

Cherwell District Council

Council

Minutes of a meeting of the Council held at Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury, Oxon OX15 4AA, on 19 December 2022 at 6.30 pm

Present:

Councillor Les Sibley (Chairman)

Councillor Andrew Beere
Councillor Rebecca Biegel
Councillor Nathan Bignell
Councillor Maurice Billington
Councillor Mike Bishop
Councillor John Broad
Councillor Hugo Brown
Councillor Phil Chapman
Councillor Mark Cherry
Councillor Colin Clarke
Councillor Patrick Clarke
Councillor Jean Conway
Councillor Gemma Coton
Councillor Andrew Crichton
Councillor Sandy Dallimore
Councillor John Donaldson
Councillor Donna Ford
Councillor Ian Harwood
Councillor David Hingley
Councillor Matt Hodgson
Councillor Simon Holland
Councillor Kieron Mallon
Councillor Nicholas Mawer
Councillor Fiona Mawson
Councillor Ian Middleton
Councillor Perran Moon
Councillor Richard Mould
Councillor Adam Nell
Councillor Dr Chukwudi Okeke
Councillor Angus Patrick
Councillor Lynn Pratt
Councillor Chris Pruden
Councillor Eddie Reeves
Councillor George Reynolds
Councillor Dan Sames
Councillor Dorothy Walker
Councillor Amanda Watkins
Councillor Douglas Webb
Councillor Fraser Webster
Councillor Bryn Williams

Councillor Barry Wood
Councillor Sean Woodcock

Also Present Virtually:

Councillor Katherine Tyson

Apologies for absence:

Councillor Jason Slaymaker (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Hannah Banfield
Councillor Ian Corkin
Councillor Nick Cotter

Officers:

Ian Boll, Corporate Director Communities
Michael Furness, Assistant Director Finance & S151 Officer
Shiraz Sheikh, Assistant Director Law, Governance & Democratic
Services/Monitoring Officer
Natasha Clark, Governance and Elections Manager

Officers Attending Virtually:

Yvonne Rees, Chief Executive
Nicola Riley, Assistant Director Wellbeing & Housing

50 **Welcome**

The Chairman welcomed Members, officers and guests to the meeting.

The Chairman advised that Councillor Tyson was joining the meeting virtually and could speak on items but had no voting rights or rights to propose or second items.

51 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

52 **Communications**

Former Councillors John Hunter, John Giddings MBE and Carole Mason
Since the last meeting of Council, former Councillors John Hunter, John Giddings MBE and Carole Mason had sadly passed away.

Former Councillor John Hunter passed away on 5 November 2022. He represented the Fringford ward from 1986 to 2002. Former Councillor Hunter

was Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group and served on numerous committees, notably Group spokesperson on Policy and Resources.

Former Councillor John Giddings MBE passed away in November 2022, aged 99 years. Former Councillor Giddings represented the Banbury Easington ward from 1992 to 1996. Former Councillor Giddings MBE was a Conservative member appointed to numerous committees, including Northern Area Planning Sub-Committee Banbury Sports Ground Management Company and was Vice-Chair/Deputy Group Spokesperson on the Finance Sub Committee. Mr Giddings MBE was also a Banbury Charter Trustee, serving as Mayor from 1994-95 and was Chairman of the Burma Star Association.

Former Councillor Carole Mason passed away on 21 October 2022. Former Councillor Mason represented to Bicester East ward between 1995 and 1999. A Labour Group member, for Councillor Mason served on numerous committees, notably chairing Resources and being Vice-Chair of Personnel Sub. Former Councillor Mason was also a member of Bicester Town Council.

On behalf of Council, the Chairman extended condolences to the family and friends of former Councillors Giddings MBE, Hunter and Mason.

Council observed a minutes silence in honour of former Councillors Giddings MBE, Hunter and Mason.

Chief Constable of Thames Valley Police and Police & Crime Commissioner at Overview and Scrutiny

The Chief Constable and Police and Crime Commissioner for Thames Valley would be attending Overview & Scrutiny Committee on Tuesday 24 January, to give their annual presentation. This had previously been an item at full Council but had moved to Overview & Scrutiny as the committee with responsibility for the crime and disorder panel functions of the council.

All non-Committee Members were welcome to attend the meeting. Members were asked to advise the Democratic and Elections Team if they planned to attend or wished to submit a question for either the Chief Constable or the Police and Crime Commissioner.

Chairman's Engagements

A copy of the events attended by the Chairman or the Vice-Chairman was published with the agenda.

Chairman's Charity Dinner

The Chairman's Charity Dinner was held on Saturday 19 November. The Chairman paid tribute to his PA, Liz Matthews, for her hard work arranging the event and Alex Robinson for her excellent efforts in raising £1400 from selling raffle tickets. The Chairman expressed gratitude to everyone who attended the event and for all donations. It was a very successful event with £4400 raised going to Alexandra House of Joy, the charity the being supported during the term as Chairman.

Meeting Length

Due to the length of the agenda, out of courtesy to other Members, the Chairman asked Members to remain in your seat during items and advised, if needed, he would adjourn the meeting to allow for a comfort break at a suitable point. The Chairman also reminded Member to be courteous to each other when addressing the meeting.

Members' Pigeon Holes

Members were reminded to check their pigeon hole and take any post.

53 **Petitions and Requests to Address the Meeting**

There were no petitions or requests to address the meeting.

54 **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

55 **Minutes of Council**

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 October 2022 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to the following amendment:

Minute 39 – Questions

Under a) Written Questions, add “Minister” to the end of the third paragraph.

56 **Minutes**

a) Minutes of the Executive, Portfolio Holder Decisions and Executive Decisions made under Special Urgency

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting of the Executive and Portfolio Holder decisions as set out in the Minute Book be received and that it be noted that since the last meeting of Council on 17 October 2022 no key decisions had been taken by the Executive which were not included in the 28 day notice.

b) Minutes of Committees

Resolved

That the minutes of Committees as set out in the Minute Book be received.

Questions

a) Written Questions

The Chairman advised Council that one written question, addressed to the Leader of the Council, Councillor Wood, had been submitted with advance notice in accordance with the Constitution and had been published with the agenda. A response to the question had been published as a supplement to the agenda (and are an annex to the Minutes as set out in the Minute Book).

The question was from Councillor Sibley and was in relation to the North West Bicester ECO Development.

Councillor Sibley thanked the Leader for the response. By way of a supplementary question, Councillor Sibley commented that funding was being considered by both Cherwell District Council and Oxfordshire County Council officers and asked if Homes England were involved in the discussions for realignment.

The Leader responded to the supplementary question advising that Homes England were being kept informed about the discussions and there may be formal involvement in due course.

b) Questions to the Leader of the Council

Questions were asked and answers received on the following issues:

Councillor Cherry: Fly tipping

Councillor Patrick: Botley West Solar Farm proposal (the Leader undertook to request officers to provide a draft email for Members to response to residents' queries)

Councillor Middleton: Government support to local authorities for hosting Ukrainian refugees

Councillor Middleton: Affordable housing in Kidlington (the Leader undertook to respond in writing)

Councillor Middleton: Consideration of the draft Local Plan by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 11 January 2023

Councillor Woodcock: Introduction of Voter ID arising from the Elections Act 2022

Councillor Watkins: Sunshine Centre, Banbury

Councillor Pruden: Pioneer Square, Bicester (the Portfolio Holder for Property undertook to respond in writing)

Councillor Broad: Methodology of calculating housing need by Oxfordshire district councils and the city council

Councillor Broad: Allocation of land for solar farms in the Cherwell Local Plan

c) Questions to Committee Chairmen on the Minutes

There were no questions to Committee Chairman on the minutes of meetings.

Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2023/24

The Assistant Director of Finance submitted a report to enable Council to approve the banded scheme for Council Tax Reduction for the financial year 2023/24 and to note potential changes to Council Tax discounts and reliefs which were currently subject to consultation as part of the Council's budget consultation

Resolved

- (1) That the contents of the report and the financial implications for the Council be noted.
- (2) That the following be approved:
 - The option of no change to the Council Tax Reduction Income Banded Scheme for Working Age Customers for 2023 -24
 - To amend Working Age Regulations in line with annual uprating; and to amend the Council Tax Regulations for pensioners in line with uprating announced by Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.
- (3) That it be agreed that the levels of Council Tax discounts and premiums for 2023-24 remain the same as previous years and remain as follows:
 - Retain the discount for second homes at zero
 - Retain the discount for empty homes (unoccupied and substantially unfurnished) at 25% for 6 months and thereafter zero.
 - Retain the empty homes premium of an additional 100% for properties that have remained empty for more than 2 years (total Council Tax payable 200%).
- (4) That it be noted that the following Council Tax discounts and premiums are currently proposed to change as part of the Council's 2023/24 budget consultation:
 - Introduce an empty homes premium of an additional 200% for properties that have remained empty for more than 5 years (total Council Tax payable 300%)
 - Introduce an empty homes premium of an additional 300% for properties that have remained empty for more than 10 years (total Council Tax payable 400%)
 - Removal of the 25% discount for 12 months (zero thereafter) for dwellings which are vacant and undergoing major repair work to render them habitable.

Amendments to Proportionality Calculations and Committee Membership and Outside Body Representative

The Chief Executive submitted a report for Council to note the amendments to the constitution of political groups and amendments to the proportionality calculations and committee membership arising from a change to political Group membership.

Resolved

- (1) That the amended constitution of Political Groups be noted.
- Conservative Group – 25 members (all Conservative councillors)
 - Group Leader: Councillor Barry Wood
 - Progressive Oxfordshire Group – 12 members (comprising 7 Liberal Democrat, 2 Green and 3 Independent (Cllrs Broad, Cotter and Banfield) councillors)
 - Group Leader: Councillor Katherine Tyson
 - Labour Group – 9 members (comprising all Labour / Labour & Co-operative councillors)
 - Group Leader: Councillor Sean Woodcock
 - Independent Group – 2 members (comprising 2 Independent councillors, Cllrs Sibley and Webster)
 - Group Leader: Councillor Les Sibley
- (2) That the amended allocation of seats on committees that are subject to the political balance requirements be noted:

Committee	TOTAL	Conservative	Progressive Oxfordshire	Labour	Independent
Accounts, Audit & Risk Committee	8	4	2	2	0
Appeals Panel	10	6 (+1)	2	2	0
Budget Planning Committee	12	6	3	2	1
Licensing Committee	12	6	3	2	1
Overview & Scrutiny	12	6	3	3 (+1)	0 (-1)
Personnel Committee	12	6	3	2	1
Planning Committee	18	10 (+1)	5	2 (-1)	1
Standards Committee	8	4	2	2	0
Proportional Total by Committee	92	46	23	17	5
Aggregate Entitlement	92	48	23	17	4
Adjustment Required	N/A	Plus 2	0	0	Minus 1

- (3) That the amendments to committee membership, as advised by the respective Leaders of the Progressive Oxfordshire Group and Labour Group be noted:

- **Labour Group**

Appeals Panel

Remove – Councillor Hannah Banfield (as no longer Labour Group member)

Add – Councillor Sean Woodcock

Licensing Committee

Remove – Councillor Hannah Banfield (as no longer Labour Group member)

Planning Committee

Remove permanent member – Councillor Amanda Watkins

Remove named substitute – Councillor Dr Chukwudi Okeke

Standards Committee

Remove – Councillor Hannah Banfield (as no longer Labour Group member)

Add – Councillor Sean Woodcock

- **Progressive Oxfordshire**

Licensing Committee

Add – Councillor Hannah Banfield (as Progressive Oxfordshire Group member)

Planning Committee

Add permanent member – Councillor David Hingley (previously named substitute)

Add named substitute – Councillor Nick Cotter (to replace Councillor David Hingley)

Add named substitute – Councillor Angus Patrick (new named substitute)

- (4) That Councillor Sandy Dallimore be appointed as Cherwell District Council's representative to the Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Motions

The Chairman advised that five motions had been submitted. Amendments to one of the motions had been submitted. In line with the Constitution, no further amendments were now permitted.

Motion: One Planet Living

It was proposed by Councillor Sames and seconded by Councillor Broad that the following motion be adopted:

“In 2019 CDC declared a climate a climate emergency committing to ensure our operations and activities are net zero by 2030 and to do our part to achieve a net zero district by 2030 through leading by example. CDC’s Climate Action Framework sets out the detail of how this will be achieved and emissions have reduced by 51% between 2008/09 to 2020/21.

However, responding to the climate emergency requires more than simply reducing carbon emissions. Currently our lifestyles consume the resources of 3 planets, we must do better to live within our means and the resources of one planet.

One Planet Oxfordshire is a collaboration of councils, businesses, schools and community groups that have a vision of a world in which people enjoy happy, healthy lives within their fair share of the earth’s resources, whilst leaving space for wildlife and wilderness. It’s about living and growing sustainably to minimise impacts on the environment and maximise benefits to people.

At August’s Overview and Scrutiny committee the ten One Planet principles that contribute to planning, delivering and committing to a more sustainable future were presented to offer a framework within which the council could operate.

These principles are:

- Health and happiness
- Equity and local economy
- Culture and community
- Land and nature
- Sustainable water
- Local and sustainable food
- Travel and transport
- Materials and product
- Zero waste
- Zero carbon energy

This council resolves to support the One Planet Oxfordshire shared vision and commits to review operations and activities using the One Planet Living Framework.”

No amendments to the motion having been proposed, the motion was debated as submitted. On being put to the vote the motion was unanimously agreed.

Motion: Tenants Charter

It was proposed by Councillor Woodcock and seconded by Councillor Okeke that the following motion be adopted:

“The coroner's inquest into the death of Awaab Ishak in Rochdale should, like the Grenfell Tower Fire, be a watershed moment in the relationship between tenants and landlords.

Yet with 50% of properties in Cherwell not meeting basics energy efficiency standards and an energy bill crisis, tenants risk being left in cold, damp and mouldy properties.

This council recognises its key role in protecting tenants in both the private and social rented sectors

And this council calls on the Executive:

1. To establish a Tenants Charter setting out minimum standards that the council and that all tenants expect.
2. To run a public awareness campaign of the Charter, encouraging tenants to be aware of their rights and of where local sources of advice and support can be found.
3. To call on the government to bring forward the Private Renters Reform Bill, the promised ban on 'no fault' evictions and to commit to a national campaign of insulating poor homes."

Councillor Mawer proposed the following amendment (amendments struck through and revised text in italics), which was duly seconded by Councillor Wood.

“The coroner's inquest into the death of Awaab Ishak in Rochdale should, like the Grenfell Tower Fire, be a watershed moment in the relationship between tenants and landlords.

Yet with 50% of properties in Cherwell not meeting basics energy efficiency standards and an energy bill crisis, tenants risk being left in cold, damp and mouldy properties.

This council recognises its key role in protecting tenants in both the private and social rented sectors

And this council calls on the Executive:

1. To establish a Tenants Charter setting out minimum standards that the council and that all *Council* tenants expect.
2. To *ask officers to engage with registered social landlords and private landlords to seek improvements in standards, in line with those this Council will adopt.* ~~run a public awareness campaign of the Charter, encouraging tenants to be aware of their rights and of where local sources of advice and support can be found.~~

3. To call on the government to bring forward the Private Renters Reform Bill, the promised ban on 'no fault' evictions and to commit to a national campaign of insulating poor homes."

The amendment was debated. In the course of the debate it was proposed by Councillor Woodcock and seconded by Councillor Watkins that a recorded vote be taken. Having been proposed and seconded, a recorded vote on the amendment was duly taken and Members voted as follows:

Councillor Andrew Beere	Against
Councillor Rebecca Biegel	Against
Councillor Nathan Bignell	For
Councillor Maurice Billington	For
Councillor Mike Bishop	For
Councillor John Broad	Abstain
Councillor Hugo Brown	For
Councillor Phil Chapman	For
Councillor Mark Cherry	Against
Councillor Colin Clarke	For
Councillor Patrick Clarke	For
Councillor Gemma Coton	Against
Councillor Andrew Crichton	Against
Councillor Sandy Dallimore	For
Councillor John Donaldson	For
Councillor Donna Ford	For
Councillor Ian Harwood	For
Councillor David Hingley	Against
Councillor Matt Hodgson	Against
Councillor Kieron Mallon	For
Councillor Nick Mawer	For
Councillor Fiona Mawson	Against
Councillor Ian Middleton	Against
Councillor Perran Moon	Against
Councillor Richard Mould	For
Councillor Adam Nell	For
Councillor Dr Chukwudi Okeke	Against
Councillor Angus Patrick	Against

Councillor Lynn Pratt	For
Councillor Chris Pruden	Against
Councillor Eddie Reeves	For
Councillor George Reynolds	For
Councillor Dan Sames	For
Councillor Les Sibley	For
Councillor Dorothy Walker	Against
Councillor Amanda Watkins	Against
Councillor Douglas Webb	For
Councillor Fraser Webster	Against
Councillor Bryn Williams	For
Councillor Barry Wood	For
Councillor Sean Woodcock	Against

The vote was carried with 23 votes in favour, 18 votes against and no abstentions and therefore became the substantive motion for debate.

Council debated the substantive motion (the motion as amended), which on being put to the vote was unanimously agreed.

Motion: “Get Home Safely”

It was proposed by Councillor Cherry and seconded by Councillor Hodgson that the following motion be adopted:

“This Council notes that:

- Shift work is widespread in many industries, particularly hospitality, among others in health, cleaning and security work.
- Many workers, especially women, are increasingly worried about their safety travelling to and from work at night

This Council believes that:

- While employers may feel their duty of care to staff ends when an employee finishes a shift, they also need to take into consideration journeys home, especially during unsocial hours;
- Employers should take reasonable steps to ensure workers can get home safely at night.

This Council will

- Refer to the Licensing Committee to consider how it might be able to use its powers to adopt a policy whereby our licensing committee will ensure the process for approving late night licences will be linked to the

provision of employee transport home, in balance with the size, type, and location of the premises concerned.

- The Licensing Committee to report back”

No amendments to the motion having been proposed, the motion was debated as submitted. On being put to the vote the motion was unanimously agreed.

Motion: Overview and Scrutiny Committee Chair

It was proposed by Councillor Middleton and seconded by Councillor Hingley that the following motion be adopted:

“It’s not best practice for a council to ‘mark their own homework’ and in many other local authorities it is common practice for scrutiny committees to be chaired by members of the opposition group.

Such a practice was affirmed during discussions with Local Government Authority representatives during the recent Local Peer Review process. It’s also common practice in other authorities throughout Oxfordshire. This convention helps to build trust and increase accountability.

The Council requests that the Monitoring Officer considers, as part of his Constitution Review Programme, that the appointment of the Chairman of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee be from the opposition group as part of the normal annual appointments process.”

No amendments to the motion having been proposed, the motion was debated as submitted. In presenting the motion, it was proposed by Councillor Middleton and seconded by Councillor Hingley that a recorded vote be taken. Having been proposed and seconded, a recorded vote on the amendment was duly taken and Members voted as follows:

Councillor Andrew Beere	Abstain
Councillor Rebecca Biegel	Abstain
Councillor Nathan Bignell	For
Councillor Maurice Billington	For
Councillor Mike Bishop	For
Councillor John Broad	For
Councillor Hugo Brown	For
Councillor Phil Chapman	For
Councillor Mark Cherry	Abstain
Councillor Colin Clarke	For
Councillor Patrick Clarke	For
Councillor Gemma Coton	For

Councillor Andrew Crichton	Abstain
Councillor Sandy Dallimore	Abstain
Councillor John Donaldson	Abstain
Councillor Donna Ford	For
Councillor Ian Harwood	For
Councillor David Hingley	For
Councillor Matt Hodgson	Abstain
Councillor Nick Mawer	For
Councillor Fiona Mawson	For
Councillor Ian Middleton	For
Councillor Perran Moon	Abstain
Councillor Richard Mould	For
Councillor Adam Nell	For
Councillor Dr Chukwudi Okeke	Abstain
Councillor Angus Patrick	For
Councillor Lynn Pratt	For
Councillor Chris Pruden	For
Councillor Eddie Reeves	For
Councillor George Reynolds	Against
Councillor Dan Sames	Abstain
Councillor Les Sibley	For
Councillor Dorothy Walker	For
Councillor Amanda Watkins	Abstain
Councillor Douglas Webb	For
Councillor Fraser Webster	For
Councillor Bryn Williams	For
Councillor Barry Wood	For
Councillor Sean Woodcock	Abstain

On being put to the vote the motion was carried with 27 votes in favour, 1 vote against and 12 abstentions.

Motion: Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) Investment

It was proposed by Councillor Walker and seconded by Councillor Patrick that the following motion be adopted:

“Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) principles have become ever more important in recent years due to the focus of organisations such as ours on issues surrounding climate change and ethical values.

ESG audits are commonplace in many organisations and apply a set of standards measuring their impact on society and the environment as well as how transparent and accountable they are.

This council holds significant sums on deposit with numerous investment bodies, including banks, other local authorities and the Oxfordshire pension fund. We also have some internal investments, particularly associated with commercial property and property investment.

This Council therefore requests that the Executive consider the following proposals

1. holding transparent annual audits of all our investments to be measured against ESG principles which will be published alongside the annual accounts.
2. To divest as soon as practicable from any investment that runs contrary to ESG principles and any other standards set by the council, particularly with respect to any funds connected with fossil fuels, unfair labour practices or exploitation of workers.

To urge the Oxfordshire Pension Fund to further divest from fossil fuel investments at the earliest opportunity with a firm timetable for complete divestment from such funds by 2030.”

No amendments to the motion having been proposed, the motion was debated as submitted. On being put to the vote the motion was unanimously agreed.

Resolved

- (1) That the following motion be adopted:

“In 2019 CDC declared a climate a climate emergency committing to ensure our operations and activities are net zero by 2030 and to do our part to achieve a net zero district by 2030 through leading by example. CDC’s Climate Action Framework sets out the detail of how this will be achieved and emissions have reduced by 51% between 2008/09 to 2020/21.

However, responding to the climate emergency requires more than simply reducing carbon emissions. Currently our lifestyles consume the resources of 3 planets, we must do better to live within our means and the resources of one planet.

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people enjoy happy, healthy lives within their fair share of the earth's resources, whilst leaving space for wildlife and wilderness. It's about living and growing sustainably to minimise impacts on the environment and maximise benefits to people.

At August's Overview and Scrutiny committee the ten One Planet principles that contribute to planning, delivering and committing to a more sustainable future were presented to offer a framework within which the council could operate.

These principles are:

- Health and happiness
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- Local and sustainable food
- Travel and transport
- Materials and product
- Zero waste
- Zero carbon energy

This council resolves to support the One Planet Oxfordshire shared vision and commits to review operations and activities using the One Planet Living Framework.”

- (2) That it be agreed that the following motion, as amended, be referred to Executive:

“The coroner's inquest into the death of Awaab Ishak in Rochdale should, like the Grenfell Tower Fire, be a watershed moment in the relationship between tenants and landlords.

Yet with 50% of properties in Cherwell not meeting basics energy efficiency standards and an energy bill crisis, tenants risk being left in cold, damp and mouldy properties.

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And this council calls on the Executive:

1. To establish a Tenants Charter setting out minimum standards that the council and that all Council tenants expect.
2. To ask officers to engage with registered social landlords and private landlords to seek improvements in standards, in line with those this Council will adopt.

3. To call on the government to bring forward the Private Renters Reform Bill, the promised ban on 'no fault' evictions and to commit to a national campaign of insulating poor homes."

- (3) That it be agreed that the following motion be referred to Licensing Committee:

"This Council notes that:

- Shift work is widespread in many industries, particularly hospitality, among others in health, cleaning and security work.
- Many workers, especially women, are increasingly worried about their safety travelling to and from work at night

This Council believes that:

- While employers may feel their duty of care to staff ends when an employee finishes a shift, they also need to take into consideration journeys home, especially during unsocial hours;
- Employers should take reasonable steps to ensure workers can get home safely at night.

This Council will

- Refer to the Licensing Committee to consider how it might be able to use its powers to adopt a policy whereby our licensing committee will ensure the process for approving late night licences will be linked to the provision of employee transport home, in balance with the size, type, and location of the premises concerned.
- The Licensing Committee to report back."

- (4) That the following motion be agreed:

"It's not best practice for a council to 'mark their own homework' and in many other local authorities it is common practice for scrutiny committees to be chaired by members of the opposition group.

Such a practice was affirmed during discussions with Local Government Authority representatives during the recent Local Peer Review process. It's also common practice in other authorities throughout Oxfordshire. This convention helps to build trust and increase accountability.

The Council requests that the Monitoring Officer considers, as part of his Constitution Review Programme, that the appointment of the Chairman of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee be from the opposition group as part of the normal annual appointments process."

- (5) That it be agreed that the following motion be referred to Executive:

“Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) principles have become ever more important in recent years due to the focus of organisations such as ours on issues surrounding climate change and ethical values.

ESG audits are commonplace in many organisations and apply a set of standards measuring their impact on society and the environment as well as how transparent and accountable they are.

This council holds significant sums on deposit with numerous investment bodies, including banks, other local authorities and the Oxfordshire pension fund. We also have some internal investments, particularly associated with commercial property and property investment.

This Council therefore requests that the Executive consider the following proposals

3. holding transparent annual audits of all our investments to be measured against ESG principles which will be published alongside the annual accounts.
4. To divest as soon as practicable from any investment that runs contrary to ESG principles and any other standards set by the council, particularly with respect to any funds connected with fossil fuels, unfair labour practices or exploitation of workers.
5. To urge the Oxfordshire Pension Fund to further divest from fossil fuel investments at the earliest opportunity with a firm timetable for complete divestment from such funds by 2030.”

The meeting ended at 9.05 pm

Chairman:

Date: