

WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the  
**West Oxfordshire District Council**  
held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Woodgreen,  
Witney, on **Wednesday 24 October 2018** at 2:00pm.

PRESENT

Councillors: Maxine Crossland (Chairman); Alex Postan (Vice-Chairman); Jake Acock, Alvin Adams, Alaa Al-Yousuf, Jeanette Baker, Andrew Beaney, Richard Bishop, Rosa Bolger, Andrew Coles, Louise Chapman, Julian Cooper, Derek Cotterill, Charles Cottrell-Dormer, Merylyn Davies, Pete Dorward, Jane Doughty, Harry Eaglestone, Duncan Enright, Hilary Fenton, Steve Good, Andy Graham, Jeff Haine, David Harvey, Gill Hill, Liz Leffman, Nick Leverton, Norman MacRae MBE, Martin McBride, David McFarlane MBE, Michele Mead, James Mills, Toby Morris, Kieran Mullins, Neil Owen, Elizabeth Poskitt, Geoff Saul and Harry St John.

40. MINUTES

**RESOLVED:** That, subject to amendments to reflect the fact that the resolutions relating to the Local Plan were proposed by Councillor Haine and seconded by Councillor Mills, the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 27 September 2018, copies of which had been circulated, be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

41. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Laetisia Carter, Ted Fenton, Peter Handley, David Jackson, Ed James, Peter Kelland, Carl Rylett and Ben Woodruff.

42. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Good advised of a conflict of interest in relation to the recommendation at agenda item no. 6 relating to Cottsway Housing (minute no. 47(g) below) arising from his position as a member of the Board of Cottsway Housing.

Councillor Harvey reported a conflict of interest in relation to the minute of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held 11 October relating to on-street car parking in Corn Street and Church Green, Witney, by virtue of residing and working in Corn Street.

There were no other declarations of interest from Members or Officers in items to be considered at the meeting.

43. RECEIPT OF ANNOUNCEMENTS

43.1 A40 Briefing

Councillor Crossland reminded Councillors of the County Council presentation relating to future options for the A40, which was taking place immediately following this meeting.

43.2 LGA Peer Challenge

Councillor Mills thanked Councillors and staff who had participated in and contributed to the recent Local Government Association Peer Challenge of the Council. He emphasised the objective to learn from the exercise and improve as a consequence, and advised that the initial feedback had been very positive. A full report would be presented by the Peer Challenge Team in due course, and Councillors would be invited to a feedback session, the date of which would be circulated when known.

### 43.3 Carterton Leisure Centre

Councillor Baker reported that the contractors would be “breaking ground” for Phase 2 of the Carterton Leisure Centre project on Tuesday 6 November.

### 43.4 Cogges Surgery

Councillor Baker reported that Julie Dandridge of the Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group had advised that the Cogges GP Surgery was likely to remain open after 1 February 2019. There had been a number of expressions of interest, and it was also understood that the existing practice had succeeded in recruiting a partner and had asked to cancel its notice of termination. A decision, following the required processes, should be made by no later than mid-December.

Councillor Bolger thanked Councillor Baker for the announcement and asked her to join in thanking the community for its efforts in this matter, which Councillor Baker was happy to do, emphasising the cross-party nature of the issue.

### 43.4 Pumpkins

With Halloween being imminent, Councillor Good drew attention to the fact that pumpkins could be recycled as food waste, and could be left alongside food recycling bins for collection if necessary.

## 44. PARTICIPATION OF THE PUBLIC

The following members of the public addressed the Council on the specified matters.

### 44.1 Aaron Miles (Motion on Council Tax for Care Leavers, Agenda Item No. 9)

Mr Miles introduced himself as being the Chair of the Oxfordshire Children in Care Council, 21 years old, and a care leaver. Mr Miles was supportive of the motion to be considered later in the meeting, and highlighted the anxieties faced by the people he was seeking to represent, of which the requirement to pay Council Tax was just one, and advised that for most care leavers there was no direct support once they reached 18 years of age. He referred to the fact that 25 local authorities had introduced a Council Tax exemption for Care Leavers, and stated that he was not a good example of someone who had been in care, in the sense that he had attended University, but only 5% of care leavers had attended Higher Education in the previous two years. He did not believe that Universal Credit was helpful in this, and stressed the view that this was not an example of people feeling entitled or being greedy, rather it was a step which could be taken which would help care leavers have more time to achieve a degree of security and reduce the anxieties they had to face.

There were no questions from Councillors, and Mr Miles was thanked for his input.

### 44.2 Jon Berry (Seven Seas Foundation and the Rock Barn)

Mr Berry introduced himself as Chair of the Trustees of the Seven Seas Foundation, the former occupiers of the “Rock Barn” in Witney.

Mr Berry referenced the petition in support of the retention of the Rock Barn, and was of the view that the grant of planning permission had been inevitable, with no concern for the charity; and that the Council had not provided sufficient aid. He reported that the Foundation had actively explored the possible use of seven different properties over a period of three and a half years and emphasised the contribution made to the community by the Foundation. Mr Berry called on the Council to put forward a workable proposal to support the charity moving forward.

Councillor Baker asked Mr Berry whether he/the Foundation had contacted the Council's Business Development Officer, as suggested and agreed a long time previously, and he confirmed that he had not but would now pursue that.

Councillor Mills enquired whether Mr Berry was aware of other potential sources for help, and he stated that he was aware of Rotary Club and the Carnival Club but not of others. Councillor Mills proposed that the submission made by Mr Berry be noted, with the comment that the Foundation followed up the suggestion to contact the Business Development Officer and stated that, notwithstanding incorrect statements made by Mr Berry, he was more than happy to confirm that the Council would offer advice and support in the matter.

Councillor Enright recognised this, and said that all councillors wished the Foundation well, and that he was confident that other ways to support it could be identified. Councillor Chapman agreed, and emphasised that the Council would continue to seek to be supportive.

**RESOLVED:** That the submission made by Mr Berry be noted, with the suggestion being made that the Foundation should contact the Business Development Officer.

#### 45. VARIATION OF ORDER OF BUSINESS

In accordance with the Council's rules of procedure, it was proposed and seconded that the motion referred to at agenda item no. 10 and relating to the People's Vote Campaign be considered as the next item of business, in view of the large number of members of the public present to hear the discussion.

On being put to the vote the proposal was carried, and accordingly Council -

**RESOLVED:** That the order of business for the meeting be varied and the motion relating to the People's Vote Campaign be considered as the next item.

#### 46. NOTICE OF MOTION – PEOPLE'S VOTES CAMPAIGN

The following motion had been received in the names of Councillors Jake Acock and Andy Graham, namely:-

“The People's Vote campaign seeks to ensure that the government's Brexit deal is put before the country in a public vote so that we can decide if a decision that will affect our lives for generations to come makes the country better or worse off. Bearing in mind that West Oxfordshire voted to remain a member of the European Union.

Council therefore RESOLVES to:

- 1) Endorse the cross-party People's Vote campaign and ask for a people's vote;
- 2) Ask Cabinet to provide practical support to the local cross-party People's Vote campaign, such as use of council facilities for public meetings; and
- 3) Ask the Leader of this council to write to our MP, expressing this council's strong desire for a vote on the final deal, including the option to maintain full EU membership”

In proposing the motion, Councillor Acock stated his view of “broken Britain” as a country “on the wrong path” and asserted that it was not too late to stop the UK from leaving the European Union. He referred to the 700,000 people who had demanded a final say in the matter and to the fact that the people of West Oxfordshire had voted to remain in the EU.

Councillor Acock went on to say that the decision to leave was not irrevocable, and asserted his perception of the impact leaving the EU would have on the economy and that

the currently proposed deal was not something for which anyone had voted in the 2016 referendum. He considered that the final decision should not be made by politicians but by the people and stated that the campaign for a vote would continue.

Councillor Graham seconded the motion and advised Council that he was speaking as a Councillor as well as a Liberal Democrat. The ward he represented had voted overwhelmingly to remain, and residents felt disenfranchised. The question posed at the referendum had been simplistic, and he felt that democracy should be underpinned by tolerance, respect and truth, all of which had been undermined as a consequence of the referendum and the negotiations in relation to the Brexit deal. Councillor Graham referred to the uncertainties faced by businesses, and concluded by asserting the need for more engagement and to lobby the Member of Parliament.

Councillor Mills spoke against the motion. In doing so, he opined that a representative democracy involved balancing competing interests and views, and that a referendum was not the best way to seek to achieve that. He noted that the MP for the constituency had been returned at two elections since the EU referendum and that he was entitled to go to parliament and give a view in his capacity as the MP. It was important to recognise that the majority for remain in the area had not been large, and that the Council's influence in the matter was very limited, not least in the context that 95% of the Brexit deal was already agreed. Councillor Mills also asserted the strong position of Oxfordshire and West Oxfordshire to withstand whatever impact arose out of leaving the EU and felt that this Council could play its part in helping to grasp the opportunities which would exist.

Councillor Chapman could not agree with the proposer's depiction of broken Britain. She considered that the people had spoken via the 2016 referendum, and that it was not the role of the District Council to become involved in seeking a further referendum. That was, properly, a role for government.

Councillor Leffman spoke in favour of the motion. She recognised some important points made by Councillor Mills, but considered that the impact leaving the EU would have on business and the economy was paramount and cited the uncertainty faced by businesses which did not know what would happen in April 2019. Answers were needed from government, and the last 5% of the deal was of critical importance, including the major issue of the Irish border. A people's vote was needed because of the divisions in parliament, and that vote should be on the final exit deal, not a second in/out referendum.

Councillor Morris considered that the matter was not party political, and that a second referendum would not be any less divisive and would not create greater certainty.

It was then proposed and seconded that the question be put to the vote. The Chairman being of the opinion that the matter had been sufficiently discussed, that proposition was put to the vote and was carried.

The motion was then put to the vote and was **LOST**.

#### 47. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE EXECUTIVE AND COUNCIL COMMITTEES

In accordance with his earlier disclosure of a conflict of interest, Councillor Good left the room during the consideration of this item.

The Council considered the report of the Head of Democratic Services setting out recommendations made by the Cabinet and the Council's Committees in the period from 26 July to 17 October 2018. The recommendations at (a) to (g) in the appendix to the report were proposed by Councillor Mills and seconded by Councillor Morris.

In relation to the budget parameters for 2019/20, Councillor Enright considered that the assumed 2% pay increase might prove to be too low; and Councillor Poskitt commented on the generality of the possibility that using percentages was not always appropriate.

In relation to the action plan for the delivery of affordable housing associated with the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal (resolution (g) below), Councillor Cooper proposed the amendment set out in the resolution, and the proposer and seconder confirmed that they were content to include it in their proposition. In speaking to the matter, Councillor Cooper stated that he was reiterating comments made at the meetings of both the Finance and Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Cabinet, to the effect that this was a significant proposal in which Housing Associations additional to Cottsway should have had an opportunity to participate. Councillor Mills commented that it was being viewed as a pilot scheme, and that the Council would be open to conversations with other partners with any future schemes.

**RESOLVED:** That the recommendations made by the Cabinet and the Council's Committees in the period from 26 July to 17 October 2018 be approved in relation to:-

- (a) The revised delegations relating to commercial property rent reviews and the agreement of new leases and licences (Minute no. CT/42(c)/2018/19);
- (b) The budget parameters for 2019/20 (Minute no. CT/52(a)/2018/19);
- (c) The budgetary changes arising from Quarter One Budget and Performance Monitoring (Minute no. CT/53/2018/19);
- (d) The approval of a revised Statement of Licensing Policy (Minute no. LIC/9/2018/19);
- (e) The approval of a revised Gambling Licensing Policy Statement of Principles (Minute no. LIC/10/2018/19, and subject to the amendment included in the report);
- (f) The Acquisition of Emergency Homeless Accommodation (Minute no. CT/59/2018/19); and
- (g) The Action Plan for the delivery of affordable housing associated with the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal (Minute no. CT/61/2018/19), subject to an additional decision "That the other registered Social Landlords operating within the District be approached to establish the level of provision they could provide in the next tranche of funding".

#### 48. REPORTS OF THE CABINET AND THE COUNCIL'S COMMITTEES

The reports of the meetings of the Cabinet and the Council's Committees held between 26 July and 17 October 2018 were received.

##### 48.1 Oxfordshire Joint Statutory Spatial Plan: Local Development Scheme; Draft Statement of Community Involvement 2018; and Scoping Document (Minute No. C/50/2018/2019)

In response to a question from Councillor Poskitt querying the range and extent of consultation, Councillor Mills confirmed that a recent meeting of the JSSP Sub-Group had addressed the question of consultation and engagement, but also acknowledged the tight timescales.

##### 48.2 Superintendent Mark Johns, Local Police Area Commander (Minute No. E&S/30/2018/2019)

Councillor Beaney undertook to respond to a query from Councillor Poskitt relating to arrests for drugs offences, the meaning of the minute not being clear.

48.3 Rural Broadband Project Update (Minute No. F&M/36/2018/2019)

Councillor McFarlane queried the level of take up, in the context of having been quoted a high connection charge. Councillor Good undertook to circulate the information.

48.4 Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme (Minute No. E/30/2018/2019)

Councillor Coles expressed his gratitude for the recent “Water Day” and enquired as to the availability of action notes from it. He was advised that these would be circulated on completion.

49. NOTICE OF MOTION – 4G COVERAGE

The following motion had been received in the names of Councillors Ted Fenton and Andrew Beaney, namely:-

“A recent Oxford Times article stated that more than half of homes and businesses in South and West Oxfordshire do not have full 4G coverage, according to Ofcom. Figures from the communications regulator’s Connected Nations report show that in January 2018, 55 per cent of premises in the south of the county, and 59 per cent in the west, did not have reliable 4G coverage from all four mobile phone networks.

We believe that today’s economy and way of life relies on access to effective mobile coverage.

Therefore, we call upon the Government to introduce legally-binding targets to force the mobile phone networks to extend 4G coverage.”

Councillor Ted Fenton was unwell and unable to be at the meeting, and the motion was proposed by Councillor Beaney and seconded by Councillor Cotterill.

In making the proposal, Councillor Beaney considered it to be self-explanatory, stating that he had nothing to add and hoped that Council would be supportive. On seconding the motion, Councillor Cotterill reserved the right to speak later.

Councillor Leffman spoke in support of the motion, and emphasised that better coverage was needed across the board, not just in relation to 4G, a view which was also taken by Councillor Enright, who observed that even in some more urban areas the coverage was inadequate. Councillors Mills, Morris and Cottrell-Dormer all spoke in support, with Councillor Mills stressing that provision was essential rather than desirable.

Councillor Cotterill exercised his right to speak, and drew attention to the desirability of handsets being able to roam between networks, as was the case in Europe.

On being put to the vote, the motion was **CARRIED** unanimously.

50. NOTICE OF MOTION – COUNCIL TAX EXEMPTION FOR CARE LEAVERS

The following motion had been received in the names of Councillors Rosa Bolger and Duncan Enright, namely:-

“A 2016 report by The Children’s Society found that when care leavers move into independent accommodation they begin to manage their own budget fully for the first time. The report showed that care leavers can find this extremely challenging and with no family to support them and insufficient financial education, are falling into debt and financial difficulty.

This council believes that to ensure that the transition from care to adult life is as smooth as possible, and to mitigate the chances of care leavers falling into debt as they begin to manage their own finances, they should be exempt from paying council tax until they are aged 25.

This council therefore resolves to exempt care leavers in the West Oxfordshire District from council tax until they reach the age of 25.”

In proposing the motion, Councillor Bolger considered the proposal to be a small but significant step, and referred to persons in care as being amongst the most vulnerable people in society, and to leaving care being a key moment in their lives. They faced many challenges and were forced to adjust to many aspects earlier in life than most, often with no family support and little financial education, and many could not adequately afford accommodation. The approval of the proposal would give care leavers one less thing to have to worry about and would be a significant step forward, as well as being supportive of a national campaign by the Children’s Society.

Councillor Enright seconded the proposal, following which Councillor Mills proposed its referral to be considered through the scrutiny and Cabinet processes, and it was –

**RESOLVED:** That, in accordance with the Council’s Rules of Procedure, the motion be referred for consideration by the Economic and Social and Finance and Management Overview and Scrutiny Committees and the Cabinet, prior to subsequent consideration by Council.

#### 51. NOTICE OF MOTION – WATER DISCHARGE

The following motion had been received in the names of Councillors Alex Postan and Michele Mead, namely:-

“In the interests of all residents, property owners, businesses and the entire community of West Oxfordshire together with all parties, riverains, banksmen and riparian entities associated with watercourses, sewers and drains passing through and downstream of the District, the expectation of this Council be noted that all new property development, enlargement or extension be asked to restrict and prevent discharge of insoluble solids, fats and manufactured items beyond the curtilage of the property. Such notice be recorded and published to encourage permissive conditions that achieve relief from pollution and to achieve pure uncontaminated watercourses. The expectation is that fat traps and solids screens with settlement sump facility be specified and installed now and in future. A principle of developer borne cost with resident continuing administration be seen as sound responsible stewardship of this nation’s clear and pure water.”

In proposing the motion, Councillor Postan referred to the recent “Water Day”, feeling that this aspect related to a positive action which could be taken. He had spoken to planning officers, and was aware that encouragement in this matter was probably as much as could be achieved. Councillor Mead seconded the proposal but did not wish to speak.

Councillor Haine referred to the implications and details which needed to be considered before a conclusion was reached, and proposed its referral to the Development Control Committee, and it was –

**RESOLVED:** That, in accordance with the Council’s Rules of Procedure, the motion be referred for consideration by the Development Control Committee, prior to subsequent consideration by Council.

#### 52. NOTICE OF MOTION – MODERN SLAVERY

The following motion had been received in the names of Councillors Merilyn Davies and Michele Mead, namely:-

“West Oxfordshire District Council resolves to adopt the Modern Slavery Charter and will:

- Require Publica, Ubico and GLL (its principal partners that deliver services on its behalf) to ensure that their employees are trained to recognise the signs of modern slavery;
- Ensure that appropriate channels are available for partners or contractors staff to report any potential cases of modern slavery such as through the Whistleblowing policy or the Counter Fraud Unit;
- Ensure that the Publica procurement team are appropriately trained to understand modern slavery through the Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply on-line course on Ethical Procurement and Supply;
- Require all contractors to comply fully with the Modern Slavery Act 2015;
- Require any abnormally low-cost tenders to provide evidence to ensure they do not rely upon contractors practising modern slavery;
- Encourage suppliers to remind contract workers that they are free to join a Trade Union or representative organisation as we recognise this provides added protection against modern slavery.
- Refer cases of suspected modern slavery to the National Crime Agency for investigation;
- Provide an annual summary of any actions taken in its annual performance report”

In proposing the motion, Councillor Davies adjusted the wording of the first bullet point to read “Request and urge ....”; and the wording of the third bullet point to read “Request and urge that the Publica, Ubico and GLL procurement teams ....”.

Councillor Davies emphasised that this was not a party political matter, and referenced the degree of modern slavery, including the fact that the largest national group affected was British and that the majority were men. In her view, it was imperative that the Council took what steps it could to eradicate the problem from its supply chain. Councillor Mead seconded the proposal as put forward at the meeting and expressed her wholehearted support for it and for the comments made by the proposer.

The Chairman confirmed that, in accordance with the Council’s Rules of Procedure, she considered it appropriate for the motion to be debated and determined at this meeting, and invited contributions.

Councillor MacRae expressed his support, and considered there was no doubt that modern slavery was abhorrent and that there was no place for it in society. It was important that the Council and others highlighted and were aware of the issue. In terms of Councillor and staff awareness, training would be available via the county-wide partnership and information would be forwarded.

Councillor Enright was pleased to support the motion, and pointed out its relevance to the ability of councillors and staff to contribute to the well-being of the District.

Councillor Leffman suggested that it was appropriate to seek the support of Trading Standards, and Councillor Mills commented that the Leader of the County Council was present at the meeting and would take this back, and the County Council Leader confirmed that he would do so, and that Trading Standards were aware of the matter.

On being put to the vote, the adjusted motion was **UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED.**

### 53. NOTICE OF MOTION – SINGLE USE PLASTICS

The following motion had been received in the names of Councillors Alaa Al-Yousuf and Alex Postan, namely:-



“This Council resolves to work towards elimination of all avoidable plastic waste and calls upon the Cabinet Member for Environment to bring forward proposals by Spring 2019 to:

- Phase out the use of avoidable Single Use Plastics (SUPs) in all District Council premises
- Work with UBICO, PUBLICA and contracted partners to end purchase and procurement of avoidable SUPs through the Council’s supply chain
- Incentivise traders on District Council sites to avoid SUPs as a condition of their event permission”

In proposing the motion, Councillor Al-Yousuf explained that the term “single use plastics” referred to cups, bottles, containers etc and represented a significant challenge within the recycling system. Essentially, the purpose of the proposal was to ask the Council to take steps in the matter, and he noted that the Council was in a position to influence this, and that many corporations had already implemented policies, an example being not to provide cups for water coolers. Councillor Postan seconded the proposal and concurred with what had been said.

In his capacity as the Cabinet member for the Environment, Councillor Good acknowledged the importance of the topic, and proposed its referral to the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee. It was –

**RESOLVED:** That, in accordance with the Council’s Rules of Procedure, the motion be referred for consideration by the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee, prior to subsequent consideration by Council.

#### 54. SEALING OF DOCUMENTS

The Council received and noted the report of the Head of Paid Service which gave details of documents numbered 11550 to 11604 sealed since its last meeting.

The meeting closed at 4:15 pm

CHAIRMAN