

Council



Listening Learning Leading

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Summons to attend a meeting of Council

to be held on

THURSDAY 11 FEBRUARY 2021 AT 6.00 PM

as a

VIRTUAL MEETING

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

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MARGARET REED
Head of Legal and Democratic

Agenda

1 Apologies for absence

To record apologies for absence.

2 Minutes (Pages 10 - 21)

To adopt and sign as a correct record the Council minutes of the meeting held on 10 and 22 December 2020.

3 Declarations of disclosable pecuniary interest

To receive any declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests in respect of items on the agenda for this meeting.

4 Urgent business and chairman's announcements

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

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 Treasury management and investment strategy 2021/22 (Pages 22 - 62)

Cabinet, at its meeting on 4 February 2021, will consider a report on the council's treasury management and investment strategy for 2021/22.

The Joint Audit and Governance Committee considered the report at its meeting on 26 January 2021 and had not recommended any adjustments to the strategy.

The committee resolved to recommend Cabinet to approve the treasury management strategy, the prudential indicators and limits for 2021/22 to 2023/24 and the annual investment strategy 2021/22 as set out in the report.

The report of the interim head of finance, which Cabinet will consider on 4 February 2021, is attached.

The recommendations of Cabinet will be circulated to all councillors following the Cabinet meeting.

8 Capital strategy 2021/22 to 2030/31 (Pages 63 - 74)

Cabinet, at its meeting on 4 February 2021, will consider a report on the capital strategy for 2021/22 to 2030/31.

The report of the interim head of finance, which Cabinet will consider on 4 February 2021, is attached.

The recommendations of Cabinet will be circulated to all councillors following the Cabinet meeting.

9 Revenue budget 2021/22 and capital programme to 2025/26 (Pages 75 - 114)

Cabinet, at its meeting on 4 February 2021, will consider a report on the draft revenue budget 2021/22, and the capital programme to 2025/26.

The report of the interim head of finance, which Cabinet will consider on 4 February 2021, is attached.

The recommendations of Cabinet will be circulated to all councillors following the Cabinet meeting.

The Scrutiny Committee will consider this report at its meeting on 9 February 2021. Any views will be reported to Council.

10 Council tax 2021/22

To consider the report of the interim head of finance on the setting of the council tax for the 2021/22 financial year - report to follow.

11 Review of Joint Statement of Licensing Policy (Pages 115 - 161)

At its meeting on 26 January 2021, the Licensing Acts Committee considered the report of the Head of Housing and Environment. This proposed a statement of licensing policy, jointly developed with Vale of White Horse District Council. A copy of the report of the Head of Housing and Environment considered by the Licensing Acts Committee and the draft policy agreed for recommendation to Council is attached.

Recommendations to Council: to

1. authorise the Head of Housing and Environment to make minor editorial changes to the Joint Statement of Licensing Policy, and
2. adopt the proposed Joint Statement of Licensing Policy with effect from 12 February 2021.

12 Pay policy statement 2021/22 (Pages 162 - 165)

To consider the report of the head of corporate services on the adoption of a pay policy statement to meet the requirements of the Localism Act - report attached.

13 Councillors' allowances scheme (Pages 166 - 197)

To consider the report of the head of legal and democratic, and the recommendations of the Joint Independent Remuneration Panel, on a revised councillors' allowances scheme to run from 1 April 2021 - attached.

14 Review of political balance (Pages 198 - 203)

To consider the report of the head of legal and democratic – attached.

15 Progress on approved Council motions (Pages 204 - 223)

To note progress on the approved Council motions – attached.

16 Report of the leader of the council

1. To receive the report of the leader of the council.
2. Urgent cabinet decisions

In accordance with the Scrutiny Committee Procedure Rules, a Cabinet or Cabinet member decision can be taken as a matter of urgency, if any delay by the call in process would seriously prejudice the council's or the public's interest or that the decision cannot reasonably be deferred. Treating the decision as a matter of urgency must be agreed by the chair of the Scrutiny Committee and must be reported to Council, together with the reasons for urgency.

Council is requested to note the details of the following urgent decision.

Additional Restrictions Grant – Round 2

On 20 January 2021, Councillor Leigh Rawlins, Cabinet member for finance, took a decision to approve South Oxfordshire District Council's Additional Restrictions Grant Scheme Round 2 and authorise the interim head of development and regeneration, in consultation with the interim head of finance to award grants.

The chair of the Scrutiny Committee agreed to waive call in to allow the grants to be awarded immediately and during the national lockdown period of 5 January to 15 February 2021.

17 Questions on notice

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

1. Question from Councillor Jane Murphy to Councillor Sue Cooper, Leader of

the council

Can the Leader of the Council detail what she has already done and how she will continue to support this Council's decision to adopt the Local Plan; and can she confirm she acknowledges that as Leader of the Council she is required to represent Full Council's decision in this (and any other) regard

2. Question from Councillor Jane Murphy to Councillor Anne-Marie Simpson, Cabinet member for planning

Can the Cabinet Member for Planning confirm that she has informed the Department of Transport, as agreed by Full Council, of this council's opposition to the building of a car based third road bridge over the Thames at Reading, and could she make this available on the website.

3. Question from Councillor Ian Snowdon to Councillor Maggie Filipova-Rivers, Cabinet member for community services

During the last eleven months South Oxfordshire has witnessed so many incredible residents rise to the challenge of helping each other in these difficult and unprecedented times, finding solutions to problems to ensure our most vulnerable are cared for during this worldwide emergency. Can the Cabinet member for community services give an update on the number of these groups in our district and what plans the council has for recognising these wonderful volunteers and their amazing dedication to their communities?

4. Question from Councillor Ian White to Councillor Maggie Filipova-Rivers, Cabinet member for community services

Why do we no longer promote the South Oxfordshire Charitable Lottery, nor publish the results of the weekly draw on Twitter, whilst continuing to do so on Facebook? The last results were posted on 3 October 2020 with three subsequent Christmas and New Year's best wishes postings during December.

How much officer time is used to run the Lottery?

Given that a paper was presented to the Vale of White Horse Cabinet and approved on the subject of establishing a Lottery following on from an initial approval in 2018, is consideration being given to the possibility of merging our Scheme with the Vale's Scheme, and benefiting from any cost savings, whilst at the same time giving a greater opportunity for successful promotion of the Scheme(s)?

18 Motions on notice

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

A. Motion proposed by Councillor Ian Snowdon, seconded by Councillor Caroline Newton.

Council notes that it has appointed a cycling champion to promote the benefits of cycling and a River Thames champion to promote the river and all it brings to our

district. As much as the River Thames is a wonderful asset enjoyed by many for which the council has an obligation to protect and enhance, Council notes that our beautiful (mostly green) district is that way because of our amazing countryside and wildlife which should also be protected and enhanced.

Council therefore agrees to appoint a Tree Champion to:

- Promote the value of trees and woodlands in tackling the climate and ecological emergencies
- Encourage people to re-connect with nature and appreciate the importance of trees and woodlands for both environmental and human health and well-being
- Promote woodland protection/conservation and tree growing initiatives in the district
- Work with officers and members to develop and promote a Tree Policy and Strategy
- Raise awareness of the statutory protections for trees and woodland within local communities, town and parish councils.

B. Motion proposed by Councillor Sam Casey-Rerhaye, seconded by Councillor David Rouane.

Council has adopted a new Corporate Plan that has as one of its main priorities: 'Protect and Restore the Natural World'. In the consultation exercise on this Plan, this theme was ranked the most important by a high number of respondents. This Council has already, rightly, declared a climate emergency (April 2019).

Council acknowledges that:

- Our societies and economies are intimately linked with and depend on biodiversity and nature. The natural world is essential for the provision of nutritious food (with soil and pollinators having a vital role), clean water, clean air, medicines, and protection from extreme weather, as well as being our source of energy and raw materials
- The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the relationship between people and nature. When we destroy and degrade habitats, we increase the risk of disease spill-over from wildlife to people
- The State of Nature 2019 report highlighted the critical decline in biodiversity in the UK. Changes in farming practices have had the biggest effect in recent decades and the impact of climate change is now increasing. 15% of UK species are classified as threatened with extinction and 2% are already extinct
- The [State of the World's Plants and Fungi 2020 report](#) from Royal Botanic Gardens Kew estimated that 39.4% of plants are now threatened with extinction. This is a jump from one in five plants thought to be at risk in Kew's 2016 report
- The Environment Bill will require the introduction of a Local Nature Recovery Strategy and Nature Recovery Networks
- Actions to restore nature and biodiversity, as well as being vital for their own sake, often have an important co-benefit of storing carbon, so help address

climate change

- People's access to 'green spaces' to understand and appreciate biodiversity and a rich, natural world, private or public, is unequal

Council resolves to:

1. Declare an ecological emergency
2. Rename CEAC the Climate and Ecological Emergencies Advisory Committee, to help Cabinet and council officers address these twin emergencies
3. Add ecological impact implications alongside those for climate and sustainability in committee and council reports.
4. Ensure that addressing the climate and ecological emergencies and nature recovery are considered as strategic priorities for planning policies and design guides for new development, including master-planning of sites, by identifying appropriate areas for habitat restoration and biodiversity net gain and ensuring that development limits impact on existing habitats in its process, whilst also working on the principle of increasing equality of access for people to natural, green spaces
5. Establish a Biodiversity Steering Group involving both key officers and members to oversee and develop the Councils approach to nature protection and recovery
6. Set measurable targets and standards for biodiversity increase, in both species and quantities, seeking also to increase community engagement
7. Work with our partners to establish a Local Nature Partnership for Oxfordshire as soon as possible, in keeping with the urgency of this declaration
8. Work with our partners to develop Nature Recovery Networks and Nature Recovery Strategy for Oxfordshire, again in keeping with the urgency of this declaration
9. Look for opportunities to work in partnership with local charities and environmental organisations to deliver nature recovery in South Oxfordshire
10. Develop a district wide Tree Planting Policy and Strategy, including having Member Tree Champions, to support nature protection and recovery and carbon sequestration
11. Build on the work of the Thames Champion to improve the ecology of the Thames and its banks and flood plains, a hugely important habitat in our District
12. Ensure the Strategic Property Review considers opportunities for biodiversity enhancements and tree planting on Council landholdings
13. Investigate new approaches to nature recovery such as habitat banking that deliver biodiversity objectives and provide new investment opportunities

14. Embed climate action and ecological initiatives within all council work areas, including COVID-19 recovery projects and programmes
15. Write to all South Oxfordshire's MPs urging them to support the Climate and Ecological Bill, a private member's bill, in keeping with the declarations of this Council.

C. Motion proposed by Councillor David Rouane, seconded by Councillor Sarah Gray

Council has adopted a corporate plan which commits it to 'Protect and Restore the Natural World' and 'Recognise and support the vital role of farming' in our community.

Sky lanterns are small hot air balloons made of paper, with an opening at the bottom where a candle is suspended, they can float for miles before they fall to the ground. The NFU has launched a campaign to highlight the dangers posed by sky lanterns such as:

- **Fire** - Once a sky lantern is lit, nobody knows exactly where it will land. Fields of standing crops, hay and straw stacks, farm buildings housing animals, thatched roofs plus lots more are all at a significant risk of being set alight.
- **Animals and Livestock** - Sky lanterns can cause suffering or even kill animals and livestock, not just by fire, sky lantern debris can cause immense stress and injury. For example, animals eating lantern debris which can cause tears or punctures to internal organs leading to a potentially life-threatening situation, animals getting splinters in their skin which may cause infection or, animals becoming trapped or tangled in debris.
- **Litter nuisance** - landowners have to clear up the remnants of sky lanterns from their fields.

The council therefore resolves to support this campaign and:

- To ban the release of sky lanterns at events held on property owned by the council.
- To use its communication channels to advertise the dangers of sky lanterns to event organisers, other landowners including town and parish councils, and the general public.

19 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.

20 Revenue budget 2021/22 and capital programme to 2025/26
(Page 224)

The confidential appendix A 6 to the revenue budget 2021/22 item (agenda item 9) is attached.

MARGARET REED

Head of Legal and Democratic