

## **Minutes of a meeting of Council on Monday 15 July 2024**

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### **Council members present:**

Councillor Corais (Deputy Lord Mayor)	Councillor Fry (Sheriff)
Councillor Qayyum	Councillor Azad
Councillor Jupp	Councillor Max Morris
Councillor Regisford	Councillor Stares
Councillor Harley	Councillor Henwood
Councillor Altaf-Khan	Councillor Arshad
Councillor Brown	Councillor Chapman
Councillor Clarkson	Councillor Coyne
Councillor Diggins	Councillor Djafari-Marbini
Councillor Fouweather	Councillor Gant
Councillor Goddard	Councillor Hollingsworth
Councillor Jarvis	Councillor Kerr
Councillor Malik	Councillor Miles
Councillor Muddiman	Councillor Munkonge
Councillor Ottino	Councillor Powell
Councillor Pressel	Councillor Railton
Councillor Rawle	Councillor Rehman
Councillor Sandelson	Councillor Linda Smith
Councillor Roz Smith	Councillor Smowton
Councillor Turner	Councillor Upton
Councillor Waite	

### **Also present for all or part of the meeting:**

Caroline Green, Chief Executive  
Emma Jackman, Head of Law and Governance  
Nigel Kennedy, Head of Financial Services  
Tom Hook, Executive Director (Corporate Resources)  
Tom Bridgman, Executive Director (Development)

Jonathan Malton, Committee and Member Services Manager  
Celeste Reyeslao, Committee and Member Services Officer  
Dr Brenda McCollum, Committee and Member Services Officer  
Tanaka Merralls, Trainee Solicitor  
Amber Khaloon, Trainee Solicitor

### **Apologies:**

Councillor(s) Rowley, Yeatman, Hunt, Latif, Lygo and Mundy sent apologies.

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

### **Minute's silence and tributes**

Council observed a minute's silence in memory of former councillors Mike Gotch and Mark Whitaker.

Councillors Gant, Goddard, Hollingsworth, Henwood, Malik and Clarkson spoke to pay tribute to the former councillors.

## **8. Declarations of interest**

### **Item 15a: Oxford United Stadium**

**Cllr Andrew Gant** declared an interest on this item on the grounds that it coincides with his County Council's responsibilities. He indicated he would leave the room during the consideration of this item.

**Cllr Ed Turner** stated that he was a Football Association match official and occasionally refereed matches for Oxford United Youth's and Women's teams. He indicated that he received monetary compensation for his services. He clarified that he had no specific relationships with Oxford United but made the declaration for reasons of transparency.

**Cllr Nigel Chapman** stated that he was season ticket holder for Oxford United for over 20 years. It was not a pecuniary interest. He indicated he made the declaration for reasons of transparency.

### **Item 15c: Making Oxford a Truly Walkable City and Item 15e: Bus travel for asylum seekers in Oxford**

**Cllr Andrew Gant** declared an interest on these items on the grounds that they coincide with his County Council's responsibilities. He indicated he would leave the room during the consideration of these items.

## **9. Minutes**

Council agreed to **approve** the minutes of the ordinary meeting of Council held on 18 March 2024 and the annual meeting of Council held on 16 May 2024 as true and correct records.

## **10. Announcements**

The Deputy Lord Mayor announced that he participated in two recent foreign events: the Mosaic Indonesian Cultural Exhibition (ICE) on the 18th of May 2024, and the Carmina Burana Fundraising Dinner on the 13th of July 2024. He had also attended the Centenary Celebration of the Littlemore Village Hall and the Littlemore Play Day in June.

The Sheriff had invited two Year 10 pupils from Oxford Academy, Amiyah Cameron and Shavonne Allen, to join him in various events throughout the week, allowing them to observe the workings of local government. These events included this evening's Council meeting and a visit to the ODS Cowley Marsh Depot with other Councillors.

The Leader of the Council made the following announcements:

Expressed heartfelt sadness over the passing of former councillors Mike Gotch and Mark Whitaker, with whom she had previously served.

Sent her congratulations to Annaliese Dodds and Layla Moran on their resounding re-elections as Members of Parliament and expressed her commitment to continued collaboration in the interest of the people of Oxford.

The Council celebrated England's qualification for the Euro 2024 by flying the England flag until the close of the competition in support of the England national football team.

Had written to the Secretary of Transport and the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, requesting urgent action on the issue regarding Botley Road and the need for Network Rail and Thames Water to work closely together. The Leader also copied the letter to Oxfordshire County Council Leader, Cllr Liz Leffman. She hoped to seek urgent clarity on the introduction of traffic filters in Oxford, noting the significance this had to the people of Oxford.

*Cllr Upton arrived at the meeting.*

The City Rector addressed the Council, acknowledging its humility in commemorating former councillors. He reflected on Eric Liddell's principled decision during the 1924 Paris Olympics and concluded by drawing a parallel to Liddell's perseverance in pursuing secondary paths which had led to great achievements.

## **11. Public addresses and questions that relate to matters for decision at this meeting**

There were no addresses or questions.

## 12. Leisure Investment Program

Council considered a report from the Head of Corporate Property which sought approval to enter into a contract for Rebuild Cost Assessments of the Council's property assets to assist with placing the property insurance policy.

Cllr Ed Turner, Deputy Leader (Statutory) and Cabinet Member for Finance and Asset Management introduced the report and moved the recommendations.

On being seconded by Cllr Linda Smith, Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities, the recommendations were put the vote and agreed.

### Council resolved to:

1. **Recommend to Council** the provision of a revenue budget in the General Fund for the sum of £128,000 per annum for the next 3 years and in the HRA for the sum of £55,000 per annum;
2. **Give project approval** to tender a contract to undertake the rebuild cost assessments across all assets in both the General Fund and the HRA;
3. **Delegate authority** to the Head of Corporate Property to finalise the tender documents; and
4. **Delegate authority** to the Head of Corporate Property, in consultation with the Head of Law and Governance; the Head of Financial Services; and the Deputy Leader (Statutory) - Finance and Asset Management to agree the cost and final terms of, and enter into and make any necessary.

## 13. Contract for Rebuild Cost Assessments

Council considered a report from the Head of Corporate Property which sought approval to enter into a contract for Rebuild Cost Assessments of the Council's property assets to assist with placing the property insurance policy.

Cllr Ed Turner, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Asset Management introduced the report and moved the recommendations.

On being seconded by Cllr Linda Smith, Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities, the recommendations were put the vote and agreed.

### Council resolved to:

1. **Recommend to Council** the provision of a revenue budget in the General Fund for the sum of £128,000 per annum for the next 3 years and in the HRA for the sum of £55,000 per annum;
2. **Give project approval** to tender a contract to undertake the rebuild cost assessments across all assets in both the General Fund and the HRA;
3. **Delegate authority** to the Head of Corporate Property to finalise the tender documents; and
4. **Delegate authority** to the Head of Corporate Property, in consultation with the Head of Law and Governance; the Head of Financial Services; and the Deputy

Leader (Statutory) - Finance and Asset Management to agree the cost and final terms of, and enter into and make any necessary.

#### **14. Oxford City Council Corporate Strategy 2024/2028**

Council considered a report from the Head of Corporate Strategy which provided feedback from the public and stakeholder consultation on the Council Strategy 2024 to 2028 and sought approval for the draft strategy.

Cllr Susan Brown, Leader and Cabinet Member for Partnership Working, introduced the report, proposed the recommendations and answered questions.

*Cllr Diggins left the meeting.*

On being seconded by Cllr Chewe Munkonge, Cabinet Member for A Healthy Oxford, the recommendations were put the vote and agreed.

**Council resolved to:**

1. **Adopt** the Council Strategy 2024 to 2028 as attached as Appendix 1 to the report; and
2. **Delegate** authority to the Head of Corporate Strategy in consultation with the Council Leader to make any further amendments to the Council Strategy 2024 to 2028 before implementation and publication, provided that such amendments do not materially affect the substance of the Council Strategy 2024 to 2028.

#### **15. Update of Byelaws for Parks and Open Spaces**

Council considered a report from the Head of Corporate Property which sought approval to progress the submission of the proposed byelaws for parks and open spaces to the Secretary of State for approval following public consultation.

Cllr Chewe Munkonge, Cabinet Member for A Healthy Oxford, introduced the report and proposed the recommendations.

On being seconded by Cllr Susan Brown, Leader and Cabinet Member for Partnership Working, the recommendations were put the vote and agreed.

**Council resolved to:**

1. **Approve** the proposed byelaws for parks and open spaces following public consultation;
2. **Recommend** submission of the application to the Secretary of State for approval of the proposed byelaws;
3. **Note** 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; and
4. **Note** that a further report will be presented to Members to allow them to make a final decision to make the proposed byelaws.

## **16. Questions on Cabinet minutes**

### **a) Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting held on 17th April 2024**

None.

### **b) Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting held on 12th June 2024**

#### **Minute 6 – Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) - Submission of Draft Charging Schedule for Examination**

In response to a question from Cllr Chris Snowton, Cllr Louise Upton, Cabinet Member for Planning, explained that because land valuation was now attached to business premises, this made it viable to develop new businesses and contribute significantly to the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). Viability assessments indicated that business use could manage the higher CIL contribution.

### **c) Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting held on 10th July 2024**

None.

## **17. Questions on Notice from Members of Council**

33 written questions were asked of the Cabinet Members and the Leader. The questions and written responses were published before the meeting.

These along with summaries of the 14 supplementary questions and responses asked and given at the meeting are set out in the minutes pack.

*The meeting broke for 15 min during this item and reconvened at 7pm. Council agreed to consider item 12 before returning to the remainder of this item, and then proceeded with the agenda as listed.*

*Cllrs Azad, Malik and Rehman left the meeting and did not return.*

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

Council heard five addresses and one question from members of the public. Cabinet Members read or summarised their written responses.

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

1. Address from Sushila Dhall, Chair, Oxford Pedestrians Association – Make Oxford a Truly Walkable City Motion
2. Question from Chaka Artwell – Cabinet Decision for the Request for Exceptional Circumstances Relief from the Community Infrastructure Levy
3. Address from Paul Peros, OxVox Chairman, Oxford United Supporters Trust – Oxford United Stadium Motion
4. Address from Chaka Artwell – Glyphosate

5. Address from Ashley Smith, Windrush Against Sewage Pollution –Support for Motion of No Confidence in Thames Water and development of an Oxford City River Action Plan
6. Address from Dan Glazebrook, Friends of Grandpont Nature Park – Oxpens River Bridge Scheme

The Deputy Lord Mayor thanked the speakers for their contributions.

*Cllrs Regisford, Kerr and Diggins re-joined the meeting.*

## **19. Outside organisation/Committee Chair reports and questions**

### **a) Outside Organisation Report: Oxford Strategic Partnership**

Council considered a report from the Head of Corporate Strategy which noted the annual update on the Oxford Strategic Partnership.

Cllr Susan Brown, Leader and Cabinet Member for Partnership Working, introduced the report.

In response to a question from Cllr Roz Smith, Cllr Brown reaffirmed the Council's dedication to being a Fairtrade City. She stated that whilst promises to rent out premises in the Covered Market could not be made, any proposal from organisations selling fair trade products would be considered favourably.

#### **Council resolved to:**

1. **Note** the annual update report on the work of the Oxford Strategic Partnership.

### **b) Outside Organisation Report: Oxfordshire Health and Wellbeing / Health Improvement Board**

Council considered a report from the Head of Corporate Strategy which noted the annual update on the Oxfordshire Health and Wellbeing / Health Improvement Board.

Cllr Chewe Munkonge, Cabinet Member for A Healthy Oxford, introduced the report.

#### **Council resolved to:**

1. **Note** the annual update report of the work the City Council does to support the Oxfordshire Health & Wellbeing Board and the Health Improvement Board.

## **20. Annual Scrutiny Report 2023 - 24**

Councillor Katherine Miles, Chair of the Scrutiny Committee, introduced the report updating the Council on the Committee's activities during the 2023/24 municipal year, and thanked Cllr Lucy Pegg for her contributions as Chair during that period. She advised that 142 recommendations had been submitted to Cabinet, of which 100 were agreed, 12 agreed in part, 17 not agreed, and 12 provided with commentary only. She conveyed the Committee's disappointment in some of the Cabinet responses that were not always aligned with the overall thrust of their recommendations. Finally, she gave



thanks to the Councillors of the Committee and Panels, Cabinet Members, and Officers who had supported the Committee over the year.

In response to reflections on Cabinet's engagement with Scrutiny recommendations, Cllr Ed Turner, Deputy Leader (Statutory) and Cabinet Member for Finance and Asset Management emphasised Cabinet's effort to respond positively despite short time frames. He acknowledged that whilst some recommendations could not be fully implemented due to differences in views, the aim was to communicate openly and constructively. Cllr Brown, Leader and Cabinet Member for Partnership Working also expressed surprise at any disappointment, stating that the Cabinet aimed to adopt scrutiny recommendations as far as possible and provided explanations where there were disagreements. She highlighted the generally positive collaboration between Cabinet and Scrutiny, noting that their rate of adoption compared favourably with other councils.

**Council resolved to note the report.**

**a) Scrutiny Committee update report**

Councillor Katherine Miles, Chair of the Scrutiny Committee, introduced the report updating the Council on the activities of the Committee from 01 March 2024 to 30 June 2024. She highlighted work undertaken by the Committee, including the re-establishment of three standing panels, and the expanded remit of the Finance and Performance Panel, which replaced the previous Companies Scrutiny Panel. She welcomed the new Committee members and expressed her anticipation of working constructively with Cabinet Members, Councillors, and Officers.

**Council resolved to note the update report.**

## **21. Motions on notice July 2024**

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

Motions agreed as set out below:

- a) Oxford United Stadium (proposed by Cllr Mark Clarkson, seconded by Cllr Ed Turner)
- b) Motion of No Confidence in Thames Water and development of an Oxford city river action plan (proposed by Cllr Jo Sandelson, seconded by Cllr Katherine Miles) [amendment proposed by Cllr Simon Ottino, seconded by Cllr Jarvis]

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

- c) Making Oxford a Truly Walkable City (proposed by Cllr Max Morris, seconded by Cllr Emily Kerr)
- d) Scrap the Two-Child Benefit Cap (proposed by Cllr Theodore Jupp, seconded by Cllr Chris Smowton)
- e) Bus travel for asylum seekers in Oxford (proposed by Cllr Alex Powell, seconded by Cllr Dianne Regisford)



**a) Oxford United Stadium (Proposed by Cllr Mary Clarkson, seconded by Cllr Ed Turner)**

*Cllr Gant left the meeting, having declared an interest on this item, and returned to the meeting at the start of the next item.*

Cllr Mary Clarkson, seconded by Cllr Simon Ottino, proposed the motion as set out in the briefing notes and clarified the motion referred to parcel of land known as 'The Triangle', where the stadium is proposed to be built.

Council agreed to take a recorded vote.

The following councillors voted in favour: Altaf-Khan, Arshad, Brown, Chapman, Clarkson, Coyne, Diggins, Djafari-Marbini, Fouweather, Henwood, Hollingsworth, Jupp, Miles, Munkonge, Ottino, Pressel, Qayyum, Railton, Linda Smith, Roz Smith, Smowton, Stares, Turner, Upton, and Waite.

No councillor voted against.

The following councillors abstained: Harley, Jarvis, Kerr, Morris, Muddiman, Powell, Rawle, Regisford, and Sandelson.

With 25 members voting in favour, the motion was agreed:

This Council expresses its support for Oxford United's proposals for a new stadium at Stratfield Brake.

**b) Motion of No Confidence in Thames Water and development of an Oxford city river action plan (proposed by Cllr Jo Sandelson, seconded by Cllr Katherine Miles) [amendment proposed by Cllr Simon Ottino, seconded by Cllr Jarvis]**

Cllr Jo Sandelson, seconded by Cllr Katherine Miles, proposed the motion as set out in the briefing notes.

Cllr Simon Ottino proposed a combined amendment to the motion and was seconded by Cllr Chris Jarvis. Council debated the amended motion. Following debate and on being put to the vote, the proposed amendment was agreed.

On being put to the vote, the amendment motion was agreed:

This council has no confidence in the water company Thames Water, which provides services to households in Oxford. For too long now water company bosses have been able to get away with paying themselves millions of pounds in bonuses while dumping millions of tonnes of raw sewage into the River Thames and under-investing in infrastructure. Despite increasing public scrutiny and despair, dividends continue to be paid out to investors that form part of the company's complex corporate structure. At

the same time, the company has been renegeing on its commitments to invest in infrastructure investments.<sup>1</sup>

The consequences are many. Wildlife is disappearing and rivers are unfit to swim in. For example, Oxford has a long tradition of wild swimming in the River Thames at Port Meadow. The city celebrated when Wolvercote Mill Stream received designated bathing water status in 2022.<sup>2</sup> But the level of pollution caused by sewage means the Bathing site is currently classified as Poor and bathing is not advised.<sup>3</sup>

The current regulator Ofwat has demonstrated it is too weak to stand up to Thames Water.<sup>4</sup>

The Sewage Scandal must end to protect the River Thames. In response, this Council believes that water companies, including Thames Water, should be put into Special Administration and brought back into public ownership; and Ofwat should be replaced with a tough new regulator with new powers to prevent sewage dumps.

At a local level in response to the river water emergency, the City Council can demonstrate its commitment to support the restoration of river health, by signing up to the Local Charter for Rivers.<sup>5</sup> This sets out steps that councils can take to use their powers to restore our rivers to health at a local level.<sup>6</sup>

**To this end the Council resolves:**

That it has no confidence in Thames Water.

That the Council requests the Leader:

- writes to the Secretary of State of His Majesty's Government with responsibility for water companies to call to: replace Ofwat with a tough new regulator with new powers to prevent sewage dumps; and place Thames Water into Special Administration to ensure the company's debt does not fall on the Government.
- commissions a cabinet report with an analysis of current actions and gaps in line with the Local River Charter, and recommendations for developing an Oxford City River Action Plan.<sup>7</sup>
- To reiterate this council's view that the long-term solution to the problems in our water system is to take the water firms - including Thames Water - back into public ownership.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/business/article/2024/jun/28/thames-water-board-150m-dividend-payout-funding-u-turn>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/bathing-waters-list-of-designated-waters-in-england/list-of-current-bathing-waters>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.oxford.gov.uk/waterways/bathing-water> ;  
<https://environment.data.gov.uk/bwq/profiles/profile.html?site=ukj1402-11946>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/business/article/2024/jun/28/thames-water-board-150m-dividend-payout-funding-u-turn>

<sup>5</sup> <https://riveractionuk.com/local-charter-for-rivers/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1hOKwnEXtzke2oO-MWrmXnXxFNHV5KZhV/view>

<sup>7</sup> <https://riveractionuk.com/local-charter-for-rivers/>

- c) Making Oxford a Truly Walkable City (proposed by Cllr Max Morris, seconded by Cllr Emily Kerr)**

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

- d) Scrap the Two-Child Benefit Cap (proposed by Cllr Theodore Jupp, seconded by Cllr Chris Smowton)**

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

- e) Bus travel for asylum seekers in Oxford (proposed by Cllr Alex Powell, seconded by Cllr Dianne Regisford)**

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

**The meeting started at 5:00 pm and ended at 9:00 pm**

**Lord Mayor .....**

**Date: Monday 7 October 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.*

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