

# Council Agenda



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## Summons to attend a meeting of Council

to be held on Wednesday 16 December 2015 at 7.00 pm  
The Ridgeway, The Beacon, Portway, Wantage, OX12 9BY

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M Reed".

Margaret Reed  
Head of Legal and Democratic Services

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# Agenda

## Open to the public including the press

### Council's vision

The council's vision is to take care of your interests across the Vale with enterprise, energy and efficiency.

#### **1. Apologies for absence**

To receive apologies for absence.

#### **2. Minutes**

(Pages 9 - 16)

To adopt and sign as a correct record the council minutes of the meeting held on 15 July 2015 (**attached**).

#### **3. Declarations of interest**

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

#### **4. Chairman's announcements**

To receive any announcements from the chairman.

#### **5. Statements, petitions and questions from the public relating to matters affecting council.**

Any statements, petitions and questions from the public under standing order 32 will be made or presented at the meeting.

#### **6. Urgent business**

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.

#### **7. Petitions under standing order 13**

To receive petitions from members of the council under standing order 13 (if any).

## 8. Questions under standing order 12

To receive the following questions from members of the council under standing order 12.

1. Question from Councillor Bob Johnston to Councillor Charlotte Dickson, Chairman of the General Licensing Committee.

Could the Chairman please explain how council will reconsider and amend its Air Quality Management Area policies and actions in light of recent emissions-rigging scandal?

2. Question from Councillor Bob Johnston to Councillor Roger Cox, Cabinet member for housing.

Given the Government's stated desire to reduce family benefit to a maximum of £23,000 per annum, which will result in housing associations no longer being able to house them as social housing rents will be unaffordable, could the Cabinet member please explain what contingency arrangements the Vale (as a statutory housing body) is making to deal with the expected increase in social housing need?"

3. Question from Councillor Judy Roberts to Councillor Eric Batts, Cabinet member for technical services.

Please could the Cabinet member explain why the Vale is continuing to ignore repeated requests from residents and parish councils for a proper hydrology survey for the Cumnor Hill area?

4. Question from Councillor Judy Roberts to Councillor Elaine Ware, Cabinet member for corporate strategy.

Could the Cabinet member please confirm her intention to review the Grants Scheme in early 2016?

5. Question from Councillor Julia Reynolds to Councillor Matthew Barber, Leader of the council.

Letcombe Brook is a chalk stream which are globally rare. It is seven miles long, from Letcombe Regis, through Wantage, Grove and East Hanney. It is a key strategic environmental asset and its continual maintenance by the Letcombe Brook Project Officer is vital for flood mitigation and for ensuring the integrity of its habitats by conserving and enhancing the biodiversity and landscape. The Letcombe Brook Project arose from public concern about pollution, low water levels and years of neglect resulting in litter, erosion, poor bank treatments and frequent flooding. The Project officer works with a small team of volunteers, developers, residents who are riparian owners, and organises field visits for local schools, which forms part of the National Curriculum. Advice is given to the East Hanney flood group, tree and bank erosion management is ongoing, indigenous planting has been carried out and invasive species such as himalayan balsam is pulled out on a regular basis. The brook supports a healthy wild brown trout population and priority species such as otter and UK's most endangered species, the water vole. Funding from the Environment Agency was withdrawn three years ago. Will the Leader commit to additional funding for the Letcombe Brook Project in the forthcoming budget?

6. Question from Councillor Chris Palmer to Councillor Matthew Barber, Leader of the council.

Given that the first refugees are due to arrive in Oxford before Christmas, what plans are there locally for any refugees, and what can/ should the Churches in Abingdon do to help?

There are many different things that the Churches can and may well be willing to do to help out. But they need to know what is expected and how many people they would be expected to help?

## **9. Treasury management outturn 2014/15**

On 2 October 2015 Councillor Matthew Barber, Leader of the council, took a decision on the outturn performance of the treasury management function for the financial year 2014/15.

**Recommendations to Council:** to

1. approve the treasury management outturn report for 2014/15;
2. note that the treasury activities in 2014/15 have been carried out in accordance with the treasury management strategy and policy.

## **10. Joint Statement of Licensing Policy**

(Pages 17 - 55)

At its meeting on 25 November 2015, the Licensing Acts Committee considered the report of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services. This proposed a statement of licensing policy, jointly developed with South Oxfordshire District Council. A copy of the draft policy agreed for recommendation to Council is **attached**.

The minutes of the Licensing Acts Committee held on 25 November 2015 are available on the council's website at

<http://democratic.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?MIId=2060&x=1>

**Recommendations to Council:** to

1. adopt the Joint Statement of Licensing Policy;
2. authorise the Head of Legal and Democratic Services to make minor editorial changes to the Joint Statement of Licensing Policy;
3. authorise the Head of Legal and Democratic Services to publish the Joint Statement of Licensing Policy in accordance with the Licensing Act 2003.

## **11. Joint Gambling Policy**

(Pages 56 - 101)

Cabinet, at its meeting on 4 December 2015, considered the recommendations of the Licensing Acts Committee, made at its meeting on 25 November 2015, on the Joint Gambling Policy following the statutory consultation.

The report of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services, which Cabinet considered on

4 December, is **attached**.

**Recommendations to Council:** to

1. adopt the proposed Joint Gambling Policy;
2. authorise the Head of Legal and Democratic Services to make minor editorial changes to the Joint Gambling Policy; and
3. authorise the Head of Legal and Democratic Services to publish the Joint Gambling Policy in accordance with the Gambling Act 2005 (Licensing Authority Policy Statement)(England and Wales) Regulations 2006.

**12. Council tax base 2016/17**

(Pages 102 - 106)

Cabinet, at its meeting on 4 December 2015, considered a report on the council tax base for 2016/17.

The report of the Head of Finance, which Cabinet considered on 4 December is **attached**. An amended appendix 1 was tabled at the Cabinet meeting setting out corrected figures for five parishes which had changed due to a recalculation of the number of properties in each parish. The revised appendix is **attached**. Cabinet also noted that to correct this discrepancy in relation to new developments, the inspector would check the alignment of parish boundaries with the council's geographic information database.

Cabinet agreed to recommend the amended figures to Council for adoption.

**Recommendations to Council:**

1. that the report of the Head of Finance for the calculation of the council's tax base and the calculation of the tax base for each parish area for 2016/17 be approved;
2. that, in accordance with The Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012, the amount calculated by Vale of White Horse District Council as its council tax base for the year 2016/17 be 48,176.9; and
3. that, in accordance with The Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012, the amount calculated by Vale of White Horse District Council as the council tax base for the year 2016/17 for each parish be the amount shown against the name of that parish in the revised Appendix 1 attached to the Council agenda for this meeting.

**13. Councillors' allowances scheme**

The Independent Remuneration Panel undertakes an annual review to determine whether to recommend any inflationary adjustment to councillors' allowances. The panel regard this as preferable to adopting any standard index, as an annual review will give better control rather than relying on standard indices.

For the past three years, the panel has recommended increasing the councillors' basic

allowance in line within the staff pay increase for the forthcoming financial year, and recommended other allowances remained the same. The Council has a duty to consider the panel's recommendations before making any changes to the councillors' allowances scheme. Council agreed with this recommendation for the past three years and subsequently increased staff pay and the councillors' basic allowance by the same percentage.

The panel met recently and considered that any increase in the councillors' basic allowance in 2016/17 should be linked again to any staff pay increase. An increase above the staff pay increase is not recommended. The exact level of staff pay increase will not be known until the budget Council meeting in February 2016.

The panel considers that there is no justification to increase the special responsibility allowances, the childcare or dependent carer's allowances, or the travel allowances at this time.

**RECOMMENDATION:** to increase the councillors' basic allowance only for 2016/17, in line with the staff pay increase for that year.

#### **14. Review of the council's constitution**

(Pages 107 - 116)

To consider the report of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services on proposed changes to the council's constitution attached.

#### **15. Report of the leader of the council**

##### (1) Urgent cabinet decisions

In accordance with the overview and scrutiny procedure rules, a cabinet 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. Treating the decision as a matter of urgency must be agreed by the chairman of the Scrutiny Committee and must be reported to the next meeting of the council, together with the reasons for urgency.

To receive any details of urgent cabinet decisions taken since the last ordinary meeting of the council, (if any).

##### (2) Delegation of cabinet functions

To receive details of any changes to the leader's scheme of delegation.

##### (3) Matters affecting the authority arising from meetings of joint committees, partnerships and other meetings

To receive the report of the leader (if any).

## **16. Notices of motion under standing order 11**

To receive the following notices of motion under standing order 11.

(1) Motion to be proposed by Councillor Mike Badcock, seconder to be notified:

That Council requests officers to convene a special Council meeting no later than the date of the annual Council meeting in May 2016 in order to grant the freedom of the Vale of White Horse district to 3 Regiment Royal Logistics Corps, 4 Regiment Royal Logistics Corps and 7 Rifles in recognition of their contribution to the service of the country and the residents of the Vale.

(2) Motion to be proposed by Councillor Roger Cox, seconded by Councillor Mike Murray:

This Council commends the Government's efforts to support people in having the security and stability of owning a home of their own.

This Council welcomes the Government's Housing and Planning Bill which will help to create a million new homeowners by 2020. The Council endorses the Bill:

- Turning Generation Rent into Generation Buy. First-time buyers will benefit from the provision of 200,000 Starter Homes which will be available at a 20 per cent discount to first-time buyers under 40.
- Making planning permission simpler and protecting the greenbelt. The Bill reforms complex planning legislation and grants automatic planning permission in principle on brownfield sites.
- Selling high-value vacant council assets. Councils should make the best use of their assets, as high value council homes become empty they should be sold to fund new affordable house building in the same area.
- Extending Right to Buy to housing association tenants. Ending the unfairness of Right to Buy only being available to council house tenants, this will be extended to 1.3 million housing associations tenants. Homes that are sold to tenants will be replaced with new affordable homes on a one-for-one basis.
- Giving local people more of a voice through neighbourhood planning and local plans. Shifting power from Whitehall to local people, so communities will have more of a say in planning in their local areas and where homes and businesses should be built.

This Council supports the Housing and Planning Bill, which will allow people who want to work hard to save and aspire to buy their own home achieve their dream.

(3) Motion to be proposed by Councillor Gervase Duffield, seconded by Councillor Reg Waite:

This Council welcomes the recent announcements of the second Vale Enterprise Zone and the Garden Town initiative and calls on all parts of the Council to have regard to protecting and respecting as far as possible the rural character of the villages affected and to work to avoid an urbanised 'greater Didcot'.

