

# Minutes

OF A MEETING OF THE

# Council

HELD ON THURSDAY 11 FEBRUARY 2021 AT 6.00 PM

AS A VIRTUAL MEETING

## Present:

David Bretherton (Chairman)

Ken Arlett, Anna Badcock, Pieter-Paul Barker, David Bartholomew, Robin Bennett, Sam Casey-Rerhaye, Sue Cooper, Peter Dragonetti, Maggie Filipova-Rivers, Stefan Gawrysiak, Elizabeth Gillespie, Sarah Gray, Kate Gregory, Victoria Haval, Lorraine Hillier, Kellie Hinton, Alexandrine Kantor, Mocky Khan, George Levy, Lynn Lloyd, Axel Macdonald, Jane Murphy, Caroline Newton, Andrea Powell, Leigh Rawlins, Jo Robb, Sue Roberts, David Rouane, Anne-Marie Simpson, Ian Snowdon, Alan Thompson, David Turner, Ian White and Celia Wilson

**Officers:** Steven Corrigan, Steve Culliford, Simon Hewings, Margaret Reed and Mark Stone

## Minutes

**RESOLVED:** to approve the minutes of the meetings held on 10 and 22 December 2020 as correct records and agree that the Chairman sign them as such.

### 130 Declarations of disclosable pecuniary interest

None.

### 131 Urgent business and chairman's announcements

The chairman provided general housekeeping information and advised there were no items of urgent business.

### 132 Public participation

The chairman advised that three speakers had registered to address Council.

- A. Mr Upcraft addressed Council to raise concerns about the impact upon communities arising from the ongoing uncertainties around the adoption of the Local Plan following the submission of a judicial review challenge. He stated that if

the challenge is successful it would bring about more uncertainty on the district with further speculative planning applications and have a negative impact on neighbourhood plans which are based on the Local Plan. He urged the council to fight the challenge and, if necessary, review the plan to avoid further delay.

- B. Mr Smart addressed the Council on behalf of the Great Western Park Residents Association's COVID-19 Community Response Group which was set up to support vulnerable people during the current pandemic. He stated that the council had taken over a year to respond to requests for support to find a local community venue to assist with their volunteering efforts.
- C. Mr Cattermole asked Councillor Rouane, Cabinet member for housing and environment, why the council's contracts for refuse collection and gutter cleaning allowed work to commence prior to 6.00am therefore disrupting the sleep of residents.

In response Councillor Rouane, Cabinet member, stated that in town centres and on main roads the street cleansing crews start work early to ensure access to key areas before they become too busy. He asked Mr Cattermole to provide him with specific details in respect of the refuse collection and he would look into the matter and respond.

### **133 Petitions**

No petitions were submitted to Council.

### **134 Treasury management and investment strategy 2021/22**

Council considered Cabinet's recommendations, made at its meeting on 4 February 2021, on the council's treasury management strategy 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. Cabinet agreed to recommend Council approve the strategy.

In introducing Cabinet's recommendations, the Cabinet member for finance reported that there were no significant changes to the strategy. However, the report did reflect a significant fall in projections of investment income due to low interest rates that are likely to prevail for some time. As capacity permits, the council would be looking to progress a more proactive treasury management strategy during the coming year to address the budget shortfall.

The view was expressed that the council should consider municipal bonds to raise funds for green investments and invest in green industries which currently had higher yields. However, contrary to this view, others expressed the view that the purpose of the strategy was to maintain the security and liquidity of the funds and investments in such industries could be in conflict with those principles. In response to a question, the Cabinet member stated that a modest amount was outstanding from the agreed settlement with the Icelandic Banks.

**RESOLVED:** to

1. approve the treasury management strategy 2021/22, as set out in appendix A to the interim head of finance's report to Cabinet on 4 February 2021;
2. approve the prudential indicators and limits for 2021/22 to 2023/24 as set out in appendix A to that report; and
3. approve the annual investment strategy 2021/22 set out in appendix A, and the lending criteria detailed in table 6 to that report.

### **135 Capital strategy 2021/22 to 2030/31**

Council considered Cabinet's recommendation, made at its meeting on 4 February 2021, on the council's capital strategy for 2021/22 to 2030/31.

In response to a question the Cabinet member confirmed that the issue of divesting from fossil fuels would be considered as part of the next review of the strategy.

**RESOLVED:** to approve the capital strategy 2021/22 to 2030/31 which is contained in appendix one of the interim head of finance's report to Cabinet on 4 February 2021.

### **136 Revenue budget 2021/22 and capital programme to 2025/26**

The chairman referred to regulations that require councils to record the names of those councillors voting in favour, against or abstaining from any vote on the budget, including amendments, and the council tax. In accordance with the regulations he would call for a named vote on each of these matters at this meeting.

The chairman reminded councillors that they were not entitled to vote on any issue affecting the level or administration of the council tax or other decisions which might affect the making of any such calculation such as the budget, if they were over two months in arrears with their council tax payments. Where such circumstances applied, councillors were under a statutory obligation to disclose the restriction placed on them and refrain from voting at the relevant meeting. No councillor made any such declaration.

Council noted the report of the chief finance officer on the robustness of the budget estimates and the adequacy of the reserves.

Council considered Cabinet's recommendations, made at its meeting held on 4 February 2021, on the revenue budget for 2021/22 and the capital programme to 2025/26. Scrutiny Committee had considered the report of the interim head of finance on 9 February and had made no recommendations.

Councillor Rawlins, Cabinet member for finance, presented Cabinet's proposals for the revenue budget and capital programme. He moved and Councillor Sue Cooper, Leader of the council, seconded a motion to approve Cabinet's recommendations as follows:

1. to set the revenue budget for 2021/22, as set out in appendix A.1 to the interim head of finance's report to Cabinet on 4 February 2021;
2. to approve the capital programme for 2021/22 to 2025/26 as set out in appendix D.1 to that report, together with the capital programme changes as set out in appendix D.2 to that report;
3. to set the council's prudential limits, as listed in appendix E to that report;
4. to approve the medium-term financial plan to 2025/26 as set out in appendix F to that report;

5. to allocate £500,000 to fund the Communities Capital and Revenue grant scheme;
6. to ask officers to review the Medium-Term Financial Strategy following the 2021 spending review and Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government announcements of changes to the council's future funding streams.

The majority of councillors supported the budget recognising the challenging environment caused by the pandemic. The view was expressed that the council could not continue to rely on reserves, which were diminishing, to support a budget deficit. Those who spoke against the budget expressed the view that the budget deficit of £4million was too large and of the need to bring the budget back into balance.

In accordance with regulations requiring councils to record the names of those councillors voting in favour, against or abstaining from any vote on the budget the chairman called for a recorded vote which was carried with the voting being as follows:

<b>For</b>	<b>Against</b>	<b>Abstain</b>
<b>Councillors</b>	<b>Councillors</b>	<b>Councillors</b>
Anna Badcock	Ken Arlett	
Pieter-Paul Barker	Stefan Gawrysiak	
David Bartholomew		
Robin Bennett		
David Bretherton		
Sam Casey-Rerhaye		
Sue Cooper		
Peter Dragonetti		
Maggie Filipova-Rivers		
Elizabeth Gillespie		
Sarah Gray		
Kate Gregory		
Victoria Haval		
Kellie Hinton		
Alexandrine Kantor		
Mocky Khan		

<b>For</b>	<b>Against</b>	<b>Abstain</b>
George Levy		
Lynn Lloyd		
Axel Macdonald		
Jane Murphy		
Caroline Newton		
Andrea Powell		
Leigh Rawlins		
Jo Robb		
Sue Roberts		
David Rouane		
Anne-Marie Simpson		
Ian Snowdon		
Alan Thompson		
David Turner		
Ian White		
Celia Wilson		
<b>32</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>

**RESOLVED:** to

1. set the revenue budget for 2021/22, as set out in appendix A.1 to the interim head of finance's report to Cabinet on 4 February 2021;
2. approve the capital programme for 2021/22 to 2025/26 as set out in appendix D.1 to that report, together with the capital programme changes as set out in appendix D.2 to that report;
3. set the council's prudential limits, as listed in appendix E to that report;
4. approve the medium-term financial plan to 2025/26 as set out in appendix F to that report;
5. allocate £500,000 to fund the Communities Capital and Revenue grant scheme;
6. ask officers to review the Medium-Term Financial Strategy following the 2021 spending review and Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government announcements of changes to the council's future funding streams.

## 137 Council tax 2021/22

Council considered the report of the interim head of finance on the setting of the Council Tax for the 2021/22 financial year.

In accordance with regulations requiring councils to record the names of those councillors voting in favour, against or abstaining from any vote on the council tax the chairman called for a recorded vote which was carried with the voting being as follows:

<b>For</b>	<b>Against</b>	<b>Abstain</b>
<b>Councillors</b>	<b>Councillors</b>	<b>Councillors</b>
Ken Arlett		
Anna Badcock		
Pieter-Paul Barker		
David Bartholomew		
Robin Bennett		
David Bretherton		
Sam Casey-Rerhaye		
Sue Cooper		
Peter Dragonetti		
Maggie Filipova-Rivers		
Stefan Gawrysiak		
Elizabeth Gillespie		
Sarah Gray		
Kate Gregory		
Victoria Haval		
Kellie Hinton		
Alexandrine Kantor		
Mocky Khan		

<b>For</b>	<b>Against</b>	<b>Abstain</b>
George Levy		
Lynn Lloyd		
Axel Macdonald		
Jane Murphy		
Caroline Newton		
Andrea Powell		
Leigh Rawlins		
Jo Robb		
Sue Roberts		
David Rouane		
Anne-Marie Simpson		
Ian Snowdon		
Alan Thompson		
David Turner		
Ian White		
Celia Wilson		
<b>34</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

## **RESOLVED:**

1. To note that at its meeting on 10 December 2020 the council calculated the council tax base 2021/22:
  - a) for the whole council area as **59,171.2** [Item T in the formula in Section 31B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended (the “Act”)]; and
  - b) for dwellings in those parts of its area to which a parish precept relates as in column 1 of appendix 1.
2. That the council tax requirement for the council’s own purposes for 2021/22 (excluding parish precepts) is £7,765,628

3. That the following amounts be calculated for the year 2021/22 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Act:
- £83,946,638 being the aggregate of the amounts which the council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2) of the Act taking into account all precepts issued to it by parish councils.
  - £70,301,709 being the aggregate of the amounts which the council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3) of the Act.
  - £13,644,929 being the amount by which the aggregate at (3)(a) above exceeds the aggregate at (3)(b) above, calculated by the council, in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act as its council tax requirement for the year. (Item R in the formula in Section 31B of the Act).
  - £230.60 being the amount at (3)(c) above (Item R), all divided by Item T (1(a) above), calculated by the council, in accordance with Section 31B of the Act, as the basic amount of its council tax for the year (including parish precepts).
  - £5,879,301 being the aggregate amount of all special items referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act, as set out in column 2 of appendix 1.
  - £131.24 being the amount at (3)(d) above less the result given by dividing the amount at (3)(e) above by Item T (1(a) above), calculated by the council, in accordance with Section 34(2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its council tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no parish precept relates.
4. To note that for the year 2021/22 Oxfordshire County Council has stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:

Band A	£1,048.74
Band B	£1,223.53
Band C	£1,398.32
Band D	£1,573.11
Band E	£1,922.69
Band F	£2,272.27
Band G	£2,621.85
Band H	£3,146.22

5. To note that for the year 2021/22 the Police and Crime Commissioner for Thames Valley has stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:

Band A	£154.19	
Band B	£179.88	
Band C	£205.58	
Band D	£231.28	
Band E	£282.68	
Band F	£334.07	
Band G	£385.47	
Band H	£462.56	£774.47
Band B		£903.55
Band C		£1,032.63
Band D		£1,161.71



6. That the council, in accordance with Sections 30 and 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the aggregate amounts shown in appendix 3 as the amounts of council tax for 2021/22 for each part of its area and for each of the categories of dwellings shown in appendix 3.
7. To determine that the council's basic amount of council tax for 2021/22 is not excessive in accordance with principles approved under Section 52ZB Local Government Finance Act 1992.

### **138 Review of Joint Statement of Licensing Policy**

Council considered the recommendations of the Licensing Acts Committee, made at its meeting on 26 January 2021, on a proposed a statement of licensing policy, jointly developed with Vale of White Horse District Council.

Councillor Haval, Chair of the Licensing Acts Committee introduced the recommendations. She explained that under the Licensing Act 2003 there is statutory duty to review the statement of licensing policy every five years, and a draft policy is the response to this review. The amendments to the current policy set out in Appendix B, show that no significant changes have been proposed. The amendments align the policy with current guidance and clarify requirements for applicants and licence holders. In addition, the format of the policy has been amended to separate out different types of applications to assist applicants when reading the policy. No suggested amendments were proposed that would place additional burdens or restrictions on licence holders or applicants.

A public consultation took place from 23 November to 17 December 2020 and included consultation with the responsible authorities under the Licensing Act as well as our neighbouring authorities, district councillors, local town and parish councils and the relevant trade organisations. Whilst only a small number of responses were received, these have been incorporated into the draft policy at appendix C.

**RESOLVED:** 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.

### **139 Pay policy statement 2021/22**

Council considered the report of the interim head of corporate services on the adoption of a pay policy statement to meet the requirements of the Localism Act.

**RESOLVED:** to approve the pay policy statement for 2021/22 attached to the report of the interim head of corporate services to Council on 11 February 2021.

### **140 Councillors' allowances scheme**

Council considered 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.

Councillor Cooper moved and Councillor Rawlins seconded the following motion:

That Council:

1. thanks the Independent Remuneration Panel for its work and its report;
2. retains for the financial year 2021/22 the existing councillors' allowances scheme agreed by Council at its meeting on 17 May 2017 subject to
  - a. the continuation of an increase in basic and special responsibility allowances from 1 April 2021 at the same rate as that applied to staff salaries;
  - b. the inclusion of a special responsibility allowance for the Chair of the Climate Emergency Advisory Committee at the same rate as the Chair of the Scrutiny Committee backdated to 1 April 2020;
3. defers consideration of the independent remuneration panel's other recommendations until later in 2021 but ahead of the budget setting process for 2022/23.

Councillor Bartholomew moved and Councillor White seconded the following amendment – deleted words shown by strikethrough and additional words shown in bold.

That Council:

1. thanks the Independent Remuneration Panel for its work and its report;
2. retains for the financial year 2021/22 the existing councillors' allowances scheme agreed by Council at its meeting on 17 May 2017 subject to
  - a. the continuation of an increase in basic and special responsibility allowances from 1 April 2021 at the same rate as that applied to staff salaries;
  - b. the inclusion of a special responsibility allowance for the Chair of the Climate Emergency Advisory Committee at the same rate as the Chair of the Scrutiny Committee ~~backdated to 1 April 2020~~ **to take effect from 1 April 2021;**
  - c. **recognition that the role of Leader of the Majority Opposition Group has parity with the Chair of Planning and that the SRA should be adjusted accordingly with effect from 1 April 2021.**
3. defers consideration of the independent remuneration panel's other recommendations until later in 2021 but ahead of the budget setting process for 2022/23.

Those who supported the amendment expressed the view that a back dated allowance for the Chair of the Climate Emergency Advisory Committee (CEAC) was inappropriate and that the level of SRA for the role of the leader of the opposition should have parity with the Chair of the Planning Committee in recognition of the importance of the role in a functioning democracy with a strong opposition. However, other councillors expressed the view that the Chair of CEAC had undertaken a responsible role during the past year which should be recognised. The issue of the SRA for the leader of the opposition should be considered alongside consideration of the other allowances later in the year.

On being put to the vote the amendment was declared lost.

The majority of councillors supported the continuation of the current scheme of allowances and deferral of consideration of the Joint Independent Remuneration Panel's report and recommendations until later in the year and ahead of the budget setting process for 2022/23.

On being put to the vote the original motion was declared carried.

**RESOLVED:** to

1. thank the Independent Remuneration Panel for its work and its report;
2. retain for the financial year 2021/22 the existing councillors' allowances scheme agreed by Council at its meeting on 17 May 2017 subject to
  - a) the continuation of an increase in basic and special responsibility allowances from 1 April 2021 at the same rate as that applied to staff salaries;
  - b) the inclusion of a special responsibility allowance for the Chair of the Climate Emergency Advisory Committee at the same rate as the Chair of the Scrutiny Committee backdated to 1 April 2020;
3. defer consideration of the independent remuneration panel's other recommendations until later in 2021 but ahead of the budget setting process for 2022/23.

## 141 Review of political balance

Prior to consideration of this item, and prior to the expiry of two and a half hours, Council agreed, in accordance with council procedure rule 12, to extend the meeting by half an hour.

Council considered the report of the head of legal and democratic on the revised political balance calculations following the resignation of a councillor, the resignation of councillors from political groups and the formation of a new political group, South Oxfordshire Residents Team – SORT. A revised recommendation and schedule of appointments was circulated to all councillors following discussions with group leaders.

**RESOLVED:** to

1. Allocate seats to each political group and appoint the membership, substitutes and chairs/vice-chairs as indicated to sit on them in the table below:

<b>Planning Committee, 11 Members</b>					
<b>Conservative (3)</b>	<b>Green (2)</b>	<b>Henley Residents (1)</b>	<b>Labour (1)</b>	<b>Liberal Democrat (3)</b>	<b>SORT (1)</b>
Lorraine Hillier	Peter Dragonetti (Vice-Chair)	Ken Arlett	Celia Wilson	David Bretherton	Elizabeth Gillespie
Ian Snowdon (Chair)	Jo Robb			Kate Gregory	

<b>Planning Committee, 11 Members</b>					
<b>Conservative (3)</b>	<b>Green (2)</b>	<b>Henley Residents (1)</b>	<b>Labour (1)</b>	<b>Liberal Democrat (3)</b>	<b>SORT (1)</b>
Ian White				George Levy	
<b>Preferred substitutes</b>					
<b>Conservative (3)</b>	<b>Green (3)</b>	<b>Henley Residents (2)</b>	<b>Labour (2)</b>	<b>Liberal Democrat (3)</b>	<b>SORT (2)</b>
Jane Murphy	Sam Casey-Rerhaye	Stefan Gawrysiak	Mocky Khan	Victoria Haval	Sarah Gray
Caroline Newton		Kellie Hinton	Axel Macdonald	David Turner	Sue Roberts
Alan Thompson				Alexandrine Kantor	

<b>Scrutiny Committee, 9 Members</b>					
<b>Conservative (2)</b>	<b>Green (1)</b>	<b>Henley Residents (1)</b>	<b>Labour (1)</b>	<b>Liberal Democrat (3)</b>	<b>SORT (1)</b>
Anna Badcock	Sam Casey-Rerhaye	Stefan Gawrysiak	Mocky Khan (Vice-Chair)	Alexandrine Kantor	Sue Roberts
Ian White (Chair)				George Levy	
				David Turner	
<b>Preferred substitutes</b>					
<b>Conservative (3)</b>	<b>Green (3)</b>	<b>Henley Residents (2)</b>	<b>Labour (2)</b>	<b>Liberal Democrat (3)</b>	<b>SORT (2)</b>
Lorraine Hillier	Peter Dragonetti	Ken Arlett	Axel Macdonald	David Bretherton	Sarah Gray
Ian Snowdon	Jo Robb	Kellie Hinton	Celia Wilson	Victoria Haval	Elizabeth Gillespie
Alan Thompson				Kate Gregory	

<b>Joint Scrutiny Committee, 5 Members</b>			
<b>Conservative (1)</b>	<b>Green (1)</b>	<b>Henley Residents (1)</b>	<b>Liberal Democrat (2)</b>
Ian White (Co-chair)	Sam Casey-Rerhaye	Stefan Gawrysiak	Alexandrine Kantor

<b>Joint Scrutiny Committee, 5 Members</b>			
			George Levy
<b>Preferred substitutes</b>			
<b>Conservative (3)</b>	<b>Green (3)</b>	<b>Henley Residents (2)</b>	<b>Liberal Democrat (3)</b>
Anna Badcock	Peter Dragonetti	Ken Arlett	David Bretherton
Caroline Newton	Jo Robb	Kellie Hinton	Victoria Haval
Alan Thompson	Vacancy		Kate Gregory

<b>Joint Audit and Governance, 4 Members</b>			
<b>Conservative (1)</b>	<b>Green (1)</b>	<b>Labour (1)</b>	<b>Liberal Democrat (1)</b>
Jane Murphy	Peter Dragonetti	Mocky Khan (Co-Chair)	George Levy
<b>Preferred substitutes</b>			
<b>Conservative (3)</b>	<b>Green (3)</b>	<b>Labour (2)</b>	<b>Liberal Democrat (3)</b>
David Bartholomew	Sam Casey-Rerhaye	Axel Macdonald	Victoria Haval
Alan Thompson	Jo Robb	Celia Wilson	Alexandrine Kantor
Ian White	Vacancy		Vacancy

<b>Community Governance and Electoral Issues Committee, 6 Members</b>			
<b>Conservative (2)</b>	<b>Labour (1)</b>	<b>Liberal Democrat (2)</b>	<b>SORT (1)</b>
David Bartholomew	Mocky Khan	Maggie Filipova-Rivers	Elizabeth Gillespie
Lynn Lloyd (Chair)		David Turner	
<b>Conservative (3)</b>	<b>Labour (2)</b>	<b>Liberal Democrat (3)</b>	<b>SORT (2)</b>
Anna Badcock	Axel Macdonald	Peter-Paul Barker	Sarah Gray
Lorraine Hillier	Celia Wilson	Sue Cooper	Sue Roberts
Ian Snowdon		George Levy	

<b>Joint Staff Committee, 3 Members</b>	
<b>Conservative (1)</b>	<b>Liberal Democrat (2)</b>
Jane Murphy	Sue Cooper
	Maggie Filipova-Rivers
<b>Substitutes</b>	
The Leader may be substituted by another Cabinet member. Other members of the Committee may be substituted by any member of that Council's political group (executive or non-executive).	

<b>General Licensing Committee, 12 Members</b>					
<b>Conservative (3)</b>	<b>Green (2)</b>	<b>Henley Residents (1)</b>	<b>Labour (1)</b>	<b>Liberal Democrat (4)</b>	<b>SORT (1)</b>
Lorraine Hillier	Peter Dragonetti	Kellie Hinton (Vice-Chair)	Axel Macdonald	Victoria Haval (Chair)	Elizabeth Gillespie
Alan Thompson	Jo Robb			Alexandrine Kantor	
Ian Snowdon				Leigh Rawlins	
				Anne-Marie Simpson	
<b>No substitutes</b>					

<b>Licensing Acts Committee, 12 Members</b>					
<b>Conservative (3)</b>	<b>Green (2)</b>	<b>Henley Residents (1)</b>	<b>Labour (1)</b>	<b>Liberal Democrat (4)</b>	<b>Non-group councillor</b>
Lorraine Hillier	Peter Dragonetti	Kellie Hinton (Vice-Chair)	Axel Macdonald	Victoria Haval (Chair)	Elizabeth Gillespie
Alan Thompson	Jo Robb			Alexandrine Kantor	
Ian Snowdon				Leigh Rawlins	
				Anne-Marie Simpson	

## Licensing Acts Committee, 12 Members

No substitutes

### Appeals Panel, 5 Members

Conservative (1)	Green (1)	Henley Residents (1)	Liberal Democrat (1)	SORT (1)
Lorraine Hillier	Jo Robb	Stefan Gawrysiak	Alexandrine Kantor	Sarah Gray
<b>Preferred substitutes</b>				
Conservative (3)	Green (3)	Henley Residents (2)	Liberal Democrat (3)	SORT (2)
Lynn Lloyd	Sam Casey-Rerhaye	Ken Arlett	Kate Gregory	Elizabeth Gillespie
Caroline Newton	Peter Dragonetti	Kellie Hinton	George Levy	Sue Roberts
Ian Snowdon	Vacancy		Alexandrine Kantor	

### Community Grants Panel, 9 Members

Conservative (2)	Green (1)	Henley Residents (1)	Labour (1)	Liberal Democrat (3)	SORT (1)
Lynn Lloyd	Jo Robb	Kellie Hinton	Axel Macdonald	Kate Gregory	Elizabeth Gillespie
Ian Snowdon				George Levy	
				Victoria Haval	
<b>Substitutes</b>					
Conservative (3)	Green (3)	Henley Residents (2)	Labour (2)	Liberal Democrat (3)	SORT (2)
Lorraine Hillier	Sam Casey-Rerhaye	Ken Arlett	Mocky Khan	David Bretherton	Sarah Gray
Caroline Newton	Peter Dragonetti	Stefan Gawrysiak	Celia Wilson	David Turner	Sue Roberts
Alan Thompson	Vacancy			Alexandrine Kantor	

<b>Names</b>	<b>Climate Emergency Advisory Committee, 12 Members</b>				
<b>Conservative (3)</b>	<b>Greens (2)</b>	<b>Henley Residents (1)</b>	<b>Labour (1)</b>	<b>Liberal Democrat (4)</b>	<b>SORT (1)</b>
Lynn Lloyd	Sam Casey-Rerhaye (Chair)	Stefan Gawrysiak	Celia Wilson	Sue Cooper	Sue Roberts
Jane Murphy	Andrea Powell			Kate Gregory	
Caroline Newton				Leigh Rawlins	
				David Rouane	
<b>PREFERRED SUBSTITUTES</b>					
<b>Conservative (3)</b>	<b>Greens (3)</b>	<b>Henley Residents (2)</b>	<b>Labour (2)</b>	<b>Liberal Democrat (4)</b>	<b>SORT (2)</b>
Lorraine Hillier	Robin Bennett	Ken Arlett	Mocky Khan	Anne-Marie Simpson	Elizabeth Gillespie
Alan Thompson	Jo Robb	Kellie Hinton	Axel Macdonald	Alexandrine Kantor	Sarah Gray
Vacancy	Vacancy			Victoria Haval	
				Maggie Filipova Rivers	

2. appoint Councillor Victoria Haval to the Oxfordshire Growth Board Scrutiny Panel;
3. authorise the head of legal and democratic to make appointments to any vacant committee or panel seat and substitute positions in accordance with the wishes of the relevant group leader.

## **142 Progress on approved Council motions**

Council received and noted a progress report on motions approved by Council since May 2019.

## **143 Report of the leader of the council**

Councillor Sue Cooper, Leader of the council, provided an update on a number of matters. The text of her address is available on the council's [website](#).



Council noted the details of an urgent decision taken by Councillor Leigh Rawlins, Cabinet member for finance, to approve South Oxfordshire District Council's Additional Restrictions Grant Scheme – Round 2.

## **144 Questions on notice**

### **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?

#### **Answer**

The Council adopted the South Local Plan 2035 on 10 December 2020 and it is being used by the Planning Committee and officers in all planning decisions. All councillors must act in accordance with adopted policy when making council decisions.

### **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.

#### **Answer**

On 10 October 2019, Council resolved that the Leader should write to the leaders of Reading Borough Council, Wokingham Borough Council and Bracknell Forest Council, together with MPs John Howell, John Redwood, Matt Rodda and Theresa May. This action was undertaken on 14 October 2019 and a press release along with the letter was published on our website and circulated to all Councillors. More recently, a further letter was sent by the Leader to the leaders of Reading Borough Council, Wokingham Borough Council, Bracknell Forest Council and Oxfordshire County Council confirming that South Oxfordshire District Council does not support a car-based designed bridge. This was sent on 7 December 2020 and is also available on our website. I am happy to ask officers to ensure that this letter is copied to all relevant Government departments, asking them to confirm that our position is noted.

### **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?

## **Answer**

In South Oxfordshire, a total of 106 voluntary and community groups have directly supported the Covid-19 response. Of those 106 groups, 58 are informal groups set up by residents. Our voluntary and community groups have helped their neighbours with shopping, friendly phone calls, errands and other acts of kindness too numerous to list. As a council, we have been able to connect residents to these groups for ongoing support and the relationships that have formed within communities as a result of this work have made all the difference to those residents as this pandemic has developed. Quite simply, we would not have been able to deliver the response we have and continue to do so without them, and we are enormously grateful to be working alongside our voluntary and community groups.

The council funds 17 of the formal VCS organisations who have increased their efforts during this time by providing food, debt advice, helping those who experience loneliness and isolation or counselling those who have experienced domestic abuse or mental health issues. In recognition of this, Cabinet agreed to conditionally extend their grant for a further year towards the provision of COVID -19 response and recovery services in 2021/22. We were also able to provide 8 grants through the emergency assistance grant to VCS's who were directly supporting residents with food provision.

We have acknowledged throughout this pandemic the vital role of our voluntary and community groups, and to continually thank them for their work in regular email bulletins, direct phone calls from our community connectors, through social media bites raising their profile and letters and greeting cards sent from officers and councillors. We look forward to a time when we can thank and celebrate their work in person.

Based on our experience of the pandemic and the partnerships forged as a result, we will be considering innovative ways in which we can maintain, equip and support the network of local groups/VCS's so that we can ensure that we can together advance the wellbeing agenda as per the corporate plan post-Covid.

Showing appreciation as we have is important, but we want to go further and put in place a framework which recognises these groups as valued partners.

## **Supplementary question**

In asking a supplementary question Councillor Snowdon referred to the question asked by Mr Smart (see minute 132). He asked if the Cabinet member would apologise for the for letting down the Great Western Park Residents Association's COVID-19 Community Response Group and give an undertaking to find innovative ways to find a solution to their situation.

## **Answer**

In response Councillor Filipova-Rivers stated that, whilst she understood the frustration of the group, she would not apologise because the council had sought to assist the group via meetings with advice on grants, liability insurance and logistics. The council had been working to provide a community centre for the group to facilitate the co-ordination of an emergency food bank centre. However, it was a complicated situation and the safety of residents was the primary responsibility of the council. The group had taken up the offer of sole use of the Northern Neighbourhood Centre prior to the lifting of the second lockdown

when wider community groups and users returned. The council was working on a permanent solution and was making best efforts to make the Southern Community Centre available following the transfer of the venue from the developers to the council and the completion of fitting out works.

#### **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)?

#### **Answer**

One of the main benefits of the council's community lottery scheme, is that Gatherwell (the provider) manages the majority of the administration required to operate it successfully. The support needed from our officers is minimal and is managed by Community Enablement alongside their other priorities.

Gatherwell provides a high level of support to existing and potential good causes, but also regularly produces marketing and promotional materials for them to use to encourage their supporters and stakeholders to purchase tickets. In Gatherwell's experience of running these schemes up and down the country for many local authorities, this has proved the most effective way of raising awareness of a community lottery and generating income for good causes, much more so than centralised promotion and marketing.

We do promote the lottery alongside the good causes, however Covid-19 communications has taken priority this year. We are planning some promotional activity to mark the scheme's 3<sup>rd</sup> anniversary in March.

From recent discussions with Gatherwell, if there was appetite from the Vale for a shared lottery, it would be possible to create one. We are happy to discuss the potential for a merged scheme with the Vale, if they indicate an appetite to do so.

#### **Supplementary question**

Councillor White gave notice that he would follow up with a supplementary question outside of the meeting to allow the meeting to proceed and conclude the remaining business on the agenda.

#### **145 Motions on notice**

During this item Council agreed, in accordance with council procedure rule 82, to suspend council procedure rule 12, which restricts the duration of a meeting, to allow Council to complete the consideration of all the motions.

**A. Councillor Ian Snowdon moved, and Councillor Caroline Newton seconded the motion as set out in the agenda at agenda item 18.**

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

**RESOLVED:** That

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. Councillor Sam Casey-Rerhaye moved, and Councillor David Rouane seconded the motion as set out in the agenda at agenda item 18.**

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

**RESOLVED:** That

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. Councillor David Rouane moved, and Councillor Sarah Gray seconded the motion as set out in the agenda at agenda item 18.**

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

**RESOLVED:** That

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.

## **146 Revenue budget 2021/22 and capital programme to 2025/26**

Council noted the confidential appendix A6 to the interim head of finance's report to Cabinet on 4 February 2021.

The meeting closed at 9.10pm

Chairman

Date