

Minutes of a meeting of Council on Monday 20 March 2023

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Council members present:

Councillor Fry (Lord Mayor)

Councillor Rowley (Sheriff)

Councillor Aziz

Councillor Chapman

Councillor Corais

Councillor Diggins

Councillor Dunne

Councillor Gant

Councillor Hall

Councillor Hunt

Councillor Kerr

Councillor Latif

Councillor Miles

Councillor Muddiman

Councillor Munkonge

Councillor Pressel

Councillor Rawle

Councillor Sandelson

Councillor Roz Smith

Councillor Thomas

Councillor Upton

Councillor Walcott

Councillor Lygo (Deputy Lord Mayor)

Councillor Arshad

Councillor Brown

Councillor Clarkson

Councillor Coyne

Councillor Douglas

Councillor Fouweather

Councillor Goddard

Councillor Hollingsworth

Councillor Jarvis

Councillor Landell Mills

Councillor Malik

Councillor Morris

Councillor Mundy

Councillor Pegg

Councillor Railton

Councillor Rehman

Councillor Linda Smith

Councillor Smowton

Councillor Turner

Councillor Waite

Also present for all or part of the meeting:

Caroline Green, Chief Executive

Tom Hook, Executive Director (Corporate Resources)

Tom Bridgman, Executive Director (Development)

Stephen Gabriel, Executive Director (Communities and People)

Nigel Kennedy, Head of Financial Services

Mish Tullar, Head of Corporate Strategy

Marcia Ecclestone, Deputy Monitoring Officer

Alice Courtney, Committee and Member Services Manager (Interim Acting)

Celeste Reyeslao, Committee and Member Services Officer

Apologies:

Councillor(s) Altaf-Khan, Djafari-Marbini, Hayes, Humberstone and Nala-Hartley sent apologies.

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

99. Declarations of interest

Item 13: Questions on Notice from Members of Council (ET3 - Jericho Wharf)

Cllr Brown: stated that she had an interest relating to Jericho Wharf; she indicated that she would leave the room during the consideration of that question.

Cllr Hollingsworth: stated that he had an interest relating to Jericho Wharf; he indicated that he would leave the room during the consideration of that question.

100. Minutes

Council agreed to approve the minutes of the special and ordinary meetings held on 30 January 2023 and of the Budget Council meeting held on 16 February 2023 as a true and correct record.

101. Appointment to Committees

Council agreed to appoint with immediate effect:

- Scrutiny Committee – Councillor Douglas to the vacant seat.

102. Announcements

The Lord Mayor welcomed Cllr Sandy Douglas to the Council following the recent by-election. He reminded Council of the Lord Mayor's Charity Quiz Night and urged Members to attend; he thanked the North Parade Market for the promises and gifts which had been contributed. The Lord Mayor noted that Susan Sale, Head of Law and Governance was leaving the Council and expressed his thanks to her on behalf of the Council for her service and wished her well in her new role.

The Deputy Lord Mayor thanked the volunteers at the Civic Reception in Witney which he had attended together with the Sheriff. Relating to admission to the Freeman of Oxford, the Deputy Lord Mayor was pleased to announce that he had the opportunity to submit a nomination for the Lord Mayor's Childe; he had nominated an individual from the Children in Care Council.

The City Rector thanked the Lord Mayor for the privilege of being alongside him on many occasions in the last year. He addressed Council on the impact of its decision-making on younger generations and acknowledged councillors' commitment, conscientiousness and wisdom in the work they do, for which he said future generations would be thankful.

Cllrs Chapman, Landell Mills and Turner joined the meeting.

The Sheriff thanked those involved in the Civic events in the previous week. He also thanked the Oxford Polish Community for their kind invitation to the language school. The Sheriff thanked those involved in the Witney Citizen of Year Award; he commented how nice the event was and wondered if there would be an opportunity for Oxford City Council to do something similar.

Cllr Corais joined the meeting.

The Leader made a statement on behalf of Council condemning the Immigration Bill and highlighting that the Bill sought to do the opposite of what Oxford sought to do as a city of sanctuary. The Leader announced the following nominations for Civic Office-holders in the 2023/24 municipal year:

- Cllr Lubna Arshad – Lord Mayor
- Cllr James Fry – Deputy Lord Mayor
- Cllr Mark Lygo – Sheriff

Cllr Dunne joined the meeting.

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

There were no addresses or questions.

Council agreed to consider Items 8 and 9 next on the agenda, followed by Item 7, then Item 10 and the remainder of the agenda as listed.

104. Street Trading Policy and amendment to Constitution Part 5.7(b)

Council considered a report from the Head of Regulatory Services and Community Safety requesting that Council adopt the Street Trading Policy following the review, public consultation process and recommendation from the General Purposes Licensing Committee and agree a concurrent amendment to the Council's Constitution Part 5.7(b).

Cllr Mundy, Chair of the General Purposes Licensing Committee introduced the report and proposed the recommendations.

The recommendations were agreed on being seconded by Cllr Upton, Cabinet Member for Health and Transport and put to the vote.

Council resolved to:

1. **Adopt** the Street Trading Policy at Appendix B with effect from 01 April 2023.

2. **Amend** Part 5.7(b) of the Constitution as set out at Appendix C with effect from 01 April 2023.

105. Pay Policy Statement 2023

Council considered a report from the Head of Business Improvement requesting Council approve the Annual Pay Policy Statement.

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

The recommendation was agreed on being seconded by Cllr Brown, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Inclusive Economy and Partnerships and put to the vote.

Council resolved to:

1. **Approve** the Annual Pay Policy Statement 2023/24 as attached at Appendix 1.

Cllr Linda Smith joined the meeting.

106. Housing, Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023-28

Council considered a report from the Executive Director (Communities and People) seeking approval of the Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023-28 with associated appendices.

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

The recommendations were agreed on being seconded by Cllr Brown, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Inclusive Economy and Partnerships and put to the vote.

Council resolved to:

1. **Adopt** the Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023-28 and its associated appendices;
2. **Adopt** the Strategy's Action Plan for 23-24; and
3. **Delegate authority** to the Executive Director (Communities and People), in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing, to update the Action Plan when required.

107. Constitution Review 2022/23

Council considered a report from the Head of Law and Governance requesting Council approve the recommended changes to the Council's Constitution following an annual review of the Constitution overseen by a Cross-Party Constitution Review Working Group.

Cllr Brown, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Inclusive Economy and Partnerships introduced the report, proposed the recommendations subject to the

addition of 'or s151 Officer' after 'Monitoring Officer' at proposal 15 set out in Appendix A of the report and answered questions.

The recommendation was agreed on being seconded by Cllr Mundy and put to the vote.

Council resolved to:

1. **Approve** the list of proposed amendments to the Council's Constitution listed in Appendix A, subject to the minor amendment set out above, with effect from 17 May 2023;
2. **Delegate authority** to the Head of Law and Governance to amend any further wording and/or numbering that is identified as being inconsistent with the changes approved by Council.

Cllr Jarvis left the meeting.

108. Designation of Interim Monitoring Officer, and Appointment of Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer

Council considered a report from the Head of Paid Service seeking approval to designate the Council's Interim Monitoring Officer and to appoint a Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer.

Cllr Brown, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Inclusive Economy and Partnerships introduced the report, proposed the recommendations 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. **Designate** the newly appointed Interim Head of Law & Governance, Rhian Davies, as the Council's Interim Monitoring Officer with effect from 03 April 2023;
2. **Appoint** Caroline Green, Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service, as the Council's Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer with effect from 03 April 2023.

109. Questions on Cabinet minutes

a) Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting held on 8 February 2023

Minute 117 – Implementing the Covered Market Masterplan

In response to a question from Cllr Roz Smith, Cllr Brown, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Inclusive Economy and Partnerships advised that she did not think the question was appropriate at this point, because the Masterplan was not the Lettings Strategy of the Covered Market. She added that, in terms of the Lettings Strategy, units were let and there were signs up on some of the units indicating who the new tenants were. She advised that if Cllr Roz Smith had particular concerns relating to specific units, these could be looked into in more detail.

Minute 118 – Allocation of Preventing Homelessness Grant 2023-24

In response to a question from Cllr Smowton, Cllr Linda Smith, Cabinet Member for Housing advised that the position relating to the severe-looking reduction in the number of Full Time Equivalents was dependent on funds being made available from the Government to fund the Council's work. She said that the reduction could be as bad as set out in the report, but she hoped it would not be and cited the Council's success in applying for Government funding in previous years. She highlighted that there were no guarantees at this point.

Minute 119 – Oxford Local Plan 2040 Focused Consultation on Housing Need

In response to a question from Cllr Smowton, Cllr Hollingsworth, Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Delivery advised that the HENA consultation was a live consultation as part of the consultation on the Local Plan 2040. He confirmed that he was aware of the comments made by South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils and that Oxford City Council's response to those comments was on the Council website. He added that the Council was setting up to maximise housing provision within the city, which was consulted on during the first part of the Regulation 18 consultation on the Local Plan 2040. He further confirmed that the Local Plan 2040 Regulation 19 consultation was scheduled for the end of the year.

b) Draft Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting held on 15 March 2023

Minute 132 – Development of a Biodiversity Strategy for Oxford

In response to a question from Cllr Gant, Cllr Railton, Cabinet Member for Zero Carbon Oxford and Climate Justice advised that the Biodiversity Strategy was due to be delivered next year; the officer time was budgeted for, but work such as the extra site audits recommended by the new Climate & Environment Scrutiny Panel was not currently budgeted for because the Strategy was not yet written. She added that the Strategy did not yet exist so it did not have Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), but confirmed that she was very keen to have KPIs in the Strategy which were measurable, once it was written.

110. Questions on Notice from Members of Council

24 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 4 supplementary questions and responses asked and given at the meeting are set out in the minutes pack.

Cllrs Brown and Hollingsworth had declared an interest in relation to question ET3 on Jericho Wharf and left the meeting during consideration of that question.

Council agreed to consider items 16 and 18 next on the agenda before the 30 minute break and then return to the agenda as listed.

111. Outside organisation/Committee Chair reports and questions

a) The Oxford Strategic Partnership

Cllr Thomas joined the meeting.

Cllr Brown, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Inclusive Economy and Partnerships introduced the report which presented the annual update on the Oxford Strategic Partnership.

Council noted the report.

b) Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership

Cllr Brown, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Inclusive Economy and Partnerships introduced the report which provided an update on the work of Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (OxLEP) and answered questions.

Council noted the report.

c) Health & Wellbeing Board/Health Improvement Board

Cllr Upton, Cabinet Member for Health and Transport introduced the report which provided the annual report on the work of Oxfordshire Health and Wellbeing/Health Improvement Board.

Council noted the report.

d) Scrutiny Committee update report

Cllr Smowton, Chair of the Scrutiny Committee, introduced the report updating the Council on the activities of the Scrutiny function. He congratulated Cllr Hunt on the first meeting of the new Climate & Environment Scrutiny Panel, which emphasised the importance of the topic to the Council.

Council noted the report.

112. Additional Loan Finance for Oxford West End Developments (OxWED LLP)

Council considered a report from the Executive Director (Development) seeking approval to secure a budget to allow the City Council to lend OxWED up to £750,000 to support continuing work on the Oxpens project and in particular preparing (and subject to LLP Member approval and planning permission) implementing the Delivery Strategy for the Oxpens development.

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. **Agree** to include £750,000 in its capital budget to allow the City Council to loan these funds to OxWED to continue work on the Oxpens project in accordance with the LLP Members agreement, and in particular preparation and (if planning permission is granted) implementation of the Delivery Strategy.

113.Delivery of Affordable Housing

Council considered a report from the Executive Director (Development) seeking further project approvals and delegations to enable the continued delivery of more affordable housing in Oxford.

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 Hollingsworth, Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Delivery and put to the vote.

Council resolved to:

1. **Approve** a revision to the HRA capital budget of an additional £825,000, with the realignment of budgets and schemes within the HRA new build programme, in order for the schemes listed below to be delivered within the capital programme funded predominantly from borrowing. This additional spend to be profiled into 2024/25.
 - a) Increase Northfield Hostel budget by £3.25m (see paragraph 52)
 - b) Increase Lanham Way budget by £361k (see paragraph 53)
 - c) Reduce East Oxford Community Centre budget by £700k (see paragraph 54)
 - d) Close Juniper Close scheme (see paragraph 55)

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

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

Cllr Jarvis re-joined the meeting.

Council heard four addresses and one question. Cabinet Members provided a verbal response, or read or summarised their written response.

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

1. Address by Nicola Smith – Plant-based food and sustainable farming motion.
2. Address by Ian Middleton – Plant-based food and sustainable farming motion.
3. Address by Judith Harley – ODS Vandalism in Cowley Marsh Park
4. Address by Jocelyn Wogan-Browne – Oxford Flood and Environment Group - Oxford Flood Alleviation Scheme
5. Question from Judith Harley – New Park Bench Installation in Cowley Marsh Park

The Lord Mayor thanked the speakers for their contributions.

115.Petition submitted in accordance with Council procedure rules - Save Tumbling Bay

Council considered a petition meeting the criteria for debate in accordance with the Council's petitions scheme stating:

We the undersigned petition the council to Preserve the historic character and shape of Tumbling Bay swimming pool on the River Thames, and ensure that ladders or steps continue to be provided into the water.

We call on Oxford City Council to:

- Preserve the historic character and shape of Tumbling Bay river pool by seeking to repair or replace the existing wall.*
- Ensure that ladders continue to be in situ to allow people to get out of the river safely.*
- Work with local residents to explore ways in which funds could be raised to pay for the renovation work.*

Tumbling Bay is a much loved Victorian river swimming pool on a backwater of the River Thames just behind Botley Park in West Oxford.

For over 150 years local children have learned to swim in the pool. The north wall is in need of repair and the site has been fenced off for several months. The Council's current plan is to smash up the existing wall to produce a sloping bank that will erase this valuable piece of local heritage.

While no longer an official bathing spot, Tumbling Bay is very much enjoyed by local residents. Hundreds of people swim there in the summer and a small number all year round. It is safer than the river as there are no boats going past. It is also part of our local history.

Alice Icely, one of the petition organisers, addressed Council.

Council debated the petition. Following debate, Cllr Munkonge, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Leisure and Parks, seconded by Cllr Hunt, proposed that Council note the petition and undertake further engagement with local residents regarding Tumbling Bay. This was agreed on being put to the vote.

Council resolved to:

1. **Note** the petition.
2. **Undertake** further engagement with local residents regarding Tumbling Bay.

116.Motions on notice 20 March 2023

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

Motions agreed as set out below:

- a) Four Day Week (proposer Cllr Kerr, seconder by Cllr Pegg, amendment proposer Cllr Chapman, amendment seconder Cllr Arshad)
- b) Plant-based Food and Sustainable Farming (proposer Cllr Dunne, seconder Cllr Hollingsworth)

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

- c) Use Car Parking Site for Solar Farms (proposer Cllr Fouweather, seconder Cllr Miles, amendment proposer Cllr Railton, amendment seconder Cllr Hollingsworth)
- d) Consultation on the Sale of Council Art Works (proposer Cllr Miles, seconder Cllr Smowton, amendment proposer Cllr Brown, amendment seconder Cllr Diggins)

a) Four Day Week (proposed by Cllr Kerr, seconded by Cllr Pegg)

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

Cllr Chapman, seconded by Cllr Arshad, proposed the amendment as set out in the briefing note.

Council debated the motion and amendment. Following debate, and 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 notes

1. From June to December 2022, a sixth month pilot of a four day working week was carried out in the UK. This pilot saw 61 organisations with almost 3,000 workers trial the introduction of reducing working hours for staff while maintaining 100% of pay. This trial was the largest of its kind in the world to date, and saw companies introduce a 'meaningful' reduction of hours for staff up to the implementation of a four day week. It was carried out by Autonomy, the 4 Day Week Campaign and 4 Day Week Global.¹
2. Participating organisations in the trial spanned a wide range of sectors including marketing, charities, finance, healthcare, manufacturing, construction, engineering and the arts.²
3. 92% of the organisations participating in the four day week trial have continued its implementation beyond the pilot period. 30% of the participating organisations have already decided to make the change in working hours permanent.
4. The trial found that 39% of workers were less stressed, 71% had lower levels of burnout, 60% said it was easier to balance paid work and care responsibilities, 62% found it easier to balance work and social life. The number of workers leaving participating companies decreased by 57% over the trial period.

Council believes

1. We should continue to take steps to improve the working conditions of our own staff, while maximising the quality of the services we deliver.
2. The Council has over many years played a significant role in improving pay and working conditions throughout Oxford, through using its considerable influence with initiatives such as the Oxford Living Wage.
3. The Council should continue, expand and extend its work driving improvements for workers across our city.

¹ <https://autonomy.work/portfolio/uk4dwpilotresults/>

² Page 17: <https://autonomy.work/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/The-results-are-in-The-UKs-four-day-week-pilot.pdf>

Council resolves:

1. To request that the Chief Executive and other relevant officers continue to discuss with its trade unions ways of improving the retention and recruitment of its employees including discussing ways of working.
2. To request that the Leader and Cabinet Member for Inclusive Economy and Partnerships continues to discuss with the LEP (of which she is a director) and with South Cambridgeshire District Council (whose leader she meets with regularly) any relevant learnings from their involvement in running the four day week trial.
3. To request that the Leader as part of her work on the Oxfordshire Inclusive Employment Partnership (OIEP) finds out if there are any other employers in Oxford considering trialling a four day week for their own employees, particularly any with a large directly employed customer service workforce.

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

Cllr Dunne, seconded by Cllr Hollingsworth, 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:

Council notes that:

- The global scientific consensus is that humans have heated the climate at a rate that is unprecedented, and we are heading towards mass extinction not just for ourselves but of entire eco systems if we do not change our actions today.³
- Oxford City Council is committed to reducing its impact on the environment and to becoming carbon neutral by 2030.⁴
- We have a duty as leaders in the city to empower the local community to make changes that can mitigate climate catastrophe and help preserve the vitality of our planet for future generations.
- The UK's agriculture produces 10% of the country's greenhouse gas emissions and makes up 70% of land use. Modern agricultural practices are a central driver for habitat and biodiversity loss and the UK is one of the world's most nature-depleted countries.⁵
- In the UK we eat twice as much meat and dairy as the global average which is not sustainable as there is not enough land in the world to meet this demand without destroying our natural world.⁶

³ https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg1/downloads/outreach/IPCC_AR6_WGI_Press_Conference_Slides.pdf

⁴ https://www.oxford.gov.uk/news/article/1705/council_outlines_how_it_aims_to_become_a_zero_carbon_council_by_2030_at_the_latest

⁵ <https://www.rspb.org.uk/globalassets/downloads/documents/conservation-projects/state-of-nature/state-of-nature-uk-report-2016.pdf>

⁶ <https://www.greenpeace.org.uk/news/how-much-meat-should-i-be-eating/>

- Plant-based sources of protein have much smaller carbon footprints than animal-based ones, even when comparing locally raised meat to imported plant foods.
- Farm animals across Europe are producing more emissions than cars and vans combined.⁷
- Our relationship to food is still an overlooked factor to the climate crisis yet it is the quickest and cheapest step to help tackle the climate crisis if we reduce our meat intake.
- The necessary change to confront the climate crisis needs to tackle existing inequalities in society while acting urgently.
- To protect and enrich jobs in Oxford, we should work closely with local farmers and plant-based food organisations to move to more sustainable farming methods and local produce that promotes plant-based food.

Council agrees to:

- Request that the Cabinet Member for Health and Transport:
 - Works with local farmers to support, promote, and encourage their move to create more sustainable plant-based produce.
 - Recognises the benefit of sourcing food locally from producers who follow sustainable principles.
- Request that the Executive Director (Communities and People) submits a report to Cabinet with options to form a plant-based localised free food service by funding community groups who are already doing this work to transform Oxford into a more environmentally sustainable economy which will also tackle food poverty.
- Follow Oxfordshire County Council's lead by ensuring that food provided for internal councillor events are entirely plant-based and food provided at all council catered events and meetings include plant-based options, preferably using ingredients sourced from local food surplus organisations.⁸
- Call on Cabinet to request that the Council's Climate Action Plan be updated to state that all catering provided at Council events and functions from April 2023 will have plant-based options.
- Call on the Shareholder group to work with all Council run companies to encourage moving to having plant-based catering options by April 2023.

⁷ <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/sep/22/eu-farm-animals-produce-more-emissions-than-cars-and-vans-combined-greenpeace>

⁸ Oxford City Council stopped catering for council meetings a year ago so plant-based catering would be for the few remaining internal council events.

Following consideration of this item, the Lord Mayor, seconded by the Deputy Lord Mayor, proposed a motion without notice under the Council's Constitution Part 11.19(j) to adjourn the meeting. On being put to the vote, the motion without notice to adjourn the meeting was agreed.

- c) Use Car Parking Sites for Solar Farms (proposed by Cllr Fouweather, seconded by Cllr Miles, amendment proposed by Cllr Railton, amendment seconded by Cllr Hollingsworth)**

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

- d) Consultation on the Sale of Council Art Works (proposed by Cllr Miles, seconded by Cllr Smowton, amendment proposed by Cllr Brown, amendment seconded by Cllr Diggins)**

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

The meeting started at 5.00 pm and ended at 9.15 pm

Lord Mayor

Date: Wednesday 17 May 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.

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