

# Minutes

OF A MEETING OF THE

# Council



Listening Learning Leading

HELD AT 6.00 PM ON THURSDAY 19 FEBRUARY 2015

FOUNTAIN CONFERENCE CENTRE, HOWBERY PARK, CROWMARSH  
GIFFORD, WALLINGFORD, OX10 8BA

## Present:

Ann Midwinter (Chairman)

Margaret Turner, Roger Bell, Joan Bland, Felix Bloomfield, David Bretherton, Dorothy Brown, Janet Carr, Steve Connel, Bernard Cooper, John Cotton, Philip Cross, Margaret Davies, Pat Dawe, David Dodds, Elizabeth Gillespie, Mark Gray, Will Hall, Tony Harbour, Eleanor Hards, Neville F Harris, Paul Harrison, Elizabeth Hodgkin, Christopher Hood, Malcolm Leonard, Lynn Lloyd, Denise Macdonald, Judith Nimmo-Smith, Angie Paterson, Anne Purse, Bill Service, Robert Simister, Pearl Slatter, David Turner and Jennifer Wood

## Apologies:

Celia Collett, MBE, Kristina Crabbe, Stephen Harrod, Imran Lokhon and Christopher Quinton tendered apologies.

**Officers:** David Buckle, Steven Corrigan, William Jacobs, Margaret Reed, Anna Robinson and Bob Watson

Prior to the start of the meeting Council observed a minute's silence in memory of Mr Mike Welply who had died on 15 February 2015.

Mrs A Midwinter, Chairman of Council, Mr J Cotton, Leader of the council, Mr D Turner, Leader of the Liberal Democrat group and Mr N Harris, a Didcot Ladygrove ward councillor, made statements in memory of Mr Welply.

The chairman welcomed councillors to the new venue for Council meetings following the devastating fire at the council offices. She paid tribute to the staff who had ensured council services were maintained and despite difficult conditions showed great resilience and high levels of morale. Council supported her comments with a round of applause.

## 46 Declaration of disclosable pecuniary interest

None.

## **47 Minutes of the previous meeting**

**RESOLVED:** to approve the minutes of the meetings held on 11 December 2014 as correct records subject to the inclusion of Mr Steve Connel in the list of apologies and agree that the Chairman sign them as such.

## **48 Chairman's announcements**

The chairman thanked all councillors for their hard work over the council's four year term. She wished those standing for re-election good fortune and those standing down best wishes for life beyond the council.

She reported that Ms A Purse, Chairman of Oxfordshire County Council, had invited her to attend the Commonwealth flag raising ceremony on 9 March.

On behalf of Council she congratulated Mr Steve Bshop, Strategic Director, and his wife on their recent marriage held on 14 February.

## **49 Questions from the public and public participation**

Mr Matt Rodda addressed Council in support of a third Reading bridge. He stated that a third bridge would reduce the chronic delays caused by floods closing Sonning Bridge which had blighted Caversham, Emmer Green, Reading and the surrounding area including Woodley and Earley, South Oxfordshire and other parts of Berkshire. A flood proof bridge to the east of Reading would be mainly for local traffic and would not be part of a new motorway to the M40. On behalf of the campaign he called on Oxfordshire County Council, South Oxfordshire District Council and the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership to recognise the benefits to their communities of a third bridge and to work with Reading and Wokingham councils and Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership on drawing up agreed plans and a timetable which would then be the basis of bids for any available Government funds.

The chairman thanked Mr Rodda and indicated that the council would take his comments into account when it considers a third bridge proposal.

## **50 Questions under Council procedure rule 34**

Question from Mrs Hards to Rev'd Angie Question Paterson Cabinet member for planning

"At the end of last year the government revised to ten units the threshold below which local planning authorities would not be able to require a proportion of new housing to be affordable. However, for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty local planning authorities may reduce this threshold to five to recognise the fact that development sites here tend to be smaller.

Is the Council intending to adopt such a policy?"

### **Answer**

"Our approach is that in the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (we do not have designated rural areas) we will keep the existing threshold of three units that is set in

the Core Strategy, and seek commuted sums towards off-site affordable housing from this threshold up to ten units. This is in recognition of the fact that South Oxfordshire has a high level of affordable need as is evidenced in the Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment and we are therefore keen to ensure we obtain the maximum provision we can when new homes are built. Whilst this is not in accordance with the NPPG (which states that councils should not seek affordable housing contributions from sites of less than five), we have received legal advice on the status of the NPPG and believe we can maintain this approach on a case by case basis by providing up-to-date evidence on viability.

Our existing policy in the Core Strategy will be updated through the emerging Local Plan process to seek commuted sums rather than on site provision.

In summary, yes we will be applying the Government's approach. As it is already national planning guidance we do not need to adopt it".

### **Supplementary question**

As her supplementary question Mrs Hards asked if the commuted sums would be used to support affordable housing in rural areas.

Rev'd A Paterson undertook to provide a written response.

## **51 Community infrastructure levy - draft charging schedule**

Council considered Cabinet's recommendations, made at its meeting on 12 February 2015, on the consultation comments received on the Community Infrastructure Levy Preliminary Draft Charging Schedule and changes to the Draft Charging Schedule for public consultation and submission to the Secretary of State for formal examination.

### **RESOLVED: to**

1. publish for public consultation the Community Infrastructure Levy Draft Charging Schedule and supporting documents (Viability Study, Draft Regulation 123 list, Infrastructure Planning and Funding Gap Report, Infrastructure Delivery Plan, responses on the CIL Preliminary Draft Charging Schedule, Statement of the Representations Procedure) for a period of four weeks, and thereafter
2. authorise the head of planning in consultation with the Cabinet member for planning policy to submit the Community Infrastructure Levy Draft Charging Schedule and supporting documents and evidence, together with the Consultation Statement and summary of consultation responses received, to the Secretary of State for independent examination in accordance with the CIL Regulations 2010 (as amended).
3. authorise the head of planning in consultation with the Cabinet member for planning policy, to make minor changes and corrections to the Draft Charging Schedule and associated documents.

## **52 Treasury management mid-year report 2014/15**

Council considered Cabinet's recommendations, made at its meeting on 12 February 2015, on the treasury management activities for the first six months of 2014/15.

**RESOLVED:** to

1. approve the treasury management mid-year monitoring report 2014/15; and
2. note that Cabinet is content with the mid-year treasury management performance for 2014/15.

### **53 Treasury management strategy 2015/16 to 2017/18**

Council considered Cabinet's recommendations, made at its meeting on 12 February 2015, on the approval of the council's treasury management strategy (TMS) for 2015/16 to 2017/18.

**RESOLVED:** to approve

1. the treasury management strategy 2015/16 set out in appendix A to the head of finance's report to Cabinet on 12 February 2015;
2. the prudential indicators and limits for 2015/16 to 2017/18 as set out in table 2, appendix A to the head of finance's report; and
3. the annual investment strategy 2015/16 set out in appendix A (paragraphs 23 to 58) and the lending criteria detailed in table 5 to the head of finance's report.

### **54 Medium term financial strategy 2015/16 - 2019/20**

Council considered Cabinet's recommendation, made at its meeting on 12 February 2015, on the medium term financial strategy for 2015/16 to 2019/20.

**RESOLVED:** to approve the Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2015/16 to 2019/20 as attached to the head of finance's report to the Cabinet meeting of 12 February 2015.

### **55 Budget 2015/16**

The chairman referred to regulations which came into force on 25 February 2014 that required councils to record the names of those councillors voting in favour, against or abstaining from any vote on the budget, including amendments, and the council tax. In accordance with the regulations she would call for a named vote on each of these matters at this meeting.

The chairman reminded councillors that they were not entitled to vote on any issue affecting the level or administration of the council tax or other decisions which might affect the making of any such calculation such as the budget, if they were over two months in arrears with their council tax payments. Where such circumstances applied, councillors were under a statutory obligation to disclose the restriction placed on them and refrain from voting at the relevant meeting. No councillor made any such declaration.

Council noted the report of the chief finance officer on the robustness of the budget estimates and the adequacy of the reserves.

Mr W Hall, Cabinet member for finance, presented the Cabinet's proposals for the revenue budget 2015/16 and capital programme to 2019/20.

Mr W Hall moved and Mr J Cotton seconded a motion to approve Cabinet's recommendations as follows:

That Council:

- (a) sets the revenue budget for 2015/16 as set out in appendix A.1 to the head of finance's report to Cabinet on 12 February 2015;
- (b) approves the capital programme for 2015/16 to 2019/20 as set out in appendix D.1 to the head of finance's report, together with the capital growth bids set out in appendix D.2 of this report;
- (c) sets the council's prudential limits as listed in appendix E to the head of finance's report;
- (d) approves the medium term financial plan to 2019/20 as set out in appendix F to the head of finance's report; and
- (e) allocates £1,000,000 to fund the Communities Capital Grant Scheme.

Mr D Turner moved and Mrs E Hards seconded an amendment to the above budget in the following terms:

That Council sets the revenue budget and capital programme taking account of the proposed changes as set out in the schedule - "opposition forum budget proposal"(attached to the minute book copy of these minutes). to:

- create a budget to support the introduction of civil parking enforcement
- provide additional funding for the deep street cleansing programme
- freeze council tax.

A number of councillors spoke in support of the amendment. The freeze in council tax would allow the council to build up reserves in anticipation of further cuts to central government funding and the uncertainty surrounding New Homes Bonus funding. The additional funding to the deep cleanse street clean growth bid would increase the coverage of the programme to the benefit of residents across the district. Funding to support the set up costs of civil parking enforcement (CPE) and the ongoing running costs would address the current lack of on street parking enforcement, address congestion caused by illegal parking and improve the quality of life for those residents living in the areas affected mainly near train stations and bus stops.

A number of councillors spoke against the amendment. Freezing the council tax was unnecessary despite the uncertainty in government and New Homes Bonus funding as the council had sufficient reserves and should only charge residents for the cost of the services it provided. The proposed introduction of CPE was not supported by three of the five district councils in Oxfordshire and therefore the cost to the council would increase. It was possible to enforce on street car parking without CPE as successfully evidenced in other areas of the district working in partnership with the police and police community support officers. CPE would make the towns less attractive for visitors and shoppers. Additional funding, above that provided for in the

Cabinet's budget, was not required for the deep cleanse street clean programme because of negotiations with the council's contractor, Biffa, to provide additional coverage.

The chairman called for a recorded vote on the amendment which was lost with the votes recorded as follows:

| <b>FOR</b>      | <b>AGAINST</b>    | <b>ABSTAIN</b>  |
|-----------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| Mr R Bell       | Ms J Bland        | Mrs A Midwinter |
| Mr D Bretherton | Mr F Bloomfield   |                 |
| Mr B Cooper     | Mrs D Brown       |                 |
| Mrs M Davies    | Mrs J Carr        |                 |
| Mr M Gray       | Mr S Connel       |                 |
| Mrs E Hards     | Mr J Cotton       |                 |
| Mrs E Hodgkin   | Mr P Cross        |                 |
| Mrs D Macdonald | Mrs P Dawe        |                 |
| Mrs A Purse     | Mr D Dodds        |                 |
| Mr D Turner     | Mrs E Gillespie   |                 |
| Mrs J Wood      | Mr W Hall         |                 |
|                 | Mr T Harbour      |                 |
|                 | Mr N Harris       |                 |
|                 | Mr P Harrison     |                 |
|                 | Dr C Hood         |                 |
|                 | Mr M Leonard      |                 |
|                 | Ms L Lloyd        |                 |
|                 | Mrs J Nimmo-Smith |                 |
|                 | Rev'd A Paterson  |                 |
|                 | Mr B Service      |                 |
|                 | Mr R Simister     |                 |
|                 | Mrs P Slatter     |                 |
|                 | Mrs M Turner      |                 |
| 11              | 23                | 1               |

Councillors supporting the Cabinet's budget revenue and capital budget proposals expressed the view that it included increased investment in services yet proposed a three per cent council tax reduction.

The chairman called for a recorded vote on the motion which was carried with the votes recorded as follows:

| <b>FOR</b>        | <b>AGAINST</b>  | <b>ABSTAIN</b>  |
|-------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Ms J Bland        | Mr R Bell       | Mrs A Midwinter |
| Mr F Bloomfield   | Mr D Bretherton |                 |
| Mrs D Brown       | Mr B Cooper     |                 |
| Mrs J Carr        | Mrs M Davies    |                 |
| Mr S Connel       | Mr M Gray       |                 |
| Mr J Cotton       | Mrs E Hards     |                 |
| Mr P Cross        | Mr N F Harris   |                 |
| Mrs P Dawe        | Mrs E Hodgkin   |                 |
| Mr D Dodds        | Mrs D Macdonald |                 |
| Mrs E Gillespie   | Mrs A Purse     |                 |
| Mr W Hall         | Mr D Turner     |                 |
| Mr T Harbour      | Mrs J Wood      |                 |
| Mr P Harrison     |                 |                 |
| Dr C Hood         |                 |                 |
| Mr M Leonard      |                 |                 |
| Ms L Lloyd        |                 |                 |
| Mrs J Nimmo-Smith |                 |                 |
| Rev'd A Paterson  |                 |                 |
| Mr B Service      |                 |                 |
| Mr R Simister     |                 |                 |
| Mrs P Slatter     |                 |                 |
| Mrs M Turner      |                 |                 |
| 22                | 12              | 1               |

**RESOLVED:** to

1. set the revenue budget for 2015/16 as set out in appendix A.1 to the head of finance's report to Cabinet on 12 February 2015;
2. approve the capital programme for 2015/16 to 2019/20 as set out in appendix D.1 to the head of finance's report, together with the capital growth bids set out in appendix D.2 of this report;

3. set the council's prudential limits as listed in appendix E to the head of finance's report;
4. approve the medium term financial plan to 2019/20 as set out in appendix F to the head of finance's report; and
5. allocate £1,000,000 to fund the Communities Capital Grant Scheme.

**56 Council tax 2015/16**

Council considered the report of the head of finance on the setting of the Council Tax for the 2015/16 financial year.

Mr Hall moved and Mr Cotton seconded the recommendations as set out in the report.

In accordance with new regulations requiring councils to record the names of those councillors voting in favour, against or abstaining from any vote on the council tax the Chairman called for a recorded vote with the voting being as follows:

| <b>FOR</b>      | <b>AGAINST</b> | <b>ABSTAIN</b>  |
|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Ms J Bland      |                | Mr R Bell       |
| Mr F Bloomfield |                | Mr B Cooper     |
| Mr D Bretherton |                | Mrs M Davies    |
| Mrs D Brown     |                | Mrs E Hards     |
| Mrs J Carr      |                | Mr N F Harris   |
| Mr S Connel     |                | Mrs D Macdonald |
| Mr J Cotton     |                | Mrs A Midwinter |
| Mr P Cross      |                | Ms A Purse      |
| Mrs P Dawe      |                | Mr D Turner     |
| Mr D Dodds      |                | Mrs J Wood      |
| Mrs E Gillespie |                |                 |
| Mr M Gray       |                |                 |
| Mr W Hall       |                |                 |
| Mr T Harbour    |                |                 |
| Mr P Harrison   |                |                 |
| Mrs E Hodgkin   |                |                 |
| Dr C Hood       |                |                 |
| Mr M Leonard    |                |                 |
| Ms L Lloyd      |                |                 |

| FOR               | AGAINST | ABSTAIN |
|-------------------|---------|---------|
| Mrs J Nimmo-Smith |         |         |
| Rev'd A Paterson  |         |         |
| Mr R Simister     |         |         |
| Mrs P Slatter     |         |         |
| Mrs M Turner      |         |         |
| 24                | 0       | 10      |

**RESOLVED:**

1. to note that at its meeting on 11 December 2014 the council calculated the council tax base 2015/16:
  - (a) for the whole council area as **54,233.6** [Item T in the formula in Section 31B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended (the "Act")]; and
  - (b) for dwellings in those parts of its area to which a parish precept relates as in column 1 of appendix 1 of the report of the head of finance to Council on 19 February 2015.
2. that the council tax requirement for the council's own purposes for 2015/16 (excluding parish precepts) is £6,032,946
3. that the following amounts be calculated for the year 2015/16 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Act:
  - (a) £78,274,901 being the aggregate of the amounts which the council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2) of the Act taking into account all precepts issued to it by parish councils.
  - (b) £68,053,366 being the aggregate of the amounts which the council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3) of the Act.
  - (c) £10,221,535 being the amount by which the aggregate at (3)(a) above exceeds the aggregate at (3)(b) above, calculated by the council, in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act as its council tax requirement for the year. (Item R in the formula in Section 31B of the Act).
  - (d) £188.47 being the amount at (3)(c) above (Item R), all divided by Item T (1(a) above), calculated by the council, in accordance with Section 31B of the Act, as the basic amount of its council tax for the year (including parish precepts).
  - (e) £4,188,589 being the aggregate amount of all special items referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act, as set out in column 2 of appendix 1 of the report of the head of finance to Council on 19 February 2015.
  - (f) £111.24 being the amount at (3)(d) above less the result given by dividing the amount at (3)(e) above by Item T (1(a) above), calculated by the council, in accordance with Section 34(2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its council tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no parish precept relates.

4. to note that for the year 2015/16 Oxfordshire County Council has stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:

|        |           |
|--------|-----------|
| Band A | £821.64   |
| Band B | £958.58   |
| Band C | £1,095.52 |
| Band D | £1,232.46 |
| Band E | £1,506.34 |
| Band F | £1,780.22 |
| Band G | £2,054.10 |
| Band H | £2,464.92 |

5. to note that for the year 2015/16 the Police and Crime Commissioner for Thames Valley has stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:

|        |         |
|--------|---------|
| Band A | £109.13 |
| Band B | £127.32 |
| Band C | £145.51 |
| Band D | £163.70 |
| Band E | £200.08 |
| Band F | £236.46 |
| Band G | £272.83 |
| Band H | £327.40 |

6. in accordance with Sections 30 and 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, to set the aggregate amounts shown in appendix 3 of the report of the head of finance to Council on 19 February 2015 as the amounts of council tax for 2015/16 for each part of its area and for each of the categories of dwellings shown in appendix 3 of the report of the head of finance to Council on 19 February 2015.
7. to note the allocation of the town and parish element of the council tax reduction scheme grant payable to each parish shown in appendix 4 of the report of the head of finance to Council on 19 February 2015.
8. to determine that the council's basic amount of council tax for 2015/16 is not excessive in accordance with principles approved under Section 52ZB Local Government Finance Act 1992.

## **57 Pay policy statement 2015-16**

Council considered the report of the head of HR, IT and technical services on the adoption of a pay policy statement to meet the requirements of the Localism Act.

**RESOLVED:** to approve the pay policy statement for 2015-16 attached to the report of the head of HR, IT and technical services to Council on 19 February 2015.

## **58 Urgent Cabinet decision**

In accordance with the overview and scrutiny procedure rules, Mr J Cotton, Leader of the council reported that on 20 December 2014 he took a decision to transfer £1,000,000 from the provisional capital programme to the approved capital programme to deliver the extension of the Better Broadband for Oxfordshire programme for South Oxfordshire and approve a virement of £90,000 from contingency in 2014/15 to provide additional funding for the delivery of the broadband project. The chairman of the scrutiny committee agreed to waive call-in because any delay could impact on the timetable for the delivery of the project and prejudice both the council's and the public's interests.

## **59 Motions under Council procedure rule 41**

Rev'd A Paterson moved and Mr R Simister seconded the following motion:

'Council places on record its sincere thanks and appreciation to its emergency team in particular, and all officers, for their efforts and resilience in ensuring the restoration of services following the devastating fire at the Crowmarsh offices. Council also thanks John Cotton, Leader of the council, for his additional commitment and support during this time. Council would also like pay tribute to the fire service and police for their tremendous work and support.'

In moving the motion Rev'd A Paterson made special reference to the following officers: Adrianna Partridge; Sandra Wildern; Simon Turner and the IT team generally; Shona Ware and the communications team generally; John Backley and the facilities team generally; Bob Watson; Andrew Down; Steve Bishop; Mel Cripps; Daniel Tooke; and Ben Watson.

An amendment moved by Mr D Turner and seconded by Mr N Harris to add the words "and also thank the residents of South Oxfordshire for their understanding and support" was accepted by the mover and seconder of the original motion with the consent of Council.

### **RESOLVED (unanimously):**

That Council places on record its sincere thanks and appreciation to its emergency team in particular, and all officers, for their efforts and resilience in ensuring the restoration of services following the devastating fire at the Crowmarsh offices. Council also thanks John Cotton, Leader of the council, for his additional commitment and support during this time. Council would also like pay tribute to the fire service and police for their tremendous work and support and also thank the residents of South Oxfordshire for their understanding and support.

The meeting closed at 7.55pm

Chairman

Date