

Minutes of a meeting of Council on Monday 2 October 2023

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Council members present:

Councillor Arshad (Lord Mayor)	Councillor Fry (Deputy Lord Mayor)
Councillor Lygo (Sheriff)	Councillor Altaf-Khan
Councillor Aziz	Councillor Brown
Councillor Chapman	Councillor Clarkson
Councillor Corais	Councillor Coyne
Councillor Djafari-Marbini	Councillor Fouweather
Councillor Hayes	Councillor Hollingsworth
Councillor Humberstone	Councillor Hunt
Councillor Jarvis	Councillor Kerr
Councillor Landell Mills	Councillor Latif
Councillor Malik	Councillor Miles
Councillor Morris	Councillor Muddiman
Councillor Mundy	Councillor Munkonge
Councillor Nala-Hartley	Councillor Pegg
Councillor Pressel	Councillor Railton
Councillor Rawle	Councillor Rehman
Councillor Sandelson	Councillor Linda Smith
Councillor Roz Smith	Councillor Snowton
Councillor Turner	Councillor Upton
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
Alison Daly, Lawyer
Jonathan Malton, Committee and Member Services Manager
Celeste Reyeslao, Committee and Member Services Officer

Apologies:

Councillor(s) Diggins, Douglas, Dunne, Gant, Thomas and Walcott sent apologies.

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

31. Declarations of interest

Item 7: Out of Hospital Care Team Provision

Councillor Hayes: stated that he was the Chief Executive of a charity providing out of hospital care support which received funding as part of this provision. He would leave the room during the consideration of this item.

Councillor Rowley: stated he was a Trustee of a charity providing out of hospital care support; he made the declaration for reasons of transparency; it was not a pecuniary interest however he would leave the room during the consideration of this item.

Item 17: Questions on Notice from Members of Council (CM9: Allotment leases)

Councillor Hollingsworth: stated that he was the Chair of an allotment association engaged with the current lease negotiations; he made the declaration for reasons of transparency; it was not a pecuniary interest and he was not required to leave the room during consideration of that item.

32. Minutes

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

33. Appointment to Committees

Council agreed to appoint with immediate effect:

- Scrutiny Committee – Councillor James Fry to replace Councillor Paula Dunne.
- General Purposes Licensing Committee and Licensing & Gambling Acts Committee (and any subsequent Sub-Committees) – Councillor Dr Christopher Smowton to replace Councillor Andrew Gant

34. Announcements

The Lord Mayor announced that she had a meeting with Reducing the Risk of Domestic Abuse, an organisation committed to ensuring the safety of adults and children vulnerable to domestic abuse. She encouraged those who require support to contact Reducing the Risk's helpline at 0800 731 0055. The Lord Mayor also attended the launch of a new community hub, Oxford Hub, at the Windale Primary School.

The Deputy Lord Mayor advised that a display of the archives was available in the Assembly Room this evening and invited all Councillors to view the wonderful exhibition.

The City Rector addressed Council on Harvest Thanksgiving and reflected on the biblical teaching: not to reap to the very edge of the fields in order to leave some to the poor. He added that this principle was exemplified by the excellent schools and places of worship through their item collections during this period, which were shared with the food banks and community larders throughout the city.

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

There were no addresses or questions.

Council agreed to consider items 10, 7, 8 and 12 of the agenda next and then return to the agenda as listed.

36. Park and Ride combined parking-and-bus ticket charges

Council considered the report from the Executive Director (Development) seeking approval for permanent changes to the combined parking-and-bus ticket charges at Oxford City Council Park and Ride sites after the completion of a twelve-month trial period.

Councillor Louise Upton, Cabinet Member for Planning and Healthier Communities, introduced the report, proposed the recommendation and answered questions.

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

Council resolved to:

1. **Approve** the continued use of combined parking and bus tickets at Oxford City Council Park and Ride sites at the current prices until April 2024, as per Option 1 in the report.

Cllrs L Smith and Rehman joined the meeting.

37. Out of Hospital Care Team Provision

Cllrs Hayes and Rowley left the meeting, having declared an interest in this item.

Council considered the report from the Executive Director (Communities and People) seeking authorisation to continue the Oxfordshire Out of Hospital Care Group through financing secured from the Better Care Fund and to seek delegated authority to award ongoing contracts (with annual break clauses) for the provision of this service, subject to securing the necessary financing.

Cllr Humberstone joined the meeting.

Councillor Linda Smith, Cabinet Member for Housing, introduced the report and proposed the recommendation.

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

Council resolved to:

1. **Approve** the allocation of £1.2 million to continue to fund the Oxfordshire Out of Hospital Care Model until 31st March 2024, using funding from the Better Care Fund.

Cllrs Hayes and Rowley re-joined the meeting.

38. Expansion of the Housing First Programme

Council considered the report from the Executive Director (Communities and People) seeking approval for the expansion of the Housing First programme following a successful bid to the Single Homelessness Accommodation Programme.

Cllrs Altaf-Khan, Latif and Coyne joined the meeting.

Councillor Linda Smith, Cabinet Member for Housing, introduced the report, proposed the recommendation and answered questions.

The recommendation was agreed on being seconded by Councillor Ed Turner, Deputy Leader (Statutory) and Cabinet Member for Finance and Asset Management, and put to the vote.

Council resolved to:

1. **Approve** the allocation of a £2,888,000 capital budget (of which £1,688,000 will be borrowed by the Housing Revenue Account) for the Council's investment to purchase the properties as part of the Single Homelessness Accommodation Programme as outlined in paragraph 19, the balance of which will be met by the SHAP grant;
2. **Approve** a budget allocation of £600,000 to cover revenue costs to commission support providers to deliver support for the 17 units of Housing First. The funding equates to 3 years' worth of revenue but is spread over 4 financial years (paragraph 18).

39. Local Authority Housing Fund - Round 2

Council considered the report from the Executive Director (Communities and People) seeking approval to make available the required budget provision and the necessary project approval and delegations to enable the Council to proceed with entering into the national Local Authority Housing Fund Round 2.

Cllrs Corais and Munkonge joined the meeting.

Councillor Linda Smith, Cabinet Member for Housing, introduced the report, proposed the recommendation and answered questions.

The recommendation was agreed on by being seconded by Councillor Ed Turner, Deputy Leader (Statutory) and Cabinet Member for Finance and Asset Management, and put to the vote.

Council resolved to:

1. **Approve** the allocation of £1,863,100 capital budget from the Housing Revenue Account for the Council's investment to purchase the properties as part of Local Authority Housing Fund Round 2, with £1,069,860 being funded from HRA borrowing and the rest covered by grant of £793,240.

40. The Leys Pool and Leisure Centre

Council considered the report from the Head of Community Services seeking to create a youth hub based in the currently under-utilised space at the Leys Pools & Leisure Centre. This would be made possible by utilising external funding for both capital (building works) and revenue (youth work). The project would be in partnership with Oxfordshire County Council.

Councillor Chewe Munkonge, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Leisure and Parks, introduced the report, proposed the recommendation and answered questions.

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

Council resolved to:

1. **Approve** the addition of £1,120,199 into the capital programme together with £223,907 into the revenue budget for delivery of the project.

41. Delivery of New Burial Space

Council considered the report from the Executive Director (Development) seeking approval for delivery of a new publicly accessible greenspace and burial meadow on land owned by the Council off Oxford Road towards Horspath including approval of the scheme, submission of planning application to South Oxfordshire District Council, Phase 1 delivery budget, and required property and legal procedures to deliver the scheme.

Councillor Chewe Munkonge, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Leisure and Parks, introduced the report, proposed the recommendation and answered questions.

The recommendation was agreed on by being seconded by Councillor Louise Upton, Cabinet Member for Planning and Healthier Communities, and put to the vote.

Council resolved to:

1. **Approve** a capital budget of £2.4M for delivery of this scheme.

42. Northfield Hostel site - Additional 10 affordable homes

Council considered the report from the Executive Director (Development) seeking project approval and delegations to deliver a development of a further 10 affordable homes at the Northfield Hostel site.

Councillor Linda Smith, Cabinet Member for Housing, introduced the report and proposed the recommendation.

The recommendation was agreed on by being seconded by Councillor Ed Turner, Deputy Leader (Statutory) and Cabinet Member for Finance and Asset Management, and put to the vote.

Council resolved to:

1. **Approve** a virement within the HRA capital budget for scheme costs. The virement will be from the Oxford City Housing Limited (“OCHL”) purchase line into a new scheme line to be profiled to match the build programme across the three years from 2023/24 to 2025/26.

43. Blackbird Leys Development Project

Council considered the report from the Executive Director (Development) seeking project approval to variations to the Development Agreement between Oxford City Council (OCC) and its development partner, Peabody, for the Blackbird Leys community centre and delegated powers to assign further Section 106 off-site affordable housing funds to the scheme for affordable housing delivery.

Councillor Ed Turner, Deputy Leader (Statutory) and Cabinet Member for Finance and Asset Management introduced the report and proposed the recommendation.

The recommendation was agreed on by being seconded by Councillor Linda Smith, Cabinet Member for Housing, and put to the vote.

Council resolved to:

1. **Approve** allocation of an additional £1.5 million of S106 affordable housing funds, not currently delegated to the Head of Planning, to Phase 2 of the Blackbird Leys Regeneration Project.

44. Matters exempt or part 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 Item 14 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 item 43 of the minutes, for the public record.

45. Public Session

Council resolved to return to public session for the remaining items of business.

46. Constitution Amendments - changes to responsibility for functions

Council considered a report from the Head of Law and Governance (Monitoring Officer) seeking Council agreement to amend the Constitution to reflect changes in responsibility for functions.

Councillor Susan Brown, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Inclusive Economy and Partnerships, introduced the report and proposed the recommendation.

The recommendation was agreed on by being seconded by Councillor Ed Turner, Deputy Leader (Statutory) and Cabinet Member for Finance and Asset Management, and put to the vote.

Council resolved to:

1. **Approve** the following changes to the Constitution:
 - a. Where the job title “Head of Regulatory Services and Community Services” appears in respect of a Regulatory Services function that this be changed to Head of Planning & Regulatory Services;
 - b. Where the job title “Head of Regulatory Services and Community Services” is referred to other than in relation to Regulatory Services, that it be changed to the Executive Director for Communities and People.
 - c. All other references to the Head of Planning Services be updated to be references to the Head of Planning & Regulatory Services within the remainder of the constitution.

2. **Note** that the changes will take effect as of the 17 October 2023.

47. Questions on Cabinet minutes

- a) **Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 9 August 2023**

None received.

b) Draft Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 13 September 2023

Minute 56 - Private Rented Sector Regulation Policies

In response to a question from Councillor Katherine Miles, Councillor Linda Smith, Cabinet Member for Housing advised that additional legal advice was required to ascertain the feasibility of extending the assessment of the fit and proper criteria for holding an HMO or selective licence to encompass legal property ownership. A written response would be provided outside of the meeting.

48. Questions on Notice from Members of Council

32 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 19 supplementary questions and responses asked and given at the meeting are set out in the minutes pack.

Cllrs Hayes, Malik and Nala-Hartley left the meeting.

The meeting broke for 30 min at the conclusion of this item.

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

Council heard one question and three addresses. Cabinet Members read their written responses.

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

1. Question from Kate Robinson – City Wide Food Plan
2. Address by Jane Wilson – Court Place Farm Allotments in Marston
3. Address from Martin Hackett – Future of Bertie Park
4. Address by April Jones, Karl Wallendszus and Anne Machachlan – Oxford Climate Emergency Centre (support for Motion 20B from Green Group)

The Lord Mayor thanked the speakers for their contributions.

Cllrs Rehman and Latif re-joined the meeting.

50. Outside organisation/Committee Chair reports and questions

a) Outside Organisation Report: Children's Trust Board

Councillor Chewe Munkonge, Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Leisure and Parks, introduced the report which provided members with an update on the work of the Oxfordshire Children's Trust Board and Oxford City Council for Children and Young People in the city.

Since the report was written, Oxfordshire County Council Councillor Liz Brighthouse had stood down from her post as Chair of the Trust. An Oxfordshire Children's Trust Board Chair would be formally appointed in due course.

Council **noted** the report.

b) Scrutiny Committee update report

Councillor Lucy Pegg, Chair of the Scrutiny Committee, introduced the report updating the Council on the activities of the Scrutiny Committee from 01 July 2023 to 30 September 2023. She gave thanks to Councillor Mike Rowley for standing in as Chair and ably leading the Committee through various reports in the previous Scrutiny meeting. She also thanked Officers for their speedy work in producing a third Safeguarding Report that further explored issues of domestic abuse.

Council **noted** the report.

51. Motions on notice 2 October 2023

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

Motions agreed as set out below:

- b) Oxford Climate Emergency Centre (proposed by Cllr Lois Muddiman, seconded by Cllr Emily Kerr)
- c) Freedom from Fear for our Shop Workers (proposed by Cllr Edward Mundy, seconded by Cllr Shaista Aziz).

Motions not taken:

- a) Digital Inclusion (Proposed by Cllr Mohammed Altaf-Khan, seconded by Cllr Steven Goddard)

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

- d) Housing Management System problems and resultant accounts issues at Oxford City Council and ODS (proposed by Cllr Christopher Smowton, seconded by Cllr Laurence Fouweather)
- e) A Ban on Disposable Vapes (proposed by Cllr Lucy Pegg, seconded by Cllr Rosie Rawle)
- f) Clean Air as a Human Right (proposed by Cllr Alex Hollingsworth, seconded by Cllr Lizzy Diggins)

a) Digital Inclusion (Proposed by Cllr Mohammed Altaf-Khan, seconded by Cllr Steven Goddard)

This motion was withdrawn.

b) Oxford Climate Emergency Centre (proposed by Cllr Lois Muddiman, seconded by Cllr Emily Kerr)

Councillor Lois Muddiman, seconded by Councillor Emily Kerr, proposed the submitted motion as set out in the agenda and briefing note.

Councillor Anna Railton, seconded by Councillor Lois Muddiman, proposed the amendment as set out in the briefing note.

Council debated the amended motion. 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:

In January 2019, Oxford City Council members unanimously declared a climate emergency and agreed to create a citizens' assembly in Oxford to help consider new carbon targets and additional measures to reduce emissions. The Oxford Citizens Assembly on Climate Change was duly held over two weekends in September and October 2019.

One of the headline findings of Oxford Citizens' Assembly on Climate Change in 2019 was: 'a demand for more education and information provided for the wider public...to help them understand what they can personally do to help'.

Across Oxford, excellent work has been done to meet this demand over the past 20 years. For example, the work of all the groups in the CAG* project founded in 2001 and the many projects being undertaken by members of the Zero Carbon Oxford Partnership formed in 2021, (replacing the Low Carbon Oxford network launched in 2011).

Despite all this work to educate, inform and engage the public, it is clear from the demands of the Citizens' Assembly that we are still not doing enough. On housing alone, we urgently need to support residents to retrofit their homes to tackle fuel poverty, rising energy costs, and the climate emergency because approximately 60% of homes in Oxford still have an energy efficiency rating of D or below.

The Low Carbon Hub, the various local Low Carbon groups, the county run <https://www.climateactionoxfordshire.org.uk/> and Cosy Homes Oxfordshire offer advice and services but they are not accessible enough to the public. Given the urgency of the climate crisis, Oxford needs a highly visible Climate Emergency Centre (CEC). A CEC is a central, inclusive and accessible space where residents and groups can meet to share and gain information on the climate and ecological emergencies, and develop local solutions for nature recovery, climate mitigation and adaptation. Through the CEC, residents could:

- Find information about our changing climate, its impact and solutions.
- Have an opportunity to discuss their concerns about the future.
- Access advice and support on how to take positive steps towards a safer future for themselves, their families, and their communities.

There are lots of examples of Climate Emergency Centres across the UK from Leeds to Lewes, Preston to Portsmouth, and in Guildford, Islington, Kingston and Northampton

as well as more locally in Abingdon and Swindon. The creation of a CEC in the middle of the city would increase public engagement of all the existing groups, organisations and projects in the city and enhance the public realm in the city centre.

This council therefore resolves to request the cabinet member for zero carbon and climate justice and the cabinet member for finance and asset management to:

- Support the objective of establishing and running a Climate Emergency Centre in Oxford.
- Work with partner organisations and local communities to achieve this objective.
- Consider grant funding towards the costs of establishing and running a CEC, as part of the usual grant process

c) Freedom from Fear for our Shop Workers (proposed by Cllr Edward Mundy, seconded by Cllr Shaista Aziz)

Councillor Edward Mundy, on being seconded by Councillor Shaista Aziz, amended and proposed the motion.

Councillor Chris Jarvis withdrew his amendment.

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

Council resolved to adopt the following motion:

Our shop workers are key workers who risked their health by working through the Covid pandemic, providing essential retail services while many stayed at home. Sadly, in recent years, shop workers and delivery drivers have increasingly been the victims of violence and abuse, as well as being on the front line during an uptick in shoplifting. Research from both the Association of Convenience Retailers (ACR)¹ and the British Retail Consortium² has found that shoplifting and violence against shop workers has increased from pre 2019 levels. ACR data found that 87% of convenience store workers had been victims of verbal abuse in the last year. There is considerable strain and hardship being placed upon people across the country from the impacts of the cost of living crisis (including on shop workers themselves), as well as a mental health crisis and difficulty in accessing essential care and support. It is vital that this is addressed both nationally and locally.

There is an enormous impact on shop workers from crime and abuse. The Union of Shop Distributive and Allied Workers (Usdaw) has a long running Freedom From Fear Campaign³, which has gathered survey data on the nature and frequency of violence and abuse perpetrated against shop staff. Shockingly, their annual survey for 2022-23 found that three quarters of retail workers had been victims of abuse from customers. Many workers don't even feel that reporting incidents of abuse will make a difference. The most significant trigger for abuse and violence against shop staff has been shoplifting, being cited as the cause of nearly a third of such incidents.

This Council pledges to:

¹ https://cdn.acs.org.uk/public/acs_crime_report_2023.pdf

² <https://www.usdaw.org.uk/About-Us/News/2023/Jul/BRC-finds-retail-theft-and-abuse-have-increased>

³ <https://www.usdaw.org.uk/CMSPages/GetFile.aspx?guid=768eb764-e8dd-4d48-a913-17d6d1d03c1c>

- Back the Usdaw Freedom From Fear Campaign with a letter of support and solidarity to the Usdaw General Secretary Paddy Lillis.
- Support and contribute to local messaging promoting respect for shop workers and our commitment to stamping out abuse and violence.
- Lobby the Police and Crime Commissioner for Thames Valley Matthew Barber to do more to combat shop lifting as well as the abuse and violence perpetrated against shop workers.
- Lobby police and relevant authorities to investigate the causes of increases in shoplifting. While many reports have involved organised gangs, it should also be noted that an holistic approach to some perpetrators will be more constructive than a purely punitive or carceral one.

d) 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.

e) A Ban on Disposable Vapes (proposed by Cllr Lucy Pegg, seconded by Cllr Rosie Rawle)

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

f) Clean Air as a Human Right (proposed by Cllr Alex Hollingsworth, seconded by Cllr Lizzy Diggins)

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

The meeting started at 5.00 pm and ended at 8.45 pm

Lord Mayor

Date: Tuesday 7 November 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.