

Minutes of a meeting of Council on Monday 3 October 2022

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Council members present:

Councillor Fry (Lord Mayor)	Councillor Lygo (Deputy Lord Mayor)
Councillor Rowley (Sheriff)	Councillor Altaf-Khan
Councillor Arshad	Councillor Bely-Summers
Councillor Brown	Councillor Chapman
Councillor Clarkson	Councillor Corais
Councillor Coyne	Councillor Diggins
Councillor Djafari-Marbini	Councillor Fouweather
Councillor Goddard	Councillor Hayes
Councillor Hollingsworth	Councillor Humberstone
Councillor Hunt	Councillor Jarvis
Councillor Kerr	Councillor Landell Mills
Councillor Malik	Councillor Miles
Councillor Morris	Councillor Muddiman
Councillor Munkonge	Councillor Nala-Hartley
Councillor Pressel	Councillor Rawle
Councillor Rehman	Councillor Linda Smith
Councillor Smowton	Councillor Thomas
Councillor Turner	Councillor Upton
Councillor Waite	Councillor Railton

Also present for all or part of the meeting:

Caroline Green, Chief Executive
Nigel Kennedy, Head of Financial Services
Susan Sale, Monitoring Officer and Head of Law and Governance
Mish Tullar, Head of Corporate Strategy
Tom Hook, Executive Director (Corporate Resources)
Tom Bridgman, Executive Director (Development)
Stephen Gabriel, Executive Director (Communities and People)
Alice Courtney, Committee and Member Services Manager (Interim Acting)
Lucy Tyrrell, Committee and Member Services Officer

Apologies:

Councillors Aziz, Dunne, Gant, Hall, Latif, Mundy, Pegg, Sandelson, Roz Smith and Walcott sent apologies.

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

30. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

31. Minutes

Council agreed to approve the minutes of the ordinary meeting held on 18 July 2022 as a true and correct record.

32. Appointment to Committees

Council agreed to appoint with immediate effect:

- Standards Committee - Councillor Diggins to replace Councillor Rehman.
- Scrutiny Committee – Councillor Railton to the vacant seat.

33. Announcements

Council held a minute's silence in respect of the recent death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

The Lord Mayor advised Council of the Proclamation of King Charles III in Oxford and the events leading up to the event.

Cllr Pressel joined the meeting.

The City Rector addressed Council on a busy week in September, which included St Giles Fair, and the Proclamation of King Charles III, and highlighted the pleasure of working alongside all those involved from both the City and County Council in that week.

The Sheriff gave thanks to the Civic Team led by David Hawkins for their hard work with the above events and asked Council to give the team a round of applause. He gave a further thank you to Julian Cooper, Port Meadow Ranger, for his support with the recent cattle round-up at Port Meadow.

The Lord Mayor, on agreement of the Group Leaders, invited Cllr Malik to address the Council on the recent catastrophic floods in Pakistan. Cllr Malik advised that, with the help of people in Pakistan, the local Mosque and the community, he had raised over £18,000 and would be travelling to Pakistan on 07 October 2022 at his own expense to support the humanitarian efforts.

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

There were no addresses or questions.

35. Oxford City Council Safeguarding Report 2021/22

Council received the report from the Head of Corporate Strategy, presented for information following submission to Cabinet on 13 July 2022, reporting on the progress made on Oxford City Council's Safeguarding Action Plan for 2021/22.

Cllr Upton, Cabinet Member for Health and Transport, introduced the report.

Council noted the report, which incorporated changes to reflect the recommendation of the Scrutiny Committee which was accepted by the Cabinet.

36. Asset Management Strategy

Council considered a report from the Head of Corporate Property seeking adoption of the Asset Management Strategy 2021-2031 which would provide an ongoing framework for the management of the Council's assets.

Cllr Brown, Leader of the Council, introduced the report, noting that some minor formatting errors had been corrected since its publication, then proposed the recommendations and answered questions.

The recommendation was agreed on being seconded by Cllr Munkonge, Cabinet Member for Leisure and Parks and put to the vote.

Council resolved to:

1. **Adopt** the Asset Management Strategy 2021-2031.
2. **Delegate** to the Executive Director (Development) in consultation with the Deputy Leader (Statutory) – Finance and Asset Management authority to make minor amendments to the Strategy; and
3. **Delegate** to the Executive Director (Development) in consultation with the Deputy Leader (Statutory) – Finance and Asset Management authority to make ongoing changes to the Asset Management Action Plan.

37. Financial Outturn Report 2021/22

Council considered a report from the Head of Financial Services updating Members on the financial outturn for the year ending 31 March 2022.

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

Cllrs L Smith and Goddard joined the meeting.

The recommendations were agreed on being seconded by Cllr Munkonge, Cabinet Member for Leisure and Parks and put to the vote.

Council resolved to:

1. **Approve** the fees and charges for Law and Governance which were omitted from the final Council Budget report in February 2022, as per Appendix E and detailed in paragraph 5;
2. **Approve** an additional budget of £153k to be added to Bullingdon Community Centre capital scheme as detailed in paragraph 4.

38. Constitution amendment - delegation to the Head of Planning Services in respect of s14(2) of the Hazardous Substances Act 1990

Council considered a report from the Head of Law and Governance recommending that the power to modify or revoke hazardous substances consents under section 14(2) of the Hazardous Substances Act 1990 be delegated to the Head of Planning Services and the Constitution amended accordingly.

Cllr Hollingsworth, Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Delivery, introduced the report, proposed the recommendation and answered questions.

The recommendation was agreed on being seconded by Cllr Munkonge, Cabinet Member for Leisure and Parks, and put to the vote.

Council resolved to:

Amend paragraph 5.3 of the Constitution to delegate the power to revoke or modify hazardous substances consents under section 14(2) of the Hazardous Substances Act 1990 and to take all associated actions thereafter to secure the revocation or modification of those consents to the Head of Planning Services.

39. Urgent key decisions taken since July 2021

Council had before it a report from the Head of Law and Governance updating Council on key decisions taken in cases of special urgency since July 2021, of which there were none.

Cllr Brown, Leader of the Council introduced the report.

Council noted the urgent key decisions taken in cases of special urgency as set out in the report.

40. Appointment of Independent Remuneration Panel

Council considered a report from the Head of Law and Governance seeking delegated authority for the appointment of an Independent Remuneration Panel to consider a new Members' Allowance Scheme, which would be presented to Council in early 2023 for adoption.

Cllr Brown, Leader of the Council, presented the report and proposed the recommendation.

The recommendation was agreed on being seconded by Cllr Munkonge, Cabinet Member for Leisure and Parks and put to the vote.

Council resolved to:

Delegate authority to the Head of Law and Governance to make appointments to the Council's Independent Remuneration Panel as needed, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, up to the end of the four year period when the replacement Members' Allowance Scheme will expire (March 2027).

41. Questions on Cabinet minutes

a) **Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 10 August 2022**

There were no questions on the minutes of the 10 August 2022 Cabinet meeting.

b) Draft Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 14 September 2022

Minute 55 – The Regulation of Short Let Accommodation

In response to a question from Cllr Smowton, Cllr L Smith, Cabinet Member for Housing advised that unfortunately the Council's powers on short let accommodation were limited and the Council had recently responded to a Government consultation stating it would welcome powers to licence and regulate short let accommodation, but currently it had no licensing powers. She added that the Council had planning enforcement powers, but taking action in relation to short let accommodation was not straightforward and was carried out on a case by case basis. She said that being registered for business rates was one of many sources of information that the Council could draw on when considering planning enforcement action against short let accommodation.

Minute 58 – Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2023/24

In response to a question from Cllr Smowton, Cllr Brown, Leader of the Council advised that current budgetary pressures meant that the Council needed to keep all options open and consult on everything that it might need to do in order to balance the budget. She confirmed that all potential options would be consulted on during the consultation process.

Cllr Turner joined the meeting.

42. Questions on Notice from Members of Council

Cllrs Arshad and Rehman joined the meeting.

36 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 12 supplementary questions and responses asked and given at the meeting are set out in the minutes pack.

Council agreed to consider items 16, 17 and 19 next on the agenda before the 30min break and then return to the agenda as listed.

43. Outside organisation/Committee Chair reports and questions

a) Partnership report: Future Oxfordshire Partnership

Cllr Diggins joined the meeting.

Council considered the report by the Head of Corporate Strategy updating the Council on the work of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership (formerly the Oxfordshire Growth Board).

Cllr Brown, Leader of the Council, introduced the report and answered questions. Cllr Hollingsworth, Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Delivery clarified comments regarding the requirement of a bridge for the development of the Osney Mead site, as set out in adoption of the 2008 West End Area Action Plan.

Council noted the report.

44. Scrutiny Committee update report

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

Cllr Smowton, Chair of the Scrutiny Committee, introduced the report and formally welcomed Richard Doney as the new Scrutiny Officer in post.

Cllr Hollingsworth thanked the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Scrutiny Committee for the Committee's effective challenge to the Oxford Local Plan 2040 at their last meeting of 06 September 2022, which was welcomed and constructive.

Council noted the report.

45. Future Workplace - Relocation from St Aldate's Chambers to Oxford Town Hall

Council had before it a report from the Executive Director (Corporate Resources) seeking approval of a contingency budget of £300,000.

The report included an exempt appendix and Council **agreed** to consider this item in public session, without making reference to the exempt information contained within the appendix.

Cllr Chapman, Cabinet Member for Citizen Focused Services introduced the report, proposed the recommendation and answered questions.

Cllrs Nala-Hartley and Djafari-Marbini joined the meeting.

In response to comments raised by Cllr Malik, Cllr Chapman advised that the Council benefited from a more holistic Customer Service experience by working with other agencies in other Council venues, and that face to face contact satisfaction had been reported at 95%.

In response to comments raised by both Cllrs Corais and Landell-Mills, collaborative work had taken place with staff and the Unions to ensure staff safety and wellbeing were paramount in considering and carrying out the relocation.

The recommendation was agreed on being seconded by Cllr Turner, Deputy Leader (Statutory) – Finance and Asset Management and put to the vote.

Council resolved to:

Approve a contingency budget of £300,000.

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

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

Council had received one address, set out in full in the briefing and supplementary papers to the agenda.

The Lord Mayor advised that with his permission, following a request from the addressee, the address had been withdrawn from the meeting. Council therefore heard no public addresses or questions.

47. Motions on notice 3 October 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) Declaring an ecological emergency (proposed by Cllr Jarvis, seconded by Cllr Kerr) [amendment 1 proposed by Cllr Hunt, seconded by Cllr Thomas] [amendment 2 proposed by Cllr Thomas, seconded by Cllr Hayes]
- b) Tackling and preventing child poverty (proposed by Cllr Djafari-Marbini, seconded by Cllr Nala-Hartley) [amendment proposed by Cllr Smowton, seconded by Cllr Landell-Mills]

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

- c) Providing funding for 'Warm Spaces' in the winter (proposed by Cllr Sandelson, seconded by Cllr Goddard) [amendment proposed by Cllr Brown]
 - d) Fixing Oxford's water (proposed by Cllr Jarvis, seconded by Cllr Muddiman)
 - e) To bring back water into public ownership (proposed by Cllr Hunt, seconded by Cllr Bely-Summers)
 - f) Campsfield House (proposed by Cllr Gant)
 - g) Plant-based food and sustainable farming (proposed by Cllr Dunne, seconded by Cllr Hollingsworth)
- a) Declaring an ecological emergency (proposed by Cllr Pegg, seconded by Cllr Kerr)**

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

Cllr Hunt, seconded by Cllr Thomas, proposed the amendment as set out in the briefing note.

Cllr Thomas proposed a second amendment submitted in accordance with the provisions set out in Oxford City Council's Constitution Part 11.18(f) which states that; 'Minor technical or limited wording amendments may be submitted during the meeting but must be written down and circulated'. Copies of the second amendment were circulated at the meeting and a copy is set out in the minute pack.

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

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

On being put to the vote the amended motion, as amended was then agreed.

Council resolved to adopt the following motion:

Addressing ecological emergency

Globally and in the UK we are in the midst of an ecological emergency. Nature is declining faster than at any time in our history - 41% of UK species have seen populations decrease since 1970, with 15% of British species currently at risk of extinction¹. These changes are being exacerbated by climate change, which is hindering nature's ability to mitigate due to warming temperatures and increasingly volatile weather. We must take action, right now, if we are to save our wildlife and protect the planet.

¹UK State of Nature report, 2019

This Council notes that the establishment of an Oxfordshire Nature Recovery Network was a key policy objective of the Oxfordshire 2050 Plan.

This council resolves to:

1. Reaffirm our commitment to addressing ecological emergency, recognising that:
 - a. Nature is declining faster than at any previous time and urgent action must be taken to reverse this trend
 - b. A thriving natural environment underpins a healthy, prosperous society
 - c. The nature and climate crises are intrinsically linked, and we cannot tackle one without taking action on the other
2. Call on Cabinet to ensure nature's recovery is embedded at the heart of all strategic plans, policy areas and decision-making processes
3. Request that the Head of Corporate Strategy submits a report to Cabinet setting out options to develop and agree on an evidence-based strategy and action plan to tackle the ecological emergency and report on the progress made, to sit alongside and connect to the Zero Carbon Oxford Action Plan, the previous Biodiversity Action Plan, and the Urban Forest Strategy, as well as linking to Oxfordshire-level plans like the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.
 - a. The action plan must include ambitious targets and strategic goals to restore nature in Oxford, such as:
 - i. Committing to protecting and enhancing the biodiversity of land owned or managed by the City Council through conserving habitats for nature across our parks and nature reserves, ensuring that community green spaces are safeguarded for future generations and adopting a tree-first policy.
 - ii. Promoting, expanding and maintaining a Nature Recovery Network in Oxford as part of a broader Nature Recovery Network for Oxfordshire.
 - iii. Ensuring everyone living in Oxford has doorstep access to nature
 - iv. Commit to tackling the climate and ecological emergencies together by investing in local nature-based solutions to climate change.
 - v. A commitment to annually report on progress on the action plan to Scrutiny Committee
4. Work with local communities and organisations to achieve nature's recovery, particularly engaging with disadvantaged and underrepresented groups in Oxford.

b) Tackling and Preventing Child Poverty (proposed by Cllr Djafari-Marbini)

Cllr Djafari-Marbini, seconded by Cllr Nala-Hartley, proposed the submitted motion as set out in the agenda and briefing note.

Cllr Smowton, seconded by Cllr Landell-Mills, proposed the amendment as set out in the briefing note.

Cllr Turner stated that he was a Council-appointed representative on the Rose Hill and Donington Advice Centre. This was not a pecuniary interest and he was not required to preclude himself from the debate; he made the declaration for reasons of transparency.

Council debated the motion and amendment. Following debate, and on being put to the vote, the amendment was not agreed.

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

Council resolved to adopt the following motion:

Child poverty in Oxford is sadly persistent and has been through the decades. In 2019, 29% of children in Oxford lived below the poverty line, approximately 9 children in every class of 30, a horrendously high figure given the city and country's prosperity. The majority (70% nationally) of these children live in working families where unaffordable housing and low wage poor quality jobs have now combined with the cost of living crisis to make life miserable. The data is even more stark amongst racialised minorities and families living with disabilities.

It is almost impossible to list exhaustively the negative consequences on children of growing up in poverty. Poorer health outcomes, lower educational attainment and earnings, and higher entrapment in the criminal justice system are pervasive themes which resonate into adulthood and cause life-long scarring and stigmatisation. The stigma of poverty is one of many compelling reasons for universal and "cash first" approaches favoured by most local and national experts in the field.

The struggles which accompany not having sufficient resources to engage in society on the same basis as everybody else though are of concern right now, and require an immediate response. In the words of Baroness Lister of Burtersett, Honorary President of Child Poverty Action Group children should be valued and cared for as "beings" rather than "becomings".

It is striking that in the discourse around poverty the voice of children and families living in poverty is often missing. There are some notable exceptions to this which reveal devastating testimony such as *"Poverty feels like a tangled web that you can never escape"* (ATD Fourth World - Oxford University) and: *"makes me feel sad when mum says we haven't got much money but I'm OK with it and have to support my mum"* (Milton Keynes Child Poverty Commission).

Despite the national constraints, our Council has taken a number of positive steps over many years to tackle inequalities in the city without which the situation would have been much worse. These include an ambitious housing strategy, a comprehensive Council Tax Reduction scheme and Discretionary Housing Payments, sustained support for the city's advice centres and work on the Oxford Living Wage.

Council resolves to:

1. Request that the Head of Corporate Strategy submit a report to Cabinet with options to:
 - a. Implement the Socio-economic Duty within all Council policies over the next eighteen months; and
 - b. Encourage partnership institutions, including Oxford University, to adopt the Socio-economic Duty.
2. Request that the Head of Communities submit a report to Cabinet with options to:

- a. Develop a Child Poverty Strategy (noting the work done at the Scrutiny Committee) over the next eighteen months informed by the voices of young people affected.
- b. Implement more immediate actions such as:
 - i. Donation of devices to Getting Oxfordshire Online
 - ii. Considering how parents and carers in or at risk of destitution (including those with no recourse to public funds) can access support via "food first" and "cash first" approaches.
- c) Providing funding for 'Warm Spaces' in the winter (proposed by Cllr Sandelson, seconded by Cllr Goddard)**

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

- d) Fixing Oxford's water (proposed by Cllr Jarvis, seconded by Cllr Muddiman)**

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

- e) To Bring Back Water into Public Ownership (proposed by Cllr Hunt, seconded by Cllr Bely-Summers)**

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

- f) Campsfield House (proposed by Cllr Gant)**

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

- g) Plant-based Food and Sustainable Farming (proposed by Cllr Dunne, seconded by Cllr Hollingsworth)**

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

Lord Mayor
2022

Date: Monday 28 November

*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.*