

Minutes of a meeting of Council on Monday 27 November 2023

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Council members present:

Councillor Altaf-Khan	Councillor Arshad (Lord Mayor)
Councillor Aziz	Councillor Brown
Councillor Chapman	Councillor Clarkson
Councillor Corais	Councillor Coyne
Councillor Diggins	Councillor Djafari-Marbini
Councillor Douglas	Councillor Dunne
Councillor Fry (Deputy Lord Mayor)	Councillor Gant
Councillor Goddard	Councillor Hall
Councillor Hollingsworth	Councillor Humberstone
Councillor Hunt	Councillor Jarvis
Councillor Kerr	Councillor Landell Mills
Councillor Latif	Councillor Lygo (Sheriff)
Councillor Malik	Councillor Miles
Councillor Morris	Councillor Muddiman
Councillor Mundy	Councillor Munkonge
Councillor Nala-Hartley	Councillor Pegg
Councillor Pressel	Councillor Railton
Councillor Rawle	Councillor Rehman
Councillor Rowley	Councillor Sandelson
Councillor Linda Smith	Councillor Roz Smith
Councillor Snowton	Councillor Thomas
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)
Tom Bridgman, Executive Director (Development)
Nigel Kennedy, Head of Financial Services
Mish Tullar, Head of Corporate Strategy

Emma Jackman, Head of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer
Jonathan Malton, Committee and Member Services Manager
Lucy Brown, Committee and Member Services Officer
Tanaka Merrells, Trainee Solicitor, Legal Services
Amber Khaloon, Trainee Solicitor, Legal Services

Apologies:

Councillor(s) Fouweather and Hayes sent apologies.

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

56. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest declared for this meeting.

57. Minutes

Cllr Roz Smith arrived at the meeting.

Council agreed to approve the minutes of the ordinary meeting held on 2 October 2023.

Following the amendment to the minutes of the special meeting held on 7 November 2023, stated to Item 55 as follows:

In Appendix 7.4 (page 437), (for student accommodation) replace “At least 3 spaces for every 4 study bedrooms” with “1 space per study bedroom”. (i.e. revert back to what it currently states in the local plan 2036 which is 'at least four spaces for every four study bedrooms)

On acceptance of the above amendment, the minutes of special meeting of Council held on 7 November 2023 was agreed as a true and correct record.

58. Announcements

The Lord Mayor announced that she had attended the Remembrance Sunday Service at the War Memorial in St Giles', which had been conducted by the City Rector, the Reverend Anthony Buckley. She had also attended and spoke at the Armistice Day at the Town Hall.

The Deputy Lord Mayor announced that he had also attended the above events which were successful as always, and to remind Councillors that the Oxford Museum Gift Shop had reopened of which there were many gifts on display.

The Sherriff announced that he attended the Sixes Social Cricket event at the Westgate, which was very enjoyable.

The Leader updated Council on Cabinet portfolios and announced that Mark Lygo was the new Cabinet Member for the renamed portfolio, Safer and Inclusive Communities.

The City Rector addressed Council on Remembrance Sunday and reflected on the different backgrounds that came together to pay their respects.

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

There were no addresses or questions.

60. FutureFit Oxford(shire) Project Grant Funding Bid

Council considered a report from the Head of Corporate Strategy seeking approval for Oxford City Council's involvement in the FutureFit Oxford(shire) Project (FOx Project), and delegated authority for the facilitation and delivery of the project.

Councillor Anna Railton, Cabinet Member for Zero Carbon Oxford and Climate Justice introduced the report, proposed the recommendation and answered questions.

The recommendation was agreed on being seconded by Councillor Louise Upton and put to the vote.

Council resolved to:

1. **Establish** a revenue budget for £1.56 million funded by a government grant to enable the necessary resources to be employed and the work undertaken.

61. Council and Committee meetings programme for May 2024 to May 2026

Council considered a report from the Head of Law and Governance which set out a programme of Council, committee and other meetings for the whole of the 2024/25 and 2025/26 Council years.

The recommendation was agreed on being seconded by Councillor Ed Turner and put to the vote.

Council resolved to:

1. **Approve** the programme of Council, committee and other meetings from 1 May 2024 to 31 May 2026 attached at Appendix A.
2. **Delegate** authority to the Head of Law and Governance, in consultation with Group Leaders, to make changes to this programme in the event that there is any decision by Council to change the committee structure or committee remit which impacts on the programme of meetings: and
3. **Delegate** authority to the Head of Law and Governance to set dates for additional training and briefing sessions for Members.

62. Appointments to Council Committees 2023/2024

Council considered a report from the Head of Law and Governance which requested Council appoint committees and the members serving on those committees for the remainder of the Council year 2023-24.

The Leader of the Council advised of the following amendments to the report:

- General Purposes Licensing Committees and Licensing and Gambling Acts Committee – to add Cllr Barbara Coyne
- Audit and Governance Committee – to add Cllr Amar Latif
- Planning Committee – to add Cllr Saaj Malik
- Scrutiny Committee – Cllr Altaf Khan to replace Cllr Roz Smith
- Standards Committee – to add Cllr Amar Latif

Council resolved to:

1. **Note** the methods, calculations and conventions used in determining political representation on committees as outlined in the report and shown in *Appendix 2: Political proportionalities on Council committees 2023-24*;
2. **Appoint** to committee seats in accordance with the requirements of political proportionality and (where received and detailed in Appendix 3) in line with the nominations made by political groups, as shown in *Appendix 3: Committee nominations 2023-24*;
3. **Appoint** a member of the Independent Group to the General Purposes Licensing and Licensing and Gambling Acts Committees as no nomination has been received from the party. In accordance with the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 the nomination must therefore be made by Council.

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

Council considered a report from the Head of Law and Governance, on behalf of the Head of Paid Service (Chief Executive) which noted the decisions taken by the Head of Paid Service (Chief Executive) using the powers delegated in Part 9.3(b) of the Constitution.

Council resolved to:

1. **Note** the decision taken as set out in the report.
Cllr Djafari-Marbini arrived at the meeting.

64. Decisions taken under Part 17.9 of the Constitution

Council considered a report from the Head of Law and Governance which noted the decision taken by the Executive Director (Development) using the powers delegated in Part 17.9(b) of the Constitution.

Council resolved to:

1. **Note** the decision taken as set out in the report.

65. Amendment to Proper Officer Delegations

Cllr Pegg arrived at the meeting.

Council considered a report from the Head of Law and Governance (Monitoring Officer) which sought Council's agreement to amend the Constitution to reflect the changes in responsibilities for functions.

Council resolved to:

1. Approve the following changes to the Constitution:
 - a. Amend Part 10.1 to include delegation to the Monitoring Office to make amendments to Proper Officer designations to reflect changes to the senior management structure.
 - b. Amend the table at Part 10.2 (Table of Proper Officer Responsibilities) at Local Government Act 1972 Section 234 "Signing notices, orders and other documents which the Council is required or authorised to issue by or under any enactment" to include 'where no Head of Service, the relevant director will be the Proper Officer'.
2. Note that the changes will take effect as of the 12 December 2023.

Cllr Latif arrived at the meeting.

66. New Byelaws for parks and open spaces

Council considered a report from the Head of Community Services which sought approval that the existing byelaws for parks and open spaces be updated and for a full consultation on the proposed draft set of new byelaws to be undertaken.

Councillor Chewe Munkonge, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Leisure and Parks, introduced the report, proposed the recommendations and answered questions.

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

Council resolved to:

1. **Approve** that the existing byelaws for parks and open spaces are updated with new byelaws as set out in the draft set of new byelaws.
2. **Approve** that Officers undertake a consultation with such persons as the Council considers may be affected by the proposed byelaws when carrying out the regulatory assessment.
3. **Notes** that a further report will be presented to Members with results of the public consultation and whether the Council should submit its application to the Secretary of State for approval.

4. **Notes** that upon the Secretary of State granting leave for the Council to make the proposed byelaws there will be a further period of consultation of not less than 28 days.

67. Questions on Cabinet minutes

a) Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 18 October 2023

None received.

b) Draft Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 15 November 2023

Minute 84 – Appropriation of Land at Bertie Place to a Planning Purpose

In response to a question from Councillor Christopher Smowton, Councillor Linda Smith, Cabinet Member for Housing advised that the item was moved to another meeting so that a full evaluation of the public responses could be considered.

68. Questions on Notice from Members of Council

30 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 16 supplementary questions and responses asked and given at the meeting are set out in the minutes pack.

Cllr Gant left the meeting.

Council agreed to consider item 16a next on the agenda before the break and then return to the agenda as listed.

69. Outside organisation/Committee Chair reports and questions

a) Outside organisation report: Oxford Safer Communities Partnership

Councillor Mark Lygo, Cabinet Member for Safer Communities, introduced the report which provided a summary of Oxford Safer Communities Partnership's (OSCP) achievements in 2022-23.

Council **noted** the report.

The meeting broke for 45 minutes at the conclusion of these items.

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

Cllr Gant re-joined the meeting.

Council agreed to return the remainder of the agenda as listed.

Council heard four addresses and Cabinet Members read or summarised their written responses.

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

1. Address by Professor Nick Maynard
2. Address from Rachel Schiller
3. Address from Maryam Ahmed
4. Address from Chaka Artwell – Ethnic Traders and Shoppers of Oxford Cowley Road

The Lord Mayor thanked the speakers for their contributions.

71. Motions on notice 27 November 2023

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) Rent Controls (proposed by Cllr Lucy Pegg, seconded by Cllr Chris Jarvis)
[Amendment proposed by Cllr Alex Hollingsworth, seconded by Cllr Linda Smith]
- b) Motion to call for a ceasefire in Gaza (proposed by Cllr Paula Dunne, seconded by Cllr Jabu Nala-Hartley) [Amendment proposed by Cllr Chris Jarvis, seconded by Cllr Lucy Pegg]

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

- c) Back Oxford communities, Oxfam, and Oxford based medical workers, demanding immediate Gaza ceasefire (proposed by Shaista Aziz, seconded by Cllr Amar Latif)
- d) Peace in Israel and Palestine (proposed by Cllr Susan Brown, seconded by Cllr Anna Railton)
- e) Housing Management System problems and resultant accounts issues at Oxford City Council and ODS (proposed by Cllr Christopher Snowton, seconded by Cllr Laurence Fouweather) [Amendment proposed by Cllr Nigel Chapman, seconded by Cllr Susan Brown]
- f) A Ban on Disposable Vapes (proposed by Cllr Lucy Pegg, seconded by Cllr Rosie Rawle)
- g) School Streets Initiative (proposed by Cllr Katherine Miles, seconded by Cllr Andrew Gant)

72. Rent Controls (proposed by Cllr Lucy Pegg, seconded by Cllr Chris Jarvis)

Councillor Lucy Pegg, seconded by Councillor Chris Jarvis, proposed the amended motion as set out in the briefing note.

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

Council resolved to adopt the following motion:

This council notes:

1. According to the 2021 census, almost a third of all households in Oxford are private renters (32.2 per cent).¹ This has increased from 28.3 per cent at the point of the 2011 census, and is substantially higher than the national average of 20.3 per cent.²
2. In the year to September 2023, tenants in the South East of England experienced rent increases of more than 5 per cent on average.³
3. Studies have shown that Oxford is one of the most expensive cities in the UK to live in⁴, with housing costs being the single biggest contributor to this.⁵
4. A growing number of local authorities and leaders are calling for powers to introduce rent controls in the private rented sector, including Mayor of London Sadiq Khan⁶ and Bristol City Council.⁷
5. The Scottish Government has introduced temporary rent controls, which will be in place until 2024.⁸ Following this, the Scottish Government has stated it intends to introduce a new housing bill that would implement long-term rent controls.⁹
6. That the trend of landlords moving properties from private lets to short term and holiday lets nationally is one that is impacting on large parts of Oxford as well, reducing the number of homes available for rent to families and house-sharers.
7. That this trend is driven largely by the fact that even with the current very high levels of rent in the private rented sector it is possible to generate the same levels of income from a few days rental as a short term let as from a month as a privately rented property.¹⁰
8. That the Government has consistently failed to come close to delivering the number of new homes required each year, with the most recent quarterly figures for planning permissions for new homes been the lowest since records began.

1

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing/bulletins/housingenglandandwales/census2021>

² <https://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/23235132.census-shows-people-renting-privately-oxford/>

3

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/inflationandpriceindices/bulletins/indexofprivatehousingrentalprices/september2023#measuring-the-data>

⁴ <https://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/23476851.unaffordable-places-live-uk--oxford-ranked-8th/>

⁵ https://www.oxford.gov.uk/info/20126/housing/458/housing_in_oxford

⁶ <https://www.london.gov.uk/mayors-longstanding-call-rent-controls-more-urgent-ever-private-rents-london-forecast-surpass-ps2700>

⁷ <https://westenglandbylines.co.uk/features/brokenbritain/rent-control-motion-passes-the-bristol-city-council/>

⁸ <https://www.gov.scot/news/scottish-parliament-approves-final-extension-of-tenant-protections/>

⁹ <https://www.thenational.scot/news/23769220.scottish-government-confirms-plans-rent-controls/>

¹⁰ Landlord Today: 3rd May 2023 (<https://www.landlordtoday.co.uk/breaking-news/2023/4/warning-to-landlords-that-switching-to-holiday-lets-wont-be-easy>)

Of even greater concern, the same report shows that the number of social housing units – the only genuinely affordable form of affordable housing – given planning permission has fallen by 24% since the previous year.¹¹

This council believes:

1. Oxford's spiralling housing costs are central to the cost of living crisis in our city, with private renters being among the hardest hit. Without making renting more affordable, thousands of residents in the city will continue to face staggering costs, be plunged further into economic hardship and be priced out.
2. Rent controls are far from a panacea - they will not fix the housing crisis alone or overnight. However, they are a necessary tool to transition to a housing system which puts people before profit.
3. That the introduction of rent controls without the simultaneous introduction of powers to restrict the numbers of short-term lets is likely to increase the shift of privately rented homes to short term lets, further worsening the shortage of homes in Oxford."
4. The only real sustainable and equitable long-term solution to rising housing costs and increasing shortages of homes is a massive and sustained investment in new social housing, to provide genuinely affordable homes in all the cities, towns and villages where people want to live.

This council resolves:

1. To request the Cabinet Member for Housing and the Leader of the Council publicly campaign for local authorities - including Oxford City Council - to be given powers to introduce rent controls.
2. To request that the Cabinet Member for Housing and the Leader of the Housing publicly support Shelter's campaign for a new programme for the mass building of social housing, both nationally and in Oxford and Oxfordshire.
3. To request that the Cabinet Member for Housing and the Leader of the Housing continue the Council's long-standing support for all measures to regulate and control the short-term let sector.
4. To request the Cabinet Member for Housing and the Leader of the Council to write to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities of the United Kingdom informing them of the council's positions, and request the government allow local authorities to introduce controls on private sector rents.

73. Motion to call for a ceasefire in Gaza (proposed by Cllr Paula Dunne, seconded by Cllr Jabu Nala-Hartley)

¹¹ Glenigan: Housing pipeline report - Q2 2023 report - Published 7 September 2023
(<https://www.hbf.co.uk/news/housing-pipeline-report-q2-2023-report-published-september-2023/>)

Councillor Paula Dunne, seconded by Councillor Jabu Nala-Hartley, proposed the amended motion as set out in the briefing note.

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

Council resolved to adopt the following motion:

Council notes:

- As of 10 November 2023, 11,078 Palestinians, 4,506 of whom were children, have been killed, 27,490 injured and more than 1 million displaced, by Israeli forces.
- Following Hamas' attacks on 7 October - killing 1,200 people and abducting more than 200 people including children, in contravention of the Geneva Conventions, Israeli forces dropped 6,000 bombs on Gaza, one of the world's most densely populated places, home to 2.2 million trapped Palestinians (of whom almost half are children).
- UNRWA has described the situation as reminiscent of the Nakba ('Catastrophe') of 1948 in which more than 750,000 people were forcibly displaced, dispossessed and expelled from their homes.
- Collective punishment is against international law under the Geneva Conventions.
- The Israeli government has cut off water, food, and electricity to Gaza which is a war crime under International Humanitarian Law.
- There has been a 16-year illegal blockade of Gaza, an occupation in the West Bank, including in our twin city of Ramallah, and major NGOs say there is a system of apartheid.
- Hamas' rocket and mortar attacks targeting civilians have been condemned by the UN and human rights organisations.

Council believes:

- There must be an immediate, permanent ceasefire in Gaza.
- Neither the actions of the Israeli government or Hamas will contribute to a just peaceful resolution.
- The killing of all civilians and atrocities committed against civilians in both the ongoing bombardment of Gaza by Israeli forces and the Hamas attacks are horrific and must be condemned.
- Polls show over 70% of the British public surveyed support a ceasefire, which has been called for by the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights, UNICEF, Save the Children, the head of the WHO, Oxfam, Layla Moran MP, and our Lord Mayor. Oxford's four main mosques have also called for the leader of this council and the Oxford East MP to call for an immediate ceasefire.
- There are major concerns about Israeli army and settler violence and intimidation of Palestinians in the West Bank and Ramallah.

- Antisemitism, Islamophobia, racism and hate crimes of all forms, including against Jewish and Muslim people, communities and places of worship, have no place in Oxford.

Council agrees to:

- Request the Council Leader
 - Write to Rishi Sunak, Keir Starmer and Anneliese Dodds demanding they call for an immediate, permanent ceasefire
 - Write to the foreign secretary asking them to:
 - work to ensure full access for humanitarian aid is granted in Gaza
 - seek an immediate unconditional release of all hostages
 - call for Palestinians in arbitrary military detention to be given access to justice through an independent, non-military system
 - raise concerns about Israeli army and settler violence in the West Bank
 - Write to express solidarity with Layla Moran and her family in Gaza
 - Invite the mayor of Ramallah to address full council to discuss the crisis in the West Bank
 - Convene a meeting of religious leaders, including Jewish and Muslim leaders, and community safety stakeholders to discuss how to better tackle Antisemitism and Islamophobia

74. Back Oxford communities, Oxfam, and Oxford based medical workers, demanding immediate Gaza ceasefire (proposed by Cllr Shaista Aziz, seconded by Cllr Amar Latif)

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

75. Peace in Israel and Palestine (proposed by Cllr Susan Brown, seconded by Cllr Ed Turner)

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

76. Housing Management System problems and resultant accounts issues at Oxford City Council and ODS (proposed by Cllr Christopher Smowton, seconded by Cllr Laurence Fouweather)

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

77. A Ban on Disposable Vapes (proposed by Cllr Lucy Pegg, seconded by Cllr Rosie Rawle)

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

78. School Streets Initiative (proposed by Cllr Katherine Miles, seconded by Cllr Andrew Gant)

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

The meeting started at 5.00 pm and ended at 8.55 pm

Lord Mayor

Date: Monday 29 January 2024

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.