**Draft Minutes of Oxford and District Labour Party All Member Meeting**

**7.30 p.m. on 13 October 2017, Rose Hill Community Centre**

1. **Attendance and apologies**

**Present*:*** Luke Akehurst, Avril Alexander, Elaine Aubain, Jamila Azad, Mohammad Azad, Marie-Claire Berthelson, Ann Black, David Blackman, Liz Brighouse, Susan Brown, Paul Burton, Alan Calder, Peter Cann, Michaela Collord, Pete Cranston, Steve Curran, Jane Darke (Chair), Roy Darke, Victoria Davidson, Anneliese Dodds MP, Tony Eaude, Jude Esa, Helen Evans, Deborah Gill, Julia Goodwin, Hester Hand, Ray Hand, David Hillman, Stephanie Hobson, Richard Howlett, Biddy Hudson, Mark Hull, Stephen Hyde, Dan Iley-Williamson, Felicity Irwin (minutes), Rabyah Kahn, Pat Kennedy, Sarah Lasenby, Anne Lyons, Bee Maidlow,Hosnieh Marbini, Stephen Marks, Chris MacMackin, Caroline Morrell, Cherry Mosteshar, Bobbie Nichols, James O’Donoghue, Simon Ottino, Jennifer Pegg,Viv Peto, Glynis Phillips, David Preston, Rosemary Preston, Caroline Raine, Jo Richards, Chris Robins, Andrew Smith, Jane Stockton, John Tanner, Sue Tanner, James Tarlton, Geoff Taylor, Ed Turner, Anna Wagstaff, Nick Walker, Peter Willsman

**Apologies:** Farida Anwar, John Bond, Becky Boumelha, Lotte Boumelha, Nigel Chapman, Marieke Clarke, Tiago Corais, Paul Flather, Deirdre Flintoff, Ian Flintoff, Gordon Kennedy, Peter Leary, Peter Ledwith, Sue Ledwith, Rob Lemkin, Simon Lowles, Bill Mackeith, Pol O Ceallaigh, Liz Peretz, Catrin Roberts, Martin Stott, Sian Taylor, Marie Vickers, Janet Warren

1. **Agreement of agenda and timings**

These were agreed.

1. **Minutes of the all member meeting on 8 September 2017 and matters arising**

With the addition of Pat and Gordon Kennedy as attenders, the minutes were agreed as a correct record. Matters arising:

(a) 7(b)(ii) A publicly-owned banking system. The motion is posted on the policy forum website at https://www.policyforum.labour.org.uk/agenda-2020/commissions/economy-business-and-trade/a-publicly-owned-banking-system

1. **Urgent business, including any other business**

Peter Cann

Close Campsfield Campaign is having a protest outside Campsfield at 12pm on 25 November, also Rob Johnson performing at St Aldates Tavern on 24 November.

1. **Oxfordshire county Labour group report – Liz Brighouse, Leader**

Many on-going issues - County Council runs adult and children’s social care, some influence on education. Currently issues around budget because the Tories do not have a majority and are dependent on two independent councillors. County councils and other Unitary Authorities have lost 50% of budgets since Tories came to power.

Successes – Labour Group has challenged Carillion contract since it was agreed by the council 6 years ago. Many parts have been brought back in house and will not be contracted out again. Managed to get county to look at bringing adult home care back in-house. Also engaged in trying to stop having the cabinet system of government within the council – because it is opaque.

Adult social care – has been the big issue. Much talk about bringing this together with healthcare. Only way to improve adult social care is to fund it properly. Vast majority of state-funded adult social care is paid for by the county, but majority of people using the services are self-funded. £6bn has been cut from this budget since 2010, while the number of people going in to it has increased by 64%. Adult safe-guarding used to be not talked about, now we have systems in place so that abuse is reported. Children’s social care – previously Oxfordshire was very good at building our own children’s homes. Problem is that reason for this was to bri\*ng children back into the county rather than send them away from their community - this has not happened and we have massive overspend on children being sent out of the county. Impact of universal credit is a major cause of families getting in to debt, loosing homes and children being put into care.

Questions

Pat Kennedy

How far is there an issue with unaccompanied minors?

Hester Hand

What is happening about the unitary authority?

Roy Darke

What is happening to children’s services?

Liz Brighouse (responding to all)

Large number of young people coming to county and they disappear. We don’t know what is happening to them. We are bringing in more planned unaccompanied minors. Problem is unplanned ones who arrive, social care workers have to be activated to accommodate minors quickly. System of foster carers now in place across the county to take them in.

Children’s centres – £6m was taken out of children’s centres because of other demands on the budget, amid austerity cuts. Thirty-four are still functioning.

Nothing happening regarding unitary authority.

Andrew Smith

Chronic problems with life chances of children in care?

Debbie

Point of information – unaccompanied asylum seekers. For under-18s, the council has a duty to look after these young people.

Caroline Morrell

Funding for rough sleepers and homeless in the city?

Susan Brown

Problem with getting children with safe-guarding needs out of hospital – is this something we need to think about in terms of campaigning?

Liz Brighouse (responding to all)

A lot of these things fit together – all linked with housing shortage. The other mess is around our schools. Children with special needs are not being taken by schools because they are under no obligation to tell us. No money to support rough sleepers. Need Labour government to resolve these problems.

1. **Annual Conference**

Written report from Cherry Mosteshar and Lotte Boumelha will be circulated and put on website.

Cherry Mosteshar

Lotte Boumelha and I wanted to thank both of the Constituency Labour Parties (CLPs) for sending us to conference - this was a remarkable experience. Labour Party is now 580k strong, among the largest in the world. Great privilege to be at the Women’s Conference – raised the energy before the main conference and was inspiring experience. Women’s conference is now a formal part of the Labour Party’s decision-making structures. Debated healthcare, social care, housing, foreign policy and Brexit. Brexit also debated at the main conference. Elected women to the women’s Conference Arrangements Committee. Inspiring speakers including Dawn Butler, insight into how party can tackle racism and sexism.

Compositing session for the NHS motion that we submitted to conference, 41 CLPs had submitted similar motions. Lord Hunt attended. Debated for two hours omissions in party proposed composite – that did not include 5 year review, and had inserted the word “ideally” in front of aim to increase funding up to western European standards.

Difficult for one delegate to make the most of the conference, suggest better for CLPs to send more delegates in order to participate in more.

Rule changes – most exciting part of conference. All rule changes not adopted by CAC were remitted, with some great speeches.

Attended hustings for the Scottish Leadership campaigns – two candidates not the most exciting.

Questions

Ann Black

Have circulated written report which is about the behind the scenes aspect of conference. It was a remarkable conference. There used to be between 500- 600 delegates, last year there were 800, and this year it was 1200. Before we write to branches to nominate conference delegates the EC will discuss the issue of sending more delegates.

Luke Akehurst

Appreciate Jeremy Corbyn is playing a balancing act, but think Conference, as decision making body, should be able to take a view on issues relating to Brexit in order to take a position on this. Which way did you vote in the priorities ballot?

Jamila Azad

BAME community came back with disturbing election reports.

Ann Black

Invites Jamila to send details and she will respond with information available.

Cherry Mosteshar

Did not vote to prioritise the Brexit motion. Did not want to tie the hands of the party on Brexit. Looked at other issues - delegates wanted to debate and vote on housing, healthcare etc. On Brexit, we cannot predict what will happen and I felt that party should have leeway to be nimble.

Ann Black

There was an NEC statement that encapsulated Labour Party (LP) policy on all of this. There was also a vote where delegate referred back a section of the international document on Brexit and that was pretty heavily defeated. Brexit motions that were submitted were on a huge range of issues that people wanted to debate - not clear to me that the party is of one mind on any of these issues. Keir Starmer is walking delicate tightrope very skilfully. Tying LP to being part of customs union or ruling it out – neither of these would have been the right thing to do.

Jane Darke

Highly likely an all member’s meeting in the new year will be devoted to a discussion on this. EC will try to programme this in.

1. **Fundraising collection** £187.56 was collected.
2. **Oxford city council report – Ed Turner, Deputy Leader and Susan Brown, Deputy Leader**

Susan Brown

We currently have two deputy leaders. Chief Executive – appointed temporary chief executive for period of 6 months because of period of uncertainty. We have now appointed Gordon Mitchell for period of 3 years.

Westgate is opening on Tuesday 24 October, with half the stores open. Huge and exciting development for Oxford.

Zero emissions zone – proposal for centre of Oxford. This is a world first - needed because current levels are illegal, and the effects on people’s health are huge. These proposals are not without controversy. At first this would apply to a small number of streets to be expanded gradually from 2020 to 2035.

Universal credit – one of my responsibilities on council is for financial inclusion. Very disappointed government is continuing their roll out of this benefit. Larger numbers of people will start to be hit by this. Payments are delayed, claimants unable to buy food, pay rent. There is a system for advance payments, but there are problems with this system. City Council has decided to set up a small fund £50k that will pay money to people in dire need.

East Oxford Community Centre – proposals for development out at the moment, proposing £3.5m investment in the community centre.

Ed Turner

Susan is now Deputy Leader, and I am an extra deputy. We will now have leader, statutory leader and extra. No longer able to have all male leadership. Bigger leadership team will help us cope with Bob Price’s departure when he stands down. I represented the group on appointments panel to recruit Hannah Riley as our new local Organiser – very dynamic, very committed.

Lucky in group meetings to welcome great new candidates, and look forward to them joining our group.

Budget – finances are stable. We do not expect to have major cuts in services over next few years. Aim to increase council tax by amount that we are allowed to, and will continue to pay council tax benefit. Significant capital investment projects such as East Oxford Community Centre. There are challenges, and in 4th year we will have to work to make numbers stack up. That will mark the end of our current pay deal with the union.

New company set up to develop housing that will include genuine affordable housing.

Local authority trading company. We are successfully selling our services to public and private sector. This company will allow us to bid for more new work.

Housing in Oxford in unaffordable – need to press Labour Party on this. Homelessness is a complicated issue, sometimes we are not legally allowed to spend money on certain groups. In addition to this, the county council has cut all funding for the homeless. Plan to change nature hostel provision in the city, and provide a range of accommodation options including in private houses.

Motions passed, subjects include - Burma – Aung San Suu Kyi – motion tabled as free vote, unanimously resolved that she would be stripped of freedom of the city unless situation changes.

Questions

Sarah Lasenby

Zero emissions – have you factored in needs of frail disabled and elderly walkers?

Biddy Hudson

As city is landlord, are you looking to make sure that no council housing tenants are evicted if they cannot pay their rent due to universal credit delays?

Helen Evans

Fake news about fining rough sleepers?

Chris McMackin

There are streets where there is not much traffic already, major reductions will not take effect until 2030.

Hosnieh Marbini

Racist abuse hurled at woman we spoke to canvassing recently – what steps can be taken to communicate the importance of this to Oxford community?

Susan (responding to all)

Zero emissions – relatively small area already largely pedestrianised. This will stop huge number of delivery lorries.

Urge anyone who has been racially abused to report it because we cannot tackle if crimes are not reported.

There has never been an issue around fining people for rough sleeping per se. Belongings were cleared and this required a notice to be served.

Council as landlord – yes we are in close contact between departments, making sure they are joined up.

Jane Darke

There will be a manifesto meeting to discuss policy in the new year

Ed Turner

Trading company – should look at energy companies.

Tackling race hate crime is one of our issues – Shaista Aziz has an initiative to publish anti-hate crime posters. There is an issue of not reporting crime. Should be supporting groups that support local communities and bring them together.

1. **Motion – BMW pension dispute proposed by Unite BMW branch**

Proposer has agreed to hold this over to the next meeting.

1. **Parliamentary Report – Anneliese Dodds MP**

Would like to thank my staff - the casework side of job for an MP in any area that has problem with deprivation has grown hugely. More and more people with immigration problems, and the quality of contact that we are able to have with the home office in relation to these people is deteriorating.

There are many issues with Universal Credit, one is that the only hotline will be available will be through the MPs office. Very pleased that we have one of few councils that is still helping people with council tax benefit. Even Tory MPs have raised their concerns about Universal Credit. No longer have any social assistance at all provided by the county council.

Conference – Shadow Treasury team announcements during conference included one on credit card debt. A cap would be introduced so that you can’t end up being required to pay back over 100% more than you originally borrowed. Also an announcement on not signing any new PFI deals and to bring back into house existing PFI contracts. Not doing this will be more risky in terms of liability of existing PFI contracts. The policy on getting rid of Higher Education fees has been criticised in the press, but if we don’t do this, the public purse will be further out of pocket in the long run. This will be harder and harder to fix over time.

Brexit – there is a lot of commonality in the Labour response. Lots of support for having a transitional period. Also within Parliamentary Labour Party to stop Brexit being used to accrue additional powers to government. We have seen white papers on trade and customs. The customs paper was a shambles, some proposals within it were bizarre.

Finance bill – I have been working on this within the shadow Treasury Team. Some elements would give the government greater decision-making powers, including ability to vary taxes on redundancy payments. Measures to tighten up arrangements for non doms – loop holes mean that this is not cracking down on non doms in any real way.

Budget coming up soon – trying to make sure we have strong Labour position. Despite the rhetoric about the economy doing well, the reality is very different, biggest squeeze on wages since Napoleonic times. We need it to deliver better for the people than the system that we have at the moment.

Questions

Chris McMackin

Interested that plans are being drawn up for different models.

Andrew Smith

You are doing a brilliant job being on front bench and constituency MP. What about West Papua and Catalonia?

David Blackman

Should have the freedom to sign a letter complaining that the government is sitting on things in relation to Brexit? Irish equivalent of HMRC takes a different position on impact of Brexit on Ireland.

Biddy Hudson

Secret reports that government is getting on impact of Brexit – will we ever see them?

Jamila Azad

Disturbing report a few weeks ago on inequality?

Anneliese Dodds (responding to all)

Preparing for different economic situations – this became one of the stories from the conference. Business community in my experience views Labour as the safe pair of hands now. We do need to be prepared for contingencies. Growth rates have been revised downwards.

Oxford has strong connection with West Papua and will keep working on this. Catalonia, as a progressive I find this a difficult issue. The referendum was boycotted by those opposed to independence. Clear that response of Spanish law enforcement authorities was not appropriate.

I am not allowed to sign Early Day Motions unless instructed to do so by the Whips. With policy areas, it is rule of thumb that if you stray too far from party position that could end up being a problem. However, on this, as on whole Brexit negotiations, we need far more transparency. There is far more cost from not having transparency. Should have open commission set up, as the Irish have done, to take submissions in a transparent process.

Inequality – there has been a national audit in terms of people’s ethnicity. General socio-economic inequality is increasing worryingly since financial crisis. Going well beyond what has happened in previous decades.

1. **Executive committee.** The minutes of the meeting on 14 September 2017 have been circulated to members. These were accepted.
2. **Future meetings.** These were noted as **Friday 10 November** (Summertown church hall), **Friday 8 December 2017, Thursday 11 / Friday 12 January 2018, Thursday 8 / Friday 9 February, Friday 9 March** (AGM). Dates, venues and topics to be arranged**.** Further dates, venues and topics to be arranged.