

Minutes

OF A MEETING OF THE

Council



Listening Learning Leading

**Held on Thursday 13 October 2022 at 6.00 pm
Didcot Civic Hall, Britwell Road, Didcot, OX11 7JN**

Present:

Councillors: David Turner (Chair), Ken Arlett, Anna Badcock, Pieter-Paul Barker, David Bartholomew, Tim Bearder, Robin Bennett, David Bretherton, Sam Casey-Rerhaye, Sue Cooper, Peter Dragonetti, Maggie Filipova-Rivers, Victoria Haval, Lorraine Hillier, Kellie Hinton, Alexandrine Kantor, Mocky Khan, George Levy, Lynn Lloyd, Axel Macdonald, Jane Murphy, Caroline Newton, Andrea Powell, Leigh Rawlins, Sue Roberts, David Rouane, Anne-Marie Simpson, Ian Snowdon, Alan Thompson, Ian White and Celia Wilson

Officers: Ifty Ali, Locum Governance Consultant, Steven Corrigan, Democratic Services Manager and Simon Hewings, Head of Finance & Section 151 Officer

Apologies for absence: Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Stefan Gawrysiak, Elizabeth Gillespie, Kate Gregory, Jo Robb and Andrea Warren.

33 Minutes

RESOLVED: to approve the minutes and confidential minutes of the meeting held on 14 July 2022 and the minutes of the special meeting of Council held on 8 September as correct records and agree that the Chair sign them as such.

34 Declarations of interest

None.

35 Urgent business and chair's announcements

The Chair thanked officers for all their work to help ensure the local arrangements for the national mourning period following the death of Her Majesty The Queen had run to plan and smoothly. The Chair advised that he had represented the council at a service of remembrance and thanksgiving and the Proclamation for King Charles III, both in Oxford. The vice-chair had attended the Proclamation in Henley-on-Thames.

36 Public participation

No members of the public had registered to address Council.

37 Petitions

None.

38 Treasury outturn 2021/22

Council considered Cabinet's recommendations, made at its meeting on 29 September 2022, on the outturn performance of the treasury management function for the financial year 2021/22. The Joint Audit and Governance Committee and Cabinet had considered the head of finance's report and were satisfied that the treasury activities had been carried out in accordance with the treasury management strategy and policy.

In response to a question regarding the lack of environmental, social and governance (ESGs) considerations in the current Treasury Management Strategy (TMS), Councillor Rawlins, Cabinet member for Finance, responded that Council was being invited to approve the 2021/21 outturn against the strategy in place during that period at this meeting. He acknowledged that the council was looking at a revision of the TMS to include ESG factors alongside financial factors. However, the council had a duty to reflect the principles of security, liquidity and to invest in sound investments.

RESOLVED: to

1. approve the treasury management outturn report 2021/22; and
2. approve the actual 2021/22 prudential indicators within the report.

39 Adoption of powers from Oxfordshire County Council under Land Drainage Act

Council considered Cabinet's recommendations, made at its meeting on 29 September, on a request from Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) for the district council to act as an agent of the county council in the discharge of delegated functions for the operation and management of the powers and responsibilities of the lead local flood authority (LLFA) under Sections 19, 23, 24 and 25 of the 1991 Land Drainage Act.

RESOLVED: to approve the adoption of powers under an agency agreement with Oxfordshire County Council.

40 Woodcote Neighbourhood Development Plan Review

Council considered the recommendation of Councillor Simpson, Cabinet member for planning, made on 30 September 2022, to make the Woodcote Neighbourhood Development Plan part of the development plan for South Oxfordshire.

RESOLVED: to

1. To make the Woodcote Neighbourhood Development Plan Review, so that it continues to be part of the council's development plan.
2. To authorise the Head of Policy and Programmes, in consultation with the appropriate Cabinet Member and in agreement with the Qualifying Body, Woodcote Parish Council the correction of any spelling, grammatical, typographical or factual errors together with

any improvements from a presentational perspective

41 Cholsey Neighbourhood Development Plan Review

Council considered the recommendation of Councillor Rouane, Leader of the council, made on 30 September 2022, to make the Cholsey Neighbourhood Development Plan part of the development plan for South Oxfordshire.

RESOLVED: to

1. make the Cholsey Neighbourhood Development Plan Review with the modifications specified in the Examiner's report;
2. authorise the Head of Policy and Programmes, in consultation with the appropriate Cabinet Member and in agreement with the Qualifying Body, Cholsey Parish Council, the correction of any spelling, grammatical, typographical or factual errors together with any improvements from a presentational perspective.

42 Review of the council's constitution

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

In introducing the report, Councillor Pieter-Paul Barker, Cabinet member for Legal and Democratic, advised that officers would amend the wording on councillor eligibility which, as written, omits reference to EU nationals.

RESOLVED:

1. That Council adopts the following for inclusion in the new joint Constitution with effect from the Annual Meeting of Council in May 2023 or earlier if practicable upon the advice of the Monitoring Officer:
 - a) Part 1 - Summary and Explanation section set out in Appendix B to the report of the head of legal and democratic to the Council meeting on 13 October 2022;
 - b) Part 2 - Articles of the Constitution set out in Appendix C to the report of the head of legal and democratic to the Council meeting on 13 October 2022;
 - c) Part 3 (c) – Committee Functions;
2. That Council adopts the following changes to the joint Constitution with immediate effect:
 - a) Replace Part 16 Joint Staff Committee Procedure Rules with the Joint Staff Committee terms of reference and procedure rules set out in Appendix D to the report of the head of legal and democratic to the Council meeting on 13 October 2022;

- b) Replace Part 22 Officer Employment Procedure Rules with the document set out in Appendix E to the report of the head of legal and democratic to the Council meeting on 13 October 2022;
 - c) Adopt the Officers' Code of Conduct set out in Appendix F to the report of the head of legal and democratic to the Council meeting on 13 October 2022 and insert as Part 35;
 - d) Replace Part 28 - The Protocol on Member and Officer Relations with the document set out in Appendix G to the report of the head of legal and democratic to the Council meeting on 13 October 2022;
 - e) Adopt the Press and Media Protocol set out in Appendix H to the report of the head of legal and democratic to the Council meeting on 13 October 2022 and insert as Part 36;
 - f) To retain Part 18p paragraph 1.1(c)(i) in the head of planning's scheme of delegation as a mechanism to allow members to request a call-in of an amended planning application; and
3. To authorise the head of legal and democratic to make these changes and any further minor or consequential amendments to the Constitution.

43 Report of the leader of the council

Councillor David Rouane, Leader of the council, provided an update on a number of issues. The text of his address is available on the council's [website](#).

44 Questions on notice

No questions were submitted from councillors.

45 Motions on notice

1. Councillor Mocky Khan moved, and Councillor Axel Macdonald seconded, the motion as set out in the agenda at agenda item 14

After debate and on being put to the vote the motion was agreed.

RESOLVED:

That Council supports in principle that the community of Great Western Park should reside in one parish within one district council area.

Council notes:

1. that the community of Great Western Park is currently split between those living in Didcot parish within South Oxfordshire District Council and those living in Harwell parish within Vale of White Horse District Council;

2. that a request to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England for a review of the boundaries of principal council areas, by means of Principal Area Boundary Review (PABR), must be made by all the principal councils concerned, in this case South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse district councils;
3. that any final decision on such a request would require consideration of a report from the chief executive covering the benefits of the proposal, the financial implications and evidence of support from the local community.

Council resolves to request the chief executive to ask the Leader of Vale of White Horse if an item can be included on the next Council agenda for Vale of White Horse District Council to seek views on whether it would support, in principle, a request to the LGBCE for a PABR of the boundary between South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils to address the current geographical division of the community within Great Western Park.

2. Councillor Robin Bennett moved, and Councillor Leigh Rawlins seconded, the motion as set out in the agenda at agenda item 14

Councillor David Bartholomew moved, and Councillor Jane Murphy seconded, a motion without notice to withdraw the motion. In doing so they expressed the view that consideration of the motion was not necessary because Oxfordshire County Council had already written to government ministers to state it would not bid to be involved in the investment zone initiative. The majority of councillors expressed the view that, irrespective of the response from Oxfordshire County Council, it was important that Council expressed its view on the matter.

On being put the motion without notice was declared lost.

After debate and on being put to the vote the motion as set out in the agenda was agreed.

RESOLVED:

That council considers that the UK government's so-called 'investment zones', proposed by the Chancellor in his recent 'mini-budget', are a disaster in the making, for the environment, local communities, democracy and public finances.

Council notes that the similar 'enterprise zones' introduced in 2011 only generated about one quarter of the forecast jobs and that a significant part of those were from existing companies moving into the zones.

Under the proposals, local consultations and environmental regulations have been presented as 'burdensome requirements'. Development which 'responds to the market' in these zones is required to be additional to the sites already set out in Local Plans, which are carefully planned to respond to local needs and to respect the local environment. Investment zones will be able to 'relax' well-evidenced policy requirements that have been consulted on and approved by local councillors. Those policies are there for a reason.

It appears that EU-based environmental regulations such as Habitat Regulation Assessments will be scrapped in these zones, with no clarity as to how they will be replaced.

Instead of treating nature protection as something that is in the way of growth, the environment should be at the heart of decision-making, given that it is the foundation of all economic prosperity.

Oxfordshire's 6 councils have already agreed a Strategic Vision for long-term sustainable development; adopting a get rich quick scheme devised by Right-wing think tanks is not in keeping with that vision.

Council asks the Leader to write to DLUHC and Oxfordshire County Council to say that South Oxfordshire is already a key contributor to the wider UK economy and that democratic local plans remain the best vehicle to continue to deliver that contribution. Responding to the market alone is not enough: South Oxfordshire's residents need to be heard, not sidelined, and our environment respected.

46 Exclusion of the public

RESOLVED:

To exclude members of the press and public from the meeting for the following item of business under Section 100A and 100I of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that:

- (i) It is likely that there will be disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A, and
- (ii) the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

47 Application for Grant Funding by Soha Limited - Cullum House, Wheatley (see exempt minute)

Council considered and agreed Cabinet's recommendation, made at its meeting on 29 September 2022, on the provision of grant funding using commuted sums held by the council, towards an affordable housing project being delivered by Soha Ltd in Wheatley.

The meeting closed at 7.50PM

Chair

Date

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