

Minutes of a meeting of Council on Monday 31 January 2022

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Council members present:

Councillor Goddard (Deputy Lord Mayor)

Councillor Abrishami

Councillor Arshad

Councillor Brown

Councillor Clarkson

Councillor Corais

Councillor Diggins

Councillor Fouweather

Councillor Gant

Councillor Hayes

Councillor Humberstone

Councillor Jarvis

Councillor Latif

Councillor Miles

Councillor Munkonge

Councillor Pegg

Councillor Rehman

Councillor Linda Smith

Councillor Snowton

Councillor Tidball

Councillor Wade

Councillor Walcott

Councillor Wolff (Sheriff)

Councillor Altaf-Khan

Councillor Aziz

Councillor Chapman

Councillor Cook

Councillor Coyne

Councillor Djafari-Marbini

Councillor Fry

Councillor Haines

Councillor Hollingsworth

Councillor Hunt

Councillor Landell Mills

Councillor Malik

Councillor Mundy

Councillor Nala-Hartley

Councillor Pressel

Councillor Rowley

Councillor Roz Smith

Councillor Thomas

Councillor Upton

Councillor Waite

Also present for all or part of the meeting:

Caroline Green, Chief Executive

Stephen Gabriel, Executive Director for Communities and People

Mish Tullar, Head of Corporate Strategy

Nigel Kennedy, Head of Financial Services

Susan Sale, Monitoring Officer and Head of Law & Governance
Andrew Brown, Committee and Member Services Manager

Apologies:

Councillor(s) Lygo, Bely-Summers, Dunne, Hall and Turner sent apologies.

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

78. Declarations of interest

Item 15a) Motion: John Radcliffe Hospital parking

Cllr Brown: stated that she was employed at John Radcliffe Hospital but did not have a staff parking permit or the right to a staff parking permit; she made the declaration for reasons of transparency; it was not a pecuniary interest but she indicated that she would not take part in the consideration of that item.

79. Minutes

Council agreed to approve the minutes of the special and ordinary meetings held on 29 November 2021 as a true and correct record.

80. Appointment to Committees

There was no discussion under this item.

81. Announcements

The Deputy Lord Mayor advised the Council that it had been a relatively quiet period over Christmas and the New Year but he had attended a number of pre-Christmas events, including a Crisis Service in the University Church.

Cllr Corais joined the meeting.

The Sheriff announced that he had recently attended an End Sewage Pollution demonstration at Port Meadow. He said the event was well-attended but noted there were no speakers from the City Council and given the Council passed a Motion related to the subject in October 2020 he briefly spoke in his capacity as Sheriff and made clear that the Council was well represented – with at least twelve City Councillors in attendance. Cllr Clarkson added that it was good to see cross-party support for putting pressure on Thames Water to resolve the issues and hoped the support would long continue.

At the invitation of the Deputy Lord Mayor, the City Rector Rev Buckley spoke to the meeting and highlighted the Queen would be celebrating the 70th anniversary of her accession. He shared a quote from the Queen related to leadership.

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

There were no addresses or questions.

83. Strategic Grants Review

Council considered the report from the Head of Community Services seeking approval for the recommendations and approach to implementation contained in the Communities Grants Strategic Review to ensure grants remained fit for purpose.

Cllr Abrishami and Cllr Waite joined the meeting.

Cllr Aziz, Cabinet Member for Inclusive Communities introduced the report, proposed the recommendations and answered questions. Council was advised that, following constructive conversations with Councillors and Advice Centres, the proposed £25,000 saving contained in table one of the report was under review and work was underway to identify alternative options before Budget Council to make the required savings that would not impact Advice Centres.

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

Council resolved to:

1. **Approve** the establishment of a Community Impact Fund totalling £558,000.
2. **Approve** the establishment of a commissioning fund totalling £475,000 for domestic abuse, and advice services.
3. **Approve** the continued use of the £442,000 homelessness monies alongside the Government grant (paragraph 22 of the report).
4. **Agree** to the savings shown in table one (paragraph 79 of the report).

84. Integrated Performance Report for Q2

Council considered the report from the Head of Financial Services and Head of Business Improvement seeking approval for the addition of £2m into the Homelessness budget.

Cllr Latif joined the meeting.

Cllr Brown, Leader and Cabinet Member for Inclusive Growth, Economic Recovery and Partnerships introduced the report on Cllr Turner's behalf, proposed the recommendations and answered questions.

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

Council resolved to:

Agree the addition of £2 million into the Homelessness budget, which would be fully funded by grant, as per paragraphs 9 and 10 of the report.

85. Decisions taken under Part 9.3(b) of the Constitution

Council considered a report of the Head of Paid Service (Chief Executive) asking it to note a decision taken using the urgency powers delegated in Part 9.3(b) of the Constitution. The decision related to a restructure of the Council's joint venture with Nuffield College.

Cllr Brown, Leader and Cabinet Member for Inclusive Growth, Economic Recovery and Partnerships introduced the report and proposed the recommendations.

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

Council resolved to:

Note the decision as set out in the report.

86. Questions on Cabinet minutes: Draft minutes of the 15 December 2021 Cabinet meeting

There were no questions on the draft minutes of the 15 December 2021 Cabinet meeting.

87. Questions on Notice from Members of Council

Cllr Djafari-Marbini joined the meeting.

39 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 20 supplementary questions and responses asked and given at the meeting are set out in the minutes pack.

Council agreed to consider items 13 and 14 next on the agenda before the 30min break and then return to the agenda as listed.

88. Outside organisation/Committee Chair reports and questions

There was no discussion under this item.

89. Scrutiny Committee update report

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

Cllr Chapman moved the report on Cllr Wade's behalf.

Cllr Gant highlighted that the officer recommendations on the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 due to be considered by the Scrutiny Committee on 01 February 2022 were about noting the public consultation rather than substantively engaging with it. In response to a question, Cllr Chapman confirmed that he would seek advice from the Scrutiny Officer about whether the item would come back to the Committee after that and provide a written response after the meeting.

Council noted the report.

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

Cllr Tidball left the meeting and did not return.

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

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

Both addresses, the question and responses are set out in full in the minutes pack.

1. Address by Colin Aldridge – Drug Consumption Rooms
2. Address by Chaka Artwell, Secretary of Oxford African Caribbean Conversation (OACC) – Public Safety Women
3. Question from Chaka Artwell – Concentrated Wealth

The Deputy Lord Mayor thanked all the speakers for their contributions.

91. Motions on notice 31 January 2022

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

Motions agreed as set out below:

- a) John Radcliffe Hospital parking, as amended (proposer Cllr Haines, seconder Cllr Malik, amendment proposer Cllr Hollingsworth)
- b) Elections Bill, as amended by the proposer (proposer Cllr Djafari-Marbini, seconder Cllr Arshad)
- c) Lift the Ban for Asylum Seekers (proposer Cllr Gant, seconder Cllr R Smith)

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

- d) Opposition to the privatisation of the Vaccine Manufacturing and Innovation Centre (proposer Cllr Jarvis, seconder Cllr Pegg)
- e) End Fire and Rehire (proposer Cllr Mundy, seconder Cllr Dunne)

- f) Setting up a Drug Consumption Room (proposer Cllr Wade, seconder Cllr Miles) [amendment, proposer Cllr L Smith, seconder Cllr Mundy]
- g) EU Nationals deserve to be treated with respect (proposer Cllr Corais, seconder Cllr Bely-Summers)

a) Motion: John Radcliffe Hospital parking (proposed by Cllr Haines, seconded by Cllr Malik)

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

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

Council debated the motion and amendment. Following debate, Cllr Haines accepted the amendment put forward by Cllr Hollingsworth. 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:

Council reaffirms its decision on 7 October 2019 where it agreed:

Council resolves to continue to work with the management of Oxford University Hospitals Trust as a matter of urgency to help them to undertake a review of the approach to sustainable transport at all the Trust's sites including the John Radcliffe hospital, including a review of the Trust's approach to the allocation of car parking capacity so as to allow for an increased proportion of parking at the sites for the disabled, patients and visitors, and for the operational needs of critical medical staff as part of a comprehensive master plan for all the Trust's sites in Headington including the John Radcliffe hospital, to promote a sustainable approach to transport to those sites as part of the Local Transport Strategy 5.

Reason:

It is grossly unfair on people who are sick and the friends and family of those wanting to urgently visit people in hospital to allow the current situation to continue. A comprehensive shift to more sustainable transport approaches would:

- Reduce the congestion on local roads, freeing up the road network to other traffic including buses and ambulances;
- Reduce the pollution inhaled by cyclists, pedestrians and local residents from vehicles queuing with engines running;
- Reduce lost time and missed appointments which cost the health service a fortune;
- Make it easier for staff to access the hospital, helping to reduce staff shortages;
- Currently there are 743 parking spaces, 832 beds and the hospital serves roughly 655,000 people.

While this Council notes that a petition: 'To build a multi-storey car park at the John Radcliffe hospital' circulating has now received nearly 5000 signatures on [change.org](https://www.change.org), with around 1300 on paper, this Council believes that evidence shows that increasing car parking makes traffic congestion worse rather than improving it, and urges the Trust to explore genuinely sustainable solutions to its transport challenges, such as improving the range of direct bus links to the site and introducing shuttle buses from remote parking sites for those able to use them, rather than schemes that can only make the situation worse.

This Council urges that the Trust works with the City and County Councils to resolve this long standing issue for now and in to the future, and to alleviate some of the problems that the public so clearly and desperately need resolving.

b) Elections Bill (proposer: Cllr Djafari-Marbini)

Cllr Djafari Marbini, seconded by Cllr Arshad, accepted her own amendment and proposed her revised motion with the amendment as set out in the briefing note.

Cllr Wade joined the meeting.

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

Council resolved to adopt the following motion:

This Council notes that current bills going through Parliament are taking the UK down a worryingly authoritarian path which would have the effect of silencing dissent, rolling back access to justice, and further disenfranchising the most vulnerable in society; those from poorer communities, asylum seekers, and those from minoritised communities. These bills include the Election Bill, the Policing Bill, the Nationality and Borders Bill, and the Judicial Review and Courts Bill.

This raft of oppressive legislation has been introduced at pace during an unprecedented pandemic and, if passed, would severely reduce our rights to hold the government and public institutions accountable, cut off public access to information, make it harder to challenge injustice in court, and create dangerous new powers to deprive people of citizenship without notice and criminalise those seeking sanctuary.

The Election Bill uses the pretext of voter fraud (despite a near total absence of evidence) to further silence those who suffer most, whilst the Policing Bill criminalises GRT communities, threatens the freedoms of assembly, association and expression, and shuts down routes for us all to hold the government to account (routes that the Chartists and the Suffragettes used to win us our right to universal suffrage, which was fiercely opposed by the Establishment for many decades).

These hard-won rights and freedoms form the bedrock of our democracy and must be defended.

In particular, Oxford City Council recognises the supreme importance of ensuring that elections are fair and accessible for all voters.

The Council notes with concern that the Elections Bill is set to bring in major changes to national elections, including the introduction of compulsory and expensive photographic ID. It is estimated that these changes will cost the taxpayer £180 million and will create unnecessary bureaucracy for Councils and people wishing to vote.

Oxford City Council believes that this change will function as a barrier to people voting and increase inequality in the electoral process. There are currently an estimated 3.5

million people in the UK who do not have any form of photographic ID. This includes at least two million people struggling in poverty. By contrast, out of 32 million votes cast in the last general election, there was just one person convicted of voter impersonation.

This Council believes that, at a time when voter turnout is declining, we should be doing all we can to make it easier not harder for people to vote.

Oxford City Council doesn't want to see people being turned away at the ballot box because of these changes and resolves to support the #HandsOffOurVote campaign by:

1. Requesting that the Leader writes to Rt Hon Michael Gove MP, Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.
2. Requesting that the Leader writes to Anneliese Dodds MP and Layla Moran MP asking them to raise these concerns in Parliament.
3. Working with affected communities to amplify voices of protest and to mitigate, where possible, the effects of pernicious legislation.

c) Lift the Ban for Asylum Seekers (proposer: Cllr Gant, seconder: Cllr R Smith)

Cllr Gant, seconded by Cllr R Smith, proposed the submitted motion as set out in the agenda and briefing note.

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

Council resolved to adopt the following motion:

Oxford City is rightly proud to welcome asylum seekers but currently those seeking asylum in the UK can only apply for the right to work only if they have been waiting for over a year – and even then only in a limited number of professions.

Allowing Asylum Seekers the right to work much sooner in their application process would generate over £100 million a year for the UK economy and allow Asylum Seekers to support themselves far more effectively than they currently can on £5.66 a day allowance.

Polling has shown that 71% of people are in favour of allowing Asylum Seekers the right to work.

This Council:

(a) notes that:

- (i) since 2002, people seeking asylum are only able to apply for the right to work after they have been waiting for a decision on their asylum claim for over a year, and only if they can be employed into one of the narrow, highly-skilled professions included on the Government's Shortage Occupation List;
- (ii) people seeking asylum are left to live on £5.66 per day, struggling to support themselves and their families, and left vulnerable to destitution, isolation, and exploitation;
- (iii) the potential foregone economic gain for the UK economy of allowing people to work is estimated to be £108.8 million a year via increased taxable income and reduced payments of accommodation/subsistence support;

(iv) 71% of people polled agreed with the statement: “when people come to the UK seeking asylum it is important they integrate, learn English and get to know people. It would help integration if asylum-seekers were allowed to work if their claim takes more than six months to process”;

(b) believes that:

(i) people seeking asylum want to be able to work so that they can use their skills and make the most of their potential, integrate into their communities, and provide for themselves and their families;

(ii) restrictions on right to work can lead to extremely poor mental health outcomes, and a waste of potentially invaluable talents and skills both for the economy of and the UK;

(iii) allowing people seeking asylum the right to work would therefore lead to positive outcomes for those seeking asylum in and for the local and national economy;

(c) resolves to:

(i) Join the *Lift the Ban Coalition*, which is campaigning to restore the right to work for everyone waiting for more than 6 months for a decision on their asylum claim.

(ii) Call on the UK Government to give people seeking asylum the right to work unconstrained by the shortage occupation list after they have waited six months for a decision on their initial asylum claim or further submission.

(iii) Request the Leader writes to the Minister of Immigration with the Council's resolution.

Background:

[Lift the Ban – Refugee Action \(refugee-action.org.uk\)](https://refugee-action.org.uk)

d) Opposition to the privatisation of the Vaccine Manufacturing and Innovation Centre (proposer: Cllr Jarvis, seconder: Cllr Pegg)

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

e) End Fire and Rehire (proposer Cllr Mundy, seconder Cllr Dunne)

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

f) Setting up a Drug Consumption Room (proposer: Cllr Wade, seconder: Cllr Miles)

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

g) EU Nationals deserves to be treated with respect (proposer: Cllr Corais, seconder: Cllr Bely-Summers)

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

The meeting started at 5.00 pm and ended at 8.25 pm

Lord Mayor
2022

Date: Wednesday 16 February

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.