

Minutes of a meeting of Council on Monday 17 July 2023

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Council members present:

Councillor Fry (Deputy Lord Mayor)
Councillor Rowley
Councillor Arshad (Lord Mayor)
Councillor Brown
Councillor Clarkson
Councillor Coyne
Councillor Djafari-Marbini
Councillor Dunne
Councillor Goddard
Councillor Hayes
Councillor Humberstone
Councillor Kerr
Councillor Latif
Councillor Miles
Councillor Muddiman
Councillor Munkonge
Councillor Pegg
Councillor Railton
Councillor Rehman
Councillor Linda Smith
Councillor Smowton
Councillor Upton
Councillor Walcott

Councillor Lygo (Sheriff)
Councillor Altaf-Khan
Councillor Aziz
Councillor Chapman
Councillor Corais
Councillor Diggins
Councillor Douglas
Councillor Fouweather
Councillor Hall
Councillor Hollingsworth
Councillor Jarvis
Councillor Landell Mills
Councillor Malik
Councillor Morris
Councillor Mundy
Councillor Nala-Hartley
Councillor Pressel
Councillor Rawle
Councillor Sandelson
Councillor Roz Smith
Councillor Thomas
Councillor Waite

Also present for all or part of the meeting:

Caroline Green, Chief Executive
Tom Hook, Executive Director (Corporate Resources)
Tom Bridgman, Executive Director (Development)
Nigel Kennedy, Head of Financial Services
Rhian Davies, Interim Monitoring Officer

Jonathan Malton, Committee and Member Services Manager
Lucy Brown, Committee and Member Services Officer

Apologies:

Councillors Gant, Hunt and Turner sent apologies.

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

9. Declarations of interest

None received.

10. Minutes

Council agreed to **approve** the minutes of the ordinary meeting held on 20 March 2023 and the Annual Council meeting held on 17 May 2023 as a true and correct record.

11. Appointment to Committees

There were no appointments to committees notified at the meeting.

12. Announcements

The Lord Mayor advised that she had attended Christ Church Cathedral on the 08 July 2023 for the installation of the new Dean of Christ Church. Professor Sarah Foot was the first female Dean, and she extended her hand in sisterhood to Professor Foot as she led the way for change. She hoped that the future of Christ Church, its students, staff, and congregations flourished under her capable guidance.

The Deputy Lord Mayor advised that the archivist would be providing a display of their archives for the next Full Council meeting, which could be accessed both before and during the break, and encouraged all Councillors to attend.

The Sherriff attended the launch of the new OxTrail art installation on behalf of Sobell House, along with the other partners involved, and advised that he was looking forward to being involved in the project during 2024.

The Leader confirmed that Emma Jackman, the new Monitoring Officer would start at the Council on 07 August 2023 and extended her thanks to Rhian Davies as the Interim Monitoring Officer.

She also advised that her appointment to the Future Oxfordshire Partnership Infrastructure Advisory Group had changed since the appointments were announced at Annual Council. The appointment was Cllr L Smith, but it is now Cllr Upton – with Cllr Railton as the named substitute.

The following Champions were also announced:

Heritage – Cllr Clarkson

Older Peoples – Cllr Coyne

Migrants – Cllr Djafari-Marbini

Armed Forces and Veterans – Cllr Humberstone

It was noted that there would not be a Champion for cycling as this would be incorporated under Cllr Upton's portfolio as Cabinet Member for Planning and Healthier Communities and Oxford Living Wage would be incorporated under her own portfolio as Cabinet Member for Inclusive Economy and Partnerships. She also welcomed Ed Halford to his first meeting.

The City Rector addressed Council on what would have been the one hundred and fifth birthday of Nelson Mandela tomorrow who had been awarded the Freedom of Oxford City and shared some of his quotes with the Council.

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

There were no addresses or questions.

14. Ice Rink Future Car Parking Provision

Cllr Djafari-Marbini joined the meeting.

Council considered a report from the Head of Community Services seeking approval for the favoured on-site option for future car parking provision for users of the Oxford Ice Rink when the Oxpens car park is closed permanently for redevelopment.

Cllr Munkonge, Cabinet Member for Leisure and Parks introduced the report and proposed the recommendations.

The recommendations were agreed on being seconded by Cllr Brown, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Inclusive Economy and Partnerships, and put to the vote.

Council resolved to:

1. **Establish a budget** of £580,000 within the Council's capital programme, profiled across 2024/25 and 2025/26, to fund the provision of new car parking at the front of the ice rink, subject to OxWED's programme for closing the Oxpens car park, and **approve** the payback of previously spent feasibility funding of £46,000 into the feasibility budget.

Cllr Hayes, Humberstone, and Dunne joined the meeting.

15. Oxford City Council Safeguarding Report 2022/23 and Policy 2023-26

Council considered a report from the Executive Director (Communities and People) which reported on progress made on Oxford City Council's Safeguarding Action Plan for 2022/23 and presented the updated Safeguarding Policy for 2023-26.

Cllr Aziz, Cabinet Member for Safer Communities presented the report and proposed the recommendations.

The recommendations were agreed on being seconded by Cllr Upton, Cabinet Member for Planning and Healthier Communities and put to the vote.

Council resolved to:

1. **Note** the key achievements of the Safeguarding work delivered through Oxford City Council during 2022/23.
2. **Approve** the Safeguarding Policy 2023-2026.
3. **Note** the Safeguarding Action Plan 2023/24.
4. **Delegate authority** to the Executive Director (Communities and People), in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Safer Communities, to make minor changes to the approved policy in order to continue its alignment with the Oxfordshire Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements.

16. Decisions taken under Part 17.9 of the Constitution

Council considered a report from the Head of Law and Governance asking Council to note the decision taken by the Executive Director (Development) under the provisions in Part 17.9 of the Constitution.

Council resolved to:

1. **Note** the decision taken as set out in the report.

17. Urgent key decisions taken since October 2022

Council considered a report by the Head of Law and Governance which updated Council on key decisions taken in cases of special urgency since October 2022.

Council resolved to:

1. **Note** the urgent key decisions taken in cases of special urgency as set out in the report.

18. Questions on Cabinet minutes

a) Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 19 April 2023

None received.

b) Draft Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 14 June 2023

Minute 11 – East Oxford Community Centre

In response to a question from Cllr Malik, Cllr Rehman, Cabinet Member for Inclusive Communities and Culture, advised that the increase in project budget was for a fixed price contract, which had been increased following the rising costs in construction caused by the pandemic.

Minute 8 – Fire Door Replacement Programme

In response to a question from Cllr Smowton, Cllr L Smith, Cabinet Member for Housing clarified that a written response would be provided outside of the meeting.

c) Draft Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 12 July 2023

Minute 23 – Future Resettlement Commitments for New Refugee Families

In response to a question from Cllr Smowton, Cllr L Smith, Cabinet Member for Housing advised that not only were there financial considerations taken into account in the decision to resettle a minimum of eight refugee families each year for the next five years. Other considerations included supply of affordable housing available for the programme and capacity of both council officers and the partner organisations that work with the Council to deliver the scheme.

19. Questions on Notice from Members of Council

40 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 23 supplementary questions and responses asked and given at the meeting are set out in the minutes pack.

Cllr Pressel left the meeting and did not return.

Council agreed to consider items 16a, 16b and 16c next of the agenda before the 30 minutes break and then return to the agenda as listed.

20. Matters exempt from publication and exclusion of the public

Council passed a resolution in accordance of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 to exclude the press and public from the meeting for the consideration of Items 20a, 20b and 20c to enable Council to fully discuss and debate the reports including the confidential information contained within the relevant appendices. Whilst the debate was heard in confidential session, it was agreed that Council would vote on these items in public session at items 22, 23 and 24 of the minutes, for the public record.

Cllr Hall left the meeting and did not return.

The meeting broke for 30 minutes at the conclusion of these items.

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

Council heard two addresses and one question. Cabinet Members read or summarised their written responses.

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

1. Address by Danny Yee – 20 mph in the City Centre
2. Address by Kaddy Beck – Save Bertie Park
3. Question from Chaka Artwell – Councillors revealing their domicile during local elections

The Lord Mayor thanked the speakers for their contributors.

Council agreed to return to Item 16a, 16b and 16c on the agenda, which had been discussed in private session before the break, and the remainder of the agenda as listed.

22. East Oxford Community Centre

Council considered a report from the Executive Director submitted to Cabinet on 14 June 2023 which provided an update on progress of the project to deliver the development of The East Oxford Community Centre at Princes Street in upgrading the main building and providing a modern new build extension in a single place. The report also set out, for approval, options to address the unprecedented construction inflation.

Cllr Rehman, Cabinet Member for Inclusive Economies introduced the report, proposed the recommendations and answered questions in the private session.

The recommendation was agreed on being seconded by Cllr Brown, Leader and Cabinet Member for Inclusive Economy and Partnerships and put to the vote.

Council resolved to:

1. Increase the project budget by £1.298m (from £5.496 to £6.794m).

Cllr Hayes left the meeting and did not return.

23. Housing Management System Implementation

Council considered a report from the Executive Director (Communities and People) and the Head of Financial Services which updated Members on the lessons learned from the implementation of the Housing Management System and the outcome of discussions with the supplier as to potential settlement; and sought additional budget approval for further development of the product after the move to 'business as usual' which had been secured.

Cllr Nigel Chapman, Cabinet Member for Citizen Focussed Services and Council Companies introduced the report, proposed the Cabinet's recommendations and answered questions in the private session.

The recommendation was agreed on being seconded by Cllr Rehman, Cabinet Member for Inclusive Communities and put to the vote.

Council resolved to:

1. **Approve** the additional budget of £263k in 2022-23 as detailed in paragraph 8 of the report; and
2. **Include** an additional budgetary amount of £497k of capital and £97k of revenue over the next 4 year period for the further development of the system (paragraphs 9-11).

a) City Centre Land Regeneration Scheme

Council considered a report from the Executive Director (Development) which had updated Cabinet on the progress of the procurement of a development partner to regenerate a council asset in the city centre; recommend to Council to include additional budget for the scheme; and sought approval to enter contracts with a preferred development partner and operator consortium to regenerate 38-40 George Street, Oxford.

Cllr Brown, Leader and Cabinet Member for Inclusive Economy and Partnerships introduced the report, proposed the recommendation and answered questions in the private session.

The recommendation was agreed on being seconded by Cllr Rehman, Cabinet Member for Inclusive Communities and put to the vote.

Council resolved to:

1. **Approve** an additional capital budget of £12.1 million for delivery of this regeneration scheme.

24. Outside organisation/Committee Chair reports and questions

a) The Oxfordshire Resources and Waste Partnership

Cllr Chapman, Cabinet Member for Citizen Focussed Services and Council Companies introduced the report which noted the annual update on the Oxfordshire Resources & Waste Partnership.

Council noted the report.

b) Scrutiny Committee Annual Report 2022/23

Cllr Smowton, Chair of the Scrutiny Committee, introduced the report updating the Council of scrutiny activity during the 2022/23 municipal year. He advised that over 100 recommendations had been submitted to Cabinet, with over 70 having been accepted with many receiving positive comments. He gave thanks to Scrutiny Officers that had supported the Committee over the year, and to Officers, Cabinet Members and the Councillors of the Committee and Panels. And he also thanked Cllr Pegg, as successor as Chair of the Committee for this municipal year.

Council noted the report.

c) Scrutiny Committee update report

Cllr Pegg, Chair of the Scrutiny Committee, introduced the report updating the Council on the activities of the scrutiny function. She updated Council on the work undertaken

by the standing panels, and thanked all those involved in supporting the scrutiny function.

Council noted the report.

25. Motions on notice 17 July 2023

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

Motions agreed as set out below:

- a) Support Oxford's Sudanese community – create safe pathways for Sudanese families with ties to Britain and Oxford to be granted the right to join their love ones here (proposer Cllr Aziz, seconder Cllr Djafari-Marbini)
- b) Use car parking sites for Solar Farms (proposer Cllr Fouweather, seconder Cllr Miles, amendment proposer Cllr Railton, amendment seconder Cllr Hollingsworth)
- c) Extending the Smoke Control Area (proposer Cllr Kerr, seconder Cllr Pegg, amendment proposer Cllr Railton, amendment seconder Cllr Upton)
- d) Supporting a Community Right to Grow (proposer Cllr Hollingsworth, seconder Cllr Lygo)

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

- e) Housing Management System problems and resultant account issues at Oxford City Council and ODS (proposer Cllr Smowton, seconder Cllr Fouweather, amendment proposer Cllr Chapman, amendment seconder Cllr Brown)

26. Support Oxford's Sudanese community - create safe pathways for Sudanese families with ties to Britain and Oxford to be granted the right to join their loves ones here. (proposed by Cllr Shaista Aziz, seconded by Councillor Hosnieh Djafari Marbini)

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

Council debated the motion. Following debate, and on being put to the vote, the motion was agreed.

Council resolved to adopt the following motion:

The war in Sudan is leading to the loss of life, displacement of hundreds and thousands of people inside and outside the country's borders, a hunger and health crisis, and reports of rape and sexual violence against women and girls.

This Council stands in solidarity with Oxford's Sudanese communities and calls for an immediate end to the conflict and violence, urging all parties to engage in negotiations to find a peaceful and lasting solution to the crisis.

Sudanese families in our city have witnessed family members turned away from British Government run evacuation schemes, separating families and further traumatising desperate and vulnerable people.

We call on the government to urgently create safe pathways for all Sudanese families with ties to Britain and Oxford to be granted the right to join their loved ones here.

This Council pledges to:

- Work with Oxford's Sudanese community and asylum support organisations to identify and support new arrivals;
- Advocate for support for those arriving with physical and psychological trauma;
- Ensure frontline Council staff can sign post people to appropriate services.

This Council therefore resolves to ask the Leader:

1. As a Council seeking to become a City of Sanctuary, we resolve to work with partner organisations across the city and our MPs to lobby the government to:
 - Expand safe, legal routes for extended family of British citizens and Sudanese asylum seekers;
 - Waive existing barriers to support
 - Establish a formal programme mirroring the Ukrainian settlement scheme to provide clarity and security for Sudanese nationals seeking sanctuary.

27. Use car parking sites for Solar Farms (proposed by Cllr Laurence Fouweather, seconded by Cllr Katherine Miles)

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

Cllr Railton, seconded by Cllr Hollingsworth, proposed the amendment as set out in the briefing note.

Council debated the motion and amendment. Following debate, and 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:

Oxford City Council declared a climate emergency in 2019. The Council has made progress with the decarbonisation of Council owned social housing and leisure centres. The rise in costs of fossil fuel generated electricity over the past 12 months shows the need to push ahead with renewable energy projects. This proposal is that the case for installing solar panels over the car parks in the city is examined.

The French government has announced plans to mandate that all car parks over 80 spaces in France must have solar farms installed. The Bentley Car Company recently announced the installation of a solar farm at their plant in Crewe which will cover 1378 car spaces and generate 2.7 MW of power. Leicester City Council has recently

completed a similar but smaller scheme. The benefit of this proposal is that it could make better use of otherwise available land and could further demonstrate that the City Council is fully behind the push for Green Energy and Net Zero. It could contribute to the targets for increased PV generation across the County as defined in the Oxfordshire Energy Strategy. Two of the City owned P+R sites together total 2801 car spaces.

This could generate at least 4.2 MW of power — enough for 600–800 average sized houses, but at a cost of £1800-2800 per space (£900-£1400/kWp)¹³, compared to £450/kWp for field solar. If the other P+R sites are included then this rises to over 9MW which is nearly 10% of the Oxfordshire Energy Strategy target. The strategy identifies a need for installed PV capacity in Oxfordshire to increase from 300MW to 1900MW. This Council therefore is supportive of exploring all possible opportunities for increasing that installed capacity, whether it is large strategic scale installations like Botley West Solar Farm, or smaller and more tactical projects like the existing installation at Redbridge Park and Ride and Leys Pool and Leisure Centre.

There are other Council owned car parks which could be utilised in this way including those at leisure centres and public parks. Even a small car park could be a useful local source of PV energy and may be able to be implemented over a shorter timescale. There would also be opportunities to extend the existing EV charging in sites using the power generated locally. The space for physical equipment needed for connection to the local electricity grid will need consideration and planning permission as would other potential uses such as power storage.

Therefore this Council requests that the Head of Corporate Strategy continues to investigate the feasibility of extending solar installations on spaces in Oxford including Park and Rides, and that the Cabinet Member for Zero Carbon Oxford and Climate Justice provide a verbal update at a Council meeting before the end of 2023.

28. Extending the Smoke Control Area (proposed by Cllr Emily Kerr, seconded by Cllr Lucy Pegg)

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

Cllr Railton, seconded by Cllr Upton, proposed the amendment as set out in the briefing note.

Cllr Aziz left the meeting and did not return.

Council debated the motion and amendment. Following debate, and 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:

This Council notes that

1. Wood-burning takes place in just 8% of UK homes, and yet is the second highest cause of particle pollution in the UK. It has grown by 35% in the last 10 years as more people install wood-burning stoves.

2. The chief medical officer, Chris Whitty, wrote his last report on air pollution.¹ He states that we need to focus on areas where people live – i.e. cities such as Oxford. The report highlights wood burning is dangerous at any level: DEFRA approved stoves produce more than 300 times as much PM 2.5 as gas fires; open fires ten times as much again. Particles accrue in the top of the home, often where people sleep and are exposed for a long time. This is especially an issue for children, who are more sensitive to wood burning.
3. National figures from a DEFRA survey² of 46,000 people show over 70% of people who use wood burners do so for purely aesthetic reasons. We also know people who use wood burners are twice as likely to be AB social grade than those who do not, and much more likely to own their own homes. The 8% of people who rely entirely or primarily on burning as a fuel source overwhelmingly live in rural areas.
4. Oxford has led the way on reducing air pollution resulting from traffic through restricting and electrifying motor traffic, with an 8.3% reduction across the city, or 24% reduction vs pre-pandemic levels.
5. The 2021-2025 AQAP mentions a focus on ‘reducing emissions from domestic heating’ and ‘reviewing smoke control zones’. This has focused on awareness raising campaigns such as last year’s ‘do you fuel good’. Pilot projects such as the ability for canal boats to charge on solar are useful, but the vast majority of burning is not linked to people who live on canal boats.
6. Current Smoke Control Areas (SCAs) or Smoke Control Zones (SCZs) cover some of the city, but miss out key areas such as North Oxford, which have higher home ownership rates and more ABC1 residents – the demographics more likely to be burners.

Council believes:

1. We should continue to take steps to improve air quality, given the devastating and unevenly distributed effects of pollution.
2. The Council has played a significant role in recent years by electrifying and restricting polluting motor traffic. Reducing emissions from domestic heating should continue to be a core area of focus.

This Council asks the Cabinet Member for Zero Carbon Oxford and Climate Justice:

1. We welcome the 13th July announcement to expand the existing SCA across the entire city of Oxford.
2. To build on last year’s awareness campaign and deliver a best-in-class example which leverages new data from the CMO’s report and shares an honest picture of the dangers of wood burning, including the implications for indoor air quality.

¹

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1124738/chief-medical-officers-annual-report-air-pollution-dec-2022.pdf

²

<https://randd.defra.gov.uk/ProjectDetails?ProjectID=20159&FromSearch=Y&Publisher=1&SearchText=AQ1017&SortString=ProjectCode&SortOrder=Asc&Paging=10#Description>

29. Supporting a Community Right to Grow (proposed by Cllr Alex Hollingsworth, seconded by Councillor Mark Lygo)

Cllr Altaf-Khan left the meeting and did not return.

Cllr Hollingsworth, seconded by Cllr Lygo, 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:

This Council notes:

- The importance of locally produced food to provide affordable and healthy options for local people
- The physical and mental health benefits of gardening, especially communally, backed by the RHS's gardening for health and well-being campaign
- The success of inclusive local community gardening groups like Greening Jericho, winners of the 2021 Oxford Preservation Trust's award for landscape and public realm
- The ongoing experience of the Edible Streets project in establishing food growing spaces in Barton
- The Community Right to Grow campaign launched by Incredible Edible, and the supported by a 10-Minute Rule Bill proposed by Mike Kane MP and proposed amendments to the Levelling Up Bill in the House of Lords
- The Oxfordshire Food Strategy, endorsed by the City Council in 2022, and the work of Good Food Oxfordshire

This Council believes that the benefits from public spaces which are cared for by local people and can be used to produce food, flowers or both are self evident, in terms of the positive impact on the well-being of local communities, the individuals that tend and use them and the broader environment and biodiversity of Oxford and beyond.

This Council therefore asks that:

- The Leader of the Council writes to the city's two MPs to ask them to show their support for the Community Right to Grow in Parliament and beyond
- The Council, learning the lessons from the Edible Streets and Greening Jericho projects, provides a clear register of unused public land that can be offered to community groups for cultivation and a robust but simple process for doing so.

30. Housing Management System problems and resultant accounts issues at Oxford City Council and ODS (proposed by Cllr Christopher Smowton, seconded by Cllr Laurence Fouweather)

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

The meeting started at 5.00 pm and ended at 9.09 pm

Lord Mayor

Date: Monday 2 October 2023

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.