

Council Agenda



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Summons to attend a meeting of Council

to be held on Wednesday 18 December 2019 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

1. Apologies for absence

To record apologies for absence.

2. Minutes

(Pages 9 - 24)

To adopt and sign as a correct record the Council minutes of the meeting held on 9 October 2019 - 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 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. Making the Wootton and St Helen Without Neighbourhood Development Plan

(Wards Affected: Marcham; Wootton)

(Pages 25 - 29)

Cabinet, at its meeting on 6 December 2019, considered the head of planning's report on the Wootton and St Helen Without Neighbourhood Development Plan.

The report of the head of planning, which Cabinet considered on 6 December, is attached.

Cabinet has recommended to Council as follows:

RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL: to

1. make the Wootton and St Helen Without Neighbourhood Development Plan so that it continues to be part of the council's development plan; and
2. authorise the head of planning, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, and in agreement with the Qualifying Body, to correct any spelling, grammatical, typographical or factual errors together with any improvements from a presentational perspective.

8. Treasury Management Outturn 2018-19

(Pages 30 - 50)

Cabinet, at its meeting on 6 December 2019, considered the report of the head of finance on the outturn performance of the treasury management function for the financial year 2018/19.

The report of the head of finance, which the Joint Audit and Governance Committee considered on 14 October 2019 and Cabinet considered on 6 December 2019, is **attached**.

The Joint Audit and Governance Committee made no recommendations to Cabinet.

RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL: to

1. approve the treasury management outturn report 2018/19; and
2. approve the actual 2018/19 prudential indicators within the report.

9. Council Tax Base 2020/21

(Pages 51 - 54)

Cabinet, at its meeting on 6 December 2019, considered a report on the council tax base for 2020/21.

The report of the head of finance, which Cabinet considered on 6 December, is attached.

RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL:

1. that the report of the head of finance to Cabinet on 6 December 2019 for the calculation of the council's tax base and the calculation of the tax base for each parish area for 2020/21 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 2020/21 be 52,686.4; 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 2020/21 for each parish be the amount shown against the name of that parish in Appendix 1 of the report of the head of finance to Cabinet on 6 December 2019.

10. Designating the council's section 151 chief finance officer

(Pages 55 - 57)

To consider the report of the chief executive – attached.

11. Report of the leader of the council

To receive any updates from the leader of the council.

12. Questions on notice

To receive the following question in accordance with Council procedure rule 33.

Question from Councillor Simon Howell to Councillor Andrew Crawford, Cabinet Member for finance

“The Leader of the council highlighted, at the annual meeting of the council, the need to produce a sustainable budget and improve income generation, including a line by line review.

Could the Cabinet member update Council on progress made over the last six months and the current financial health of the council as we approach the timeframe for the preparation of budgets”.

13. Motions on notice

To consider motions from councillors in accordance with Council procedure rule 38.

(1) Motion to be proposed by Councillor Richard Webber, seconded by Councillor David Grant:

In the context of the Climate Emergency, this Council welcomes the Government’s review of fracking and its potential environmental impacts. Council urges Government to move towards a position of banning fracking altogether. Quite apart from the many environmental concerns, developing yet one more carbon-based fuel flies in the face of our ambition to strive for carbon neutrality.

Council notes that onshore wind is the lowest cost low-carbon technology currently available, yet the Westmill Wind Farm at Watchfield remains the only onshore wind farm in the whole of the Vale of White Horse. This situation is being exacerbated by the Government making their ‘Contracts for Difference’ funding available for offshore wind farms but excluding onshore.

Council notes that, while Government has looked on solar energy production more favorably, there remains huge untapped potential within the Vale to generate energy through Solar PV.

Council therefore commits to exploring planning policies which positively encourage all renewable sources of energy including onshore wind farms as part of the next Vale Local Plan and Oxfordshire Plan 2050.

(2) Motion to be proposed by Councillor Max Thompson, seconded by Councillor Sarah Medley:

Council notes the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of antisemitism is the most widely accepted and recognized definition of anti-Jewish racism. It states that: Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.

Council notes the All Party Parliamentary Group on British Muslims (APPG) definition of Islamophobia: Islamophobia is rooted in racism and is a type of racism that targets expressions of Muslimness or perceived Muslimness.

Council notes that by using these definitions it helps understand, identify, and tackle antisemitism and Islamophobia.

Council holds the right to freedom of speech and freedom of religion are fundamental, but freedom of speech is not freedom to demonise, scapegoat and discriminate.

Council resolves to:

- condemn all hate crimes and deplores the rise in hate crimes against members of the Jewish and Muslim communities in Britain
- condemn all inflammatory rhetoric in political discourse: including antisemitic and Islamophobic tropes used by politicians and public servants.
- adopt the IHRA definition of antisemitism in full and without amendment
- adopt the APPG definition of Islamophobia in full and without amendment.
- ask officers to update this council's equality policies to this effect

(3) Motion to be proposed by Councillor Hayleigh Gascoigne, seconded by Councillor Alison Jenner:

Council:

1. Believes that young people should be allowed a say over their future.
2. Recognises that 16 and 17 year olds are knowledgeable and passionate about the world in which they live and are as capable of engaging in the democratic system as any other citizen.
3. Notes that there is currently an unequal situation across the United Kingdom, with 16 and 17 year olds having voting rights in Scotland and Wales that are not available to them in England and Northern Ireland.
4. Supports the need for greater engagement with young people, leading to greater involvement of young people in the decisions that affect their community.
5. Believes that lowering the voting age to 16, combined with strong citizenship education, would empower young people to better engage in society and influence decisions that will define their future.
6. Believes that people aged 16 and 17, who can consent to medical treatment, work full-time, pay taxes, get married or enter a civil partnership and join the armed forces, should also have the right to vote.
7. Recognises and supports the ongoing 'Votes at 16' campaign by the British Youth Council, the UK Youth Parliament and other youth organisations, supported by thousands of young people across the UK.

8. Calls for 16 and 17 year olds to have the right in all elections and referendums across the UK.

Council therefore:

- Requests that the Leader write to relevant Ministers and local MPs: expressing this Council's support for the Votes at 16 campaign; calling for the extension of the franchise to 16- and 17-year olds in all elections and referendums across the UK;
- and asks the ERO/ RO to consider participating in any pilot scheme.

(4) Motion to be proposed by Councillor Andy Cooke, seconded by Councillor Amos Duveen:

Council notes:

- that confidence and trust in both Parliament, the UK's democratic system and politicians has been falling for some time.
- that the House of Commons and council chambers have long been unrepresentative of the votes cast by the electorate of the United Kingdom.
- that the UK's First Past the Post voting system curtails voter choice, makes millions of votes ineffective, and leaves millions feeling unrepresented.

Council believes:

- that these factors have contributed to dangerous levels of distrust and disillusionment with our democratic process
- that democracy is distorted and failed by the fact that, due to this system, barely half of voters now feel able to cast their vote for their preferred candidate or Party.
- that it is essential that faith is restored in our democratic system and that the public see Parliament as fairly reflecting their views.
- that our First Past the Post voting system is a significant barrier to restoring this faith and all but guarantees that the balance of opinion among the electorate is not reflected in Parliament and our council chambers.
- that a system of Proportional Representation in which seats match votes at all levels, including councils, and in which all votes count equally, would help to rebuild public trust by ensuring that political views are represented.

Therefore:

Council requests that the leader write to the relevant government minister and our two local MPs setting out our position and requesting that all elections be run using a form of Proportional Representation in which all votes count equally and seats match votes.

(5) Motion to be proposed by Councillor Emily Smith, seconded by Councillor Simon Howell:

In March 2017 this council voted to support 'Better Oxfordshire'; a proposal to create a unitary authority.

The unitary authority outlined in the 'Better Oxfordshire' submission was for a single authority based on the current County Council boundary. Oxfordshire County Council and South Oxfordshire District Council also took formal decisions to support the submission of this proposal.

The proposal was sent to the Secretary of State for approval, however, no further action

has been taken. The proposal was submitted under legislative provisions containing a sunset clause, which expired in March 2019, meaning that at this time the proposal is not under active consideration.

However, over the past six months, Robert Jenrick MP, in his role as Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, has spoken publicly about an approach that could mean the end of smaller District Councils. He has also committed to a new push for devolution and raised the potential for further local government reorganisation. Additionally, these themes feature in all the main political parties' General Election manifestos.

In light of the above, with a new Council administration, and the significant financial uncertainty this council faces due to the delayed spending review, Council now wishes to clarify its position in relation to local governance models for Oxfordshire.

Council therefore confirms that it:

- Recognises that much of the financial and economic data and analysis that underpinned the 'Better Oxfordshire' submission is now out of date;
- Remains open to considering a new unitary proposal in principle, assuming it is able to secure appropriate local public support. A new unitary proposal may be based on a whole Oxfordshire basis as with the original unitary proposal or may differ, i.e. comprising different boundaries better representing local communities; and
- Restates its opposition to a "combined authority" based on the Oxfordshire County boundary or a Mayoral lead authority model of devolution.

Council asks officers to ensure that any future unitary proposal impacting the Vale of White Horse:

- addresses the significant financial challenge faced by local government, as evidenced within in our Medium Term Financial Plan and those of other Oxfordshire Councils;
- reflects a logical geography,
- delivers increased value for money; and
- creates a Council of an appropriate size, that can think and act strategically whilst ensuring meaningful decision making is brought closer to communities

Council requests that:

- officers make contact with the MHCLG to explore the approach the new Secretary of State will take to any proposals for unitary based reorganisation;
- a report on this matter is brought to full council, by the Chief Executive and Leader, outlining their understanding of the new Government's intentions by Summer 2020; and
- officers bring forward proposals for the Vale of White Horse to consider a formal merger with South Oxfordshire District Council, with the same total number of District Councillors, creating a single district council based on their combined geography with increased financial resilience.

