

Remote meeting

Minutes of a meeting of Council on Monday 30 November 2020

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Council members present:

Councillor Lygo (Lord Mayor)

Councillor Wolff (Sheriff)

Councillor Azad

Councillor Bely-Summers

Councillor Chapman

Councillor Cook

Councillor Curran

Councillor Donnelly

Councillor Gant

Councillor Gotch

Councillor Hayes

Councillor Hollingsworth

Councillor Humberstone

Councillor Kennedy

Councillor Lloyd-Shogbesan

Councillor Munkonge

Councillor Rowley

Councillor Simmons

Councillor Roz Smith

Councillor Tarver

Councillor Turner

Councillor Wade

Councillor Goddard (Deputy Lord Mayor)

Councillor Altaf-Khan

Councillor Aziz

Councillor Brown

Councillor Clarkson

Councillor Corais

Councillor Djafari-Marbini

Councillor Fry

Councillor Garden

Councillor Haines

Councillor Henwood

Councillor Howlett

Councillor Iley-Williamson

Councillor Landell Mills

Councillor McManners

Councillor Pressel

Councillor Simm

Councillor Linda Smith

Councillor Tanner

Councillor Taylor

Councillor Upton

Apologies:

Councillors Arshad, Harris, Malik and Tidball sent apologies.

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

43. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations.

44. Minutes

Council agreed to approve the minutes of the ordinary meeting held on 5 October 2020 as a true and correct record.

45. Appointment to Committees

There were no changes of appointments to committees.

46. Announcements

The Lord Mayor, Cllr Lygo, reminded Council this was his first event as the newly installed Lord Mayor. His chosen charities for the year were Wood Farm Youth Centre, Ark-T, and Oxfordshire Mind.

He reminded members of the special council meeting on 5 January at 5.30pm, and to watch online the virtual Mayor Making.

He congratulated Cllr Hayes for winning the Local Government Information Unit's Environment and Sustainability Pioneer award for 2020 and Cllr Tidball for being nominated for their Covid-19 champion award.

He congratulated the Monitoring Officer Anita Bradley on her appointment as Director of Law and Governance for Oxfordshire County Council and Cherwell District Council; thanking her for her time with the council and wishing her well.

He then invited the City Rector to speak.

The Leader of the Council congratulated the three civic office holders on taking up their offices.

She asked Council to note the success in trials of the Oxford-AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine and the huge hopes it brings for the city and the world: and to congratulate the research team on their achievement.

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

There were no addresses or questions.

48. Project Approval and Allocation of Housing and Growth Deal Funding for Affordable Housing Delivery

Council considered the report of the Head of Housing Services seeking project approval and delegations to enable capital grant allocations to be paid to Registered Providers and Community-Led Housing providers for schemes within the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal programme, using grant received from Oxfordshire County Council for this purpose.

The Cabinet Member for Affordable Housing, Cllr Rowley, introduced the report, proposed the recommendations and answered questions. The recommendations were agreed on being seconded and put to the vote.

Council resolved to approve a revision to the general fund capital budget in 2020/21 of £3,123,000, for the initial grant payment in relation to the William Morris Close site, and a further capital budget for 2021/22 of £347,000 to fund the remaining grant balance payable for that scheme all of which will be funded by capital grant income from Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal (OGD).

49. Project Approval and Allocation of Next Steps Accommodation Programme Funding for Affordable Housing Delivery & Homelessness Prevention

Council considered the report of the Head of Housing Services seeking project approval and delegations to enable capital spend, under the Next Steps Accommodation Programme, using grant received from Government for the purpose of acquiring additional Council housing for the purpose of reducing rough sleeping.

The Cabinet Member for Affordable Housing, Cllr Rowley, introduced the report, proposed the recommendations and answered questions. The recommendations were agreed on being seconded and put to the vote.

Council resolved to approve a revision to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) capital budget in 2020/21 of £1,195,750 for the initial purchase of 5 properties, to be funded by capital grant from MHCLG/ Homes England of £150,000; by Oxfordshire Housing and Growth (OGD) Deal funding of £275,000; and HRA Council borrowing of up to £770,750.

50. Appointment of Head of Law and Governance (Monitoring Officer)

Council considered the report of the Head of Business Improvement asking Council to designate the Council's Monitoring Officer and to appoint a Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer.

The Leader and Group Leaders thanked the current Monitoring Officer Anita Bradley for her guidance and clarity of thought, and her skill and professionalism in her roles as Monitoring Officer and Head of Law and Governance, and wished her well in her new post.

The Chair of the Appointments Committee Cllr Brown introduced the report and proposed the recommendations. The recommendations were agreed on being seconded and put to the vote.

Council resolved to:

1. **Designate** the newly appointed Head of Law and Governance, Susan Sale, as the Council's Monitoring Officer with effect from 4 January 2021.
2. **Appoint** the newly appointed Head of Law and Governance, Susan Sale, as the Council's Returning Officer and as the Council's Electoral Registration Officer with effect from 4 January 2021.

51. Council and Committee meetings programme March 2021 - May 2022

Council considered the report of Head of Law and Governance which sets out a programme of Council, committee and other meetings for 1 March 2021 to 31 May 2022, including moving a Council meeting to 6.00pm on 22 March 2021

The Leader of the Council Cllr Brown introduced the report and proposed the recommendations. The recommendations were agreed on being seconded and put to the vote.

Council resolved to:

1. **Approve** the programme of Council, committee and other meetings from 1 March 2021 to 31 May 2022 attached at Appendix 1;
2. **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 any decision by Council to change the committee structure or committee remits which impacts on the programme of meetings; and
3. **Delegate** authority to the Head of Law and Governance to set dates for additional training and briefing sessions for Members.

52. Questions on Cabinet minutes

a) Minutes of meeting Wednesday 14 October 2020 of Cabinet

Minute 76 – Oxford City Council's response to the Planning for the Future White Paper August 2020

Cllr Wolff asked if any communication from MHCLG relating to the Council's response had been received.

Cllr Hollingsworth reported that no response had been received but that the government itself now seemed less enthusiastic about the consultation proposals.

Cllr Roz Smith asked if a copy of the Council's official response to the consultation could be added to its website.

Cllr Hollingsworth said he would ask officers to add this.

b) Minutes of meeting Wednesday 11 November 2020 of Cabinet

Minute 88 – Alcohol and Dog Control Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPOs)

Cllr Wolff asked about options for reporting problems and if councillors could be informed if a PSPO is in force in their ward.

Cllr Upton replied that the PSPOs included a map of the areas covered but she would ask officers to notify councillors of the orders affecting their wards.

The dog control order covered the whole city, the alcohol PSPO covered areas where there was good evidence of a persistent problem. Councillors could report matters via the saferoxford email.

Cllr Gant asked about the need to have documentary evidence of a problem for the new PSPO; whether Cabinet was content with the remits of the both the previous and new PSPOs; and if any formal processes were started under the PSPO and if so were there any that could not have been handled under other powers.

Cllr Upton explained that the newly-lapsed PSPO had rolled-over previous orders and did not require a full evidential base in support. The new Order requires a fully evidence based approach to setting the areas covered, so coverage is more restricted.

No fixed penalty notices were issued, but officers used it many times to request people to hand over their alcohol or to make it difficult for drinkers to gather where such gatherings could cause distress.

53. Questions on Notice from Members of Council

35 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 14 supplementary questions and responses asked and given at the meeting are set out in the full document pack containing these minutes.

54. Partnership report: Oxfordshire Growth Board

The Lord Mayor took this and the next item before the public speaker was heard at around 7.00pm.

Council had before it the report on behalf of the Leader of Council, Cllr Brown, on the Oxfordshire Growth Board, and the Engagement Draft of the Oxfordshire's Strategic Vision for Long-Term Sustainable Development included as an appendix.

Cllr Brown introduced the report, outlining the benefits of the partnerships and the Board in allowing the local authorities (as the individual decision making bodies) to meet together and with other partners to take forward common goals and leverage funding to benefit the county.

Cllr Brown answered questions from councillors:

- On the relationships between the many different partnerships and bodies involved in and around the Growth Board, each partnership works on deciding and delivering on common areas works. Democratic accountability then lay with the individual decisions made by each council.
- There was no decision on whether to re-timetable the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 to fit with revised Local Plan timetables. She would encourage and emphasise that young people form a vital part of and should engage in the consultations.
- She hoped that fellow council leaders reported back to their councils in similar fashion, but had no information about their reporting.

Growth Board Scrutiny Panel members noted the wide-ranging remit of the Board and the accountability, and welcomed the report which gave members an opportunity to discuss and comment on the Board's work.

Council noted the report and the appendix.

55. Scrutiny Committee update report

Council had before it the report of the Scrutiny Committee Chair.

Cllr Gant, Chair of the Scrutiny Committee, introduced the report and the matters discussed at the committee and standing and review panels and answered questions. He thanked officers involved in the scrutiny function for their support.

Council noted the report.

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

Cllr Haines left the meeting at this point.

There was one address to Council.

Janet Philips spoke in support of motion 16a on Improving coronavirus testing and tracing.

Cllr Upton thanked Ms Philips for her speech and her support for the motion, and noted the effective work of the Oxford University testing and tracing system. She and invited Ms Philips to listen to the debate on the motion.

The full text of this speech as submitted is set out in the document pack containing these minutes.

57. Motions on notice 30 November 2020

Council had before it 12 motions on notice submitted in accordance with Council procedure rules and reached decisions as set out below.

Motions agreed:

- a) Improving coronavirus testing and tracing [amendment agreed by all parties]
- b) Domestic Abuse and Covid-19 Workplace
- c) Community Safety Universal Basic Income [as amended by the proposer]
- d) Supporting the climate and ecological emergency [as amended]

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

- e) Charitable donations from members' allowances
- f) Homelessness and Social Housing
- g) Pavement parking
- h) Defining 'Net Zero' buildings
- i) Chinese New Year
- j) The Permitted Deportation of EU Nationals Found Rough Sleeping
- k) Student fees
- l) Fireworks

a) Improving coronavirus testing and tracing

Cllr Upton seconded by Cllr Simmons proposed the submitted cross-party motion, with additional words at the end agreed by all three groups, as set out in the briefing note. Cllr Gant supported the motion.

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

Council resolved to adopt the following motion:

Oxford City Council expresses concern that, so far into the COVID pandemic, the country still does not have an adequate testing and tracing system, putting the people of Oxford at increased risk of suffering from coronavirus.

Test and trace has been proven in countries with a properly functioning system to be a successful strategy to manage and contain COVID-19 outbreaks.

Numerous experts have repeated that, to be effective, testing and tracing needs to be managed and carried out at a local level. However, instead of funding local bodies – which have the expertise, experience and vital local connections – this Government has squandered billions of pounds of public money on private companies (though the system has still been misleadingly named ‘NHS’ Test & Trace). This poor performance has contributed to the failure to contain COVID outbreaks and, ultimately, to an increased loss of life. This lack of integration into normal local NHS services (which would allow GPs to contact positive cases with crucial and timely medical advice) could and probably will cost lives. This lack of integration with local authorities prevents the timely offering of financial and practical support.

In late recognition that its tracing performance could not improve without local participation, NHS Test and Trace have in recent months passed to local authorities the names of people with positive tests whom they failed to reach. In short, they are getting local authorities to clean up their mess.

This Council believes the only way to fully rectify the situation is for full control to be passed to local authorities, with the necessary funding to do the job properly, with national input providing any support necessary to ensure effective co-ordination.

We believe a local scheme will:

- Improve traceability
- Enable increased and targeted testing, including asymptomatic testing
- Be better integrated into existing Council COVID support services
- Be a more cost-effective solution
- Achieve greater community engagement
- Allow for the engagement of local volunteers

Pressure is building on the Government both to use local authorities more and to cease contracting out ‘NHS’ Test and Trace’ to private companies.

This Council agrees to add its voice to those challenging the current, failed system by asking the Leader to:

- Call on our Director of Public Health and the leader of the County Council to support more local authority engagement in testing and tracing.

- Write to our MPs asking them for their support.

Council also recognises the tireless work of the Oxford Vaccine Group who, in partnership with AstraZeneca, have taken us a giant step closer to ending the pandemic.

Council particularly applauds the decision to make the vaccine available on a not-for-profit basis around the world.

b) Domestic Abuse and Covid-19 workplace and community safety

Cllr Aziz, seconded by Cllr Taylor 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 more than 40,000 calls and contacts were made to the National Domestic Abuse Helpline during the first three months of the Covid-19 lockdown, as reported by the BBC in July 2020.

Domestic Abuse is a common form of violence, overwhelmingly impacting women and girls globally and nationally and here in Oxford. Men and children are also impacted by domestic abuse as are non-binary and LGBTIQ+ people.

According to women's groups, at least twenty six women including children have been killed in domestic homicides since the lockdown started, the eldest victim was over 82 years old and the youngest were four and two, killed alongside their mother.

Domestic Abuse impacts people of all ages, genders, race, disabilities and class, as well as work places, places of worship, places of learning and all communities.

This Council recognises people with insecure immigration status are especially vulnerable to seeking help due to the Hostile Environment, leaving many homeless and facing additional threats with pregnant migrant women facing particular risks.

This Council recognises the Covid pandemic, lockdowns and restriction of movement, means there is a greater need for increased protection and support for victims and survivors in Oxford.

This Council resolves:

to ask the Head of Business Improvement to submit a report to Cabinet setting out proposals to

- Develop a Domestic Abuse in the Workplace Policy for Oxford City Council and encourage Oxford's workplaces to do the same. As the government instructs people to work from home over the next six months, this council encourages all workplaces to prioritise domestic abuse as a work place and community safety issue.
- Support and build links with trade unions and employers to implement work place domestic abuse policies.

- Raise awareness and provide information on how to help friends, family members and colleagues affected by domestic abuse.
- Campaign and lobby for increased sustainable and emergency funding from central government for organisations working with victims and survivors, especially services for BAME women, which are hugely underfunded.

This Council thanks Oxford's frontline domestic abuse workers, charities and organisations for their life saving work.

c) Universal Basic Income

Cllr Garden, seconded by Cllr Gant proposed the submitted motion including the proposer's minor amendment as set out in the briefing note,

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

Council resolved to adopt the following motion:

This Council recognises that financial security is critical to a stable and thriving society. Yet, too many people are without enough money to meet their basic needs. Universal Basic Income (UBI) is an opportunity to revolutionise a welfare system that is no longer fit for purpose.

The Bank of England predicts that unemployment levels will rise to 7.7% by the middle of next year. Oxford will not be immune. Businesses closing, zero hour contracts and gig economy adding further uncertainty. Housing is expensive and too much income is being spent on rent or mortgages so we can expect an increase in evictions and homelessness. These trends are likely to persist and worsen as climate change intensifies requiring significant industry restructuring.

Demand for financial state support is anticipated but there's little confidence that Universal Credit will be sufficient. The system is intrusive and demeaning, and has caused much distress and hardship even before the current crisis. Many are expected to fall through the gaps.

Financial inequality impacts social cohesion and productivity. The consequent cost to the health, police, education and social services are immense.

We need a more flexible and supportive social security infrastructure to allow society to cope with the necessary changes. Poverty and inequality pose great threat to the economic recovery. But with the right support, individuals could be empowered to embark on new enterprises and retraining for new careers. Rebuilding can be successful, and support the much need transition to a low-carbon high-tech economy, but we need a strong confident innovative workforce.

UBI would provide every adult (regardless of employment status, wealth, or marital status) with a fixed, regular and unconditional income to relieve some of the financial pressures facing households. It's a monthly grant sufficient to contribute to the basic needs of food, shelter and education. It is a fair way of eliminating poverty, guaranteeing a minimum standard of living, and improving well-being. It helps the local economy by providing stability and security; allowing people to thrive rather than just survive.

There have been several trials of basic income internationally and most recently in Finland. Results have been encouraging. Spain is rolling it out as part of their COVID-19 response measures.

The Scottish government is considering the practicalities. The UK government has not come out in support as yet, but several authorities (Manchester, Sheffield, Liverpool, Hull in the north, and Brighton and London in the south) are calling for trials. This requires political will and Oxford should stand in solidarity with them.

The Council calls on the Leader:

1. to write to the Chancellor and Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy requesting that the government considers *a pilot study of Universal Basic Income*;
2. to circulate the response from the government to all council members once the reply is received.

d) Supporting the Climate and Ecological Emergency (CEE) Bill

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

Cllr Hayes proposed the amendment as set out in the briefing note. Cllr Simmons tabled a proposed further amendment to this:

replace points 3 and 4 with the following:

3. publicly expressing its support for many of the aims of the CEE Bill by expressing strong support for proposals, such as Labour's Green Economic Recovery, which accelerate or increase investment in green infrastructure and jobs;

4. where this is not already the case, aligning the Council's own future strategies, policies and targets with the aims and goals of the CEE Bill

Cllr Hayes accepted the further amendment, changing his amendment. Cllr Simmons then accepted the changed amendment, which with Council's assent became the substantive motion for debate.

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

Council resolved to adopt the following motion:

Council notes that while Parliament declared an environment and climate emergency in May last year, Boris Johnson's Government is not responding with the necessary urgency to achieve net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.

Council regrets that the Government's recently announced climate budget contains just £3bn of new funding, meaning that its level of ambition pales in comparison to Germany's €42.8bn green stimulus and France's €35bn.

Council notes that on 12 August 2020 the CEE Bill Alliance launched the campaign for the Climate and Ecological Emergency (CEE) Bill which was presented to Parliament on 2 September. This is a Private Members' Bill (PMB) written by scientists, lawyers

and activists; gathering support from a broad range of campaign groups, businesses, charities and individuals. The bill has the potential to become the most significant move forward since the Climate Change Act 2008 (which also notably started as a PMB).

At the time of writing, 81 MPs have supported the Bill with co-sponsors from Labour, Green, and Liberal Democrat MPs.

The Bill is a Presentation Bill (which does not involve a debate or a vote in Parliament but is a way of drawing attention to an issue which requires a real change in the law). The nature of the Bill could see the creation of a Citizens' Assembly that would put forward recommendations, contributing to the work of both the UK Government and UK Parliament in delivering an essential climate and ecological emergency strategy.

This Council recognised the urgency of the climate and ecological emergency in January 2019 subsequently holding its own Citizen Assembly in Autumn 2019 and setting up its own Climate Emergency Review scrutiny group. All of these highlighted the important role of the Westminster Government in galvanising action.

This Council therefore wishes to express its strong support for *urgent climate action and significant new national funding to match the scale of the climate emergency and jobs crisis we face by:*

1. *welcoming the CEE Bill for raising awareness and sharing ideas; and*
2. asking the Leader to write to the City's MPs asking them to sign the CEE Bill Early Day Motion (no. 832) as well as offering their public support and backing for its aims and goals;
3. *publicly expressing its support for many of the aims of the CEE Bill by expressing strong support for proposals, such as Labour's Green Economic Recovery, which accelerate or increase investment in green infrastructure and jobs*
4. where this is not already the case, aligning the Council's own future strategies, policies and targets with the aims and goals of the CEE Bill.

e) Charitable donations from members' allowances

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

f) Homelessness and Social Housing

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

g) Pavement Parking

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

h) Defining 'Net Zero' buildings

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

i) Chinese New Year 2021

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

j) The Permitted Deportation of EU Nationals Found Rough Sleeping

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

k) Student fees

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

l) Fireworks

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

The meeting started at 5.00 pm and ended at 8.15 pm

Signed as a correct record

Lord Mayor

Date: Monday 25 January 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.