

# Minutes

OF A MEETING OF THE

## Council



Listening Learning Leading

HELD AT 6.00 PM ON THURSDAY 18 JULY 2013

**COUNCIL CHAMBER, SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL OFFICES**

### Present:

Mrs Dorothy Brown (Chairman)

Mrs Ann Midwinter (Vice-Chairman), Ms Anna Badcock, Mr Roger Bell, Ms Joan Bland, Mr Felix Bloomfield, Mr David Bretherton, Mrs Janet Carr, Mrs Celia Collett, MBE, Mr Steve Connel, Mr Bernard Cooper, Ms Kristina Crabbe, Mr Philip Cross, Mrs Margaret Davies, Mrs Pat Dawe, Mr Leo Docherty, Mr David Dodds, Mrs Ann Ducker, MBE, Mrs Elizabeth Gillespie, Mr Mark Gray, Mr Will Hall, Mr Tony Harbour, Mrs Eleanor Hards, Mr Marcus Harris, Mr Neville F Harris, Mr Paul Harrison, Mr Stephen Harrod, Mr Marc Hiles, Ms Elizabeth Hodgkin, Dr Christopher Hood, Mr Malcolm Leonard, Ms Lynn Lloyd, Mrs Denise Macdonald, Reverend Angie Paterson, Ms Anne Purse, Mr Bill Service, Mr Robert Simister, Mrs Pearl Slatter, Mr David Turner, Mrs Margaret Turner, Mr Michael Welply and Mrs Jennifer Wood

### Apologies:

Mr John Cotton, Mr Imran Lokhon, Mrs Judith Nimmo-Smith, Mr Christopher Quinton, Mr Alan Rooke and Miss Rachel Wallis tendered apologies.

**Officers:** David Buckle, Steve Bishop, Steven Corrigan, Robert Draper, Liz Hayden, Matt Prosser and Margaret Reed

### 9 Declaration of disclosable pecuniary interest

Any interests are recorded at the relevant item of these minutes.

### 10 Minutes of the previous meeting

**RESOLVED:** to approve the minutes of the Annual Meeting of Council held on 16 May 2013 as a correct record and agree that the Chairman sign them as such.

## **11 Chairman's announcements**

The Chairman referred councillors to the council's website for details of the events she had attended. She reported that despite cuts in existing funding the Oxfordshire Youth Orchestra was seeking alternative funding arrangements and would continue to perform.

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

The Chairman reported details of those members of the public who had registered to address Council on items on the agenda and informed councillors that they would be invited to speak at the appropriate items.

## **13 Making the Thame Neighbourhood Plan part of the Development Plan for South Oxfordshire**

Mrs D Brown, Mr D Dodds and Mrs A Midwinter declared an interest in this item because of their association with landowners who will be affected. In addition Mrs A Midwinter declared that two family members were employed by Thame Town Council. All three left the room during the discussion and voting on this item.

Mr D Bretherton and Mr M Welply made statements that they had been involved with the development of the plan and did not therefore consider it appropriate to take part in the discussion or voting on the item. However, as they had no disclosable pecuniary interest in the item they remained in the room but withdrew to the public seating.

In the absence of both the Chairman and Vice-Chairman Council agreed that Mrs J Carr should chair this item.

Mrs J Carr in the chair.

Council considered the recommendation of Cabinet, made at its meeting on 11 July 2013, to make the Thame Neighbourhood Plan part of the Development Plan for South Oxfordshire.

Mr J Castle, local landowner, addressed Council. He advised that he had a beneficial interest in Site F. He considered it premature to make the Thame Neighbourhood Plan part of the Development Plan for South Oxfordshire whilst a police investigation into possible breaches of the legal referendum expenditure limits by the 'Yes' campaign was ongoing and questioned whether, in light of this, the referendum could be considered free and fair.

Councillors Jeanette Matelot and Helena Fickling, Thame Town Council addressed Council in support of the making of the Thame Neighbourhood Plan. They referred to the fact that the plan had been awarded two prestigious awards and received the backing of the majority of residents in the referendum. They believed the plan would control the future development of Thame and protect its character and identity.

In response to the issues raised by Mr Castle, Mrs Reed, Head of Legal and Democratic Services, advised that even if there were criminal proceedings, prosecutions and a conviction it would not result in the referendum result being set aside. There was a six week period from publication of the referendum result within

which a legal challenge of the conduct of the referendum could be brought by way of judicial review. That had passed and there had been no such challenge. Council could therefore act on the referendum result without awaiting the outcome of the any other investigation underway and act on the recommendation of Cabinet.

**RESOLVED:** to make the Thame Neighbourhood Plan part of the Development Plan for South Oxfordshire

Mrs D Brown returned to the chair.

## **14 Hackney Carriage Tariff in South Oxfordshire District Council area**

Mr T Harbour made a statement that he held an account with a local taxi firm but that this did not affect his ability to consider the item with an open mind.

Mr M Harris made a statement that Insight Oxford, the consultants appointed to undertake the consultation, was not associated with his company, Insight Insight.

Council considered the recommendation of the General Licensing Committee, made at its meeting on 8 July 2013, to allow drivers and operators to continue to set their own tariff.

Mr Leonard, Chairman of the General Licensing Committee, advised Council that at its meeting on 18 October 2012 Council had, in adopting a joint taxi licensing policy, agreed to undertake a further consultation on the issue of the hackney carriage tariff to determine if it should be set by individual operators and drivers or whether a council set tariff should be consulted upon and introduced. He outlined the results of the consultation, attached to the report circulated to all councillors, and explained the reason for the committee's recommendation.

Council agreed the recommendation to allow drivers and operators to set their own tariffs which reflected the majority view of the consultation responses, would better reflect the wide variety of costs, standards and journeys undertaken, and support free market/competition.

**RESOLVED:** to allow drivers and operators to continue to set their own tariffs.

## **15 Community Governance Review - Draft Terms of Reference**

Council considered the report of the chief executive on the draft terms of reference for a community governance review – a review of parish arrangements within the district.

**RESOLVED: to**

1. approve the draft terms of reference set out in Appendix A to the report of the chief executive to Council on 18 July 2013 for a community governance review of South Oxfordshire;
2. establish a working group comprising six members (four Conservatives and two from the minority groups) to oversee the review;

3. appoint Mr F Bloomfield, Mrs D Brown, Ms L Lloyd and Mr M Welply as the Conservative members;
4. authorise the head of legal and democratic services to make appointments to the vacant minority group positions in accordance with the wishes of the relevant group leaders.

## **16 Designating the council's s.151 chief financial officer**

Council considered the report of the strategic director and chief finance officer on a proposal to designate the head of finance as the section 151 chief financial officer for South Oxfordshire District Council.

### **RESOLVED: to**

1. designate William Jacobs, the Head of Finance, as the council's section 151 chief financial officer from 1 September 2013;
2. authorise the Head of Legal and Democratic Services to make any consequential changes required to the council's constitution to reflect this change.

## **17 Mr Christopher Quinton - leave of absence**

Council considered a proposal to approve the absence of Mr Christopher Quinton from any meetings of the authority for a period exceeding six months due to his ill health and ongoing treatment.

**RESOLVED:** to approve the non-attendance of Mr Christopher Quinton at meetings until 31 December 2013 due to his ill health, period of treatment and ongoing recovery.

The meeting closed at 7.30pm

Chairman

Date