

# Council



Listening Learning Leading

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## Summons to attend a meeting of Council

to be held on

**THURSDAY 13 JULY 2023 AT 6.00 PM**

at

**DIDCOT CIVIC HALL, BRITWELL ROAD, DIDCOT, OX11 7JN**

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Patrick Arran  
Head of Legal and Democratic

Note: Please remember to sign the attendance register.

# Agenda

## 1 Apologies for absence

To record apologies for absence.

## 2 Minutes (Pages 7 - 17)

To adopt and sign as a correct record the Council minutes of the annual meeting held on 18 May and the special meeting held on 12 June 2023.

## 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 Update on the council's Information Technology infrastructure

Cabinet, at its meeting on 3 July 2023, considered a report on the current discussions relating to the councils' Information Technology arrangements.

The Cabinet [agenda](#) circulated to all members includes the relevant report.

Cabinet resolved to:

1. note the update set out in the head of corporate services' report to Cabinet on 3 July 2023;
2. reaffirm the council's intention to pursue a separate Microsoft Office 365 tenancy as part of the council's overall transformation programme and planned exit from the outsourced IT arrangements; and
3. authorise the deputy chief executive - transformation and operations, in consultation with the Cabinet member for corporate services, to take all necessary steps to implement the council's withdrawal from the shared M365

tenancy.

#### **CABINET RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL:**

That a supplementary estimate of £326,000 be added to the 2023/24 revenue budget, funded as set out in the head of corporate services' report to Cabinet on 3 July 2023.

### **8 Delivery and management arrangements for council-provided Local Authority Housing Fund and Service Family Accommodation housing**

Cabinet, at its meeting on 3 July 2023, considered a report on the work being undertaken in relation to providing homes under Government schemes.

The Cabinet [agenda](#) circulated to all members includes the relevant report.

Cabinet resolved to:

1. note the approach proposed for the delivery and management of the properties under the Local Authority Housing Fund scheme, noting the risks, and approve officers to proceed;
2. note the proposed phase one staffing structure for the delivery and management of these properties alongside those purchased or managed under other arrangements;
3. approve a virement from Contingency of up to £100,000 to cover potential unbudgeted revenue expenditure;
4. authorise the head of development and corporate landlord, in consultation with the heads of finance, legal and democratic, and housing and environment, to approve the freehold or leasehold acquisition of property under the Local Authority Housing Fund scheme following appropriate due diligence; and
5. note the financial and other risks presented by the decisions above, as set out in the report of the deputy chief executive – transformation and operations to Cabinet on 3 July 2023.

#### **CABINET RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL:**

To proceed the allocation of a capital budget envelope of £4.6 million, being the council's share of the purchase costs of properties bought under the Local Authority Housing Fund scheme.

### **9 Local Authority Housing Fund 2**

Cabinet, at its meeting on 3 July 2023, considered a report on the additional grant funding made available under Local Authority Housing Fund 2 (LAHF 2) to support the provision of housing for the council's refugee accommodation programme and for accommodation for general homelessness use.

The Cabinet [agenda](#) circulated to all members includes the relevant report.

Cabinet resolved to accept the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities' grant of £768,000 (indicative Local Authority Housing Fund 2 allocation) to deliver four homes that meet the eligibility criteria outlined within the Local Authority Housing Fund 2 prospectus, and to authorise the deputy chief executive – transformation and operations to sign the Memorandum of Understanding with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, which sets out the understanding between both parties for the use of funding.

### **CABINET RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL:**

To add £1.92 million to the approved capital programme, part funded by Local Authority Housing Fund 2 funding of £768,000 to purchase four homes under this scheme.

## **10 Appointment to vacant Planning Committee position**

At the annual meeting of Council held on 18 May 2023 Councillor Snowdon declined the offer of a position on the Planning Committee. There is therefore a vacant position on the committee.

Council is invited to appoint a member to the vacancy.

## **11 Report of the leader of the council**

To receive the report of the leader of the council.

## **12 Questions on notice**

No questions submitted from councillors in accordance with Council procedure rule 33.

## **13 Motions on notice**

To consider motions from councillors in accordance with Council procedure rule 39.

Motion to be proposed by Councillor Robb, seconded by Councillor Van Mierlo:

Council notes that the Environment Agency, as the navigation authority, has responsibility for the maintenance of its assets along the length of the River Thames, including pump-out stations and footbridges. The River Thames and the Thames Path National Trail are key contributors to the visitor economy of South Oxfordshire and are beloved by residents.

Council also notes that:

1. Two major footbridges along the Thames Path National Trail in South Oxfordshire (Benson Weir and Marsh Lock) will be closed for some years for important safety repairs;
2. Residents and river users report that pump-out stations, used by boats to

- legally discharge their waste, including at Shiplake Lock, have been periodically out of order such that some boaters have been forced to discharge their waste directly into the river;
3. The Environment Agency has seen its funding slashed in real-terms by around one-third since 2010.

Council asks the leader to write to the Environment Agency to:

1. Seek information and assurances regarding the safety of footbridges along the Thames in South Oxfordshire and assurances that the bridges that are closed will be repaired and reopened as a matter of utmost urgency recognising the importance of a safe and accessible Thames Path to our residents and visitors;
2. Find out about the state of pump-out stations along the length of the River Thames in South Oxfordshire and what contingencies are in place for when a pump-out station is out of repair;
3. Ask the EA for assurances regarding the maintenance of pump-out stations to ensure our river is not further degraded with untreated sewage and boat waste;

Council also asks the leader to write to the Secretary of State to raise the above concerns and ask that funding for the Environment Agency is increased to allow it to properly perform its functions and maintain its assets appropriately.

## **14 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 Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended on the grounds that:

- (i) it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 3 and 5 of Schedule 12A of the Act, and
- (ii) the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

## **15 Delivery and management arrangements for council-provided Local Authority Housing Fund and Service Family Accommodation housing - exempt appendices**

Appendices 2 and 2A of the report of the deputy chief executive – transformation contain exempt information. Prior to any questions or discussion on the content of these appendices, Council will be invited to consider the exclusion of any public or press in attendance at the meeting as set out at agenda item 13.

Patrick Arran  
Head of Legal and Democratic