

# Council



Listening Learning Leading

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## Summons to attend a meeting of Council

to be held on

**THURSDAY 14 JULY 2022 AT 6.00 PM**

at

**135 EASTERN AVENUE, MILTON PARK, OX14 4SB**

To watch this meeting, follow this link to the council's YouTube channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCTj2pCic8vzucpzlaSWE3UQ>

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Arran'.

Patrick Arran  
Head of Legal and Democratic

# Agenda

## 1 Apologies for absence

To record apologies for absence.

## 2 Minutes (Pages 8 - 19)

To adopt and sign as a correct record the Council minutes of the annual meeting held on 19 May 2022.

## 3 Declarations of interest

To receive declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests, other registrable interests and non-registrable interests or any conflicts of interest in respect of items on the agenda for this meeting.

## 4 Urgent business and chair's announcements

To receive notification of any matters which the chair determines should be considered as urgent business and the special circumstances which have made the matters urgent, and to receive any announcements from the chair.

## 5 Public participation

To receive any questions or statements from members of the public that have registered to speak.

## 6 Petitions

To receive any petitions from the public.

## 7 Community Governance Review - related alteration order

The Community Governance and Electoral Issues Committee is currently undertaking a community governance review and will be making final decisions on a number of community governance reviews at its meeting on 8 September 2022. The committee could agree changes to parish boundaries which would impact on district ward and county division boundaries. To make district ward and county divisions coterminous with any parish changes Council is invited to authorise the head of legal and democratic to request the Local Government Boundary Commission for England to make related alteration orders to alter both the district wards and county division boundaries. Any such requests must be submitted by 1 October, prior to the next Council meeting, to ensure any changes are implemented for the May 2023 elections.

**RECOMMENDATION:** to authorise the head of legal and democratic to request the Local Government Boundary Commission for England to make related alteration orders to change district wards and county divisions to reflect the changes made to parish boundaries arising from the current community governance review.

## **8 Report of the leader of the council**

To receive the report of Councillor David Rouane, Leader of the council.

## **9 Questions on notice**

To receive questions from councillors in accordance with Council procedure rule 33.

- A. Question from Councillor Mocky Khan to Councillor Sue Cooper, Cabinet member for Environment, Climate Change and Nature Recovery

It seems that all other towns within South Oxfordshire are getting Electric Vehicle (EV) charging points except Didcot. Can the Cabinet member for Environment, Climate Change and Nature Recovery explain the criteria for selection and why Didcot was excluded?

- B. Question from Councillor David Bartholomew to Councillor Andrea Powell, Cabinet member for Corporate Services, Policy and Programmes

At the Full Council meeting in May you announced there will be six FTE officers in the core climate action team.

What is the annual cost of this to the council and what exactly are these officers going to do?

## **10 Motions on notice**

To consider motions from councillors in accordance with Council procedure rule 38.

- A. Motion to be proposed by Councillor Anne-Marie Simpson, seconded by Councillor Alexandrine Kantor

Good food is vital to us all and food production and farming is an important economic and employment sector in our district, with agriculture at the heart of many of our communities.

However, the rising costs of fuel and other supplies is creating increased pressure on farmers across the district, whilst government policies on international trade deals threaten to undermine UK food quality standards and risk putting farmers out of business – as well as exacerbating food insecurity in the UK. At the same time, significant increases in the cost of living are putting pressure on residents across South Oxfordshire, forcing them to make difficult choices regarding their household budgets, including the amount spent on food and heating.

The district council has a number of ways and opportunities that can help influence food production, support sustainable farming and distribution, reduce food waste, and promote healthy eating for the benefit of our residents and the environment, whilst supporting action to address climate change and building on the council's corporate plan objectives.

Council therefore resolves:

1. To promote local food production and distribution and a sustainable food culture in South Oxfordshire by maximising opportunities to highlight the importance of food and farming in our local economy through our website, communications the press and social media
2. To recognise that the initial cause of food poverty is not agricultural but economic/socio-economic due to high cost of living and to work with local partners such as Good Food Oxfordshire to promote and encourage food planning
3. To encourage farming communities and agricultural businesses to respond to any consultation on our new Joint Local Plan and Oxfordshire Plan 2050 and to engage more generally with the council.
4. To encourage developers to include community gardens and allotment provision within all new housing developments.
5. To encourage and promote high environmental health standards at all stages of food production, distribution and redistribution, and continue to support local businesses, local farmers' markets and 'farm-door' sales, recognising their positive impact on reducing the carbon emissions associated with food miles.
6. To continue to investigate ways we can support food redistribution organisations and food charities to address food poverty in the district, noting the work that has already been done in this regard.
7. To continue to promote ways we can reduce food waste through our waste service and the use of food recycling bins and promotion of the circular economy (reduce, re-use and recycle), highlighting the climate benefits this can bring through initiatives such as Food Waste Action Week.
8. To minimise food waste at any event that we may host that serves food, and to use such occasions to highlight the use of waste food, low carbon options, and locally sourced produce wherever possible.

B. Motion to be proposed by Councillor David Rouane, seconded by Councillor Robin Bennett:

**Council notes that:**

- On 1 April 2022, Ofgem increased the energy price cap by 54%, however there is no price cap on solid fuel, bottled gas or heating oil.
- The average standard tariff energy bill will increase by £693 per year. The average pre-pay meter energy bill will increase by £708 per year (Ofgem, 2022).
- The energy price cap is expected to rise significantly again in October this year.
- The Universal Credit £20 uplift was removed last year.
- Forecourt fuel prices have rapidly increased and are close to £2 per litre,

- badly affecting key workers, logistics, farming and food production.
- On 6 April 2022, the Government increased National Insurance by 1.25 per cent, which is projected to cost the average family an additional £108 per year.
  - 9 in 10 (88%) adults reported their cost of living had risen over the past month, with many citing affordability of food and medicines as a major concern.
  - Reliance on Food Banks has greatly increased across South Oxfordshire.
  - The cost of living increases also impact council services, from housing needs to the work of the community hub. Council finances are badly affected by rising inflation.

### **Council declares that we have moved from a Cost of Living Crisis to a Cost of Living Emergency**

Council asks the leader to call on the Government to:

- Urgently review the energy cap regime and provide much greater protection to consumers, as other European countries have done.
- Make an immediate reduction in VAT, which proportionally helps those most in need
- Increase benefits in line with inflation and reinstate the Universal Credit uplift
- Urgently provide financial support to public transport to avoid service reductions
- Recognise that councils like South Oxfordshire will need additional funding to support services affected by high inflation

Council further resolves:

- To call for a local Cost-of-Living Emergency Summit with stakeholders, including Oxfordshire County Council, Citizens Advice, Food Banks, and others, and to invite both local MPs to attend to work towards a community response to the emergency.
- To ensure Council continues to maximise opportunities to inform and support residents in need, directing them towards services that advise on heating bills, employment and skills and wellbeing support via our Community Hub
- To continue to offer up to 100% council tax reduction, subject to circumstances, and to advise our residents through all channels of communication how to apply for the scheme

- C. Motion to be proposed by Councillor Jo Robb, seconded by Councillor Elizabeth Gillespie:

This Council notes:

Residents and councillors remain deeply concerned about water quality and the impact on human health and wildlife, of sewage discharges into the River Thames and its tributaries.

Sewage discharges are happening with increasing frequency. Thames Water dumped raw sewage into the River Thames and its tributaries 5,028 times in 2021.

Data obtained from Thames Water and compiled by the Oxford Rivers Improvement Campaign (ORIC) shows that in 2020, treatment works in South Oxfordshire were

operating significantly short of the capacity required to cope with existing populations.

- Didcot has 61% of the capacity required
- Oxford Sewage Treatment Works in (Sandford), has 62% of the capacity required
- Chinnor has 69% of the capacity required
- Wheatley has 86% of the capacity required
- Chalgrove has 71% of the capacity required

South Oxfordshire has plans for almost 30,000 new homes to be delivered between 2011 and 2035. The district has already seen a significant increase in its population of 14,800 from 134,300 (2011) to 149,100 (2021).

Legislation establishes the right to connect to the foul water system. Where Thames Water identifies infrastructure capacity issues and the developer indicates that it intends to connect to the public sewer, South Oxfordshire District Council makes permission conditional on Thames Water taking necessary steps to ensure the public sewer can cope with the increased load (“Grampian-style” conditions).

But the Council is not informed of the specifics of sewage treatment capacity and is not told whether development is likely to lead to an increase in sewage discharges into the Thames or its tributaries.

This Council resolves to:

1. Ensure that an evidence base is compiled that assesses the cumulative impact of sewage discharge so that this is factored into decisions on the new Joint Local Plan.
2. Request that Thames Water submit to Council and make public by the end of 2022, detailed and up to date information on sewage treatment work capacity at all treatment works in South Oxfordshire, make clear plans for infrastructure improvements and detail how these will work to reduce and ultimately eliminate sewage discharges.
3. Ask Thames Water, as part of its response to major planning applications, to provide detailed and up to date information on capacity at the treatment works that will be handling the waste from the new development, and information on the likely impact of additional development on sewage discharges into the River Thames and its tributaries, in order that this information can be considered in the decision-making process.
4. Request that planning officers include in all reports relating to major development, a summary response from Thames Water to our consultation and, where information/data is provided, include a specific section on the impact on the wastewater network and watercourses, including the potential for the development to affect sewage discharges.
5. Noting Thames Water’s plans to make information from electronic duration monitors public by the end of 2022, ask Thames Water to measure and make public, information on the *volume* of sewage discharged, not just the number of hours.
6. Request that Thames Water provide detailed costings and timescales to

achieve a progressive reduction and ultimately an end to sewage discharges in South Oxfordshire.

7. Ask the Leader to write to OFWAT and the Secretary of State to request that work take place to align water company investment strategies and timetables with strategic local planning so that planned infrastructure investment better relates to planned housing development.
8. Ask the Leader to write to the Secretary of State, OFWAT and the Environment Agency to request that sewerage undertakers be required to make public, up to date information on sewage treatment work capacity and volume of sewage discharges for all sewage treatment works by the end of 2023.

## **11 Exclusion of the public**

To consider whether to exclude members of the press and public from the meeting for the following item of business under Part 1 of Schedule 12A Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 and as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006 on the grounds that:

- (i) it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act, and
- (ii) the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

## **12 Application for grant funding - Thame and District Housing Association** (Pages 20 - 28)

Cabinet, at its meeting on 23 June 2022, considered the confidential report of the deputy chief executive – place on the provision of grant funding using commuted sums held by the council, towards an affordable housing project being delivered by Thame and District Housing Association (TDHA), who are registered with the Regulator of Social Housing as a Registered Provider of affordable housing.

The recommendations of Cabinet were circulated to all councillors on 24 June 2022.

Patrick Arran  
Head of Legal and Democratic

