

Minutes of a meeting of Council on Monday 28 November 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 Aziz
Councillor Bely-Summers	Councillor Brown
Councillor Chapman	Councillor Clarkson
Councillor Corais	Councillor Coyne
Councillor Diggins	Councillor Djafari-Marbini
Councillor Dunne	Councillor Fouweather
Councillor Gant	Councillor Goddard
Councillor Hollingsworth	Councillor Hunt
Councillor Jarvis	Councillor Kerr
Councillor Latif	Councillor Miles
Councillor Morris	Councillor Muddiman
Councillor Mundy	Councillor Munkonge
Councillor Nala-Hartley	Councillor Pegg
Councillor Pressel	Councillor Railton
Councillor Rawle	Councillor Rehman
Councillor Sandelson	Councillor Linda Smith
Councillor Roz Smith	Councillor Snowton
Councillor Turner	Councillor Upton
Councillor Waite	Councillor Walcott

Also present for all or part of the meeting:

Caroline Green, Chief Executive
Tom Hook, Executive Director (Corporate Resources)
Nigel Kennedy, Head of Financial Services
Susan Sale, Monitoring Officer and Head of Law & Governance
Alice Courtney, Committee and Member Services Manager (Interim Acting)

Celeste Reyeslao, Committee and Member Services Officer

Apologies:

Councillor(s) Hall, Hayes, Humberstone, Landell Mills, Malik and Thomas sent apologies.

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

48. Declarations of interest

Item 15a) Motion: Bus Fares

Cllr Gant: stated that, after considering advice from the Monitoring Officer, he would not take part in the item relating to Bus Fares and indicated that he would leave the room during the consideration of that item.

Cllr Lygo: stated that he would not take part in the item relating to Bus Fares; he made the declaration on the basis of public perception and indicated that he would leave the room during the consideration of that item.

Item 12: Questions on Notice from Members of Council (CM3: City Allotments)

Cllr Hollingsworth: stated that he was the chair of the Cripsey Meadow Allotment Association; he made the declaration for reasons of transparency; it was not a pecuniary interest and Cllr Hollingsworth was not required to leave the room during consideration of that item.

Cllr Clarkson joined the meeting.

49. Minutes

Council agreed to approve the minutes of the ordinary meeting held on 03 October 2022 as a true and correct record.

50. Appointment to Committees

Council agreed to appoint with immediate effect:

- Scrutiny Committee – Councillor Railton to stand down and Councillor Hunt to replace her.
- Standards Committee – Councillor Diggins to stand down and Councillor Rehman to replace her.
- Audit and Governance Committee – Councillor Munkonge to stand down and Councillor Railton to replace him.

51. Announcements

The Lord Mayor gave thanks to councillors who attended the Remembrance Sunday Service and highlighted his appreciation for the performance by the bag piper. On attending the celebration of St Clement's Church 900th anniversary, he commented on the many charitable works, funded by the Dawson Family Trust, which helped to provide accommodation for the winter night shelter in St Clement's.

The Lord Mayor advised Council of upcoming Christmas events including the *Lord Mayor's & Councillors Christmas Reception* on the 12th of December 2022 and the *Lord Mayor's Christmas Carol Concert* on the 18th of December 2022, and encouraged councillors to attend.

The City Rector addressed Council on the season of advent and the concept of waiting well. He gave thanks to the Council and the City Council Staff for their work on the determination of the venues for the winter night shelter which would help house the City's homeless guests. He highlighted the anniversary of the birthday of William Blake and shared two of his quotes.

The Sheriff was pleased to have attended the opening of the City of Oxford College's new technology campus in Blackbird Leys, which brought higher education to the area for the first time. He advised Council that he met students of the campus who were dedicated to their work. He also advised that he had the duty and the pleasure to admit fourteen people to the Freedom of the City alongside the Lord Mayor, some of whom had been waiting for two years due to the cancellation of public events during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Leader of the Council advised Council of a potential special meeting of Council immediately prior to the next Council meeting in January 2023, in order to make some Freedoms of the City. She asked councillors to update their diaries and advised that further announcements would be made in due course. She added that the meeting in January would fulfil the formal process required and a more celebratory event would follow in March 2023.

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

There were no addresses or questions.

53. UK Shared Prosperity Fund Investment Plan

Council considered the report from the Head of Regeneration and Economy seeking endorsement of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) Investment Plan, allocation of budget and delegated authority to enter contract with Government for delivery of the plan on behalf of Oxford City Council.

Cllr Brown, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Inclusive Economy and Partnerships introduced the report and proposed the recommendation.

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

Council resolved to:

1. **Establish** Capital and Revenue budgets in accordance with paragraph 21 of the report.

54. Award of a Works Contract for the Refurbishment of the Gas Works Pipe Bridge

Council considered the report from the Executive Director (Development) seeking approval for a works contract to refurbish/repair the Gasworks Pipe Bridge situated between Friars Wharf and Baltic Wharf; authority for the Executive Director (Development) to award a contract; and approval of the spend of identified funds for the funding of the contract.

Cllr Turner, Deputy Leader (Statutory) and Cabinet Member for Finance and Asset Management introduced the report, proposed the recommendation and answered questions.

The recommendation was agreed on being seconded by Cllr Hollingsworth, Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Delivery and put to the vote.

Council resolved to:

1. **Approve** a virement of £1.82 million from the existing stock condition budget to fund the works to the gasworks pipe bridge, including reimbursement of £185k feasibility cost incurred to date.

55. Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund Bid Approval

Council considered a report from the Head of Corporate Strategy seeking approval of Oxford City Council's submission of a bid to Government under the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund 2.1 bidding round seeking funding towards a retrofit programme for around 300 council homes.

Cllr Linda Smith, Cabinet Member for Housing introduced the report, proposed the recommendation and answered questions.

The recommendation was agreed on being seconded by Cllr Chapman, Cabinet Member for Citizen Focused Services and put to the vote.

Council resolved to:

1. **If the bid is successful, grant approval** for the release of up to £6.050 million of HRA capital funding required for match funding under the terms of the SHDF

2.1 scheme in accordance with the estimated spend profile in paragraph 24 of the report.

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

Council received a report from the Head of Paid Service (Chief Executive) asking Council to note the decision taken by the Head of Paid Service using the urgency powers delegated in Part 9.3(b) of the Constitution.

Cllr Brown, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Inclusive Economy and Partnerships introduced the report, proposed the recommendation and answered questions.

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

Council noted the decision taken as set out in the report.

Cllr Latif joined the meeting.

57. Questions on Cabinet minutes

a) Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 19 October 2022

Minute 70 – Botley Road Retail Park Development Brief

In response to a question from Cllr Fouweather, Cllr Hollingsworth, Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Delivery advised that the Environment Agency said that the Oxford Flood Alleviation Scheme (OFAS) would not change the boundaries of the various flood zones in Oxford. He explained that it would lessen the risk of flood in areas that are protected within the site, however most of the site would be within a 3b flood plain. He added that a 3b flood plain was defined in the NPPF as undevelopable for housing and the Environment Agency had not indicated that the flood plain boundaries would change, but it was of the view that the OFAS would reduce the likelihood of flood.

Minute 71 - Draft Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023-28

In response to a question from Cllr Roz Smith, Cllr Linda Smith, Cabinet Member for Housing stated that the consultation on the strategy was now live and accessible online.

b) Draft Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting held on 16 November 2022

Minute 85 – West End and Osney Mead Supplementary Planning Document

In response to questions from Cllr Snowton, Cllr Hollingsworth, Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Delivery emphasised that the SPD illustrated additional details to existing plan policies and did not create new plan policies for new bridges. He stated that the bridge from the Oxpens site to Osney Mead on the SPD was the bridge in the Local Plan.

Minute 84 – Housing Infrastructure Funding for Osney Mead Revised Implementation Arrangements

In response to a question from Cllr Snowton, Cllr Hollingsworth, Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Delivery advised that the report stated the money was being reallocated to use on the bridge with future packages of money to fund the path work.

58. Questions on Notice from Members of Council

Cllr Sandelson joined the meeting.

48 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 17 supplementary questions and responses asked and given at the meeting are set out in the minutes pack.

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

59. Outside Organisation/Committee Chair Reports and Questions

a) Scrutiny Update Report

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

Cllr Snowton, Chair of the Scrutiny Committee, introduced the report, proposed the recommendation and provided updates on the recent activities of Scrutiny since the last meeting of Council. He advised that the new Climate and Environment Panel would meet in the near future and gave thanks to Panel Members, and Cllr Pegg, who came forth with the idea.

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

Council noted the report.

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

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

Council heard one question and Cllr Brown, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Inclusive Economy and Partnerships provided a verbal response.

The question and response are set out in full in the minutes pack.

1. Address by Linda Newbury – Plant-based food and sustainable farming motion

The Lord Mayor thanked the speaker for their contribution.

61. Motions on notice 30 November 2022

Cllr Djafari-Marbini joined the meeting.

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

Motions agreed as set out below:

- a) Bus Fares, as amended (proposer Cllr Hollingsworth, seconder Cllr Upton, amendment proposer Cllr Smowton, seconder Cllr Fouweather)
- b) Campsfield House (proposer Cllr Gant, seconder Cllr Rawle, amendment proposer Cllr Dunne, seconder Cllr Djafari-Marbini)

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

- c) Fixing Oxford's Water (proposer Cllr Jarvis, seconder Cllr Bely-Summers)
- d) End Tory Cost of Living Crisis (proposer Cllr Aziz, seconder Cllr Upton)
- e) Support Small Business Saturday on December 3rd (proposer Cllr Fouweather, seconder Cllr R Smith, amendment proposer Cllr Brown, seconder Cllr Rehman)
- f) Plant-based Food and Sustainable Farming (proposer Cllr Dunne, seconder Cllr Hollingsworth)

a) Bus Fares (proposed by Cllr Hollingsworth)

Cllrs Gant and Lygo left the meeting, having declared an interest in this item.

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

Cllr Smowton, seconded by Cllr Fouweather, proposed the amendment as set out in the briefing note.

Council debated the motion and amendment. Following debate, Cllr Hollingsworth accepted the amendment put forward by Cllr Smowton. On being put to the vote, the amendment was agreed.

Council resolved to adopt the following motion:

This Council recognises the vital importance of affordable, reliable and high quality public transport to the functioning of our city. We therefore strongly welcome the recent IPPR research on public transport, published on 6th October 2022 under the title **“To support low-income households, it's time to reduce the cost of daily bus travel”**.

This Council agrees with the IPPR report when it makes clear that reducing fares is not the ONLY thing needed to increase bus patronage – interventions to improve speed, reliability and the experience of passengers are all required as well.

However this Council agrees strongly that reductions in the costs of public transport for passengers are essential for a fair transport system.

Low income households are the most likely to use buses, while research by the RAC Foundation shows that since 2013 the cost of bus travel has risen by a greater extent than all other forms of transport. It is the poorest households, without access to other

forms of travel, that have borne the brunt of these increases driven by de-regulation and lack of long-term funding.

Any reduction in bus fares would therefore be of the greatest benefit to those least well off. Capping bus fares at no more than £1 per day would save the poorest 20% of households in England £0.8bn a year. Making all bus fares in England free would save the poorest 40% of households £1.5bn a year.

This Council notes that a policy of making bus fares in England entirely free would cost £2.3bn a year, with the greatest benefits going to the least well off. For comparison, the recent 'fiscal event' proposed £40bn worth of tax cuts, mostly to the most well off. The current proposed Government funding for new roads is £27bn, for schemes that are likely to increase pollution and make the climate and biodiversity crises worse. For the same money, bus travel could be made free for at least ten years, helping to reduce car journeys and making progress towards a net zero transport system.

This Council further notes the Fair Deal Alliance's progress in improving bus travel in the County, including delivering reduced Park and Ride fares, £1 fares for 18s and under, and decarbonising our bus fleet via the ZEBRA programme.

- The Leader of the Council writes to the Secretary of State for Transport, the Shadow Secretary State for Transport, Oxford's two MPs and to the Leader of the County Council expressing this Council's support for making public transport in Oxford free of charge
- The Council's Cabinet Members and officers, through their existing partnerships and relationships with the County Council and bus operators, work to promote and deliver this objective.

References/links

<https://www.ippr.org/blog/time-to-reduce-the-cost-of-daily-bus-travel>

<https://www.racfoundation.org/data/cost-of-transport-index>

b) Campsfield House (proposed by Cllr Gant, seconded by Cllr Rawle)

Cllrs Gant and Lygo re-joined the meeting.

Cllr Gant, seconded by Cllr Rawle, proposed the submitted motion as set out in the agenda and briefing note and immediately changed the motion without notice to reflect the amendment submitted by Cllr Dunne, as set out in the briefing note. The change was seconded by Cllr Rawle and agreed by Council, in accordance with Oxford City Council's Constitution Part 11.20(h).

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

Council resolved to adopt the following motion:

The Home Office announcement of its intention to reopen Campsfield House Immigration Detention Centre in Kidlington ignores local and national feeling on the treatment of refugees. It's also a cruel, ineffective, and costly backwards step for this government, for our country and for the people of Kidlington, Yarnton and Begbroke.

In the years before its closure in 2018, Campsfield House was used to detain nearly 30,000 migrants. During that time there were weekly demonstrations, protests, hunger strikes, two suicides, escapes and scores of legal challenges. It was finally closed following a damning inquiry into conditions.

The UK is ranked 20th in terms of asylum applications processed, and 19th for applications accepted. Two thirds of UK asylum seekers' claims are turned down, the highest refusal rate in Europe, with 41% of those decisions overturned on appeal.

Instead of criminalising people fleeing war, oppression and persecution, who have already suffered at the hands of people traffickers, the government should focus on achieving its own targets to deal with asylum claims promptly and fairly.

For decades, the Campaign to Close Campsfield¹, the people of Oxford, and this council² have fought tirelessly to amplify the voices of asylum seekers and end the misery and injustice of immigration detention.

This Council is proud and committed to being a City of Sanctuary welcoming Afghans, Syrians, Ukrainians and all those fleeing war in recent times.

This council is currently supporting partner organisations such as Asylum Welcome³ to care for recently arrived asylum seekers locally providing the humanity and dignity not provided to them by the faceless Home Office.

This Council therefore condemns the re-opening of Campsfield House and asks the Leader to write to the Home Secretary calling for:

- The cancellation of the reopening of Campsfield House as a detention centre.
- The creation of safe havens and more legal routes to apply for asylum in the UK.
- The prioritisation of prompt and fair processing of asylum claims whilst introducing appropriate safeguards to allow asylum seekers to live and work in our communities in the meantime.

c) Fixing Oxford's Water (proposed by Cllr Jarvis, seconded by Cllr Bely-Summers)

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

d) End Tory Cost of Living Crisis (proposed by Cllr Aziz, seconded by Cllr Upton)

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

e) Support Small Business Saturday on December 3rd (proposed by Cllr Fouweather, seconded by Cllr R Smith)

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

¹ [Close Campsfield | The weblog of the Campaign to Close Campsfield \(wordpress.com\)](#)

² [Statement on Government plans to reopen Campsfield House Immigration Detention Centre | Oxford City Council](#)

³ <https://www.asylum-welcome.org/>

f) 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.

62. Matters exempt or part exempt from publication and exclusion of the public

Council passed a resolution in accordance with the provisions of Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 to exclude the press and the public from the remaining item of business on the grounds that their presence would involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as described in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

a) Appointment of a Contractor for the Oxpens River Bridge

Council considered a report from the Executive Director (Development) seeking approval to enter into a legal agreement with Oxfordshire County Council to enable the completion of the Oxpens River Bridge, as set out within the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal; to fund and enter into a construction contract to build the Oxpens River bridge, subject to agreement with Oxfordshire County Council; and to enter into an agreement with OxWED (which owns some of the land on which the bridge will be situated) to facilitate the construction of the bridge.

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 Turner, Deputy Leader (Statutory) and Cabinet Member for Finance and Asset Management and put to the vote.

Council resolved to:

- 1. Approve** the establishment of an additional capital budget of £2.8 million in 2022/23 and 2023/24 funded from additional growth bid monies.

The meeting started at 5.00 pm and ended at 8.27 pm

Lord Mayor

Date: Monday 30 January 2023

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.