

Remote meeting

Minutes of a meeting of Council on Monday 25 January 2021

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Council members present:

Councillor Lygo (Lord Mayor)

Councillor Wolff (Sheriff)

Councillor Arshad

Councillor Aziz

Councillor Brown

Councillor Clarkson

Councillor Corais

Councillor Djafari-Marbini

Councillor Gant

Councillor Gotch

Councillor Hayes

Councillor Hollingsworth

Councillor Humberstone

Councillor Kennedy

Councillor Lloyd-Shogbesan

Councillor McManners

Councillor Pressel

Councillor Simm

Councillor Linda Smith

Councillor Tanner

Councillor Taylor

Councillor Turner

Councillor Wade

Councillor Goddard (Deputy Lord Mayor)

Councillor Altaf-Khan

Councillor Azad

Councillor Bely-Summers

Councillor Chapman

Councillor Cook

Councillor Curran

Councillor Fry

Councillor Garden

Councillor Haines

Councillor Henwood

Councillor Howlett

Councillor Iley-Williamson

Councillor Landell Mills

Councillor Malik

Councillor Munkonge

Councillor Rowley

Councillor Simmons

Councillor Roz Smith

Councillor Tarver

Councillor Tidball

Councillor Upton

Apologies:

No apologies, all members present.

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

60. Declarations of interest

Cllr Lygo and Cllr Roz Smith declared an interest in the motion at 72f (fossil fuel divestment) as they had a decision making role as members of the Oxfordshire County Council Pension Fund Committee.

61. Minutes

Council agreed to approve the minutes of the ordinary meeting held on 30 November 2020 and the special meeting held on 5 January 2021 as true and correct records.

62. Appointment to Committees

There were no changes of appointments to committees.

63. Announcements

The Lord Mayor thanked, on behalf of councillors, members of the Community Response Team, City Centre Ambassadors and Anti-social Behaviour Investigation Team for providing life-saving assistance when a serious medical emergency occurred in the city centre earlier this month.

He updated Council on events he had attended, including

- Online virtual meetings, ceremonies and conferences
- Virtual meetings with the High Sheriff and Lord Lieutenant of Oxfordshire
- Attending the Menorah event on Broad Street
- Working with ArkT charity to deliver presents and food to the community before and on Christmas Day.

He encouraged everyone to join his 'Move with Mayor Mark' well-being and health initiative (in person and online with #MoveWithMayorMark) and to remember to look after each other during the ongoing pandemic crisis.

The Lord Mayor noted the recent resignations of Cllr Alex Donnelly on 22 December and Cllr Paul Harris on 5 January due to work and family commitments, and thanked them for their time on the Council.

Cllr Brown and Cllr Gant (their respective group leaders) also thanked them, paid tribute to their service on the Council and to their communities and wished them well for the future.

The Sheriff and Deputy Lord Mayor reported correspondence from their counterparts in other cities.

The City Rector, Rev Anthony Buckley spoke to Council about the upcoming Holocaust Memorial Day on 27 January.

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

There were no addresses or questions.

65. 1-3 George Street refurbishment

Council considered the report of the Executive Director (Development) seeking approval to fund and enter into a contract for the building refurbishment of 1-3 George Street to provide affordable managed workspace in the heart of the city centre.

The Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Delivery, Cllr Hollingsworth, 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 capital budget of £1.921m to deliver the project with the enhanced sustainability option and including the use of up to £800K of funds awarded to the Council from OxLEP's Local Growth Fund. This will be split £454K in 20/21, £1.361m in 21/22 and £106K in 22/23.

66. Meanwhile in Oxfordshire

Council considered the report of the Executive Director (Development) to seek approval to include the £1.875m funding across the 2020/21 and 2021/22 Council budget. All other aspects of the project remain as set out in the reports to Cabinet on 9 December 2020 and 20 January 2021.

The Leader of the Council, Cllr Brown, introduced the report, proposed the recommendations and answered questions.

The recommendations were agreed on being seconded and put to the vote.

Council resolved to:

establish a budget £1.875m (capital) within the Council's capital programme, profiled across 2020-21 and 2021-22, subject to contracting with OxLEP.

67. Questions on Cabinet minutes

a) Minutes of meeting Wednesday 9 December 2020 of Cabinet

Minute 99 – Budget

Cllr Simmons asked if Cabinet could ensure adequate consultation on the revised capital strategy and budget changes since the initial consultation started: was there adequate opportunity for the public and councillors to comment on these before the decision was made?

Cllr Turner replied that the changes to the capital strategy would be considered at the 27 January Finance and Performance Panel meeting. Necessary amendments to the

budget since the consultation started required bringing forward changes which unfortunately cannot be subject to the same consultation process, but Council will have the opportunity to debate these during its consideration of the budget.

Cllr Roz Smith asked if the final budget proposals would be available for proper scrutiny before the Council meeting, to allow time for proper consideration and response.

Cllr Turner replied that all changes and final budget proposals would be published with the report to the Cabinet meeting on 10 February, and that the Finance and Performance Panel would continue to do its excellent work scrutinising the budget.

b) Minutes of meeting Wednesday 20 January 2021 of Cabinet (to follow)

Minute 117 – Councillor addresses on neighbourhood issues

Cllr Landell Mills asked if there might be a decline in standards in the city's parks without the benchmark and standards provided by the Green Flag scheme now that the Council had withdrawn from this.

Cllr Smith replied that there would be no reduction in standards apart from slightly less litter bin emptying in the evenings. The savings, agreed by Council when it set the budget last year, arose from reductions in administration and the costs of seeking the award.

Minute 119 – Scrutiny Committee reports

Cllr Simmons asked for an update on progress on the Climate Emergency Review Group's recommendations from early in 2020.

Cllr Tom Hayes, Cabinet Member for Green Transport and Zero Carbon Oxford, reported that work on these would restart in February. He explained that Covid-19 had diverted some Council resources, and now that attention could be turned to the recommendations there was a wish to ensure that there was real substance both in the Cabinet's responses when they are given and the resulting actions which are or will be in train.

The Review Group's work had triggered useful conversations within the Council about how best to improve its response to the climate emergency. He said he would be pleased to meet with the Review Group if it was reconvened, or the Scrutiny Committee, to discuss the Cabinet response in due course.

68. Questions on Notice from Members of Council

31 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 13 supplementary questions and responses asked and given at the meeting are set out in the full document pack containing these minutes.

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

There were no addresses or questions.

70. Partnership report - Oxford Safer Communities Partnership

Council considered the report on behalf of the Cabinet Member for a Safer, Healthy Oxford, Cllr Upton, giving an update on the Oxford Safer Communities Partnership in 2019-20.

Cllr Upton introduced the report, paid tribute to the front-line council officers for the wide variety of work they carry out, and answered questions from councillors.

In summary her main points in answer were:

- On breaking the cycle of domestic abuse, she understood Oxfordshire County Council carried out some work on anger management with perpetrators. The Health and Wellbeing Board had discussed how to liaise with the justice system to getting domestic abuse cases to court more quickly than is happening at present.
- Restorative approaches referred to were not the same as restorative justice interventions. They tended to be in organised groups for community 'payback' work providing useful work for the benefit of the community.
- Neighbourhood action/ community safety groups meeting with the police may be of limited use: it was important that the meetings were used appropriately but if it would be useful, then it could be arranged.
- The partnership would consider the serious case review resulting from a child exploitation case in Banbury and the lessons to be learned: she would make sure it was on the agenda.
- A question was asked about involving Liberal Democrat and Green councillors the partnership.

Councillors noted the report and the appendices.

71. Scrutiny Committee update report

Council had before it the report of the Scrutiny Committee Chair, Cllr Gant, who introduced this.

Council noted the report.

72. Motions on notice 25 January 2021

Councillor Haines left the meeting at this point.

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) Pavement Parking [amendment accepted by proposer]
- b) Defining and delivering truly 'Net Zero' buildings [amendment accepted by proposer]
- c) School Streets to Tackle Air Quality and Tackle Associated Health Inequalities

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

- d) Proportional Representation to ensure every vote counts (proposed by Cllr Garden)
- e) Developing a Food Strategy (proposed by Cllr Simmons, seconded by Cllr Wolff)
- f) Fossil fuel divestment (proposed by Cllr Hayes)
- g) E Scooters (proposed by Cllr Gant)
- h) Adopting an advertising and sponsorship policy which supports responsible consumption (proposed by Cllr Simmons, seconded by Cllr Wolff)
- i) Fireworks (proposed by Cllr Goddard)

a) Pavement Parking

Cllr Roz Smith, seconded by Cllr Landell Mills proposed the submitted motion as set out in the agenda and briefing note.

Cllr Roz Smith accepted the amendment proposed by Cllr Hayes as set out in the briefing note.

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

Council resolved to adopt the following motion:

The government has recently consulted on ‘Pavement Parking: Options for Change’. Oxford City Council has submitted a response to the national consultation following a consultation of people with experience of living, working and moving around Oxford with disabilities, as well as people who represent disability charities, informed by a presentation on the subject by the Parking Manager at Oxfordshire County Council.

The focus group gave an overall preference for the option of banning pavement parking, as has been the case in London since 1974.

This Council:

- Recognises that the Government launched the consultation because of concern that dangerous parking, on pavements, in cycle lanes, around schools and in many other instances, has got worse in recent years and causes significant danger and inconvenience to many people including wheelchair users, parents with small children, cyclists, the less mobile, and many others.
- Recognises that present enforcement by Oxfordshire County Council in Oxford is widely seen to be limited in effectiveness; it cannot be effective owing to the current legal framework, which we recognise needs to change.
- Believes that the safety of pedestrians (especially the visually impaired, and disabled) is important and motorists should be considerate of everybody else’s needs.

- Believes that pavement parking is both an obstacle to active transport (walking and cycling), and significantly hinders the liberty and mobility of visually impaired and disabled citizens.
- Recognises that a ban on pavement parking needs to be accompanied by a thorough CPZ approach, so that problems aren't just displaced to other areas, and extra budget from Government or else enforcement will not be possible
- Recognises that exceptions to the rule will need to be retained (for example where a CPZ specifically allows pavement parking due to narrow roads) and where there is pavement parking, it should be very clearly marked with signs and paint.

Council therefore:

1. Fully endorses the objective of the government consultation to end pavement parking, considering all local circumstances.
2. Commits to supporting the use of civil enforcement powers in a way which both enforces this policy effectively and does not represent a financial cost to the council.
3. Asks the Cabinet Member for Green Transport and Zero Carbon Oxford to write to colleagues in Oxfordshire County Council and neighbouring districts informing them of this resolution and offering to investigate opportunities for effective joint working over, for example, enforcement contracts.
4. Asks the Cabinet Member for Green Transport and Zero Carbon Oxford to write to the Secretary of State and the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Department for Transport informing them of this resolution and urging them to move to banning pavement parking as soon as possible.

b) Defining and delivering truly 'Net Zero' buildings

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

Cllr Turner proposed minor amendments to the motion, put to Council in writing, to remove from the second sentence the words '*For the sake of clarity in public discourse, the Council therefore moves to accept*' and to include the words underlined as below.

Cllr Wolff accepted the amendments.

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

Council resolved to adopt the following motion:

Oxford City Council is listed as a member of the UK Green Building Council (UKGBC), along with Cambridge, Bristol and 43 other local authorities.

In its communications the Council asks Cabinet to use the 'framework definition' of 'net zero carbon buildings' as developed by the UKGBC (or make it clear where this is not the case), which in summary states:

Net zero carbon – construction (1.1):

When the amount of carbon emissions associated with a building's product and construction stages up to practical completion is zero or negative, through the use of offsets or the net export of on-site renewable energy.

Net zero carbon – operational energy (1.2):

When the amount of carbon emissions associated with the building's operational energy on an annual basis is zero or negative. A net zero carbon building is highly energy efficient and powered from on-site and/or off-site renewable energy sources, with any remaining carbon balance, after all efforts have been otherwise made, offset.

Note: The framework also provides reporting templates, which (if followed) enable claims of 'net zero' construction and operation to be supported with evidence.

Council asks that the Head of Regeneration & Economy brings a report to Cabinet setting out proposals (including costings) as to how the authority can ensure that:

- its own properties meet net-zero operational standards by 2030 at the latest; and
- all new build by the Council meets net zero carbon construction standards by 2030 at the latest; and
- it further explores the possibility of reflecting this in the relevant planning policies and guidance when they are reviewed in the future.

and advising the Cabinet on ways to ensure that:

- 'net zero' claims made by house-builders operating in the city and the Council are evidentially supportable (and in compliance with the definition as above).

c) School Streets to Tackle Air Quality and Tackle Associated Health Inequalities

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

An amendment as set out in the briefing note proposed by Cllr Gant, seconded by Cllr Landell Mills, was debated and lost on being put to the vote.

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

Council resolved to adopt the following motion:

The Coroner's verdict last month that the death of nine-year-old Ella Adoo-Kissi-Debrah in 2013 was caused by air pollution, the first time this has been listed as the cause of death in the UK, has brought sharply into focus the health emergency caused by poor air quality.

This Council notes with deep sorrow Ella's death.

Air pollution is already a dangerous threat to our communities' health; the current pandemic is making a bad situation worse, with deaths from Covid more prevalent amongst those exposed to higher levels of air pollution¹. The effects of poor air quality aggravate existing intersecting inequalities, with Black and Minority Ethnic people and those from more deprived communities being far more likely to be exposed to higher levels of pollution and thus suffer worse health outcomes².

In Oxford the City Council has taken great strides to address the problem and is implementing a Zero Emission Zone, EV charging infrastructure and proposals to cut overall traffic levels across the City through the Connecting Oxford scheme. But more needs to be done.

Short car journeys in particular dramatically increase children's exposure to air pollution, doubling pollution emitted from vehicles³. Children in highly polluted areas are four times more likely to have reduced lung function in adulthood. Improvements to air quality now can reverse this effect⁴. Encouraging Active Travel as part of an active lifestyle is critical to tackling childhood inactivity and promoting sustainable travel - both health and environmental necessities.

This Council believes urgent action is needed. Whilst Oxfordshire County Council has committed to trialling School Streets for three schools in Oxford, the speed and coverage of implementation is insufficient. School Streets must be integral to our wider ambitious proposals to reduce car traffic and encourage a switch to active transport, including Controlled Parking Zones, Low Traffic Neighbourhoods and better cycle infrastructure.

School Streets is an effective policy to help tackle the active and present threat of air pollution to the health of children, reduce health inequalities and combat the climate crisis. A study of 16 Schools Street sites shows a reduction in the number of motor vehicles, an increased use of active travel and improved road safety⁵.

This Council therefore:

1. Expresses our unequivocal support for School Streets as a mechanism to encourage a modal shift to active travel and tackle air pollution as part of a strategic approach to cutting traffic levels.
2. Asks the Leader to request Oxfordshire County Council, the transport authority, to
 - a) ensure the delivery of the Connecting Oxford proposals;
 - b) prioritise within its budget the roll out of School Streets across Oxford ;
 - c) use all available funding mechanisms, including activation funds from the Emergency Active Travel Fund on promoting active travel within schools, including using safe off-road cycle tracks, helping schools design active travel plans; and
 - d) work with partners to ensure every child in the city has the chance to learn to cycle, embedding cycling as a habit and means of active travel.

d) Proportional Representation to ensure every vote counts

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

e) Developing a Food Strategy

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

f) Fossil fuel divestment

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

g) E-scooters

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

h) Adopting an advertising and sponsorship policy which supports responsible consumption

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

i) Fireworks

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

The meeting started at 5.00 pm and ended at 7.50 pm

Lord Mayor Date: Monday 22 March 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.