



Minutes

of a meeting of the

General Licensing Committee

held on Wednesday, 18 December 2024 at 6.00 pm in Meeting Room 1, Abbey House, Abbey Close, Abingdon, OX14 3JE

Open to the public, including the press

Present in the meeting room:

Councillors: Peter Dragonetti, Katharine Keats-Rohan and Anne-Marie Simpson
Officers: Simon Hill (Team Leader, Environmental Protection), Luci Ashbourne (Democratic Services Officer)

Remote attendance:

Councillors: Sam James-Lawrie
Officers: Bertram Smith (Broadcasting Officer), Darren Detheridge (Environment Protection Officer), Scott Williams (Environmental Services Manager), Carmen Cubillas Martinez (Environmental Protection Officer)

16 Election of Chair

In the absence of the chair and vice chair of the General Licensing Committee the democratic services officer called for nominations for a chair for the meeting.

A motion, moved and seconded, to elect Councillor Peter Dragonetti as the chair for the meeting was carried on being put to the vote.

RESOLVED: That Cllr Peter Dragonetti be Chair of the meeting.

17 Chair's announcements

The chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, outlined the procedure to be followed and advised on emergency evacuation arrangements.

18 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mike Giles, Ali Gordon-Creed, Kellie Hinton and Jo Robb

19 Minutes

RESOLVED: to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 30 September 2024 as a correct record and agree that the Chair sign them as such.

20 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

21 Urgent business

There was no urgent business.

22 Public participation

There were no registered speakers.

23 Update to the Joint Contaminated Land Strategy

Scott Williams, the Environmental Services Manager presented the report. The Council has a legal duty to publish a contaminated land strategy. The primary purpose of the report was to seek approval for the adoption of the updated strategy and to propose that future minor changes, such as legislative updates, be managed through an Individual Cabinet Member Decision (ICMD).

The officer outlined that The Council had a legal duty to periodically review this strategy to ensure it remained current. Since its original publication in 2002, there had been significant changes in legislation and statutory guidance. The report aimed to present an updated version of the contaminated land strategy, now simplified to align with current legislative requirements.

The updated strategy ensured compliance with statutory guidance and reflected the Council's current approach to addressing contaminated land primarily through the planning regime. Land contamination was a material planning consideration and had to be considered when determining planning applications. Planning decisions needed to ensure that a site was suitable for its proposed use, taking into account ground conditions and any risks from land contamination. After remediation, as a minimum, land should not be capable of being classified as contaminated under Part 2A of the Environmental Protection Act 1990, which provided a means of identifying and remediating land posing significant risks to health or the environment when no alternative solutions existed.

The production of the Council's updated contaminated land strategy had been completed and was being presented to the Licensing Committee for approval. The Environmental Services Manager was joined by officers from the Environmental

Protection team, who were happy to answer any questions the committee had about the newly proposed strategy.

Members enquired as to why it has taken until now for the strategy to be updated. Council officers noted that with the updated guidance, it was the appropriate time to proceed with the necessary updates. Members thank the officers for their time and expertise on completing the work.

RESOLVED: That the Committee:

(a) Adopt the updated Joint Contaminated Land Strategy Policy 2024

(b) Agreed that any future minor changes (such as legislation updates) to the Strategy are dealt with under an Individual Cabinet Member Decision (ICMD)

24 Revocation of the Wallingford Air Quality Management Area (AQMA)

Scott Williams, the Environmental Services Manager presented the report. The primary purpose of the report was to inform the committee of the requirement to formally revoke the Wallingford AQMA, in line with the council's Joint Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) adopted on 8 February 2024.

The Council has a legal duty to assess and manage air quality in the district, declaring Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) when national objectives are not being met and revoking them when compliance is achieved. This report seeks formal approval to revoke the Wallingford Air Quality Management Area, which has met national air quality objectives since 2017. The Council is obligated to revoke AQMAs, and by approving this revocation, it will comply with DEFRA's guidance, reflecting the sustained improvements achieved in Wallingford.

Members enquired about the main reasons for the recent improvements in air quality. Officers explained that the increased use of electric cars and cleaner vehicles, particularly the reduction in diesel vehicles, played a significant role. Additionally, changes in work patterns since COVID-19, such as more people working from home, have also contributed to the improvement.

Members raised concerns about other types of pollutants that are not currently measured, emphasising that this means they cannot become complacent about air quality. Officers acknowledged this point and noted that while particulate matter is not measured directly, air quality monitoring would continue in Wallingford to ensure compliance with the air quality objective.

The members thanked the officers, highlighting that this is a positive development. They expressed satisfaction with the continued monitoring efforts and noted that the other two areas are also showing improvement. If this trend continues, these areas will be in line for revocation as well.

RESOLVED: That the Committee formally revoke the Wallingford Air Quality Management Area.

The meeting closed at 6.13 pm

