

Minutes

OF A MEETING OF THE

Council

HELD ON THURSDAY 18 JULY 2019 AT 7.00 PM

THE FOUNTAIN CONFERENCE CENTRE, HOWBERY PARK, CROWMARSH
GIFFORD

Present:

David Bretherton (Chairman)

Ken Arlett, Anna Badcock, Pieter-Paul Barker, David Bartholomew, Robin Bennett, Sam Casey-Rerhaye, Sue Cooper, Peter Dragonetti, Maggie Filipova-Rivers, Stefan Gawrysiak, Elizabeth Gillespie, Sarah Gray, Kate Gregory, Victoria Haval, Simon Hewerdine, Lorraine Hillier, Kellie Hinton, Alexandrine Kantor, Mocky Khan, Lynn Lloyd, Axel Macdonald, Jane Murphy, Leigh Rawlins, Jo Robb, Sue Roberts, David Rouane, Anne-Marie Simpson, Ian Snowdon, Alan Thompson, David Turner, Ian White and Celia Wilson

Apologies:

George Levy, Caroline Newton and Andrea Powell tendered apologies.

Officers:

Steven Corrigan, Adrian Duffield, Holly Jones, Adrianna Partridge and Margaret Reed

10 Minutes

RESOLVED: to approve the minutes of the annual meeting of Council held on 16 May 2019 as a correct record and agree that the Chairman sign them as such.

11 Declarations of disclosable pecuniary interest

Councillor Kantor made a statement that she is employed at UKAEA Culham – a potential housing site in the Local Plan – minute 16.

Councillors Casey-Rerhaye, Cooper and Turner made statements declaring that they are in receipt of a pension from the Oxfordshire Pension Fund - minute 21(3).



Listening Learning Leading

12 Urgent business and chairman's announcements

The chairman advised that his chosen charities for his year in office will be the Red Kite Family Centre and the Earth Trust at Little Wittenham.

The chairman sought and received Council agreement to suspend council procedure rule 45 insofar as it limits councillors to speaking once on agenda item 8 – South Oxfordshire Emerging Local Plan.

Councillor Cooper, Leader of the council, proposed and Council agreed to suspend council procedure rule 36 to allow written answers to councillor questions.

13 Public participation

The chairman advised that a number of members of the public had registered to address Council on agenda item 8 – South Oxfordshire Emerging Local Plan and agenda item 14(3) - the Oxford to Cambridge Expressway motion. He advised that he would invite the speakers to address Council at the relevant item. Council agreed to extend the public speaking time to allow each member of the public who had registered to speak for three minutes to make their address.

14 Petitions

None.

15 Goring Neighbourhood Development Plan

Council considered the recommendations of Cabinet, made at its meeting on 10 July 2019, on making the Goring Neighbourhood Development Plan part of the development plan for South Oxfordshire.

RESOLVED to:

1. make the Goring Neighbourhood Development Plan so that it continues to be part of the council's development plan; and
2. authorise the head of planning, in agreement with the Qualifying Body, to correct any spelling, grammatical, typographical or factual errors in the Goring Neighbourhood Development Plan, together with any improvements from a presentational perspective.

16 South Oxfordshire Emerging Local Plan

During the course of debate on this item, and prior to the expiry of two and a half hours, Council agreed, in accordance with council procedure rule 82, to suspend council procedure rule 12, which restricts the duration of a meeting, to allow Council to complete the business.

Nineteen members of the public addressed Council on the emerging South Oxfordshire Local Plan:

1. Michael Tyce addressed Council on behalf of the Campaign to Protect Rural England. He welcomed Cabinet's recommendation and urged Council to scrap the previous council administration's local plan and to adopt option 4, to withdraw the emerging Local Plan from examination and restart the plan making process. The emerging plan included provision for more houses than required to meet the requirements of the Growth Deal. A future plan should provide for less density and identify more suitable sites for housing.
2. Ann Pritchard addressed Council on behalf of Chalgrove Parish Council. She urged Council to support option 3 which would allow the removal of the Chalgrove Airfield housing allocation from the Local Plan.
3. Caroline Baird addressed Council on behalf of Save Culham Green Belt. She urged Council to support option 4 to re-write the Local Plan and remove the Culham housing allocation which was unsustainable.
4. Caroline Livingstone addressed Council on behalf of the UK Atomic Energy Authority. She stated that the Culham site was and will continue to grow and stressed the importance of retaining the Housing Infrastructure Funding to provide the necessary infrastructure.
5. Steven Sensecall addressed Council on behalf of CEG, which promoted land at Culham. He urged Council to progress the Local Plan through option 1 and to retain the Housing Infrastructure Funding.
6. Vicky Fowler addressed Council on behalf of Martin-Baker. She reminded councillors that the proposed housing allocation site at Chalgrove Airfield was not available for redevelopment due to the current tenant having a long-term lease of the site. She reiterated that the site was required for operational reasons and its designation as a housing site was not compatible with this use. Proceeding on the basis that the land would become available would jeopardise the viability of the plan.
7. Neville Harris, a Didcot Town and Oxfordshire County Councillor, addressed Council. He stated that the Local Plan should prioritise combating climate change and encouraged Council to undertake a radical rethink including the option of an eco town.
8. Eugenie Buchan addressed Council. She welcomed changes to the Local Plan and urged Council to withdraw it rather than seek to change it.
9. James Plunket addressed Council on behalf of Elsfield Parish Meeting. He urged Council to review the plan. The emerging local plan would damage the Green Belt, reduce air quality, increase flooding and damage biodiversity. The plan was not sustainable.
10. Paul Boone addressed Council on behalf of Chalgrove Airfield Action Group, expressing concern at Chalgrove Airfield remaining in the Local Plan as a housing site as it would put the plan at risk.
11. David Jackson addressed Council on behalf of Oxford Science Village Partners. He encouraged Council to support the emerging local plan to provide much needed affordable housing and the infrastructure required to support the housing.
12. Richard Harding addressed Council. He referenced the Council's adoption of a climate emergency and stated that the emerging Local Plan would encourage more roads, more cars and more commuter journeys. He encouraged Council to withdraw the plan and reformulate a more sustainable plan.
13. Alison Knight addressed Council on behalf of Alison Knight Consulting. She stated that many residents supported the need for growth and housing. There is a need for more affordable and social housing. The plan would secure much needed infrastructure.
14. Gill Bindoff addressed Council as a resident of Watlington. She urged Council not to jeopardise the delivery of the Watlington by pass which is required to address congestion in the town and reduce air pollution issues.

15. Angela Dickinson addressed Council as a Barton resident. She urged Council to reconsider the content of the plan in light of the climate emergency. The building of houses in the countryside would have a negative impact on the environment, reduce the availability of arable land increase the likelihood of flooding and reduce the buffer between Oxford and surrounding villages.
16. Anne-Marie Sweeney, a resident of Sandhills, addressed Council. She urged Council to reject the plan to protect the AONB.
17. Jaqi Mason addressed Council on behalf of Burcot and Clifton Hampden Parish Council. She stated that the proposed level of housing growth was unacceptable. The promised infrastructure would only address the existing problems but would be insufficient for the planned housing numbers.
18. Nicola Mallows addressed Council on behalf of Gresswell Environment Trust. She stated that Oxford City was shifting its housing problem onto neighbouring authorities and that the proposals in the plan were not in the interests of local residents. The council should abandon the plan and use the existing adopted version.
19. Philip Owen addressed Council on behalf of Culham Parish Council. He stated that the housing numbers in the Local Plan were excessive. The promised infrastructure would increase traffic and increase traffic congestion. More could be achieved via smaller infrastructure projects

The chairman thanked all of the public speakers for their contributions.

Councillor Rawlins, Cabinet member for planning, addressed Council and thanked the members of the public and business community who had made representations to the meeting. He reported that following the local elections in May 2019 and the subsequent change in leadership, the new council administration had requested some time to look at key policies and projects under development; the Local Plan 2034 was one of these. To assist councillors, officers had prepared a report to Cabinet outlining the advantages and the risks of four different options to take forward the Local Plan were:

- Option 1 suggested that the emerging Local Plan 2034 continued its progress through the Examination process. No changes would be recommended by the council. Any modifications made during the examination would be at the discretion of the Inspectors.
- Option 2 allowed the emerging Local Plan to continue through its examination, but the council might be able to recommend a series of main modifications to the plan. These changes would be at the discretion of the Inspectors. The plan could not be changed unless the Inspector found that part of the plan was unsound. There were no early conclusions from the Inspector about the soundness of aspects of the submitted Local Plan or if modifications were needed.
- Option 3 provided the opportunity to withdraw the Local Plan from examination. The council could make changes to the plan, then conduct a further Regulation 19 consultation. The extent of changes would need to fall within the remit of Regulation 19 consultation, i.e. not introduce new subject areas for the plan to cover. The council could then submit a revised plan for examination.
- Option 4 provided an opportunity to withdraw the Local Plan from examination and to restart the plan making process from scratch. This would allow the council to prepare a significantly different plan, subject to compliance with the law, national policies and guidance. The council would need to undertake at least two consultations (Regulations 18 and 19) before submitting the new plan for examination.

He thanked the Scrutiny Committee for its input, and for its recommendation to Cabinet to progress with option 3.

He reported that, at its meeting on 10 July 2019, Cabinet had expressed concerns regarding a number of aspects of the emerging local plan including the environmental impact of the plan, the uncertainty regarding Oxford City's unmet housing need numbers, the oversupply of housing in the emerging plan and housing density. Cabinet considered that the council needed the opportunity to explore these concerns, whilst protecting the Housing Infrastructure Funding.

Accordingly, he moved the following slightly altered motion with the consent of Council (changes from the resolution of Cabinet shown with new words in bold and deleted words by a strikethrough):

1. express its determination to maintain its housing land supply and avoid speculative housing development;
2. express its continued support for the Housing and Infrastructure Fund (HIF) funding and ~~the proposed~~ infrastructure projects that ~~will~~ **could** be delivered by it;
3. ask officers to explore with Oxfordshire County Council, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and Homes England options for protecting the HIF funding whilst enabling the council to address concerns about the current emerging Local Plan 2034 including (but not limited to) climate change issues and Oxford City's unmet housing need, and to report back to Cabinet and Council;
4. recognising that the Climate Change Emergency is all too real and is recognised to be of key and statutory importance under the Climate Change Act 2008 and the associated objective of "zero carbon by 2050", express its wish to do all that it can to respond through the Local Plan process; and
5. agree that as soon as practicable, alongside satisfactory progress being made on resolving issues in the emerging Local Plan, work on a subsequent Local Plan shall commence, strengthening climate change considerations.

A number of councillors expressed the view that the current emerging Local Plan would have a detrimental impact on the environment and Green Belt and was at odds with the climate change emergency motion declared by Council. The plan provided for an oversupply of housing against the housing requirement figure. If housing need was adjusted, the sites contributing towards the supply needed to be reviewed to meet the overall requirement. The council required clarification of Oxford City's unmet housing need, which was not yet determined. The plan currently provided a housing figure for Oxford City which was not based on the standard methodology. It was reasonable that the new administration should review the local plan in light of its priorities and manifesto commitments. The Housing Infrastructure Funding (HIF) and Growth Deal required a higher number of houses which would increase pressure on infrastructure and resources and impact on the environment and amenity of residents. More time was needed to explore options to protect the essential HIF, whilst enabling the council to address concerns about the current emerging Local Plan 2034, including climate change issues and Oxford City's unmet housing need.

However, a number of councillors expressed concern that any delay to the local plan process could jeopardise the HIF and therefore funding for much needed infrastructure in the district to reduce congestion improve transport links, including road, rail and cycleways, and support economic growth. Any delay could increase the likelihood of speculative development and this could result in further unplanned housing in Didcot and surrounding areas which had already accommodated substantial housing growth.

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 67, which provides for a recorded vote if three members request one, the Chairman called for a recorded vote on the motion which was declared carried with the voting as follows:

For	Against	Abstain
Councillors	Councillors	Councillors
Pieter-Paul Barker	Ken Arlett	
Robin Bennett	Anna Badcock	
David Bretherton	David Bartholomew	
Sam Casey-Rerhaye	Stefan Gawrysiak	
Sue Cooper	Lorraine Hillier	
Peter Dragonetti	Mocky Khan	
Maggie Filipova-Rivers	Lynn Lloyd	
Elizabeth Gillespie	Axel Macdonald	
Sarah Gray	Jane Murphy	
Kate Gregory	Ian Snowdon	
Victoria Haval	Alan Thompson	
Simon Hewerdine	Ian White	
Kellie Hinton	Celia Wilson	
Alexandrine Kantor		
Leigh Rawlins		
Jo Robb		
Sue Roberts		
David Rouane		
Anne-Marie Simpson		

For	Against	Abstain
David Turner		
20	13	0

RESOLVED to:

1. express its determination to maintain its housing land supply and avoid speculative housing development;
2. express its continued support for the Housing and Infrastructure Fund (HIF) funding and infrastructure projects that could be delivered by it;
3. ask officers to explore with Oxfordshire County Council, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and Homes England options for protecting the HIF funding whilst enabling the council to address concerns about the current emerging Local Plan 2034 including (but not limited to) climate change issues and Oxford City's unmet housing need, and to report back to Cabinet and Council;
4. recognising that the Climate Change Emergency is all too real and is recognised to be of key and statutory importance under the Climate Change Act 2008 and the associated objective of "zero carbon by 2050", express its wish to do all that it can to respond through the Local Plan process; and
5. agree that as soon as practicable, alongside satisfactory progress being made on resolving issues in the emerging Local Plan, work on a subsequent Local Plan shall commence, strengthening climate change considerations.

The chairman adjourned the meeting at 9.55pm and reconvened it at 10.00pm.

17 Appointment of substitute members to the Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel

At its annual meeting Council appointed Councillor David Rouane as the council's representative on the Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel. Since that meeting the Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel had agreed to change the membership rules of the panel to enable all 18 Thames Valley local authorities to appoint a named substitute member to the panel who would receive notification of meetings and agenda, and could attend meetings of the panel, in the absence of the appointed member.

RESOLVED: to appoint Councillor Ian Snowdon as the substitute member on the Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel.

18 Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee

RESOLVED: to appoint David Bretherton as the council's representative and Anne-Marie Simpson as substitute on the Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

19 Establishment of a Climate Emergency Advisory Committee

Council considered the report of the head of legal and democratic on the establishment of a Climate Emergency Advisory Committee.

Councillors welcomed the establishment of the committee to advise on how the council can contribute to carbon reduction targets and minimise the damage to the environment and reduce damage to the global and local environment through its policies and practices. Council agreed to establish a committee with a membership of 12 which would allow membership of an independent councillor on the committee.

RESOLVED: to

1. establish a Climate Emergency Advisory Committee with the terms of reference and procedure rules set out in Appendix A to the report of the head of legal and democratic to Council on 18 July 2019;
2. appoint the membership, substitutes and chair as set out in the table below:

Names	Climate Emergency Advisory Committee, 12 Members				
Conservative (3)	Greens (2)	Henley Residents (1)	Labour (1)	Liberal Democrat (4)	Non-group councillor
Lynn Lloyd	Sam Casey-Rerhaye	Stefan Gawrysiak	Celia Wilson	Sue Cooper	Simon Heverdin e
Caroline Newton	Sue Roberts (Chair)			Sarah Gray	
Ian White				Kate Gregory	
				David Rouane	

Names	Climate Emergency Advisory Committee, 12 Members				
Conservative (3)	Greens (2)	Henley Residents (1)	Labour (1)	Liberal Democrat (4)	Non-group councillor
PREFERRED SUBSTITUTES					
Conservative (3)	Greens (3)	Henley Residents (2)	Labour (2)	Liberal Democrat (4)	
Lorraine Hillier	Jo Robb	Ken Arlett	Mocky Khan	Anne-Marie Simpson	
Jane Murphy	Andrea Powell	Kellie Hinton	Axel Macdonald	Vacancy	
Vacancy	Robin Bennett			Vacancy	
				Vacancy	

3. authorise the head of legal and democratic to incorporate the terms of reference and procedure rules set out in Appendix A to the report of the head of legal and democratic to Council on 18 July 2019 into the council's constitution and to make any consequential changes to the constitution to reflect the decision of Council.

20 Report of the leader of the council

Councillor Sue Cooper, Leader of the council, addressed Council. The text of her report is available on the council's [website](#).

21 Motions on notice

The Chairman agreed to alter the order of the agenda to allow for the consideration of the motions prior to the councillor questions.

1. Motion proposed by Councillor Sue Cooper, seconded by Councillor Maggie Filipova-Rivers

“Council notes the economic and environmental importance of rail transport in this area and authorises the leader of the council to write to the Secretary of State for Transport to request the acceleration of the delivery of rail projects of importance to South Oxfordshire. These include:

- Improvements necessary to Oxford City Station
- Reopening of Grove Station
- Upgrading of the route between Didcot and Oxford

- Reopening of the Cowley Branch line
- And any other initiatives which come forward in the current Oxfordshire Rail Connectivity Study”.

The majority of councillors supported the motion to bring about improvements to the rail network in the district, provide a viable alternative mode of transport and protect the environment.

RESOLVED:

To note the economic and environmental importance of rail transport in this area and authorise the leader of the council to write to the Secretary of State for Transport to request the acceleration of the delivery of rail projects of importance to South Oxfordshire. These include:

- Improvements necessary to Oxford City Station
- Reopening of Grove Station
- Upgrading of the route between Didcot and Oxford
- Reopening of the Cowley Branch line
- And any other initiatives which come forward in the current Oxfordshire Rail Connectivity Study.

2. Motion proposed by Councillor Robin Bennett, seconded by Councillor Kellie Hinton

“Council notes that, increasingly, the only type of housing in our area that is genuinely affordable to young families, key workers, and the under-40s in general is social rent housing. Council asks officers to prepare a report for Cabinet on ways to use council powers and resources to deliver more high-quality, environmentally sustainable, and genuinely affordable housing, at social rent or similar cost. This should include ways to keep such properties genuinely affordable in the long term and ways to release and access low-cost suitable land for projects such as – but not limited to - selfbuild, housing co-ops and community land trusts, as well as projects owned, let or operated by the council itself”.

The majority of councillors supported the motion to address the current shortage in affordable and social housing. The current developer model had not delivered the necessary provision of this type of housing. The view was expressed that the council should also seek to bring empty homes back into use.

RESOLVED:

To note that, increasingly, the only type of housing in our area that is genuinely affordable to young families, key workers, and the under-40s in general is social rent housing. Council asks officers to prepare a report for Cabinet on ways to use council powers and resources to deliver more high-quality, environmentally sustainable, and genuinely affordable housing, at social rent or similar cost. This should include ways to keep such properties genuinely affordable in the long term and ways to release and access low-cost suitable land for projects such as – but not limited to - selfbuild, housing co-ops and community land trusts, as well as projects owned, let or operated by the council itself.

3. Motion proposed by Councillor Robin Bennett, seconded by Councillor Alexandrine Kantor

“Council notes that the UK Government, in tandem with the National Infrastructure Commission, has proposed the construction of a motorway-style **expressway between Oxford and Cambridge**. This new road will have significant adverse impacts on Oxfordshire: it will create a major source of air and noise pollution, destroy farmland and habitats, increase CO2 emissions - incompatible with the recent Climate Emergency declared by this council in April 2019 and bring more traffic onto the county’s existing roads.

Actual and proposed consultation on the Expressway, and indeed on the Ox-Cam Arc proposal and associated major housing growth across the region, has been wholly inadequate and a proper Strategic Environmental Assessment should have taken place before this project left the drawing board. Instead, it has become the basis for regional planning with little democratic legitimacy.

Whilst this council supports partnership working and strategic planning and practical links with authorities across the region, it does not support the addition of a major road such as the Expressway in a time of climate emergency – as declared by this council on 11 April 2019.

Highways England’s own analysis of the Expressway shows a benefit:cost ratio (BCR) in the range of 1.1 – 1.3, far lower than most other road schemes analysed by the Department for Transport in 2015, (2:1).

The Oxford 2050 plan process has thus far welcomed the perceived benefits of the Oxford-Cambridge Expressway. It is also mentioned as a factor in a wide range of council documents and plans, including LP2034. **This council asks that its new position on the Expressway is taken into account in all council documents that refer to it.**

The Expressway would cause major harm to the quality of life of residents if it passes through the district; **this council wishes to withdraw any assumed consent**, including any possibility that roads such as the HIF-funded Thames crossing, or the Stadhampton or Watlington bypasses, could later be used or expanded to form part of the Expressway or act as feeder roads for it.

This council fully supports an upgrade in the East-West rail route, with full electrification, as part of the Ox-Cam arc discussions. Such an upgrade must include inter-modal centres, along it and at both ends, to enable maximum use of rail for freight. Any road upgrades necessary to support the East-West rail route should connect to that route and be proportionate to the primacy of rail freight.

Council therefore resolves to:

- Oppose the Expressway project in all forms, including expansion of existing or new roads in the district to form part of it.
- Support fully-electrified East-West Rail, including freight capacity and connections, and better public transport and active travel connections.

- Update all council documents to reflect this new position on the Expressway and related Arc development proposals.
- Continue to support partnership working, especially with regard to landscapescale conservation and nature recovery networks”.

Nicola Mallows, representing Gresswell Environment Trust, addressed Council on this motion. The proposed road was neither financially or philosophically sound. It would divide the county, damage the countryside, increase demand for housing, increase commuter travel and was not sustainable.

Eugenie Buchan addressed Council in support of the motion. Priority should be given to the electrification of the railways. The proposed road would generate a huge housebuilding programme. If Council approved the motion she urged partnership working with other local authorities and suggested that the council communicate its opposition to Government, MPs and Highways England.

Peter Wingfield-Stratford addressed Council. He expressed concern regarding the cost of such a project and the impact on the A34.

The majority of councillors supported the view that the project should be abandoned in favour of more sustainable transport projects including the East-West rail link and local infrastructure projects to enhance cycling infrastructure and public transport. The proposed Expressway offered poor value for money, would have a detrimental impact on the environment, destroy farmland and habitats, increase carbon emissions, worsen air quality, increase noise pollution, attract more traffic and increase congestion on the roads in the district and encourage further speculative building.

With the consent of Council, the mover and seconder of the motion agreed to add the following words to the motion:

- Communicate its opposition to Government, MPs and Highways England.

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 67, which provides for a recorded vote if three members request one, the Chairman called for a recorded vote on the motion which was declared carried with the voting as follows:

For	Against	Abstain
Councillors	Councillors	Councillors
Ken Arlett		Lynn Lloyd
Anna Badcock		Jane Murphy
Pieter-Paul Barker		
David Bartholomew		
Robin Bennett		
David Bretherton		

For	Against	Abstain
Sam Casey-Rerhaye		
Sue Cooper		
Peter Dragonetti		
Maggie Filipova-Rivers		
Stefan Gawrysiak		
Elizabeth Gillespie		
Sarah Gray		
Kate Gregory		
Victoria Haval		
Simon Hewerdine		
Lorraine Hillier		
Kellie Hinton		
Alexandrine Kantor		
Mocky Khan		
Axel Macdonald		
Leigh Rawlins		
Jo Robb		
Sue Roberts		
David Rouane		
Anne-Marie Simpson		
Ian Snowdon		
David Turner		
Ian White		
29	0	2

RESOLVED:

To note that the UK Government, in tandem with the National Infrastructure Commission, has proposed the construction of a motorway-style **expressway between Oxford and Cambridge**. This new road will have significant adverse impacts on Oxfordshire: it will create a major source of air and noise pollution, destroy farmland and habitats, increase CO2 emissions - incompatible with the recent Climate Emergency declared by this council in April 2019 and bring more traffic onto the county's existing roads.

Actual and proposed consultation on the Expressway, and indeed on the Ox-Cam Arc proposal and associated major housing growth across the region, has been wholly inadequate and a proper Strategic Environmental Assessment should have taken place before this project left the drawing board. Instead, it has become the basis for regional planning with little democratic legitimacy.

Whilst this council supports partnership working and strategic planning and practical links with authorities across the region, it does not support the addition of a major road such as the Expressway in a time of climate emergency – as declared by this council on 11 April 2019.

Highways England's own analysis of the Expressway shows a benefit:cost ratio (BCR) in the range of 1.1 – 1.3, far lower than most other road schemes analysed by the Department for Transport in 2015, (2:1).

The Oxford 2050 plan process has thus far welcomed the perceived benefits of the Oxford-Cambridge Expressway. It is also mentioned as a factor in a wide range of council documents and plans, including LP2034. **This council asks that its new position on the Expressway is taken into account in all council documents that refer to it.**

The Expressway would cause major harm to the quality of life of residents if it passes through the district; **this council wishes to withdraw any assumed consent**, including any possibility that roads such as the HIF-funded Thames crossing, or the Stadhampton or Watlington bypasses, could later be used or expanded to form part of the Expressway or act as feeder roads for it.

This council fully supports an upgrade in the East-West rail route, with full electrification, as part of the Ox-Cam arc discussions. Such an upgrade must include inter-modal centres, along it and at both ends, to enable maximum use of rail for freight. Any road upgrades necessary to support the East-West rail route should connect to that route and be proportionate to the primacy of rail freight.

Council therefore resolved to:

- Oppose the Expressway project in all forms, including expansion of existing or new roads in the district to form part of it.
- Support fully-electrified East-West Rail, including freight capacity and connections, and better public transport and active travel connections.
- Update all council documents to reflect this new position on the Expressway and related Arc development proposals.

- Continue to support partnership working, especially with regard to landscapescale conservation and nature recovery networks”.
- Communicate its opposition to Government, MPs and Highways England

4. Motion proposed by Councillor Jo Robb, seconded by Councillor Mocky Khan

“Council notes that the Oxfordshire Pension Fund, of which it is an employer, has more than £132m of workers’ money – around 6% of its portfolio funds - invested in fossil fuel companies. These companies – which the London Stock Exchange now terms “nonrenewables,” are the primary drivers of the climate crisis threatening our planet.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change last year warned that to avoid the most catastrophic consequences of warming, carbon emissions must fall to zero by 2050. Last month, the UK Parliament imposed a binding target of net zero by 2050 and in April, this Council declared a Climate Emergency.

Lloyds of London and Bank of England Governor Mark Carney have both warned that legislation necessary to limit warming combined with the development of renewables would likely result in the rapid “stranding” of fossil fuel assets, requiring large-scale asset write-downs. Fossil fuel companies face the additional peril of a potential wave of third-party liability claims brought by the victims of climate change including sovereign states.

A growing number of pension and investment funds have already announced plans to fully or partially divest from fossil fuels. Southwark Council, Islington Council, SOAS, the United Reform Church, The Church of England and the National Trust have already made significant divestment moves. Globally, the divestment movement has seen more than £6.3trillion leave the fossil fuel industry.

As a result, the fossil fuel industry is facing unprecedented financial, legal and regulatory headwinds.

The Oxfordshire Pension Fund has defended its continued investment in fossil fuels, arguing that to divest would mean losing its influence. This position is untenable. The very raison d’être of fossil fuel companies is the extraction and sale of carbon intensive energy. To the extent these companies are being stewarded towards renewable energy, this transition is happening too slowly. Research by Transition Pathway Initiative, an industry body, found that none of the ten largest publicly listed oil and gas producers are on track to achieve net zero emissions by 2050. None are on track to be aligned with 2 degrees or less of warming by 2050.

The message of divestment is not that fossil fuel companies are evil. But their business threatens our planet and its most vulnerable inhabitants through droughts, heat waves, crop failures, floods, and rising sea levels.

As one of the Oxfordshire LGPS employers, South Oxfordshire District Council calls on the Oxfordshire Pension Fund Committee to act in line with South Oxfordshire and the UK’s declaration of Climate Emergency and in prudent exercise of its fiduciary duties by divesting its investment in an industry whose long-term risk profile in the current political and environmental climate is unacceptably high.

Council:

1) calls on the Oxfordshire Pension Fund to follow the lead of Councils, sovereign wealth funds and other pension and investment funds around the world to divest from non-

renewable energy companies whose main purpose is the exploration and/or extraction of fossil fuels;

2) calls on the Oxfordshire Pension Fund to explore reinvestment of its funds into appropriate renewable energy companies at the earliest opportunity;

3) asks the Oxfordshire Pension Fund to acknowledge that shareholder engagement has failed to bring about the pace of change required to limit catastrophic global warming”.

The view was expressed that the Oxfordshire Pension Fund Committee is responsible for the pension fund investment portfolio and makes decisions on investment opportunities in order to safeguard the pension scheme and get the best returns. However, the majority of councillors supported the motion because climate change and investment in fossil fuels present a long term financial risk to the pension fund. As members of the pension fund, the council had a fiduciary duty to protect the pension fund from long-term financial risk associated with the investment in fossil fuels. Fossil fuel divestment was financially responsible and consistent with the funds’ responsibilities.

RESOLVED:

To note that the Oxfordshire Pension Fund, of which it is an employer, has more than £132m of workers’ money – around 6% of its portfolio funds - invested in fossil fuel companies. These companies – which the London Stock Exchange now terms “nonrenewables,” are the primary drivers of the climate crisis threatening our planet.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change last year warned that to avoid the most catastrophic consequences of warming, carbon emissions must fall to zero by 2050. Last month, the UK Parliament imposed a binding target of net zero by 2050 and in April, this Council declared a Climate Emergency.

Lloyds of London and Bank of England Governor Mark Carney have both warned that legislation necessary to limit warming combined with the development of renewables would likely result in the rapid “stranding” of fossil fuel assets, requiring large-scale asset write-downs. Fossil fuel companies face the additional peril of a potential wave of third-party liability claims brought by the victims of climate change including sovereign states.

A growing number of pension and investment funds have already announced plans to fully or partially divest from fossil fuels. Southwark Council, Islington Council, SOAS, the United Reform Church, The Church of England and the National Trust have already made significant divestment moves. Globally, the divestment movement has seen more than £6.3trillion leave the fossil fuel industry.

As a result, the fossil fuel industry is facing unprecedented financial, legal and regulatory headwinds.

The Oxfordshire Pension Fund has defended its continued investment in fossil fuels, arguing that to divest would mean losing its influence. This position is untenable. The very raison d’être of fossil fuel companies is the extraction and sale of carbon intensive energy. To the extent these companies are being stewarded towards renewable energy, this transition is happening too slowly. Research by Transition Pathway Initiative, an industry body, found that none of the ten largest publicly listed oil and gas producers are on track to achieve net zero emissions by 2050. None are on track to be aligned with 2 degrees or less of warming by 2050.

The message of divestment is not that fossil fuel companies are evil. But their business threatens our planet and its most vulnerable inhabitants through droughts, heat waves, crop failures, floods, and rising sea levels.

As one of the Oxfordshire LGPS employers, South Oxfordshire District Council calls on the Oxfordshire Pension Fund Committee to act in line with South Oxfordshire and the UK's declaration of Climate Emergency and in prudent exercise of its fiduciary duties by divesting its investment in an industry whose long-term risk profile in the current political and environmental climate is unacceptably high.

Council:

1) calls on the Oxfordshire Pension Fund to follow the lead of Councils, sovereign wealth funds and other pension and investment funds around the world to divest from non-renewable energy companies whose main purpose is the exploration and/or extraction of fossil fuels;

2) calls on the Oxfordshire Pension Fund to explore reinvestment of its funds into appropriate renewable energy companies at the earliest opportunity;

3) asks the Oxfordshire Pension Fund to acknowledge that shareholder engagement has failed to bring about the pace of change required to limit catastrophic global warming.

22 Questions on notice

Prior to consideration of this item Council agreed to close the meeting. In doing so Council agreed that officers would circulate the written answers to the questions and give the questioners a set period to submit a supplementary question in writing that would be answered in writing. These would go on the website alongside the Council papers (but not be part of the minutes).

The meeting closed at 11.20pm

Chairman

Date