

# Minutes

## OF A MEETING OF THE

# Council



Listening Learning Leading

**Held on Thursday 7 October 2021 at 6.00 pm**

**First floor, 135 Eastern Avenue, Milton Park, Milton, OX14 4SB**

### **Present in the meeting room:**

Councillors: Jo Robb (Chair)

Ken Arlett, Pieter-Paul Barker, David Bartholomew, Tim Bearder, Robin Bennett, David Bretherton, Sam Casey-Rerhaye, Sue Cooper, Peter Dragonetti, Maggie Filipova-Rivers, Stefan Gawrysiak, Elizabeth Gillespie, Kate Gregory, Victoria Haval, Kellie Hinton, Alexandrine Kantor, Mocky Khan, George Levy, Lynn Lloyd, Axel Macdonald, Jane Murphy, Caroline Newton, Andrea Powell, Leigh Rawlins, Sue Roberts, David Rouane, Anne-Marie Simpson, Ian Snowdon, Alan Thompson, David Turner, Andrea Warren, Ian White and Celia Wilson

Officers: Patrick Arran, Steven Corrigan and Mark Stone

### **Remote attendance** (not eligible to vote):

Councillors: Anna Badcock

## **32 Minutes**

**RESOLVED:** to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 15 July 2021 as a correct record and agree that the Chair sign them as such.

## **33 Declarations of disclosable pecuniary interest**

Councillor Khan stated that, as he received a Special Responsibility Allowance in his capacity as Co-Chair of the Joint Audit and Governance Committee, he would not take part in the debate or vote on agenda item 10 – Councillors' Allowances Scheme.

## **34 Urgent business and chair announcements**

The Chair of Council, Councillor Robb, advised that, in accordance with Section 100B (4) (b) of the Local Government Act 1972, she had agreed to take one item of urgent business at the meeting – the election of a Leader of the council in light of Councillor Cooper given notice that she would be retiring as Leader of the council at the meeting.

The reason for urgency being that Councillor Cooper gave notice of her intention to resign after the publication of the agenda for the meeting. There must be continuity in terms of

the Leader of the Council, and it is therefore important to ensure the council elects a new Leader which could not wait until the next Council meeting.

The Chair further advised that agenda item 10 – the report of the Leader of the council – would be taken at agenda item 7 to allow Councillor Cooper to provide her report. The urgent item would be taken prior to the other business on the agenda.

The Chair invited Patrick Arran, Head of Legal and Democratic and Monitoring Officer, to make a statement to clarify legal issues around the transgender motion adopted by Council at the December 2020 meeting. The text of the statement is set out below:

“Good evening councillors,

I have asked the Chair if I may have the opportunity of addressing Council regarding the motion to Council on the 22 December 2020 entitled:

“Council notes that Trans people face significant disadvantage in society”.

I will be happy to discuss any issues regarding this statement with members outside the meeting, but I am not able to answer any questions during the meeting.

A corporate complaint was made regarding the motion by a resident, and I reviewed the background to the resolution and complaint shortly after I came into post. I have not upheld the complaint, and this was communicated to the complainant in my letter of the 23 of September 2021.

As a starting point, it is my view that the motion was clearly one which Council was lawfully entitled to accept and make a resolution upon. The motion was political in nature, intended to be aspirational, was clearly something of relevance to the Council and was non-binding in nature or legal effect.

However, and perhaps understandably for a political motion, the wording of three elements of the resolution lacked legal precision in terms of definitions and impact.

This is certainly not a criticism - this is the nature of political discourse, politicians raise issues of genuine concern by way of motion as part of the democratic process.

As an aside, I am more than happy to help with the drafting of motions should any member require it, indeed, I would prefer to be involved at the formative stage of a motion.

I need to outline to Council for the record, the interpretation that we must place on certain elements of the resolution made. This is to ensure that there is no doubt about the considerations members and officers consider when making decisions around service provision.

Firstly, it is important that I make it clear that Council motions do not and cannot legally bind the Executive in relation to executive functions. In other words, the Council resolutions did not override or affect the lawful exercise of the Council’s public functions in relation to the provision of services, and no services have been affected by the resolution.

In short, the terms of the resolution must be read in the context that it is always subject to an implied requirement to act lawfully.

I would therefore provide clarity around the following elements of the resolution as follows:

*“[t]rans men are men, trans women are women and that non-binary genders are just as valid”*

The intent of the motion and the statements was to demonstrate support and solidarity with trans people. It was not intended to be an assertion of biological / and or social / and or legal fact.

However, for the purposes of making decisions around service provision, the Council is only permitted to legally recognise someone’s sex as that recorded at birth unless a gender recognition certificate has been issued.

The Equality Act is also clear that the right to recognition in one’s acquired sex is not absolute and there will be circumstances where the Council must recognise that there is a necessity for segregation in order to give due consideration to other protected characteristics such as religion or belief.

Whilst I recognise that the intent of the motion was to demonstrate support and seek to address disadvantages in society, the statement in relation to non-binary genders is legally incorrect because there is – perhaps currently - no legal recognition of such identity. As such, the Council cannot legally consider non-binary genders as a factor when making decisions.

*“Ensure that all Council services, both directly provided and through partners, are fully accessible to all, regardless of their sexuality or gender identity”*

I understand that the intent of the wording was to ensure that all services are fully accessible to all and is again intended to set out the Council’s commitment to the PSED.

There is a potential for this to be read as providing precedence to the protected characteristics of sexual orientation and gender re-assignment which, though not the intention, needs to be clarified. Essentially, the way in which this would be applied is that services would be accessible to all in accordance with the law and officers would ensure that there would be no unintended consequences.

*“that the Council’s constitution, policies, forms, and all internal and external communications are gender neutral”*

The Council cannot legally commit to gender neutrality as suggested by the resolution. Again, I entirely accept and appreciate that this element was intended to demonstrate solidarity with trans people, but it could lead to unintended consequences in the unlikely event it was interpreted in too restrictive a way.

It would be a disproportionate approach in that it goes beyond that which might reasonably be regarded to protect the rights of trans people without apparent consideration for the rights of others.

Thank you”.

The Chair provided general housekeeping information.

### **35 Public participation**

No members of the public had registered to address Council.

### **36 Petitions**

None.

### **37 Report of the leader of the council**

Councillor Cooper, Leader of the council, provided an update on a number of matters. The text of her address is available on the council's [website](#).

As part of her address Councillor Cooper confirmed her resignation as Leader of the council.

Councillor Gawrysiak, Henley Resident Group Leader, Councillor Bennett, Green Group Leader, Councillor Robb, Chair of council, Councillor Gillespie, Leader of South Oxfordshire Residents Team Group and Councillor Khan, Labour Group Leader, thanked Councillor Cooper for her time as Leader of the council.

### **38 Election of Leader of the council - urgent item**

**RESOLVED:** to elect David Rouane as Leader of the council for a four year period ending on the day of the next post-election annual meeting in 2023.

Councillor Rouane advised of the appointment of Councillor Cooper to Cabinet with the portfolio for environment, climate change and nature recovery.

### **39 Making the Crowmarsh Development Plan**

Council considered the recommendation of Councillor Simpson, Cabinet member for planning, made on 28 September 2021, to make the Crowmarsh Neighbourhood Development Plan part of the development plan for South Oxfordshire.

**RESOLVED:**

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

## 40 Treasury Management Outturn 2020-21

Council considered Cabinet's recommendations, made at its meeting on 30 September 2021, on the outturn performance of the treasury management function for the financial year 2020/21. The Joint Audit and Governance Committee, which had met on 28 September, and Cabinet had considered the head of finance's report and were satisfied that the treasury activities had been carried out in accordance with the treasury management strategy and policy.

In response to a question regarding the lack of carbon and ecological considerations in the current Treasury Management Strategy (TMS), Councillor Rawlins, Cabinet member for Finance, responded that Council was being invited to approve the 2020/21 outturn against the strategy in place during that period at this meeting. He acknowledged that the council was looking at a revision of the TMS. There would be scope to explore climate change related issues and how these relate to investments. However, any change would need to reflect the principles of security, liquidity and whether there are opportunities to improve on yield.

**RESOLVED:** to

1. approve the treasury management outturn report 2020/21; and
2. approve the actual 2020/21 prudential indicators within the report.

## 41 Councillors' Allowances Scheme

Council considered the report of the Head of Legal and Democratic covering the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel on a revised councillors' allowances scheme.

Councillor Rouane moved, and Councillor Filipova-Rivers seconded, the following motion which on being put to the vote was agreed:

It is recommended that Council agrees:

1. The recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel set out in their report as to the levels of basic and special responsibility allowances as set out in paragraph 7 of the report, with the exception of the recommended minimum threshold on the payment of the special responsibility allowance to the Leader of the main opposition group which will be disapplied
2. That the revised scheme should apply from 1 April 2022
3. That a task group comprising a member from each group consider the proposed content of a Parental Leave Policy for elected members and report back to Council with its recommendations at its meeting in December 2021
4. To authorise the Head of Legal and Democratic to finalise and implement a councillors' allowances scheme based on the decision in 1 and the IRP report

5. To thank the members of the IRP for their work in reviewing the councillors' allowances scheme.

In supporting the motion councillors supported the view that there should be no lower threshold on the payment of the special responsibility allowance to the Leader of the largest opposition group. South Oxfordshire District Council had a tradition of many political groups and therefore there should be no lower threshold on the payment of the SRA to such an important role.

**RESOLVED:** to

1. approve the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel set out in their report as to the levels of basic and special responsibility allowances as set out in paragraph 7 of the report of the Head of Legal and Democratic to Council on 7 October 2021, with the exception of the recommended minimum threshold on the payment of the special responsibility allowance to the Leader of the main opposition group which will be disapplied;
2. apply the revised scheme from 1 April 2022;
3. establish a task group comprising a member from each group consider the proposed content of a Parental Leave Policy for elected members and report back to Council with its recommendations at its meeting in December 2021;
4. authorise the Head of Legal and Democratic to finalise and implement a councillors' allowances scheme based on the decision in 1 and the IRP report; and
5. thank the members of the IRP for their work in reviewing the councillors' allowances scheme.

## **42 Questions on notice**

### **Question from Councillor Jane Murphy to Councillor David Rouane, Leader of the council**

Can the Leader confirm that a full consultation process on the size and style of the new HQ building on the gateway site will be undertaken with the residents who border the gateway site on two sides and what further consultation will take place?

### **Written response**

As all members will know, we are always committed to ensuring residents get a positive opportunity to comment, feedback and contribute at the appropriate stages of any project where they have a genuine opportunity to influence the outcomes.

So far, local residents have had the opportunity to comment on extensive local engagement on the master planning work for the Didcot Gateway site – this was advertised via leaflet distribution to residents who lived around the site and further afield in Didcot along with pieces in local newspapers and emails to key stakeholders. We also sent the proposals and engagement questionnaire to people registered for updates on Didcot Garden Town and planning in South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse Districts.

Support for the proposals welcomed the new and modern open space and amenities, which gives a good first impression of Didcot for those arriving at the station. Concerns raised focused on the limited amount of on-site parking for new residents and the potential implications of reducing available parking overall. The council is actively working on addressing concerns for parking in a way that ensures there is enough parking for those who need it, while also actively encouraging the use of sustainable public transport where possible. Concerns about building heights have been considered and the updated masterplan seeks to minimise the impact of tall buildings by setting these further back from the road. The updated masterplan also reduces the number and density of buildings to create more open space on the site.

Local residents were also engaged a number of times through the Didcot Garden Town public advisory board, and the town council has received presentations and updates. Local council members from the area have been closely involved in the design process of our new building to ensure that local residents' views are given appropriate attention. We are also hoping to be able to make a presentation on the proposals to Didcot Town Council in mid-October.

I and Councillor Powell met with members of the local community to discuss the site and our building on Tuesday 5 October. I have been in frequent contact with members of the community about the Didcot Gateway site for many years.

We will proactively invite local residents to take part in the full planning consultation for the building once an application has been submitted – this will be an opportunity to comment on material planning considerations such as building height and style, and genuinely influence the outcome of the planning application as set out in the council's Statement of Community Involvement. The master planning proposals for the wider Gateway site will be a supporting document during that planning consultation, so residents can comment on how the building sits within the Gateway development.

The concept designs for the council's building aim to reflect the history of Didcot, and the site layout was redesigned to enhance the welcoming open approach that the Gateway masterplan wants to achieve – this will enhance the open areas on the council's site for the benefit of the public as well as councillors and staff.

### **Supplementary question**

Councillor Murphy asked whether the Leader of the council could confirm whether the size of the accommodation required by the council would be kept under review to reflect the fact that widespread homeworking will become increasingly more established, and whether the proposal would be reduced in size as part of the council's commitment to reduce its carbon footprint and ensure value for money.

### **Answer**

Councillor Rouane responded that the office has been designed having regard to the current estimates from officers who have been working from home during the pandemic and expressed a preference to continue to do so. The design consists of accommodation for use by South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils with the remaining space available to let on a commercial basis. If more officers worked flexibly this could make additional office space available for commercial letting to the benefit of the council.

## 43 Motions on notice

Council considered the following motions from councillors in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 38.

1. Councillor Robin Bennett moved, and Councillor Andrea Powell seconded the motion as set out in the agenda at agenda item 12.

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

### **RESOLVED:** That

Council notes that the Government is currently running its public consultation on the Vision for “the Oxford to Cambridge Arc”.

It appears that Government has made economic growth its priority for the Arc, without asking residents whether that is the right priority, considering natural limits and resource constraints, or even whether the Arc project is necessary.

The Dasgupta review, published earlier this year<sup>1</sup>, found that the UK’s traditional approach to growth is unsustainable.

Local authority leaders, including from this council, have tried to prioritise nature and climate action by proposing Arc Environmental Principles, but the Government’s current consultation ignores them, as noted by BBOWT<sup>2</sup>, RSPB<sup>3</sup> and others.

Council notes these concerns and asks the Leader to write to the new Minister for Levelling up, Housing and Communities, asking him to:

- Pause the Arc project to reflect on whether the creation of an arbitrary geographic construct driving excessive growth in the South East will make a positive contribution to the government’s stated aim of ‘levelling up’ the UK.
- If the project is to continue, set out clearly what the Government’s aims for it are, including expected costs, projected housing and growth expectations, and how it will fit into a wider regional structure within the UK.
- Give local authorities within the Arc area the powers and funding needed to enable landscape-scale nature restoration and world-leading environmental standards.
- Ensure proper local democratic control, with constituent local planning authorities able to set their own housing requirements based on local need.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/the-economics-of-biodiversity-the-dasgupta-review>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.bbowl.org.uk/blog/estelle-bailey/government-must-rethink-arc-avoid-environmental-catastrophe>

<sup>3</sup> <https://community.rspb.org.uk/ourwork/b/rspb-england/posts/time-to-rethink-the-arc>



2. With the consent of Council, Councillor Anne-Marie Simpson moved and, Councillor Pieter-Paul Barker seconded the following motion to reflect comments received from councillors prior to the meeting – omitted words shown by a strikethrough and additional words shown in bold

Council acknowledges the appointment of a new Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. It ~~hopes that he will reconsider~~ **welcomes the fact that he is reconsidering** HM Government's proposed planning reforms and **hopes he makes** use of this opportunity to prioritise ambitions to address the climate emergency, protect and enhance the natural environment and increase biodiversity – all of which will help to improve the health and well-being of the nation. It is only by putting sustainability at the heart of these matters that the UK will be able to deliver on its environmental ambitions.

The Council notes:

- the appointment of Michael Gove as Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.
- the upcoming United Nations COP26 climate summit gives government at all levels the opportunity to galvanise action on reducing emissions.
- HM Government's stated ambitions to Build Back Better, achieve Net Zero and to leave the natural environment in a better state than it found it.

Council calls for HM Government to:

- scrap the current proposals for planning reform and maintain the right of local residents to engage and comment on individual planning applications
- transform the local planning process into one that assesses the climate fitness of a district and plans for growth within the environmental capacity of the area, looking at carbon emissions, water availability and the pressing need for nature recovery at scale
- maintain the right of local people, through robust Neighbourhood and Local Plan processes, to decide how their communities develop sustainably
- reverse the recently introduced permitted development rights which bypass local decision-making
- support councils in adopting strong local and strategic planning policies (including through plans like the Oxfordshire Plan 2050) to maximise protection for the environment, decarbonise, recycle urban land, revitalise existing places and plan for new development within the limits of climate and environmental capacity, to create strong, healthy, sustainable communities where people want, and can afford, to live
- **in the process of decarbonising and protecting the environment, perform a thorough review of both Building Regulations and NPPF, require property developments to be built to net carbon zero standards in manufacture and in use, or justify any shortfall.**

and asks the Leader to write to the Secretary of State and our local Members of Parliament to this effect and to reiterate this Council's belief that the 5 Year Housing Land Supply measure is flawed and inappropriate, as Councils should not be held to

account for the actions – or indeed lack of action - of developers, with regard to the delivery of housing on allocated or approved development sites.

**RESOLVED:** That

Council acknowledges the appointment of a new Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. It welcomes the fact that he is reconsidering HM Government's proposed planning reforms and hopes he makes use of this opportunity to prioritise ambitions to address the climate emergency, protect and enhance the natural environment and increase biodiversity – all of which will help to improve the health and well-being of the nation. It is only by putting sustainability at the heart of these matters that the UK will be able to deliver on its environmental ambitions.

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3. Councillor David Rouane moved, and Councillor Sue Cooper seconded the motion as set out in the agenda at agenda item 12.

Councillor Snowdon had left the meeting prior to the recorded vote on this item.

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

<b>For</b>	<b>Against</b>	<b>Abstain</b>
<b>Councillors</b>	<b>Councillors</b>	<b>Councillors</b>
Ken Arlett	David Bartholomew	Lynn Lloyd
Pieter-Paul Barker	Jane Murphy	Caroline Newton
Tim Bearder		Alan Thompson
Robin Bennett		Andrea Warren
David Bretherton		Ian White
Sam Casey-Rerhaye		
Sue Cooper		
Peter Dragonetti		
Maggie Filipova-Rivers		
Stefan Gawrysiak		
Elizabeth Gillespie		
Kate Gregory		
Victoria Haval		
Kellie Hinton		
Alexandrine Kantor		
Mocky Khan		
George Levy		
Axel Macdonald		

Andrea Powell		
Leigh Rawlins		
Jo Robb		
Sue Roberts		
David Rouane		
Anne-Marie Simpson		
David Turner		
Celia Wilson		
<b>26</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5</b>

**RESOLVED:** That

In March 2020, as we were faced with the economic fallout from the pandemic, the Government did the right thing and increased Universal Credit and Working Tax Credit by £20 a week.

Council notes that this £20 a week is now to be cut, coming into effect for families on Universal Credit from 6 October. This cut will mean the biggest overnight cut to the basic rate of social security since the modern welfare state began, more than 70 years ago.

According to analysis by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 21% of all working-age families will experience a £1,040-a-year cut to their incomes from this week.

Many of the same families will be seeing an increase in National Insurance costs. Lower income households spend more of their income on basic essentials such as food and utilities, and the cost of these is currently rising fast.

The Government says it wants to support people back into work as we emerge from the crisis. But working families make up around 60% of families who will be affected.

Council reiterates our corporate plan commitment to support vulnerable members of our community through improved economic and community wellbeing.

Council acknowledges the concerns raised by local and national charities (including as Elmore, Citizens Advice Bureau and the Joseph Rowntree Foundation) about the significantly negative impact this cut will have on the financial security and well being of those effected in our district.

Council deplores the decision of the Government to remove the ‘temporary’ uplift in

Universal Credit which will directly impact at least 5,024\* families in the South Oxfordshire district.

Council therefore resolves to ask the Leader to write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (copied to our local MPs) expressing our grave concern about the impact on families within the district and to request that the decision to cut the Universal Credit uplift reversed, and that the uplift be incorporated permanently into Universal Credit.

\*The total number of households on Universal Credit as of May 2021 is 6,060; of which 5,024 are in payment. (Gov.uk)

4. Councillor Maggie Filipova-Rivers moved, and Councillor Sam Casey-Rerhaye seconded, the motion as set out in the agenda at agenda item 12.

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

**RESOLVED:** That

Council notes:

- The recent report by Swim England which warns that almost 2,000 pools could be lost in England by the end of the decade.
- The Council's annual greenhouse gas emission report (<https://www.southoxon.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2021/04/Greenhouse-gas-emissions-report-South-2019-20.docx>) in respect to our aging leisure centres, coupled with the need to decarbonise wet side facilities to achieve the council's carbon reduction targets, rightly requires a focus on heat decarbonisation and whole building approach.
- That phase one and two of the Public Sector Decarbonisation Fund were oversubscribed within weeks of opening, highlighting the need to move away from stop-start initiatives of ringfenced pots of money with competitive bidding processes – and, instead, resource local areas to deliver their own decarbonisation strategies.
- That competitive bidding for funds can put significant resource pressure on lean councils without guarantee of award.
- That the Public Sector Decarbonisation Fund's eligibility criteria make the fund particularly inaccessible to councils whose leisure centres are operated by third party providers.
- Long-term funding, delivered through local authorities would deliver positive outcomes in terms of enhancing the future of public swimming pools, potentially decrease the long-term cost of operating pools, and contribute to the reduction of carbon emissions.
- Long-term funding, invested through local authorities and other public sector organisations, will also provide local suppliers with the confidence to invest in staff, skills and the technology.

Council resolves to:

- Continue work on evaluation of the best ways to decarbonise our leisure centres at a pace, so that applications for phase 3 or any subsequent rounds of the Public Sector Decarbonisation Fund can be utilised, noting the constraints above and that the criteria for these funding routes are set

nationally.

- Agree that the leader writes to BEIS highlighting both the barriers in the existing schemes, as well as the urgent need for the Government to set out a long-term funding for safeguarding and decarbonising leisure centres and move away from competitive bidding in order to support local authorities to lead the way in the delivery of a net zero future for leisure.

5. Councillor Stefan Gawrysiak moved, and Councillor Kellie Hinton seconded, the motion as set out in the agenda at agenda item 12.

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

**RESOLVED:** That

Council notes that:

- Two years ago, Sue Ryder at Nettlebed closed. Therefore, in South Oxfordshire there is no End of Life palliative hospice care provision. South Oxfordshire has a population of 140,000 and from Thame to Didcot and Caversham, from Oxford to Henley on Thames there are no end of life residential care facilities.
- The Duchess of Kent (Tilehurst) and Sobell House (Oxford) are not admitting any new patients. Thames Hospice in Maidenhead has 26 Beds, and all are full.

Council questions why does Berkshire have great End of Life Palliative hospice care and yet the Clinical Commissioning Groups covering South Oxfordshire provide absolutely none within its boundaries?

Council resolves that South Oxfordshire residents deserve better and asks the Leader of the council to write to the Clinical Commissioning Groups covering South Oxfordshire calling on them to properly analyse the need and provide suitable residential hospice care with appropriate specialist care from nurses, doctors and consultants.

6. Councillor Sam Casey-Rerhaye moved, and Councillor George Levy seconded, the motion as set out in the agenda at agenda item 12.

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

**RESOLVED:** That

Council notes that:

Joint Scrutiny have approved their Task and Finish group's report on Retrofitting Homes in the Districts and this report will go for consideration to the Climate & Ecological Emergencies Advisory Committee and Cabinet.

Retrofitting homes for energy efficiency is essential to achieve our carbon emission reduction target.

Energy efficient measures in homes also addresses health inequalities and fuel poverty.

Local Authorities are well placed to be a leading partner in co-ordinating this complex but urgent issue, alongside LEPs.

The government's Green Homes Grant was a failure on its own terms and could have set back retrofitting in this country.

The National Construction Leadership Council (CLC) has already developed a national Retrofit Strategy and says a 'retrofit army' is needed.

The UK is hosting the UN COP26 conference in November and our government should have evidence-based concrete strategies in place to achieve massive carbon savings, essential if we are to work with the global community to limit catastrophic climate breakdown.

Council resolves to:

- Write to the Minister of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, Rt Hon Kwasi Kwarteng MP, the Minister of State for Levelling Up, Homes and Communities, Rt Hon Michael Gove MP and the president of COP26, Rt Hon Alok Sharma, enclosing the Joint Scrutiny Report, urging them to:
- address this issue as a priority, recognising its importance in achieving our national and international carbon emission targets;
- suggest that Ministers use the Construction Leadership Council's Retrofit Strategy as a basis for a government policy and plan;
- include adequate funding for all Local Authorities in any retrofit strategy as they are perfectly placed to lead local Retrofit partnerships and strategies alongside LEPs;
- develop long term support for householders including changes in relevant laws, guidance and tax regulations and to encourage businesses and skills development in this area;
- recognise the benefits to society in better health and wellbeing from energy efficient homes;
- recognise the industrial and employment opportunities that a countrywide retrofit plan could present to the British economy
- Work collaboratively with local and national government partners, the Oxfordshire LEP, the FOP Environment Advisory Board, businesses and NGOs to seek to develop the capacity for such a 'retrofit army', identify external funding sources and to offer advice and support to individuals, households and businesses wishing to retrofit their buildings where possible.

#### **44 Exclusion of the public**

**RESOLVED:** to exclude members of the press and public from the meeting for the following items of business under Part 1 of Schedule 12A Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 and as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006 on the grounds that:

- (i) they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act, and
- (ii) the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

Prior to the expiry of two and a half hours, Council agreed, in accordance with council procedure rule 12, to extend the meeting by half an hour to allow Council to complete the consideration of the agenda items.

#### **45 Application for Grant Funding - Henley and District Housing Trust**

Council considered Cabinet's recommendation, made at its meeting on 30 September 2021, on the provision of grant funding using commuted sums held by the council, of an affordable housing project being delivered by the Henley and District Housing Trust (HDHT), a Registered Provider of affordable housing.

Council agreed Cabinet's recommendation to fund the project.

#### **46 New office accommodation - RIBA stage 2 concept design and budget envelope**

Council considered Cabinet's recommendation, made at its meeting on 30 September 2021, on the RIBA stage 2 concept design and costings report for the new office accommodation at the council's Didcot Gateway site.

Council agreed Cabinet's recommendation to amend the budget provision.

#### **47 Revised capital programme 2021/22 to 2025/26**

Council considered Cabinet's recommendation, made at its meeting on 30 September 2021, on a revised capital programme for 2021/22 to 2025/26 as a result of changes that have occurred in the year to date, including those for the office accommodation project.

Council agreed Cabinet's recommendation to approve a revised capital programme.

#### **48 Development at 116-120 Broadway, Didcot - phase one budget setting**

Council considered Cabinet's recommendation, made at its meeting on 30 September 2021, on the development of affordable housing and associated community space on council owned property, 116, 118 and 120 Broadway, Didcot.



Council agreed Cabinet's recommendation to allocate section 106 funds toward the development of 116-120 Broadway, Didcot.

The meeting closed at 8.50pm

Chair

Date

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