

Council Agenda



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Date: 4 December 2018
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Summons to attend a meeting of Council

to be held on Wednesday 12 December 2018 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

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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 record apologies for absence.

2. Minutes

(Pages 8 - 24)

To adopt and sign as a correct record the minutes of the Council meeting held on 10 October 2018 and the special Council meeting held on 19 November 2018 – **attached**.

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. Council Tax Base 2019/20

(Pages 25 - 29)

Cabinet, at its meeting on 7 December 2018, will consider a report on the council tax base for 2019/20.

The report of the head of finance, which Cabinet will consider on 7 December, is attached.

The recommendations of Cabinet will be circulated to all councillors on 7 December.

8. Council Tax Empty Homes Premium

(Pages 30 - 32)

Cabinet, at its meeting on 7 December 2018, will consider a report on the level of premium to be applied to long-term empty dwellings.

The report of the head of finance, which Cabinet will consider on 7 December, is attached.

The recommendations of Cabinet will be circulated to all councillors on 7 December.

9. Joint Gambling Policy

(Pages 33 - 72)

Cabinet, at its meeting on 7 December 2018, will consider the recommendations of the Licensing Acts Committee, made at its meeting on 28 November 2018, on the Joint Gambling Policy following the statutory consultation.

The report of the head of housing and environment, which Cabinet will consider on 7 December, is attached.

The recommendations of Cabinet will be circulated to all councillors on 7 December.

10. Vale of White Horse Scrutiny Committee Annual Report

(Pages 73 - 81)

To receive the Scrutiny Committee Annual Report **attached**.

11. Report of the leader of the council

(1) Urgent cabinet decisions

In accordance with the 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).

12. Questions on notice

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

1. Councillor Debby Hallett to Councillor Mike Murray, Cabinet member for Development and Regeneration

My question comes from my growing concern about the level to which we are performing on our duty to maintain and repair our property assets.

The most recent instance was Old Abbey House, which has been allowed to fall into disrepair, making it attractive for vandalism and anti-social behaviour nearby. A decision was made to board up the access points and place a security fence around this property right in the centre of Abingdon-on-Thames.

Members will be aware of other recent examples of buildings we own needing significant amounts spent on Planned and Preventive Maintenance (PPM). How does this council budget for PPM on properties that we own? Where can we find those amounts in our annual budget? If we have NOT been including this in our budget each year, shouldn't we be doing so?

Could the Cabinet member provide a list of our property assets, their location, value and condition, and the PPM costs for the past four years.

2. Councillor Judy Roberts to Councillor Roger Cox, Cabinet member for Partnership and Insight

What will be the mechanism by which the Vale representatives on the Growth Deal's three working sub-groups (Infrastructure, Joint Statutory Spatial Plan, and Housing) periodically and regularly feed back to full Council to let members know how the Growth Deal is progressing, the impact on our communities and how we can contribute to the plans?

Please can the Cabinet member tell us this evening what each group is prioritising and detail the work done by our representatives on our behalf so far?

3. Councillor Jenny Hannaby to Councillor Alice Badcock, Cabinet member for Community Services

Reductions in grants from central government and the probable reduction or disappearance of New Homes Bonus leaves our non-statutory services incredibly vulnerable. Leisure projects such as the Wessex Leisure Centre are clearly at risk of not going ahead - evidenced by this council's pause in capital spending.

What is the Cabinet member's contingency plan to pay for the Wessex Leisure Centre and other leisure provision if the New Homes Bonus is reduced or scrapped by the Conservative government?

4. Councillor Emily Smith to Councillor Roger Cox, Cabinet member for Planning

In 2015, the Vale Conservatives stated that the Vale was in a position to front fund the Lodge Hill slip roads.

The developers of the 950 homes North of Abingdon were given outline planning permission in July 2017, which included their s106 contribution towards the Lodge Hill southern slips. But we still do not have a reserved matters application from the developer.

Can the Cabinet member confirm that Vale administration is still able to 'front fund' the Lodge Hill slips and assure us that the diamond interchange will be delivered by 2020 whether the North Abingdon development goes ahead or not?

5. Councillor Bob Johnston to Councillor Elaine Ware, Cabinet member for Housing and Environment

Air Quality is of increasing concern for health professionals and residents, particularly in and around our established Air Quality Management Areas. Ten out of 11 targets in this council's 2015 Air Quality Action Plan were not met and when asked this at full Council in December 2017 the Cabinet member pointed to a lack of resource as the reason for the lack of progress. Since then our part-time air quality officer has gone on maternity leave and no replacement has been appointed. We've been told that instead, all officers are to be responsible for air quality. It seems clear to me that if no one is responsible, there's a real danger that nothing will be done.

What actions has the council taken over the past year that demonstrate to the public we are taking air quality and the mortality associated with it seriously?

6. Councillor Debby Hallett to Councillor Alice Badcock, Cabinet member for Community Services

For the past few years it's been clear that local government funding is uncertain and under threat. Whether you support the Government's austerity programme or not, one thing I hope we agree on is that the council needs to take professional and positive steps to mitigate the risk of cuts in Government funding to local authorities leading to real cuts in our services.

With the expectation of inevitable further funding cuts, it's natural to look to our non-statutory services to see where we can be leaner. That would have us look at our leisure centres and community centres, among other things.

The Beacon is a wonderful, valued community asset in Wantage, and its use has grown over the past several years. The cost to the council has recently been approximately £240,000 per year (as seen in the table below, from our finance team).

Financial Year	Budgeted Income	Actual Income	Budgeted Expenditure	Actual Expenditure	Planned Budget	Council Contribution	Variance against planned budget
2008/09	-91,980	-79,930	308,070	316,456	216,090	236,526	20,436
2009/10	-85,900	-87,862	259,540	243,417	173,640	155,555	-18,085
2010/11	-82,000	-80,260	253,290	255,988	171,290	175,728	4,438
2011/12	-84,500	-62,561	214,340	175,041	129,840	112,480	-17,360
2012/13	-83,450	-67,471	228,240	199,321	144,790	131,850	-12,940
2013/14	-96,010	-102,646	304,334	286,964	208,324	184,318	-24,006
2014/15	-126,010	-156,441	306,985	383,084	180,975	226,643	45,668
2015/16	-170,949	-188,129	381,176	396,386	210,227	208,257	-1,970
2016/17	-192,449	-185,827	404,443	431,070	211,994	245,243	33,249
2017/18	-249,800	-225,315	459,080	465,663	209,280	240,348	31,068

We discovered recently that The Beacon's financial reporting to Scrutiny Committee has had errors for the past few years. This has raised for me some concerns about how well the council is managing that asset, and what actions council has taken to mitigate the risk to The Beacon of funding cuts.

It would seem to me that the more they are reliant on council tax to fund their programmes and building, the more at risk they are as Government funding is reduced.

What actions has the council taken to identify ways for The Beacon to reduce its dependency on council funding? What actions are planned to help mitigate in future?

7. Councillor Helen Pighills to Councillor Mike Murray, Cabinet member for Development and Regeneration

Given that Vale of White Horse District Council has not owned social housing since about 1995, what policies are in place now to enable the council to deliver and manage the council owned social housing scheme planned at Old Abbey House in Abingdon?

8. Councillor Emily Smith to Leader of the council, Councillor Roger Cox

In October 2018, following the autumn budget statement, the National Infrastructure Commission (NIC) put out a statement titled 'National and Local Leadership Needed to Meet Growth Arc Potential'.

The statement says, "There are also plans... for new governance structure across the Arc to be in place by Spring 2019: these will take account of existing democratic accountabilities including the Cambridge-Peterborough Combined Authority as well as district and county councils".

What are these plans that the NIC refer to? How did this arrangement come about? And how will this impact the Vale residents and the district council?

9. Councillor Sandy Lovatt to Councillor Alice Badcock, Cabinet member for Community Services

The Social and Cultural activities in the Vale are as important for the health, vitality and wellbeing of the community as its economic and environmental activities. This was vividly illustrated by the sheer joy and goodwill demonstrated by the Community Awards Event that took place in the Beacon on Saturday 24 November. Does the Cabinet member agree with me that the provision of facilities such as The Beacon are a vital service to the community and that their benefits far outweigh the costs?

10. Councillor Chris Palmer to Councillor Ed Blagrove, Cabinet member for Corporate Services

Does this council have ambitions to move to a paperless environment and what measures are being taken to make this work on a practical level?

13. Motions on notice

No motions have been submitted in accordance with Council procedure rule 38.