

Minutes of a meeting of COUNCIL on Monday 25 November 2019

Council members:

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

Apologies:

Councillors Humberstone, Roz Smith, Taylor and Turner sent apologies.

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

51. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations.

52. Minutes

Council agreed to **approve** as a true and correct record the minutes of the ordinary meeting held on 7 October, subject to a correction to the last sentence in Minute 45: '*...initial investment of between £4 and £5m.*'

53. Appointment to Committees

Council noted that the Leader had appointed Councillor John Tanner as the Substitute Member on the Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel.

There were no changes to committee memberships.

54. Announcements

Councillors Clarkson, Cook, Djafari-Marbini, Garden and Lygo arrived during this item.

The Lord Mayor announced his main civic events since the Annual Council meeting, including:

- the Remembrance Sunday and Remembrance Day services;
- twinning events with the Mayor of Leiden, the Deputy Lord Mayor of Wroclaw, and representatives from Bohn;
- the gift of a 'well wisher' Gnome from Wroclaw;
- relaunching the City of Sanctuary initiative;
- hosting the Mayor of Monrovia;
- civic events in the council including the admission of Freemen, and around the city including Elmore Trust's anniversary events and North Oxford's eco fair.;
- running 'the daily mile' fitness challenge with schoolchildren;

He reminded councillors about the Lord Mayor's carol concert on 15 December and the Christmas reception on 18 December.

The Lord Mayor asked the City Rector, Rev Anthony Buckley, to speak about the recent service of commemoration and remembrance for those who had died homeless in the city in the past year.

The Leader of the Council announced:

- The publication of the report from Oxford Citizens Assembly on Climate Change;
- The publication of a national report on poor air quality's harmful effects on health, and a visit to Krakow, Poland to share good practice on improving air quality.

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

There were no addresses or questions.

56. Appointment of independent persons 2019

Council considered the Monitoring Officer's report published with the agenda and a supplementary report published after the agenda, asking Council to approve the appointment of the council's independent persons for a term of five years to 30 November 2024 following a formal recruitment exercise.

Councillor Aziz, the Chair of the Standards Committee, presented the report. She moved the recommendations, and asked Council to appoint the individuals named below. This was agreed unanimously on being seconded and put to the vote.

Council resolved to:

1. **approve** the appointment of Chris Ballinger, Andrew Mills-Hicks, Jill McCleery and Osama Raja as the council's independent persons for a term of five years to 30 November 2024; and
2. **delegate authority** to the Monitoring Officer to make the necessary arrangements.

57. Urgent decision report on Housing Infrastructure Funding (HIF) - Osney Mead Innovation Quarter.

Council considered the record of the urgent officer decision taken by the Executive Director (Development) on 31 October 2019 to enter a contract with Homes England to secure £6.088m for infrastructure to enable new development at Osney Mead Innovation Quarter under the Housing Infrastructure Fund Marginal Viability Scheme, and a recommendation to amend the capital budget to include these funds in the Council's capital programme.

Councillor Brown, the Leader of the Council, presented the report and answered questions. She moved the recommendations, which were agreed on being seconded and put to the vote.

Council resolved to:

1. **note** the urgent officer decision taken by the Executive Director (Development) on 31 October 2019 to enter a contract with Homes England to secure £6.088m for infrastructure.
2. **approve the inclusion of a budget of £6.088m in the Council's capital programme for Osney Mead Infrastructure enabling works.**

58. Council and Committee meetings programme May 2020 - May 2022

Council considered a report of the Head of Law and Governance setting out a programme of Council, committee and other meetings for the 2020/21 and 2021/2022 council years (11 May 2020 to 31 May 2022 inclusive)

Councillor Brown, the Leader of the Council, presented the report and answered questions. She moved the recommendations, which were agreed on being seconded and put to the vote.

Council resolved to:

1. **approve** the programme of Council, committee and other meetings attached at Appendix 1 for the council year 2020/21;
2. **approve** the programme of Council, committee and other meetings attached at Appendix 2 for the council year 2021/22;
3. **delegate authority** to the Head of Law and Governance, in consultation with Group Leaders, to make changes to this programme, in the event that there is a decision by Council to change the committee structure or remit which impacts on the programme of meetings; and
4. **delegate authority** to the Head of Law and Governance to set dates for additional training and briefing sessions for members, and, in consultation with the Head of Business Improvement, to set meetings of the Appointments Committee and Investigations and Disciplinary Committee (should they be required).

59. Questions on Cabinet minutes

a) Minutes of meeting Thursday 3 October 2019 of Cabinet

Minute 67, points 6 and 7

Councillor Wolff asked how the contract with St Mungo's (to carry out street outreach work) was monitored and how this affected the re-tendering process.

Councillor Smith replied that there were quarterly contract monitoring meetings including outcomes and performance, and information on the re-tendering process could be given as this progressed.

b) Minutes of meeting Wednesday 9 October 2019 of Cabinet

Minute 80

Councillor Wolff asked about the rationale for the change in qualifying age for older person's concessions from age 60 to 65; if this created a benefits gap for the 60-65 age group and how this linked with the Health and Wellbeing Board target to improve older people' fitness.

Councillor Linda Smith said that concessions were targeted by income rather than by age. Concessions were only one incentive: the service was looking at reducing the wider barriers to participation faced by this age group.

Minute 81

Councillor Wade asked about the reasons for the marketing process for 24-26 George Street, and how much the marketing agents took as a fee.

Councillor Brown said this could be answered in writing.

Minute 85

Councillor Gant asked why a 25year lease was granted to Fusion if the intention was always to let the site to Oxford United football club (OUFC). Councillor Wolff asked whether OUFC was benefiting from a publically funded asset and whether we had lost this asset.

Councillor Linda Smith replied that the change was that OUFC now held the full lease directly from the Council rather than sub-leasing from Fusion. Community use was essential and was written into the lease. She reminded Council that BMW had funded, and the Council retained ownership, of the site.

c) Minutes of meeting Wednesday 13 November 2019 of Cabinet

Minute 94

Councillors Gant and Wolff asked about the business case for resuming greyhound racing, and the analysis of the carbon emissions and pollution from speedway racing. Councillor Hollingsworth replied that the business case for re-opening the stadium would be presented at the Local Plan inquiry, and while he had not seen an analysis, speedway racing was likely to be low-impact because of the nature of the bikes and the races.

60. Questions on Notice from Members of Council

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

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

61. Outside organisation/Committee Chair reports and questions

With Council's consent this item was taken before the break.

Councillor Simm arrived during this item.

a) Outside Organisation report - Oxfordshire Health and Wellbeing Board and Health Improvement Board

Council had before it the report of the Cabinet Member for Healthy Oxford on the work of the Oxfordshire Health and Wellbeing Board and Health Improvement Board

Councillor Upton introduced the report and answered questions. She thanked the Policy and Partnership Team Manager for her supporting work for these partnerships. She outlined the key aims of the two boards including work to prevent ill health and deterioration in chronic conditions; the community impact zones; innovative ways of accessing healthcare through the Trailblazer scheme; and considering how to encourage businesses to engage effectively with employees suffering with chronic conditions. Partners shared good and successful practice with each other.

Council noted the report.

62. Scrutiny Committee update report

With Council's consent this item was taken before the break.

Councillor Bely-Summers arrived during this item.

The Chair of the Scrutiny Committee, Councillor Gant, presented the report updating Council on the work of the committee and its standing panels; and of the newly convened review group on the climate emergency. He thanked the new scrutiny officer and all those who had attended committees and panels for their work.

Council noted the report and the appendices.

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

Councillors Henwood left at the start of this item.

This item was taken first after the break, then the meeting resumed consideration of the motions.

There were four addresses and two questions to Council:

1. Mark Franks, a Blackbird Leys Parish Councillor asked a question about proposals for the area around Knights Road taking over the ownership of Spindleberry Nature Park.
2. Frances Ashworth and Cyril Foster spoke in support of the motion at 15b (mental health).
3. Safoora Teli and Fayaz Khan spoke in support of the motion at 15c (Kashmir).
4. Judith Harley asked a question about plans for the Oxford Greyhound Stadium and their relationship to plans for William Morris sports field.
5. Judith Harley gave an address about the rules on councillors lobbying other councillors.
6. Artwell gave an address about community facilities in Barton.

The full text of these speeches read as submitted; responses from the Cabinet members in writing before the meeting; and summaries of any verbal responses given at the meeting are set out in the printed pack of these minutes.

64. Motions on notice

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

Council resolved to adopt the following motions as set out in these minutes:

- a) Setting an Oxford Living Rent
- b) Mental Health
- c) Kashmir

The following motions were not taken as the time allocated for debate had elapsed:

- d) Long Service Awards
- e) International Treaty to Prohibit Nuclear Weapons
- f) Greening the city centre
- g) Tourism management

a) Setting an Oxford Living Rent

With Council's consent this item was taken before the break.

Councillors Corais and McManners arrived during this item.

Councillor Wolff, seconded by Councillor Rowley 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

- 1) the high cost of rent within the private rented sector within the City;
- 2) that it has limited influence on the private rented sector rental values;
- 3) that it has a duty under the Homelessness Reduction Act to do what it can to prevent homelessness including helping those who are not in priority need from losing their home;
- 4) the success of the Oxford Living Wage campaign in raising awareness of low pay and encouraging more employers to pay a living wage;
- 5) that the Mayor of London has set and published benchmark London Living Rent levels for every neighbourhood in the capital. These are based on a third of average local household incomes and adjusted for the number of bedrooms in each home.

Council therefore agrees to:

- 1) ask Cabinet to commission a report to explore the idea of setting and publishing an annual 'Oxford Living Rent' for the private rented sector with a view to exerting influence on the rental market within Oxford.**
- 2) write to the incoming Government after 12 December asking for the power to establish and enforce local rent controls..**

The Oxford Living Rent should be calculated using a methodology that utilises existing, annually published data using research from organisations such as the Joseph Rowntree Foundation who have studied this in some detail.

This motion does not prescribe the method to be used but notes that various options exist and should be evaluated for their relevance to Oxford and their alignment with the values of this Council.

b) Mental Health

Councillor Iley-Williamson arrived and Councillors Fry, Pressel and Tidball left during this item.

Councillor Bely-Summers, seconded by Councillor Upton 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 2012 Health and Social Care Act opened the NHS to private companies, allowing them to bid for big contracts and sue the NHS if they didn't get it.

The NHS is being dismantled piece by piece. This is compounded by the longest spell of austerity cuts in living memory and a lower investment in health compared to other EU countries.

Oxfordshire CCG is a serial under-funder of Mental Health services. It persistently spends well below the national average figure of 13.9%. For the people in Oxford it means rationing and difficulty accessing services for those who need it at a time when public awareness of mental illness is increasing and the rate of Oxfordshire pupils suffering from mental health problems tops national average (see Oxford Mail 8/10/19). Unite which represents 100,000 members in the Health service have pointed out that psychological therapies have lost about 90% of their most senior clinicians since 2007 and that the trend needs to be reversed to prevent mentally ill people falling through the care net. Consultant psychology posts in adult psychology have recently been reduced by a third. The expectation is that less qualified staff will do more complex work with people who have serious mental health problems.

Oxfordshire Unison Health branch has highlighted the following:

- a shortage of Mental Health nurses in psychiatric wards.
- the recruitment and retention crisis being made worse by high cost of living in Oxfordshire.
- overcrowded wards are creating stressful environments, hampering recovery.
- the lack of decent housing and supportive placements prevents rapid discharge.
- the lack of adequate community services to support people in crisis leading to readmission.

Put under pressure from politicians, local people, councillors and campaign groups , the county council reversed its decision over a £1.6 million cut in the Mental Health budget earlier this year but we will need to do much more just to stand still as our population grows.

Therefore

- 1) **We call on the Leader of the City Council to write to the Secretary of State to urge them to increase Mental Health funding to meet national target and address the needs of the population.**
- 2) **We call on the Systems Leaders Group for the Buckingham, Oxfordshire and West Berkshire Integrated Care System (BOB ICS) to ensure they will consult the local population on decisions made regarding Mental Health provision.**
- 3) **We request a clear line of accountability to be outlined by BOB ICS to ensure that the public has confidence in its decisions.**

c) Kashmir

Councillors Lloyd-Shogbesan left at the start of this item.

Councillor Altaf Khan, seconded by Councillor Wade, 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 supports the calls of the Oxford Kashmiri/Pakistani community to take notice of the humanitarian crisis intensified since 5th August 2019 when the Indian government revoked Article 370 of the Constitution thus abrogating the special status granted to Kashmir.

This Council notes that:

- eight million people in the valley of Kashmir are completely disconnected from the rest of the world due to curfew imposed by the Indian government;
- the enforced disappearances of civilians, the state-endorsed sexual violence of women by armed forces and the overall prevalence of human rights violations in the region worsens;
- the consequences of the abrogation of Article 370 and 35A along with the lockdown is aimed to demolish Kashmiri identity and bring about a demographic change against the wished of the people of Kashmir;
- thousands of Kashmiris including political leaders, both pro-freedom and mainstream, have been imprisoned without lawful justification;
- the number of children abducted from their homes is estimated by Indian human rights activists is about 13,000;
- the ongoing communications black-out is causing disruption for medical agencies and distress for the families.

This Council affirms that:

Jammu and Kashmir is a UN mandated disputed territory and the people of Kashmir must be given the right to self-determination as provided by the UN charter and UN resolutions.

It endorses the UN High Commissioners' demand to send a fact-finding Mission to Kashmir as demanded in OHCHR reports of June 2018 and July 2019.

This Council resolves:

- 1) That the international community including our incoming Government should ask the Government of India to lift all restrictions, ensure restoration of all human rights and fundamental freedoms and allow access to all aid agencies and international observers to obtain an independent estimate of this crisis situation.
- 2) The global community through the United Nations should invoke preventative diplomacy to prevent a military conflict between India and Pakistan in the interests of international peace and security and to ensure that the curfew enforced since 5th August should be lifted to guarantee the security and even the lives of the Kashmiri people.

- 3) To ask group leaders to write jointly to the Prime Minister, Foreign Secretary, Oxford's incoming MPs and MEPs supporting this motion.

This Council acknowledges the brave and principled work of Oxford's Kashmiri/Pakistani community and wider diaspora to push for accountability over the many decades of human rights violations and crimes against the Kashmiri people by the Government of India;

and asks the Leader/Chief Executive of the Council to write to the relevant U.K. Government Ministers in the Home and Foreign Offices, and to the city's incoming MPs, asking:

- 1) The UK government to condemn the use of force, rape and other human rights violations of the Kashmiris.
- 2) The Home Office to provide sanctuary to Kashmiri people seeking safety from the oppressive regime in Indian Occupied Kashmir.
- 3) The city's MPs to write appropriate letters to the Home Office and Foreign Office representing the demands set out in this motion.

d) Long Service Awards

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

e) International Treaty to Prohibit Nuclear Weapons

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

f) Greening the city centre

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

g) Tourism management

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

The meeting started at 5.00 pm and ended at 8.25 pm

Lord Mayor

Date: Monday 27 January 2020