

Minutes

OF A MEETING OF

Council

HELD AT 6.45 PM ON THURSDAY 21 JULY 2016

AT THE FOUNTAIN CONFERENCE CENTRE, HOWBERY PARK,
CROWMARSH GIFFORD OX10 8BA

Present

Paul Harrison (Chairman)

Anna Badcock, Charles Bailey, Joan Bland, Felix Bloomfield, Kevin Bulmer, Nigel Champken-Woods, Steve Connel, John Cotton, Margaret Davies, Pat Dawe, Anthony Dearlove, David Dodds, Stefan Gawrysiak, Elizabeth Gillespie, Stephen Harrod, Elaine Hornsby, Lynn Lloyd, Imran Lokhon, Jeannette Matelot, Anthony Nash, Toby Newman, David Nimmo-Smith, Richard Pullen, Bill Service, Alan Thompson, John Walsh and Ian White

Apologies:

Will Hall, Tony Harbour, Lorraine Hillier, Sue Lawson, Jane Murphy, Robert Simister, David Turner and Margaret Turner

Officers: David Buckle, Steven Corrigan, Margaret Reed and Sally Truman

15 Minutes of the previous meeting

RESOLVED: to approve the minutes of the annual meeting of Council held on 12 May 2016 as a correct record and agree that the chairman sign them as such.

16 Declaration of disclosable pecuniary interest

None.

17 Chairman's announcements

The chairman provided housekeeping information.

At the request of the chairman Council formally put on record its thanks to David Buckle for his hard work for the council and wished him well for the future. He reminded councillors that they would have the opportunity to say farewell at a future event.



Listening Learning Leading

18 Questions from the public and public participation

None.

19 Questions under Council procedure rule 34

None.

20 Review of the council's constitution

Council considered the report of the head of legal and democratic services on proposed changes to the council's constitution.

Following further feedback received from the Joint Constitution Review Group she proposed the deletion of the following words from the proposed delegation to the head of planning set out in 1.1 (a):

“and the request is agreed by the chairman or, in their absence, the vice chairman in consultation with the head of planning. (This request must be in writing and deal with the planning issues to ensure that the audit trail for making that decision is clear and unambiguous)”.

RESOLVED: to

1. note the further work done by the Joint Constitution Review Group and the intention to bring forward further revisions of the council's constitution for consideration by Council;
2. note the ongoing overall approach of the review group to develop “mirror” constitutions with Vale of White Horse District Council and commonality of wording where possible;
3. approve the revised contracts procedure rules attached as appendix one to the report of the head of legal and democratic services to the Council meeting on 21 July 2016 for inclusion in the constitution with effect from 1 August 2016;
4. approve the revised scheme of delegation to officers attached as appendix two to the report of the head of legal and democratic services to the Council meeting on 21 July 2016 for inclusion in the constitution with effect from 1 August 2016 subject to the deletion of “and the request is agreed by the chairman or, in their absence, the vice chairman in consultation with the head of planning. (This request must be in writing and deal with the planning issues to ensure that the audit trail for making that decision is clear and unambiguous)” from delegation 1.1 (a) to the head of planning;
5. authorise the head of legal and democratic services to update the proper officer and authorised officer appointments section of the constitution to reflect the revised scheme of delegation;
6. approve the councillors' planning code of practice attached as appendix three to the report of the head of legal and democratic services to the Council meeting on 21 July 2016 for inclusion in the constitution with effect from 1 August 2016;
7. approve the revised petition scheme attached as appendix four to the report of the head of legal and democratic services to the Council meeting on 21 July 2016 for inclusion in the constitution with effect from 1 August 2016;

8. authorise the head of legal and democratic services to make any minor or consequential amendments to the constitution for consistency and to reflect the councils' style guide.

21 Appointment of electoral registration officer and returning officer

Council considered the report of the head of legal and democratic services on the appointments of the council's electoral registration officer and returning officer with effect from 1 September 2016.

RESOLVED:

1. that in terms of the Representation of the People Act 1983 and all related legislation, with effect from 1 September 2016, to appoint David Hill as electoral registration officer and to reappoint Margaret Reed as deputy electoral registration officer;
2. that in terms of section 41 of the Local Government Act 1972 and all related legislation, with effect from 1 September 2016, to appoint David Hill as returning officer, with authority to act in that capacity for elections to the councils and all or any parish and town councils within the councils' areas;
3. to authorise the councils' electoral registration officer to act in respect of all related electoral, poll or referendum duties, including in relation to county council elections, elections to the European Parliament and national, regional and local polls or referendums;
4. that in relation to the duties of returning officer or any other electoral, referendum or polling duties arising from such appointment, to remunerate the returning officer for local elections, polls or referendums in accordance with the scale of fees approved from time to time by the councils and to note that the returning officer will be entitled to the relevant scale of fees prescribed by a fees order in respect of national, regional or European Parliament elections, polls or referendums;
5. that in all cases where it is a legal requirement or normal practice to do so, the fees paid to the returning officer shall be superannuable and that South Oxfordshire District Council as the employing authority shall pay the appropriate employer's contribution to the superannuation fund, recovering such employer's contributions from central government or other local authorities or agencies where this can be done;
6. that in relation to the conduct of local authority elections and polls, and elections to the United Kingdom Parliament, and all other electoral duties where the councils are entitled by law to do so, the councils shall take out and maintain in force insurance indemnifying the councils and the returning officer against legal expenses reasonably incurred in connection with the defence of any proceedings brought against the councils or the returning officer and/or the cost of holding another election in the event of the original election being declared invalid (provided that such proceedings or invalidation are the result of the accidental contravention of the Representation of the People Acts or other legislation governing the electoral process, or accidental breach of any ministerial or other duty by the returning officer or any other person employed by or officially acting for him in connection with the election or poll);

7. that in the event of such insurance carrying an 'excess' clause by which an initial portion of risk is not insured, the councils will indemnify the returning officer up to the value of such excess.

22 Application for voluntary redundancy

Council considered the confidential report of the chief executive on a request for voluntary redundancy. The report and recommendation of the Joint Staff Committee were circulated to all councillors on 12 July 2016.

Lynn Lloyd, Chairman of the Joint Staff Committee, advised that in light of plans to implement a slimmer and flatter management structure and in the expectation that the role of strategic director is highly unlikely to remain in the revised structure, Steve Bishop had asked that he be made redundant as of 31 December. As required by the council's officer employment procedure rules, all Cabinet members had been consulted about the recommendation. No objection was received. Vale of White Horse District Council had agreed the request at its Council meeting on 20 July 2016.

At the request of the chairman Council formally put on record its thanks to Steve Bishop for his hard work for the council and wished him well for the future. Over the last two years he had been instrumental in driving forward the five councils partnership with all the benefits that this is due to deliver shortly.

RESOLVED:

To agree to the voluntary redundancy of Steve Bishop effective from 31 December 2016.

23 Report of the Leader of the council

The Leader of the council provided the following updates:

- The Local Plan - preferred options were out for consultation. He asked councillors to encourage the public to respond to the consultation and/or attend one of the community exhibitions.
- Unitary status – the Oxfordshire authorities had issued a joint statement marking a pause in plans for consultation on unitary status proposals in light of national developments (new prime minister, new secretary of state and Brexit). Publication of the reports had been postponed. The Oxfordshire councils had agreed to discuss areas of common ground, assess potential options and seek to agree a way forward building on the work done to date.
- He had recently signed an open letter encouraging the Government to make a decision in respect of a further runway at Heathrow Airport. He did this in his personal capacity. His comments were not intended to reflect a formal council view.
- The first of this year's parish council forums was well received. He encouraged councillors to seek feedback from their parish councils on the format of the event.

He thanked David Buckle, Chief Executive, for his valuable support during his time as leader and wished him well for his retirement.

24 Motions under Council procedure rule 41

Mr Paul Harrison moved and Mr Stefan Gawrysiak seconded the following motion:

We are proud to live in a diverse and tolerant society. We believe that hate crimes have no place in our country, whether they are based on race, religion, sexual orientation, age, disability or gender identity. South Oxfordshire District Council condemn racism, xenophobia and hate crimes unequivocally. We will not allow hate to become acceptable.

We reassure all people living in South Oxfordshire that they are valued members of our community.

RESOLVED:

That we are proud to live in a diverse and tolerant society. We believe that hate crimes have no place in our country, whether they are based on race, religion, sexual orientation, age, disability or gender identity. South Oxfordshire District Council condemn racism, xenophobia and hate crimes unequivocally. We will not allow hate to become acceptable.

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The meeting closed at 7:10pm

Chairman