standing panels and review groups; and the involvement with the Future Oxfordshire Partnership (formerly Oxfordshire Growth Board) scrutiny panel. He thanked the officers responsible for managing the scrutiny function, the councillors who served on committees and panels, and the many officers who were involved.

Cllr Hollingsworth commented that scrutiny functioned well and added value, thanks to the hard work of both councillors and officers, and was a positive example for other authorities.

Cllr Wade noted that remote meetings on Zoom attracted a higher public attendance and viewing of meetings, and asked how to maintain that increased visibility of Scrutiny's work.

Council resolved to note this report.

The meeting broke for 30 minutes at the conclusion of this item, and Cllr Bely-Summers left at that point.

46. Public addresses and questions that do not relate to matters for decision at this Council meeting

Council heard three addresses and four questions as below. Cabinet Members read their written responses and expanded on these.

Both addresses and responses are set out in full in the document in the minutes pack.

1. Address by Dr Gian Guptal of the Oxford Hindu Temple & Community Centre Project (OHTCCP). Dr Guptal had previously handed a petition to the Chief Executive and Cllr Aziz outside the meeting.
2. Question from Mrs Kanta Gopal (OHTCCP)
3. Question from Mr Mukesh Shori, OHTCCP
4. Question from Ms Ingrid Widdows, OHTCCP
5. Question from John Marjot, representing the Friends of Lye Valley: Warren Crescent Development: 13/01555/CT3
6. Address by Craig Holmes, on behalf of residents of Warren Crescent.
7. Address from Ferishta Bakhtari-Boodoo, in support of Motion 15d (Afghanistan and refugees)

The Deputy Lord Mayor thanked all the speakers for their contributions.

47. Outside organisation/Committee Chair reports and questions

There were no reports for this meeting.

48. Motions on notice 4 October 2021

Council had before it 11 motions on notice submitted in accordance with Council procedure rules and reached decisions as set out below.

Motions agreed as set out below:

- a) A social enterprise lettings agency for Oxford, as amended (proposer Cllr Wade, seconder Cllr Landell Mills, amendment proposer Cllr Turner)
- b) A Partnership between Local Government and National Government to tackle Climate Change, as amended (proposer Cllr Wolff, seconder Cllr Jarvis; amendment, proposer Cllr Rowley, seconder Cllr Brown)
- d) Afghanistan and refugees (proposer Cllr Djafari-Marbini)

Motion not taken by agreement of the meeting:

- c) John Radcliffe Hospital parking (proposer Cllr Haines, seconder Cllr Malik)

Motions not taken as the time allocated for debate was insufficient or had finished:

- e) E-Scooters and active travel (proposer Cllr Gant, seconder Cllr Smowton)
- f) Oxford Stadium (proposer Cllr Pegg, seconder Cllr Dunne)

- g) EU Nationals deserves to be treated with respect (proposer Cllr Bely-Summers, seconder Cllr Corais)
- h) Opposition to the Government's Planning White Paper (proposer Cllr Gant)
- i) Opposition to the Health and Care Bill (proposer Cllr Jarvis)
- j) End Fire and Rehire (proposer Cllr Mundy, seconder Cllr Dunne)
- k) COP26 (proposer Cllr Dunne, seconder Cllr Mundy)

a) A social enterprise lettings agency for Oxford (proposer Cllr Wade, seconder Cllr Landell Mills)

Cllr Wade, seconded by Cllr Landell Mills, accepted the amendment put forward by Cllr Turner and proposed her revised motion with the amendment as set out in briefing note.

After debate and on being put to the vote the motion was agreed.

Council resolved to adopt the following motion:

This Council is concerned that the Government's RSAP funding for housing the homeless may not continue. ^[1]

At best, Government funding for house purchase in Oxford is inadequate given the high cost of housing here, which can entail residents being offered places to live in areas where housing is cheaper but they know nobody. So it is more urgent than ever to find homes for the homeless in the private rented sector, within or as close to Oxford as possible.

The Council already does its best to place vulnerable residents in the private rented sector, but this has proved to be a difficult and time-consuming task for officers because landlords will often reject benefit claimants and are even less likely to accept those with behavioural or addiction or mental health problems and in particular because Local Housing Allowance rates are inadequate in Oxford.

This Council notes the research work done by Aspire, in particular with Home Turf Lettings and Homes for Good, into the possibility of setting up a social enterprise lettings agency in Oxford.

Home Turf Lettings (HTL), ^[2] a social enterprise lettings agency in Bristol. This is a not-for-profit lettings agency under the wing of a parent charity, DHI. Ongoing social support both to Landlords and to Tenants is provided by City Council care providers, by DHI and by other charities. 41% of lettings are to homeless families, 40% to Rough Sleepers and people in hostels, 16% to people who have had addiction treatment and are considered 'ready' to move on with their lives. HTL aims to have their tenants living near the city centre so that they can still be in contact with their street community.

Another model can be seen in Homes For Good, ^[3] a different but very successful company in Glasgow, which has recently received £2.4m lottery funding to roll out its model across the UK. This is a company limited by guarantee, it is a social lettings agency, not a social enterprise lettings agency. It is an ethical business, not a charity. It has in-house tenancy officers dedicated to Tenants' care and so to the

sustainability of placements. The lease model they seek is for years rather than months.

Homes For Good reports that, as a result of Covid, a number of PRS Landlords have been more willing to consider supported housing Tenants because (a) they — Landlords and Tenants — will be supported throughout, and (b) LHA rates are consistent so there are no failed payments/voids.

As a result of its research, Aspire has begun a social enterprise pilot, under which four Oxford residents have already secured accommodation.

Council requests the Leader and Chief Executive to

- call on the Secretary of State for MHCLG to ensure continued funding under the RSA Programme through 22/23 and onwards.
 - provide an update to Cabinet indicating the success of the Aspire pilot study at the end of its first year in July 2022.
1. [Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme](#): most of the remaining capital funding (£140.9m) is available for 21/22 “with a small amount available to deliver homes in the first half of 22/23.”
 2. <https://www.hometurflettings.co.uk/>
 3. <https://homesforgood.org.uk/>

b) A Partnership between Local Government and National Government to tackle Climate Change

Cllr Wolff, seconded by Cllr Jarvis, proposed the submitted motion as set out in the agenda and briefing note.

Cllr Rowley, seconded by Cllr Brown, proposed the amendment as published in the briefing note.

Council debated the motion and amendment. On being put to the vote, the amendment was agreed.

On being put to the vote the amended motion was then agreed.

Council resolved to adopt the following motion:

In 2018, at COP24, the UK Government signed up to having ‘domestic institutional arrangements, public participation and engagement with local communities’ so that localities can play their part in delivering the UKs ‘Nationally Determined Contributions’ in the Paris Climate Agreement.

In May 2021 the COP26 President said that collaboration would be a key objective of the climate summit.

“Governments, business and civil society (sometimes called ‘non-state actors’ and including local government) need to work together to transform the ways we power our homes and businesses, grow our food, develop infrastructure and move ourselves and goods around”

Despite these agreements and statements there is still no formal relationship allowing joint partnership working between Local and National Government on climate action.

Local government is nearest to our communities and, as Oxford City Council's record shows, perhaps most clearly with our Citizens' Assembly on Climate Change, councils play a critical role in our communities.

Oxford is set to become a net zero city by 2040 or earlier—ten years ahead of the national legal target. We set this ambition because we care about our city and all who live within it, both now and in the future. We have the toughest air quality standard in the country. We set this ambition because we care about the health of everyone in our city. Our actions to realise these targets are widely recognised as best practice and we proactively share examples of our work with Government to influence policy, powers, and funding.

This Council

1. Reaffirms and expands its 2019 climate emergency declaration to declare a climate and ecological emergency to guide all future decision-making.
2. Calls on Oxfordshire County Council to demonstrate the power of local government at the time of COP26 by fleshing out their public commitment to full and permanent pedestrianisation of Broad Street with a timetable for action that includes further consultation (building on the large amount of convening and consulting by the City Council) and implementation of a scheme in time for the summer of 2022.
3. asks the Leader to continue to add her voice to calls by the Local Government Association, the Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning and Transport and others for a joint local & national government Task Force to plan action to reach 'net zero' emissions. Such a partnership can set appropriate regulations, benchmarks and targets and create the much needed long-term funding mechanisms to enable local communities and economies to decarbonise whilst remaining resilient and sustainable.
4. continues to work in partnership with local councils and through networks such as UK100.
5. asks the Leader to write to Alok Sharma MP, President for COP26, the Prime Minister and the Leadership Board of the LGA informing them of our support for a joint Local/National Government Climate Change Partnership Taskforce and asking for one to be established before the opening of the COP26 Summit in order to honour the commitment it made there.

c) John Radcliffe Hospital parking (proposed by Cllr Haines, seconded by Cllr Malik)

The Lord Mayor resumed the Chair from the Deputy Lord Mayor on the conclusion of the previous debate.

With the agreement of Council, this motion was not taken as Cllr Haines was absent and unable to propose his motion.

d) Afghanistan and refugees

Cllr Djafari-Marbini, seconded by Cllr Arshad, proposed the submitted motion as set out in the agenda and briefing note.

After debate and on being put to the vote the motion was agreed.

Council resolved to adopt the following motion:

The Council notes with deep sadness the unfolding humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan. Our thoughts are with the people of Afghanistan who have been subject to decades of violence over multiple generations and with our neighbours who are fearing for their loved ones.

The end of the 20-year war on terror has brought into sharp focus the ongoing humanitarian disaster in a country ravaged by decades of conflict. There have been ever-rising rates of poverty and childhood malnourishment, millions internally displaced (in no small part due to the US drones programme) and minorities fleeing persecution from the Taliban. In Oxfordshire this has included spouses of British citizens and family members of UK nationals including those of the persecuted Hazara community.

This has needed an urgent humanitarian response from the UK, in particular as a partner in the occupation. The recent breach of Afghan interpreters' data many of whom are left behind is indicative of what we know from our local Afghan community – that the government is falling woefully short of its responsibility to provide sanctuary to those in need, not least our British nationals and sub-contracted Afghan partners.

We are proud to be a City of Sanctuary; we have resettled 30 refugee families since 2015 through the [Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme](#). Since the Taliban have taken over in Afghanistan, our diverse communities across Oxford/shire have come together to respond with kindness in the knowledge that no one chooses to migrate from a beloved home.

Oxford City and Oxfordshire County Councils work tirelessly with refugee organisations including Asylum Welcome to prepare to support Afghan refugees to build new lives here and to assist those living in temporary accommodation. Cherwell District Council has sourced 10 houses and here in the city we are actively seeking and working with private landlords to allow us to use government funding. This will offer much needed homes so that some families can start rebuilding their lives.

Millions in the global south are forced to flee due to conflict, persecution, and extreme poverty. The present crisis has further exposed the lack of safe routes to sanctuary and the cruel nature of this government's Nationality and Borders Bill. Compassionate leadership is needed now more than ever to ensure that *all* people seeking safety have access to a dignified life.

We therefore call on our Council leader to:

1. Ask the Home Secretary to withdraw the Borders Bill, grant permanent Refugee Status to *all* Afghan nationals who are in the UK and release those detained, create safe pathways for undocumented Afghans to obtain refugee status and facilitate family reunions including from third countries.
2. Ask the Local Government Association to establish a Sanctuary Taskforce. A fully resourced, just, and locally led emergency and long-term resettlement

programme based on the principles of welcome, dignity and justice is the only solution to the ongoing crisis.

3. Re-establish the Refugee, Asylum Seeker and Vulnerable Migrant Coordination Group in joint leadership with the County and District Councils along the previously agreed principles of sanctuary.

e) E-Scooters and active travel (proposer Cllr Gant, seconder Cllr Smowton)

This motion was not taken as the remaining time allocated for debate was insufficient.

With less than 10 minutes of the allotted time remaining, Council agreed not to consider this motion but to close the meeting.

f) Oxford Stadium (proposer Cllr Pegg, seconder Cllr Dunne)

This motion was not taken as the time allocated for debate had finished.

g) EU Nationals deserves to be treated with respect (proposer Cllr Bely-Summers, seconder Cllr Corais)

This motion was not taken as the time allocated for debate had finished.

h) Opposition to the Government's Planning White Paper (proposed by Cllr Gant)

This motion was not taken as the time allocated for debate had finished.

i) Opposition to the Health and Care Bill (proposer Cllr Jarvis)

This motion was not taken as the time allocated for debate had finished.

j) End Fire and Rehire (proposer Cllr Mundy, seconder Cllr Dunne)

This motion was not taken as the time allocated for debate had finished.

k) COP26 (proposer Cllr Dunne, seconder Cllr Mundy)

This motion was not taken as the time allocated for debate had finished.

The meeting started at 5.00 pm and ended at 8.40 pm

Lord Mayor

Date: Monday 29 November 2021

Decisions on items of business take effect immediately:

Motions may be implemented immediately or may require further budget provision and/or reports to Cabinet before implementation.

Details are in the Council's Constitution.