

Council Agenda



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Summons to attend the annual meeting of Council

**to be held on Wednesday, 22 May 2024 at 7.00 pm
The Ridgeway, The Beacon, Portway, Wantage, OX12 9BY**

Vivien Williams,
Head of Legal and Democratic (Interim)

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Agenda

Open to the public including the press

1. Election of Chair

To elect a chair of council for the municipal year 2024/25.

2. Appointment of Vice-Chair

To appoint a vice-chair of council for the municipal year 2024/25.

3. Apologies for absence

To record apologies for absence.

4. Minutes

(Pages 6 - 31)

To adopt and sign as a correct record the Council minutes of the meeting held on 21 February 2024.

5. 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.

6. 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.

7. Appointments to committees, panels and joint committees for 2024/25

(Pages 32 - 37)

To consider the report of the head of legal and democratic on the appointment to those committees required to be politically balanced together with the together with the Climate Emergency Advisory Committee, the Licensing Acts Committee and joint committees.

8. Making the East Hanney Neighborhood Plan

(Pages 38 - 42)

To consider the recommendations of the Cabinet member for planning, Councillor Foulsham, made on 7 May 2024, regarding the neighbourhood plan for East Hanney following the referendum held on 11 April 2024.

The Individual Cabinet Member Decision is attached.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. To make the East Hanney Neighbourhood Development Plan, so that it becomes part of the council's development plan.
2. To delegate to the Head of Policy and Programmes, in consultation with the appropriate Cabinet Member and in agreement with the Qualifying Body, East Hanney Parish Council, the making of minor (non-material) modifications, the correction of any spelling, grammatical, typographical or factual errors together with any improvements from a presentational perspective

9. Making the Sutton Courtenay Neighbourhood Plan

(Pages 43 - 47)

To consider the recommendations of the Cabinet member for planning, Councillor Foulsham, made on 7 May 2024, regarding the neighbourhood plan for Sutton Courtenay following the referendum held on 11 April 2024.

The Individual Cabinet Member Decision is attached.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. To make the Sutton Courtenay Neighbourhood Development Plan, so that it becomes part of the council's development plan.
2. To delegate to the Head of Policy and Programmes, in consultation with the appropriate Cabinet Member and in agreement with the Qualifying Body, Sutton Courtenay Parish Council, the making of minor (non-material) modifications, the correction of any spelling, grammatical, typographical or factual errors together with any improvements from a presentational perspective.

10. Code of Corporate Governance

(Pages 48 - 80)

At the Joint Audit and Governance Committee meeting on the 15 April 2024, the committee recommended that Council adopt the revised local code of corporate governance and include it in the council's constitution. The report considered by the committee is **attached**.

The draft minutes of the committee meeting are set out below:

“The committee received the code of corporate governance report, presented by the head of finance. He highlighted that the annual governance statements were based on the local code of good governance and that the version adopted by the councils was outdated and needed revising. The head of finance highlighted that the draft code had incorporated the latest Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy guidance, had been through the Constitution Task Review Group, and was suggested to be recommend to full council meetings for adoption and inclusion in the constitution.

In response to a question about what members could do if they believed that the councils were not compliant with the code, the head of finance indicated that they should direct these concerns in the first instance to the councils' monitoring officer.

Overall, members welcomed the update and agreed that the revised code should be

adopted by the councils”.

RECOMMENDATION: That Council adopts the revised local code of corporate governance for inclusion in the council’s constitution.

11. Report of the leader of the council

1. To receive the report of the leader of the council.
2. Special Urgency Decision

The council’s constitution stipulates that a Cabinet or Cabinet member decision taken as a matter of special urgency must be reported to the next available meeting of the Council, together with the reasons for urgency.

Council is requested to note the details of the following urgent decision.

Storm Henk Flood Grants

On 26 February 2024, Councillor Andrew Crawford, Cabinet member for Finance and Property, took a decision to participate in the government funded schemes to provide financial compensation to households and businesses adversely affected by flooding impacts from Storm Henk, between 2 and 12 January 2024.

Agreement of the chair of the Scrutiny Committee was obtained that the required decision was urgent and could not be unreasonably deferred.

Details of the decision and the reasons for urgency are available [here](#).

12. Questions on notice

To receive questions from councillors in accordance with Council procedure rule 35.

A. Question from Councillor Katherine Foxhall to Councillor Bethia Thomas, Cabinet member for Climate Action and the Environment.

The Environment Agency (EA) is currently developing the Thames Valley Flood Scheme, identifying places that could be used to store floodwater to reduce flood risk across the non-tidal Thames Valley. From an initial list of over 700 potential locations, 17 potential locations remain (according to the EA) “that might be suitable to store flood water on some of the rivers that feed into the river Thames”. Two of these remaining sites are in the Vale – although the exact locations are vague, one is on the National Trust estate at Buscot and Coleshill, and the other appears to be southwest of Abingdon, just south of the River Ock, a site many of our members are of course familiar with as the proposed site of Thames Water’s massive reservoir.

Given the EA’s stated aims of working “in partnership to deliver a wide range of environmental and other benefits” can the Cabinet member please advise what contact have officers had with the Environment Agency during the planning process for this scheme, and are we confident that we are being fully informed of the implications of any finalised locations for example in allocating land within our new local plan?

B. Question from Councillor Viral Patel to Councillor Bethia Thomas as Cabinet member for Leisure Centres and Community Buildings.

Over the last decade we have seen a growth in population of 14% across the Vale, with a further growth of 25% expected in the next 15 years. A significant proportion of this growth has been in Wantage, Faringdon, Stanford and Shrivenham, with the arrival of so many more residents it is good to see the focus on expanding our capacity at leisure facilities. For my ward I am particularly pleased to see the addition of a learner pool at Faringdon, and at Wantage, with both facilities in proximity for residents of my ward. In the Vale Leisure Facilities Assessment and Strategy Report the lack of capacity at Wantage and its low quality were highlighted, along with the need to increase capacity at Faringdon. Further, in assessing the future needs for the Vale, Shrivenham was highlighted for pool facilities as where “the most unmet demand can be met”, however at present that was deemed not enough to validate the consideration for a new pool facility in the locality.

Does the Cabinet member agree with me that, while we expect to see continued growth in our population, we should be looking to support our residents, including those on the outskirts of the county, with facilities we have assessed to be vital for their wellbeing and without expecting them to travel to neighbouring districts to meet those needs? Further, can I ask the Cabinet member if we could undertake a more detailed viability assessment for providing for the highlighted deficit in swimming facilities in the western Vale, to support those residents and provide a better distribution of leisure facilities across the district?

C. Question from Councillor Viral Patel to Councillor Andrew Crawford as Cabinet member for Finance and Property.

Over the last few years local authorities of varying sizes have chosen to bring leisure facilities back in house. In North Yorkshire, a Conservative led upper tier authority, the cabinet member expressed one of the reasons as “All outsourcing does is encourage very good local government officers to move to the private sector to manage services they were managing in the first place”. North Yorkshire joins Stroud (a Green-LibDem-Independent led council), Haringey and Wiltshire (who started in-housing in 2020). Each of these authorities have chosen to in-source leisure facilities for reasons based on the needs of the local population, the position of the council and other local conditions.

In our own council, we have chosen to bring many services in house following poor service and excessive contract costs of outsourcing over recent decades. As we look to renegotiate contracts with our leisure facilities suppliers in the near future, I would expect the process to be far more challenging than it has been in past years, largely down to the financial burdens faced in all sectors of the economy, not least in council finances and especially given the high inflationary pressures felt over recent years. An example of this can be seen with the bidding process carried out by Rutland County Council, where no supplier was willing to take on the full running costs resulting in Rutland needing to restart the process in a weaker position.

Can the Cabinet member update us on what work is taking place to assess the viability of bringing our leisure services in-house, in order to put us in the strongest possible position in renegotiating contracts?

Minutes

of a meeting of the

Council



held on Wednesday 21 February 2024 at 7.00 pm
in The Ridgeway, The Beacon, Portway, Wantage,
OX12 9BY

Open to the public, including the press

Present in the meeting room:

Councillors: Kiera Bentley (Vice-Chair), Paul Barrow, Ron Batstone, Cheryl Briggs, Mark Coleman, Andy Cooke, James Cox, Andy Crawford, Eric de la Harpe, Debra Dewhurst, Lucy Edwards, Oliver Forder, Andy Foulsham, Katherine Foxhall, Hayleigh Gascoigne, Debby Hallett, Jenny Hannaby, Scott Houghton, Sarah James, Diana Lugova, Robert Maddison, Patrick O'Leary, Viral Patel, Helen Pighills, Mike Pighills, Jill Rayner, Judy Roberts, Val Shaw, Andrew Skinner, Emily Smith, Bethia Thomas, Max Thompson and Richard Webber
Officers: Steven Corrigan (Democratic Services Manager), Mark Stone (Chief Executive), Vivien Williams (Head of Legal and Democratic and Monitoring Officer), Simon Hewings (Head of Finance and Section 151 Officer) and Emily Barry (Democratic Services Officer).

55 Election of Chair

Councillor Kiera Bentley in the Chair, as the current Vice-Chair of council, in the absence of a Chair of council.

Councillor Bentley was nominated as chair for the remainder of the 2023/24 municipal year. Councillor Thomas as proposer and Councillor Rayner as seconder spoke in support of the nomination.

RESOLVED: to elect Councillor Bentley as Chair of the council for the remainder of the 2023/24 municipal year, until the next annual meeting of the council in May 2024.

The Democratic Services Manager presented Councillor Bentley with the chain of office.

Councillor Bentley signed her declaration of acceptance of office.

56 Appointment of Vice-Chair

Councillor Forder was nominated as vice-chair for the remainder of the 2023/24 municipal year.

Councillor Thomas as proposer and Councillor Coleman as seconder spoke in support of the nomination.

RESOLVED: to appoint Councillor Forder as Vice-Chair of the council for the remainder of the 2023/24 municipal year, until the next annual meeting of the Council in May 2024.

Councillor Forder signed his declaration of acceptance of office and made an acceptance speech.

Councillor Bentley, Chair of council, presented Councillor Forder with the vice-chair chain of office.

57 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Caul, Clegg, Duveen, Fawcett and Shaw.

58 Minutes

RESOLVED: to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 13 December 2023 as a correct record and agree that the Chair sign them as such.

59 Declarations of interest

None.

60 Urgent business and chair's announcements

There were no items of urgent business.

Councillor Bentley thanked Councillor Povolotsky for her guidance and duty as chair. She advised that she wished to carry on with the same approach to Chair's charities as Councillor Povolotsky had to generate funds via a number of Chair's charitable events towards a chair's community fund from which local charities could bid for funds.

61 Public participation

None.

62 Petitions

None.

63 Treasury management 2023/24 mid-year monitoring report

Council considered Cabinet's recommendations, made at its meeting on 16 February 2024, on the treasury management performance in the first six months of 2023/24.

Councillor Crawford, Cabinet member for finance, reported that income from cash investments was likely to be above budget by the financial year end due to higher than forecast balances and above budgeted interest rates achieved on new deposits. The report set out performance against benchmarks for the first six months of the financial year. There had been no borrowing during the first half of the year and borrowing was unlikely for the remainder of the year also.

Both the Joint Audit and Governance Committee, at its meeting on 30 January and Cabinet, at its meeting on 16 February 2024, were content that the treasury management activities had been carried out in accordance with the treasury management strategy and policy.

Councillor Foxhall referred to paragraph 23 on page 30 of the agenda pack and whilst appreciating that borrowing was something the council should avoid asked if consideration had been given to borrowing for projects such a retrofitting The Beacon and Abbey House. Councillor Crawford advised that the report was looking back at activities which had been carried out. He advised that a commitment had been made to reviewing the future of all council owned buildings but that it was not the time to make the decision whether to borrow for this.

RESOLVED: to

1. approve the head of finance's report to Cabinet on 16 February 2024;
2. note that Cabinet is satisfied that the treasury activities are carried out in accordance with the treasury management strategy and policy.

64 Treasury Management and Investment Strategy 2024/25

Council considered Cabinet's recommendations made at its meeting on 16 February 2024 on the council's treasury management and investment strategy for 2024/25. This set out how the council's treasury service would support the financing of capital investment decisions, and how treasury management operated day to day. The strategy also set out the prudential indicators, providing limits within which the treasury function must operate.

Councillor Crawford, Cabinet member for finance, highlighted there were no changes to the counterparty selection criteria in the proposed strategy for 2024/25, but a recommended change to the strategy this year was the inclusion of an Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) statement. He went on to advise that Cabinet had agreed an additional recommendation to note that the section 151 officer has confirmed that he will conduct a review of investment options with our treasury advisers Link and, in line with the Constitution, will report to the Joint Audit and Governance Committee, the review to include the latest analysis on environmental, social and governance investment options.

Both Cabinet and the Joint Audit and Governance Committee had supported the strategy together with approving the prudential indicators and limits and approving the annual investment strategy and lending criteria and the Environmental, Social and Governance Policy.

RESOLVED: to

1. approve the head of finance's report to Cabinet on 16 February 2024;
2. approve the treasury management strategy 2024/25, as set out in appendix A to the report;
3. approve the prudential indicators and limits for 2024/25 to 2026/27, as set out in appendix A to the report;
4. approve the annual investment strategy 2024/25, as set out in appendix A to the report, and the lending criteria detailed in table 6 in appendix A to the report; and
5. approve the Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) policy in Appendix E.

65 Capital Strategy 2024/25-2033/34

Council considered Cabinet's recommendations made at its meeting on 16 February 2024 on the capital strategy for 2024/25 to 2033/34.

Councillor Crawford, Cabinet member for finance, reported that the strategy would provide the parameters within which capital expenditure and investment decisions would be made once the supporting requirements were in place. Key changes to the strategy were:

- Amendments to the Investment strategy (Section 5), including removal of the commercial investments category, in line with the latest CIPFA Prudential code and Public Works Loans Board lending requirements.
- Capital expenditure de minimis level note added to section 4

RESOLVED: to

1. approve the capital strategy 2024/25 to 2033/34, as set out in appendix 1 of the head of finance's report to Cabinet on 16 February 2024; and
2. agree the strategy for flexible use of capital receipts, which is contained as annex 1 of the capital strategy.
3. authorise the head of finance, in consultation with the Cabinet member for finance, to make minor changes to the capital strategy

66 Revenue budget 2024/25 and capital programme 2024/25 - 2028/29

The chair referred to regulations that require councils to record the names of those members voting in favour, against or abstaining from any vote on the budget, including amendments, and the council tax. In accordance with the regulations, she would call for a named vote on each of these matters at this meeting.

Council noted the report of the chief finance officer on the robustness of the budget estimates and the adequacy of the reserves.

Council considered Cabinet's recommendations, made at its meeting held on 16 February 2024 on the revenue budget for 2024/25 and the capital programme to 2028/29.

Councillor Crawford, Cabinet member for finance, presented Cabinet's proposals for the revenue budget and capital programme. He moved and Councillor Thomas seconded a motion to approve Cabinet's recommendations as follows: to

1. set the revenue budget for 2024/25, as set out in appendix A.1 to the head of finance's report to Cabinet on 16 February 2024;
2. approve the capital programme for 2024/25 to 2028/29, as set out in appendices D.1 and D.2 to the report, together with the capital programme changes as set out in appendix D.2 and appendices D.3 and D.4 to the report;
3. set the council's prudential limits, as listed in appendix e to the report;
4. approve the medium-term financial plan to 2028/29, as set out in appendix F to the report.

In moving the Cabinet recommendations, Councillor Crawford, the Cabinet member for finance introduced the draft budget, noting that the council's financial position had improved from that which was forecast in 2019. There were no service cuts in the budget. The budget contained significant additional spend on HR in order that the transformation project could be fully supported. The budget allocated funds to continue supporting the community hub. Council tax would increase by £5 per Band D property, the maximum allowed before a referendum was required.

A number of members welcomed the growth in staff numbers commenting on the importance of providing sufficient resources. Members were also pleased to see continued investment in community support namely Vale Community Impact and Citizen's Advice Bureau. Members also welcomed positive future funding for The Beacon. Some members

commented they wanted to see a commitment to decarbonisation in future as this had been made a clear priority in the corporate plan and should be funded.

In accordance with regulations requiring councils to record the names of those members voting in favour, against or abstaining from any vote on the budget the chair called for a recorded vote which was carried with the voting being as follows:

For	Against	Abstentions
Paul Barrow		
Ron Batstone		
Kiera Bentley		
Cheryl Briggs		
Mark Coleman		
Andy Cooke		
James Cox		
Andrew Crawford		
Eric de la Harpe		
Debra Dewhurst		
Lucy Edwards		
Oliver Forder		
Andy Foulsham		
Katherine Foxhall		
Hayleigh Gascoigne		
Debby Hallett		
Jenny Hannaby		
Scott Houghton		
Sarah James		
Diana Lugova		
Robert Maddison		
Patrick O'Leary		
Viral Patel		
Helen Pighills		
Mike Pighills		
Sally Povolotsky		
Jill Rayner		
Judy Roberts		
Andrew Skinner		
Emily Smith		
Bethia Thomas		
Max Thompson		
Richard Webber		
Total: 33	Total: 0	Total: 0

RESOLVED: (unanimously) to

1. set the revenue budget for 2024/25, as set out in appendix A.1 to the head of finance's report to Cabinet on 16 February 2024;

2. approve the capital programme for 2024/25 to 2028/29, as set out in appendices D.1 and D.2 to the report, together with the capital programme changes as set out in appendix D.2 and appendices D.3 and D.4 to the report;
3. set the council's prudential limits, as listed in appendix e to the report;
4. approve the medium-term financial plan to 2028/29, as set out in appendix F to the report.

Members thanked the head of finance and his team for the work undertaken to prepare the budget.

67 Council tax 2024/25

Council considered the report of the head of finance on the setting of the Council Tax for the 2024/25 financial year.

In accordance with regulations requiring councils to record the names of those members voting in favour, against or abstaining from any vote on the council tax the chair called for a recorded vote which was carried with the voting being as follows:

For	Against	Abstentions
Paul Barrow		
Ron Batstone		
Kiera Bentley		
Cheryl Briggs		
Mark Coleman		
Andy Cooke		
James Cox		
Andrew Crawford		
Eric de la Harpe		
Debra Dewhurst		
Lucy Edwards		
Oliver Forder		
Andy Foulsham		
Katherine Foxhall		
Hayleigh Gascoigne		
Jenny Hannaby		
Scott Houghton		
Sarah James		
Diana Lugova		
Robert Maddison		
Patrick O'Leary		
Viral Patel		
Helen Pighills		
Mike Pighills		
Sally Povolotsky		
Jill Rayner		
Judy Roberts		
Andrew Skinner		
Emily Smith		
Bethia Thomas		
Max Thompson		

Richard Webber		
Total: 32	Total: 0	Total: 0

RESOLVED:

1. To **note** that at its meeting on 13 December 2023 the council calculated the council tax base 2024/25:

(a) for the whole council area as 58,103.8 [Item T in the formula in Section 31B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended (the “Act”)]; and

(b) for dwellings in those parts of its area to which a parish precept relates as in column 1 of appendix 1.

2. That the council tax requirement for the council’s own purposes for 2024/25 (excluding parish precepts) is £9,104,284

3. That the following amounts be calculated for the year 2024/25 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Act:

(a) £91,031,780 being the aggregate of the amounts which the council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2) of the Act taking into account all precepts issued to it by parish councils.

(b) £76,405,315 being the aggregate of the amounts which the council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3) of the Act.

(c) £14,626,465 being the amount by which the aggregate at (3)(a) above exceeds the aggregate at (3)(b) above, calculated by the council, in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act as its council tax requirement for the year. (Item R in the formula in Section 31B) of the Act).

(d) £251.73 being the amount at (3)(c) above (Item R), all divided by Item T (1(a) above), calculated by the council, in accordance with Section 31(B) of the Act, as the basic amount of its council tax for the year (including parish precepts).

(e) £5,522,181 being the aggregate amount of all special items referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act, as set out in column 2 of appendix 1.

(f) £156.69 being the amount at (3)(d) above less the result given by dividing the amount at (3)(e) above by Item T (1(a) above), calculated by the council, in accordance with Section 34(2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its council tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no parish precept relates.

4. To **note** that for the year 2024/25 Oxfordshire County Council has stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:

Band A £1,213.71
Band B £1,415.99
Band C £1,618.28

Band D £1,820.56
Band E £2,225.13
Band F £2,629.70
Band G £3,034.27
Band H £3,641.12

5. To note that for the year 2024/25 the Police and Crime Commissioner for Thames Valley has stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:

Band A £179.52
Band B £209.44
Band C £239.36
Band D £269.28
Band E £329.12
Band F £388.96
Band G £448.80
Band H £538.56

6. That the council, in accordance with Sections 30 and 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the aggregate amounts shown in appendix 3 as the amounts of council tax for 2024/25 for each part of its area and for each of the categories of dwellings shown in appendix 3.

7. To determine that the council's basic amount of council tax for 2024/25 is not excessive in accordance with principles approved under Section 52ZB Local Government Finance Act 1992.

68 Pay Policy Statement 2024/25

Council considered the report of the head of corporate services on the adoption of a pay policy statement to meet the requirements of the Localism Act.

RESOLVED: to approve the statement of pay policy for 2024/25 attached to the report of the head of corporate services to the Council meeting on 21 February 2024.

69 Local Government Boundary Commission for England Review of Vale of White Horse District Council Warding Arrangements

Council considered the recommendations of the Community Governance and Electoral Issues Committee made at its meeting on 19 February 2024 on the council's warding arrangements submission to the Commission.

Councillor Forder, chair of the committee, informed Council that there would be further opportunity for comment on any proposals and this submission would not be the final arrangement. He highlighted that the suggestions made by members had not been included in the report and therefore the recommendations of the committee reflected a need to incorporate these whilst still adhering to the deadline set by the Commission.

Some members raised concerns about the suggestion of multi-member wards being a preferred option.

RESOLVED: to

1. Request officers seek to address the comments raised by members on the draft proposals submitted to the Community Governance and Electoral Issues Committee when drafting revised proposals.
2. Request officers consult with relevant ward members where appropriate when drafting revised proposals
3. Request multi member wards are considered wherever practicable and community identity supports this.
4. Request officers circulate the redrafted proposals to all members for comments prior to further consideration by the Community Governance and Electoral Issues Committee.
5. Delegate authority to the Community Governance and Electoral Issues Committee to finalise the report to be submitted to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England by the deadline of 18 March 2024.

Councillors Foxhall, James and Povolotsky wished for it to be noted that they abstained from the vote on this item in accordance with provisions in council procedure rule 70.

70 Review of political balance and allocation of seats to committees

Council considered the report of the head of legal and democratic to review the Council's political balance and reconsider the allocation of seats on those committees required to be politically balanced together with the Climate Emergency Advisory Committee and the Licensing Acts Committee following the resignation of Councillor Povolotsky from the Liberal Democrat Group.

Some members raised concerns about the political make up of the Joint Audit and Governance Committee stating that they did not feel effective overview and risk management could be achieved where the representatives on the committee were all taken from the majority party. Other members confirmed that the allocated seats was a result of the size of the committee and therefore an increase in the size of the committee would be required to allow seats for members from opposition groups.

Members also raised that it was possible for ungrouped members to be allocated seats provided leaders of the parties agreed and no member of council voted against this.

Members advised that legal advice had been sought on the calculation and that a strict formula had been applied. The change in group structure had required the recalculation to be carried out.

In line with Council procedure rules a recorded vote was requested by three members present in the room with the voting being as follows:

For	Against	Abstentions
Paul Barrow	Cheryl Briggs	Debra Dewhurst
Ron Batstone	Sarah James	Katherine Foxhall
Kiera Bentley	Viral Patel	Debby Hallett
Mark Coleman		Sally Povolotsky
Andy Cooke		Richard Webber
James Cox		

Andrew Crawford		
Eric de la Harpe		
Lucy Edwards		
Oliver Forder		
Andy Foulsham		
Hayleigh Gascoigne		
Jenny Hannaby		
Scott Houghton		
Diana Lugova		
Robert Maddison		
Patrick O'Leary		
Helen Pighills		
Mike Pighills		
Jill Rayner		
Judy Roberts		
Andrew Skinner		
Emily Smith		
Bethia Thomas		
Max Thompson		
Total: 25	Total: 3	Total: 5

RESOLVED: to

1. approve the revised political balance calculation set out in paragraphs 7 and 8 of the report;
2. approve the allocation of seats to committees set out in paragraphs 10-11 of the report;
3. approve the allocation of seats to the Climate Emergency Advisory Committee in accordance with paragraphs 14 and 15 of the report
4. approve the allocation of seats to the Licensing Acts Committee in accordance with paragraphs 16-18 of the report;
5. appoint members to the committees as set out in the schedule circulated prior to the meeting and attached to these minutes;
6. authorise the head of legal and democratic to make appointments to any vacant committee or panel seat and substitute positions in accordance with the wishes of the relevant group leader.

71 Report of the leader of the council

Councillor Thomas, Leader of the council, provided an update on a number of matters. The text of her address is available on the council's [website](#).

72 Questions on notice

1. Question from Councillor Povolotsky to Councillor Lugova, Cabinet member for planning and development management

In the current winter 2023/24 season we have experienced record storm occurrences, record winter flooding in many places, and huge pressure on the flood plains, failures in the sewage systems and infrastructure. In Steventon & the Hanneys we had flooding in places never experienced before, with many residents seeing a correlation between new estate developments on flood plains, failures of Thames Waters Sewage Networks and floodwaters in our spring line village which have not been seen since 2007. Will the council ask, with urgency, the Environment Agency to review the flood plains / flood zones in effected areas and push for section 19 reports in heavily flooded areas where I still have households unable to return home in Steventon and East Hanney?

Written response

The Council does not grant planning permission for development within the flood plain without identified mitigation. Where mitigation is accepted, the statutory body tasked with assessing this mitigation, is the Environment Agency whose role it is to ensure that there is no loss in flood plain storage and that flood risk elsewhere does not increase.

To date, and from information from the Lead Local Flood Authority (Oxfordshire County Council) we are aware of two recent instances of flooding occurring on new development. From an initial investigation, it is understood that poor on-site management resulted in two new properties unfortunately being affected. The second incident is understood to be due to an adopted oversized foul sewer becoming overwhelmed with surface water / groundwater. Thames Water have been informed of the incident and we understand that they intend to undertake additional network modelling to assess the wider network in relation to this.

The flood maps which enable us to track these incidents easily, are based on hydraulic modelling and are updated regularly. The Environment Agency are responsible for updates on a quarterly basis. All modelling goes through a rigorous process by the Environment Agency before it is accepted and used in flood maps and flood zones. Records of flooding are used by the Environment Agency to assist with assessment of model accuracy

With evidence (photographs or videos of flood extents), we can request the Environment Agency to undertake a reassessment. Flood zone maps are intended to show areas that have flooded as a result of exceedance from watercourses and do not necessarily pick up areas flooded from other sources such as groundwater or surface water.

The Lead Local Flood Authority are collating flood record data from a range of stakeholders, including Vale, and reviewing against triggers for S19 flood investigations. We are aware of S19 investigations that have been triggered by the event in January which include Steventon and areas of Abingdon adjacent to the River Ock.

Supplementary question and answer

Councillor Povolotsky undertook to provide a copy of her supplementary question in writing.

The Cabinet member undertook to provide a written response.

2. Question from Councillor Povolotsky to Councillor Pighills, Cabinet member for Community health and wellbeing

This council endorsed the Good Food Strategy in 2022, and a large part of that is around growing your own food, community allotments and community food resilience.

Is the council member aware of Thames Water guidance that no food should be consumed or grown in areas which have been subjected to contaminated flood water for 12 months. Given the widespread contamination of water we experienced in Steventon and the Hanneys, and continue to do so, what awareness has the council of this advice and how will this council hold Thames Water to account on sewage clean up and contamination identification and public advice, is this public health risk?

<https://www.thameswater.co.uk/help/water-and-waste-help/sewer-flooding/cleaningup-after-sewer-flooding>

Written response

The significant flooding that we have experienced during the end of 2023 and start of 2024 is something that the council takes very seriously, and we worked very closely with our colleagues at the County Council, Environment Agency, Thames Valley Police and others to ensure that we work to protect lives and property as much as possible.

Public Health risks are generally the responsibility of the County Council. They already have this webpage which provides a flood toolkit -

<https://www.oxfordshirefloodtoolkit.com/emergency/report-flood/>

The term “contamination” or “contaminated land” has a specific meaning, and our Environmental Protection team would not consider this as ‘contaminated land’ as defined under Part 2A of the Environmental Protection Act 1990.

Contaminated land is most commonly a result of historic land uses such as industrial activities and waste disposal. Although the working assumption would be that any flooded land has the potential to be ‘land that has been flooded containing sewer flooding’ and floodwaters are likely to be contaminated by disease producing bacteria and viruses, infection problems arising from floods in this country are rare.

The sun’s ultraviolet rays are very effective at naturally breaking down the bacteria left by flooding. The natural breakdown of bacteria is dependent upon climatic conditions (e.g. temperature, moisture, vegetation and soil type) although as a rough guide, bacteria will return back to normal background levels as follows:

- nine days during warm, dry summer conditions.
- twenty days during damper, cooler spring/autumnal conditions.
- twenty-five days during wet, cold winter conditions.

The Environmental Protection team are reactive to concerns from residents about specific pieces of land but are not resourced or required to consider every area of land that has been flooded for potential contamination.

The Environmental Protection team will, on a specific basis, also provide advice on clean up when residents make contact, but the primary regulatory response sits with the Environment Agency and Thames Water.

The number of queries received by council on this is very low (estimate 5-10 in the last five years) and the council mainly signposts residents to Thames Water directly.

Officers have updated the council's advice, available through our webpages, which will be available for commercial providers of food, as well as homeowners. Our main webpage on flooding as a result of recent storms is found [here](#). This webpage also includes links to Thames Waters flooding advice, Food Standards Agency advice on food that has been touched or covered by floodwater or sewage and the UK Health Security Agency advice for flooding and health: advice for the public.

Our Food and Workplace Safety team ensure that prepared food sold by food businesses is safe to eat.

The County Council's Trading Standards team have enforcement responsibility to ensure food grown on farms, including fruit and vegetable, complies with legislation and is grown hygienically.

Food produced for private or domestic use, including allotments and back gardens, is not governed by the food hygiene legislation provided they are not selling the food.

Regarding the performance of Thames Water, this is an issue for their regulator, Ofwat.

Supplementary question and answer

Councillor Povolotsky undertook to provide a copy of her supplementary question in writing.

The Cabinet member undertook to provide a written response.

3. Question from Councillor Povolotsky to Councillor Thomas, Leader of the council and Cabinet member for climate action and the environment, strategic partnerships and place

Local groups and members, including myself, have written to the Secretary of State, the Rt Hon Stephen Barclay, to request he calls the proposed Thames Water Resource Plan for public scrutiny due to the significant public interest over performance, leak and leak management, sewage discharge, performance and locally the threat of the South East Strategic Reservoir Option (SESRO).

Can I ask the leader of the council when she will also call for such a public review on behalf of the many residents in the Vale effected by Thames Water's failures and who could be adversely affected by the current designs proposed for (SESRO)?

Written response

Thank you for your question.

I agree that the performance of Thames Water is wholly unacceptable and that the reservoir plans are alarming.

At its last meeting, Council resolved that we should write to the Secretary of State asking him to pause the decision-making process for SESRO, and I have done so, referring to other aspects of that motion at the same time. The letter is published on the correspondence page of our website and available at <https://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/vale-of-white-horse-district-council/about-thecouncil/official-correspondence/>

We await the secretary of state's response and, having written as requested by Council, it is only fair and reasonable that we consider any response that is forthcoming.

Whilst recognising the poor performance of Thames Water, water companies are subject to public scrutiny and regulation, which the question appears not to recognise – by OFWAT and DEFRA - and I have asked officers to consider how we can bring this vital role more readily to the attention of residents and members alike.

Supplementary question and answer

Councillor Povolotsky undertook to provide a copy of her supplementary question in writing.

The Cabinet member undertook to provide a written response.

4. Question from Councillor Povolotsky to Councillor Thomas, Leader of the council and Cabinet member for climate action and the environment, strategic partnerships and place

At the Council meeting of Wednesday 13 December 2023, Councillors Clegg and Cooke proposed a motion which was unanimously passed in which there was request for the Chief Executive to establish a Water Resource Officer-Member Liaison Group.

Can we get a progress update on this item, a timeframe and membership proposals of the group?

Written response

In line with the wider motion, I have recently written to the secretary of state.

At this time, there is no active consultation on going in relation to SESRO and officers have been focused on responding to the impacts of recent flooding, as the Member will be aware, given the impacts in her own ward. Officers have been working extensively with partners to do all we can to support those directly affected by the recent flooding whilst at the same time engaging extensively with Cabinet on the budget proposal we considered tonight – an approach I hope all members would recognise must be our officers' priority. Information on the help available to those most impacted by the recent flooding events can be found here <https://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/vale-of-white-horse-districtcouncil/community-support/emergency-situations/flood-advice/flooding-financialsupport/>

I recently discussed with the chief executive how relevant members would be identified to support the liaison group, and it is my intention to discuss this matter further with the leader of the Green Group in the coming days. I would envisage the group, which will be informal in nature, meeting quarterly, with the first meeting in the next month or so and to a large degree its activity level will be determined by the stages of response to water related matters that the council is engaged in at the time. I would emphasise that planning related

matters relating to Water and indeed any other policy area, will wholly remain within the Joint Local Plan process.

Supplementary question and answer

Councillor Povolotsky undertook to provide a copy of her supplementary question in writing.

The Cabinet member undertook to provide a written response.

5. Question from Councillor Povolotsky to Councillor Thomas, Leader of the council and Cabinet member for climate action and the environment, strategic partnerships and place

On 21 September 2023: Councillor Thomas wrote to Thames Water regarding the draft Water Resources Management Plan 2024 (WRMP24). This is listed on the Vale of White Horse District Council's website alongside a copy and the Thames Water response.

As the ward member for Steventon & The Hanneys could I ask why there has been a lack of openness and transparency with me and other ward members the last two years over responses to consultations and lack of our input, or even consultation, on the list of bullet points of suggestions. Including a country park and water sports provision has not been consulted on with the local elected members or representatives of the communities in any way?

Written response

Thank you for your question.

I don't agree that there has been any lack of transparency.

The council has responded to several consultations over the past two years, and all of those responses are published on the website. They have also been circulated to members by the comms team as part of the regular cycle of updates.

Thames Water have conducted a number of briefing sessions for councillors and I know various members have attended these events.

I believe we are agreed in our opposition to the reservoir plans. However, we cannot escape the reality which is that Thames Water intends to bring forward its reservoir proposals for decision as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Proposal. Although the council will not be the decision maker, the land is therefore safeguarded in both our current and emerging local plans.

We are currently consulting on preferred options for the joint local plan with South Oxfordshire, which includes a draft policy for SESRO, IN7. This public consultation provides an ideal opportunity for members, community representatives and individual residents to make their comments and to help shape the final policy.

Supplementary question and answer

Councillor Povolotsky undertook to provide a copy of her supplementary question in writing.

The Cabinet member undertook to provide a written response.

6. Question from Councillor Thompson to Councillor Foulsham, Cabinet member for corporate services, policy and programmes

This month is LGBT+ History month. It coincides with the anniversary of the abolition of Section 28 in part to remind us of the vital role of education and teachers in ensuring LGBT+ persons are heard and respected. Since 2005, this initiative has aimed to raise awareness of, and combat prejudice against, LGBT+ people. Each year has a different theme, and this year highlights the LGBT+ community contributions to medicine and healthcare. It celebrates these contributions whilst also shining a light on the health inequalities that are still experienced by LGBT+ persons. Section 28 of the Local Government Act not only prevented the discussion of LGBT+ in schools but also prevented Council's from "promoting homosexuality." It contributed to a climate of hatred and fear and its lasting impact on LGBT+ persons and the community must not be forgotten. At a time when the LGBT+ community is experiencing a rise in hate crime, how is Council acknowledging LGBT+ history month, and what is Council doing now and over the next three years to ensure that LGBT+ persons' needs are considered and that they are welcome and included in the Vale of White Horse.

Written response

I'd like to thank Councillor Thompson for this question, in which he raises an important topic. Section 28 feels like a piece of legislation from a bygone era, and I think anybody today who is unfamiliar with it would be shocked to learn how recently it was still in place.

As a public authority, our residents can and should expect us to show moral leadership on issues facing everybody in our communities, to be able to shine a light on injustices and to celebrate our diversity.

It's for those reasons we recently adopted our Equality and Diversity strategy, which includes an action plan to set out some of the things we will do to ensure that we provide strong and public support for staff, members, residents, businesses, and groups who belong to all of our diverse communities.

One of the first actions to take place, was the setting up of a network of staff Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Champions who have begun work, meeting every three months to set out their objectives and plan their actions.

We are looking at establishing deep-rooted cultural processes and mindsets within the council, and I'm sure Members can understand that it takes time to embed practices and I'm content that the actions underway are doing that rather than just ticking boxes and engaging in public displays of tokenism. The People and Culture team is resourced to ensure we meet our ambitious objectives, and Consultation and Engagement Officers have also created an equalities database to ensure we go the extra mile to engage with all our communities.

The council also has a Diversity and Social Campaigns Calendar published on the website that outlines the social campaigns and events we will support throughout the year. It's reviewed and updated annually.

This year's calendar sets out that the council has chosen to publicly support Pride month in June as the key focus for our celebration and support for our LGBTQ+ communities. The communications team tell me that this is a topic that generates excellent engagement from the public on social media.

So, while LGBTQ+ History Month in February isn't in this year's calendar, I can assure Council that we take seriously the important issues raised in Cllr Thompson's question, and we tackle them alongside the wider celebrations of our LGBTQ+ friends, family members and neighbours in June.

7. Question from Councillor James to Councillor Thomas, Leader of the council and Cabinet member for climate action and the environment, strategic partnerships and place

Even since we last met as a Council there have been several power cuts in my rural ward. Speaking to councillors and residents in other parts of the district, power cuts are an irregular, but not uncommon, occurrence outside the towns. They often happen due to high winds but also on other more unexpected occasions. The electricity infrastructure is currently not adequately resilient to provide a supply with a high degree of confidence. We expect in the future to need to increase the electricity supply as the strategy for decarbonising heating and transport includes significantly electrifying these sectors so the impacts of this are only set to grow.

Power cuts are difficult for all, usually resulting in no heating as many households have some form of central heating that relies on electric pumps, whatever the fuel. Increasing numbers of us work from home, but not without broadband in a power cut. But they disproportionately affect those who are already vulnerable: the old, the very young, and those with health issues.

How are we engaging as a Council with our local network operator Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks (SSEN) on behalf of our residents to try and improve the quality of the infrastructure in the rural areas of our district and make sure that it will be fit for the future? As a Council, is there anything more that we can do, working with SSEN and other partners, to ensure that vulnerable residents are kept safe when power cuts occur?

Written response

Thank you for your question, and I share your concern about the quality of our electricity infrastructure.

Nationally there has been under-investment over many years and there is a shortage of capacity on the grid. This is not a problem confined to the Vale, and it is not something which we can solve on our own.

With our local partners in the Future Oxfordshire Partnership we provided evidence last summer to a parliamentary Environmental Audit Committee, and only last month our submission was used by the District Councils Network in their own evidence to this continuing inquiry into enabling sustainable electrification of the UK economy.

So, I am happy that we are already making our voice heard. I know that officers county-wide are working together with SSEN and other distributors on local area energy planning, and I wish to see us continue to support this work.

We should expect that demand for electrical power will continue to increase as we reduce our dependence on fossil fuels. We cannot ourselves provide the necessary resilient infrastructure, but we can and will continue to press for more to be done and to work through the wider Future Oxfordshire Partnership to amplify that voice.

Supplementary question and answer

Councillor James undertook to provide a written copy of her supplementary question.

The Cabinet member undertook to provide a written response.

8. Question from Councillor Foxhall to Councillor Dewhurst, Cabinet Member for Leisure Centres and Community Buildings

In the Development and Corporate Landlord fee proposals for 2024/5, we are intending to introduce a new 20p fee to use public toilets in the Charter and Portway car parks in Abingdon and Wantage, and to retain the existing fee in Hales Meadow and Millbrook Square (Grove).

Freely accessible public toilets are essential for public health, accessibility and inclusion – they make being in public spaces possible for many people including people with health conditions or who are pregnant, families with young children and the elderly. I appreciate that the costs involved have forced many local authorities to reduce their provision of public conveniences, but to charge for access does seem to go contrary to our corporate plan priorities of Building Healthy Communities and Working in an Open and Inclusive Way.

Could the cabinet member please explain the justification for why we are introducing charging for some toilets and not others in the district, and what format the charging will take?

Written response

I recognise the importance of accessible public toilets for all, and I am pleased that we have been able to continue to provide such facilities across the Vale, at a time when many councils are being forced to close public toilets due to financial pressures.

We are introducing a new 20p charge for the facility at the Charter, Abingdon. Historically, the public toilets in the Charter have been vandalised/abused and have sadly attracted antisocial behaviours making it uncomfortable for the public/users and for our own the cleaning staff to undertake their work. We have recently spent £37,718 renovating one unisex toilet at this site and in order to try and reduce the amount of vandalism and gathering of groups in the area, the small charge has been introduced.

It is a similar situation at Abbey Meadow toilets where significant vandalism has been occurring and we are therefore introducing a 20p charge on this site too. For the new 'Changing Places' funded toilet and improvements at Portway WC, no charge has currently been introduced as vandalism in that facility has not been a problem in the past. During the recent refurbishment of the toilets (at a cost of £223,265) the ability to charge in future has been installed, should vandalism become an issue in the future.

The other toilets where we charge are in Hales Meadow car park, Abingdon and School Lane in Grove which are unisex 'superloo' toilets which are fitted with charging mechanisms to prevent vandalism.

Disabled users are able to access the toilets at Hales Meadow, Abingdon and School Lane, Grove, along with the one at the Charter, Abingdon, free of charge, using a RADAR key.

In summary, vandalism costs the council significant amounts. We plan to monitor the use of the facilities where we have introduced the 20p charge to see what effect the charge has on the use of the toilets and the level of vandalism.

In first six months of 2023/24, we spent £7,368 on vandalism repairs to toilets from a £9,100 budget for toilet repairs and maintenance. This is often from people blocking pans or ripping off the toilet roll holders or graffiti inside the toilet areas. Additional staff cleaning costs have also been incurred.

When toilets are vandalised, there is often a period of time when the toilets are then not operational and by introducing a small charge, we hope to ensure that the toilets are accessible more of the time.

Due to the issues with cash collection, banking and risk of theft, all charging is now processed using contactless payment cards, so no cash is stored in the facilities.

Supplementary question

Thank you for the detailed answer to my question about proposed introductions of charging for public toilets. I am sure we are all disappointed that so much of our residents' money is being spent repairing vandalism, and that the result of that is the need to charge residents a second time to use our toilets.

The response to my question states that a charge will be introduced at Abbey Meadows. This is not surprising given the well-publicised vandalism experienced there. But the final spreadsheet of charges that I was sent as Scrutiny chair did not include a proposal for a charge at Abbey Meadows for 2024/25. On the other hand, the spreadsheet does show a definite charge at Portway in Wantage, which the answer to my question now says is only potentially to be introduced in the future. This may be a case of a single 20p in the wrong spreadsheet box but please could it be clarified which of these plans are correct?

I'm still very concerned that charging for toilets using a digital card access system will continue to particularly disadvantage elderly residents and visitors. Will the Cabinet member commit to communicating these charges with town and parish councils and ensure that the Vale website is updated to clearly identify which of our toilets charge a fee, and to direct residents to how they can apply for a RADAR key. For example, that these keys are available to purchase through AGE UK?

Answer

Councillor Coleman, having only recently taken on the portfolio responsibility for public conveniences following Councillor Dewhurst's resignation from Cabinet, undertook to provide a written response to the supplementary question.

73 Motions on notice

With the agreement of Council, Councillor Smith moved, and Councillor Foxhall seconded amended wording to the motion set out in the agenda at item 19 to accommodate an amendment with additional words shown in bold below:

“Council notes:

Thames Water Limited’s proposal to increase household water bills to an average of £735 by 2030, an increase of 60% in cash terms.

That amongst the main arguments for privatising the water companies in 1989 were:

- The private sector would be more efficient and make better use of investment funds.
- The private sector would not be held back by government limits on investment levels.
- The water regulator, OFWAT would prevent the new private monopolies from abusing their market power.

In the 35 years since privatisation, investment in infrastructure has stagnated while the debt held by water companies has increased significantly.

Thames Water has failed to deal with leaks and the amount of sewage being pumped into local rivers has rocketed.

Across the network, Thames Water spilled sewage for 6,500 hours in the last nine months of 2023. This pollutes our waterways, damages the natural environment, and poses serious health risks to wildlife, pets and humans.

Thames Water has continued to pay out huge dividends to shareholders, last year paying a £37.5m dividend to a parent company as the company’s debts rose to £14.7bn in the same period.

Thames Water has continued to pay out huge pay and benefits packages to senior executives, including a total of £1.6m paid to the Chief Executive in the 2022-23 financial year.

Council believes:

Thames Water has had 35 years to draw up and implement plans to provide the necessary infrastructure to run its business properly.

That it is for Thames Water Limited to fund and manage the infrastructure investment urgently needed to stop the leaks and reduce sewage outflows, in line with the basis upon which the water industry was privatised in 1989.

That the cost of this much needed infrastructure should not fall on consumers who have been paying Thames Water bills on the basis that it delivers on its responsibilities.

Council resolves:

To ask the Leader to write to the Chair and Chief Executive of Ofwat and to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, setting out this council’s opposition to the proposed Thames Water price hike.

To ask officers to consider submitting an Environmental Information Request regarding Thames Water’s plans for AMP8 across Vale of White Horse, and to consider our own priorities in the light of their response.

To send a copy of this letter to the MPs for Oxford West & Abingdon and Wantage constituencies.”

After debate and being put to the vote the motion was agreed.

RESOLVED:

To note Thames Water Limited's proposal to increase household water bills to an average of £735 by 2030, an increase of 60% in cash terms.

That amongst the main arguments for privatising the water companies in 1989 were:

- The private sector would be more efficient and make better use of investment funds.
- The private sector would not be held back by government limits on investment levels.
- The water regulator, OFWAT would prevent the new private monopolies from abusing their market power.

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That it is for Thames Water Limited to fund and manage the infrastructure investment urgently needed to stop the leaks and reduce sewage outflows, in line with the basis upon which the water industry was privatised in 1989.

That the cost of this much needed infrastructure should not fall on consumers who have been paying Thames Water bills on the basis that it delivers on its responsibilities.

RESOLVES:

To ask the Leader to write to the Chair and Chief Executive of Ofwat and to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, setting out this council's opposition to the proposed Thames Water price hike.

To ask officers to consider submitting an Environmental Information Request regarding Thames Water's plans for AMP8 across Vale of White Horse, and to consider our own priorities in the light of their response.

To send a copy of this letter to the MPs for Oxford West & Abingdon and Wantage constituencies.

The meeting closed at 9.25 pm

Planning Committee, 9 Members	
Liberal Democrat (8)	Green (1)
Ron Batstone	Cheryl Briggs
Jenny Hannaby	
Scott Houghton	
Rob Maddison	
Mike Pighills	
Jill Rayner	
Val Shaw (Vice-Chair)	
Max Thompson (Chair)	
Preferred substitutes	
Liberal Democrat (8)	Green (3)
Paul Barrow	Katherine Foxhall
Robert Clegg	Sarah James
Andy Cooke	Viral Patel
Amos Duveen	
Oliver Forder	
Hayleigh Gascoigne	
Judy Roberts	
Emily Smith	

Scrutiny Committee, 9 Members	
Liberal Democrat (8)	Green (1)
Ron Batstone	Katherine Foxhall (Chair)
James Cox	
Eric de la Harpe	
Oliver Forder	
Hayleigh Gascoigne	
Debby Hallett	
Rob Maddison	
Judy Roberts (Vice-Chair)	

Preferred substitutes	
Liberal Democrat (8)	Green (3)
Paul Barrow	Viral Patel
Kiera Bentley	Sarah James
Robert Clegg	Cheryl Briggs
Andy Cooke	
Amos Duveen	
Jenny Hannaby	
Emily Smith	
Max Thompson	

Joint Scrutiny Committee, 5 Members	
Liberal Democrat (4)	Green (1)
Andy Cooke	Katherine Foxhall (Co-Chair)
Ron Batstone	
Judy Roberts	
Andrew Skinner	
Preferred substitutes	
Liberal Democrat (4)	Green (3)
Kiera Bentley	Sarah James
Mike Pighills	Viral Patel
Patrick O'Leary	Cheryl Briggs
Max Thompson	

Joint Audit and Governance Committee, 4 Members
Liberal Democrat (4)
Oliver Forder
Judy Roberts
Andrew Skinner
Emily Smith (Co-Chair)
Preferred substitutes

Liberal Democrat (4)	
Andy Cooke	
Eric de la Harpe	
Jenny Hannaby	
Mike Pighills	

Community Governance and Electoral Issues Committee, 6 Members

Liberal Democrat (5)	Green (1)
Eric de la Harpe	Cheryl Briggs
Oliver Forder (Chair)	
Diana Lugova	
Rob Maddison	
Max Thompson (Vice-Chair)	

Preferred substitutes

Liberal Democrat (5)	Green (3)
Ron Batstone	Katherine Foxhall
Neil Fawcett	Sarah James
Scott Houghton	Viral Patel
Patrick O'Leary	
Mike Pighills	

Joint Staff Committee, 5 Members

Liberal Democrat (4)	Green (1)
Sue Caul	Viral Patel
Neil Fawcett	
Andy Foulsham	
Bethia Thomas	

Substitutes

The Leader may be substituted by another Cabinet member.
Other members of the committee may be substituted by any other member of the council.

General Licensing Committee, 12 Members

Liberal Democrat (11)	Green (1)
Paul Barrow	Cheryl Briggs
Ron Batstone (Chair)	
Kiera Bentley	
Lucy Edwards	
Neil Fawcett	
Oliver Forder	
Diana Lugova	
Patrick O'Leary (Vice-Chair)	
Val Shaw	
Andrew Skinner	
Bethia Thomas	
NO SUBSTITUTES	

Licensing Acts Committee, 12 Members

Liberal Democrat (11)	Green (1)
Paul Barrow	Cheryl Briggs
Ron Batstone (Chair)	
Kiera Bentley	
Lucy Edwards	
Neil Fawcett	
Oliver Forder	
Diana Lugova	
Patrick O'Leary (Vice-Chair)	
Val Shaw	
Andrew Skinner	
Bethia Thomas	
NO SUBSTITUTES	

Appeals Panel, 3 Members**Liberal Democrat (3)**

Paul Barrow

Rob Clegg (Chair)

Jill Rayner

PREFERRED SUBSTITUTES**Liberal Democrat (3)**

Debby Hallett

Val Shaw

Richard Webber

Climate Emergency Advisory Committee, 7 Members**Liberal Democrat (6)**

Kiera Bentley

Robert Clegg

James Cox

Eric de la Harpe (Vice Chair)

Hayleigh Gascoigne (Chair)

Scott Houghton

Green (1)

Sarah James

Preferred substitutes**Liberal Democrat (6)**

Ron Batstone

Amos Duveen

Rob Maddison

Mike Pighills

Jill Rayner

Val Shaw

Green (3)

Viral Patel

Katherine Foxhall

Cheryl Briggs

Council report



Report of Head of Legal and Democratic

Author: Steven Corrigan, Democratic Services Manager

Tel: 07717 274704

E-mail: steven.corrigan@southandvale.gov.uk

To: COUNCIL

DATE: 22 May 2024

Review of political balance and allocation of seats to committees

Recommendations

That Council:

1. appoints the committees and panels for the 2024/25 year, allocates seats to each political group and appoints members and substitutes to sit on them in accordance with paragraphs 7-11 of this report and as set out in the schedule circulated at the meeting;
2. appoints chairs and vice-chairs as set out in the schedule circulated at the meeting;
3. appoints all local members representing the wards covered by the relevant area committees to those committees for the 2024/25 municipal year; in accordance with paragraph 13 of this report and as set out in the schedule circulated at the meeting;
4. appoints members to the Climate Emergency Advisory Committee in accordance with paragraphs 14 and 15 of this report and as set out in the schedule circulated at the meeting;
5. appoints members to the Licensing Acts Committee in accordance with paragraphs 16-18 of this report and as set out in the schedule circulated at the meeting;
6. appoints a representative and a substitute on the Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee;
7. appoints a representative and a substitute on the Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel;
8. appoints three representatives to the Future Oxfordshire Partnership Scrutiny Panel;
9. authorises the head of legal and democratic to make appointments to any vacant committee or panel seat and substitute positions in accordance with the wishes of the relevant group leader.

Purpose of report

1. This report invites Council to agree appointments to those committees required to be politically balanced together with the Climate Emergency Advisory Committee and the Licensing Acts Committee.

Background

2. Section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 imposes a duty on a local authority at its annual meeting, or as soon as possible after it, to review the allocation of seats on the committees of the Council between the political groups. The Council may carry out such a review at any other time and may do so if requested by a political group.
3. In summary the Council has a duty to ensure the following principles are adhered to:
 - (i) where there is more than one political group, not all seats are allocated to the same political group
 - (ii) a majority group should get the majority of seats on each committee
 - (iii) the seats allocated to groups on a committee reflect the membership of the Council as a whole
 - (iv) the allocation of the total number of seats on all committees reflects the membership as a whole.
4. Ordinary committees are those that have decision-making powers but excluding the Licensing Acts Committee and area committees.
5. Ungrouped members are not entitled to committee seats and any seats given are at the discretion of Council.

Strategic Objectives

6. This report supports the council's corporate plan theme of Working in an open and inclusive way. It is also in line with the council's requirement to review the political complexion of committees and other bodies, having regard to the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

Political balance

7. The current political composition of the Council's 38 seats is as follows:
 - Green Group – 4 (11.1%)
 - Liberal Democrat Group - 32 (88.9%)
 - Independent – 1 (0%) as a non-group member
 - Vacancy – 1 (0%)
8. The Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990 require a constituted political group to be two or more members. As such Councillor Povolotsky, an Independent member, is designated as a non-group member. There is also a vacancy following Richard Webber's resignation as the ward member for Sutton Courtenay.

Composition of committees

9. The ordinary committees and panels that are required to be politically balanced both individually, and overall, are set out below.

Committee	Members	Comments
Vale Scrutiny Committee	9	
Joint Scrutiny Committee	5	10 in total with South Oxfordshire District Council
Joint Audit and Governance Committee	4	8 in total with South Oxfordshire District Council
Planning Committee	9	
General Licensing Committee	12	
Community Governance and Electoral Issues Committee	6	
Appeals Panel	3	
Joint Staff Committee	5	10 in total with South Oxfordshire District Council
Totals	53	

- The membership of the General Licensing Committee and the Licensing Acts Committee are the same, although they are two separate entities. This allows for a sufficiently large, well trained pool of councillors from which to draw the Taxi Licensing and Licensing Panels and avoids confusion as to which members are on which committee. These committees may appoint the same, or different chairs and vice chairs.
10. The political balance calculation and the entitlements to seats on committees are set out in the tables below. Fractional entitlements of less than one half are rounded down and entitlements of one half or more are rounded up.

Groups	Group members	Number of committee seats
Liberal Democrat	32	47
Green	4	6
TOTAL	36	53

Committee	Total number of seats	Liberal Democrat	Green
Scrutiny	9	8	1
Planning	9	8	1
General Licensing Committee	12	11	1

Appeals Panel	3	3	0
Joint Scrutiny	5	4	1
Joint Audit and Governance	4	4	0
Community Governance and Electoral Issues Committee	6	5	1
Joint Staff Committee	5	4	1
Total	53	47	6

11. If the Council wishes to allocate any seats not in accordance with the political balance requirements it can only do so if no councillor votes against the proposal.

Substitutes

12. Each political group is entitled to the same number of preferred substitutes as the number of ordinary seats it holds on a committee or panel, and up to a maximum of three preferred substitutes where it has fewer than three members on a committee or panel. All substitutes for regulatory committees must have met the relevant training requirement, regardless of whether they are preferred or other substitutes.

Area Committees

13. In 2003, the Council established area committees with the terms of reference set out in the council's constitution. The areas were revised by Council in May 2015. In January 2011 the Executive delegated the award of community grants to the area committees. The area committees consist of members for the relevant area only. Council is invited to confirm the membership of the area committees for the next municipal year as those local members representing those areas. The Council is asked to note that the area committees do not need to be politically balanced and, therefore, the area committees are not included in the calculation of seats to political groups. Council is requested to appoint members to the area committees as set out in the schedule circulated at the meeting.

Climate Emergency Advisory Committee

14. This advisory committee with a membership of seven members is not subject to the regulations detailed in paragraph 3 of this report and, therefore, has no effect on the overall allocation of seats. For this committee to be politically balanced alone, it is suggested that 6 seats are allocated to the Liberal Democrat Group and 1 to the Green Group.

15. In accordance with the Council's constitution, each political group is entitled to substitutes as detailed in paragraph 12 above.

Licensing Acts Committee

16. The Licensing Acts Committee is a statutory committee and is not required to be included in the calculation of political balance. The whole committee meets rarely to deal with licensing and gambling policy matters but a membership of 12 provides a pool of councillors from which panels of three can be drawn to deal with hearings relating to premises licence applications and reviews, and gambling matters.
17. Council has previously agreed to appoint a committee in accordance with the political balance of the Council. The membership will mirror the membership of the General Licensing Committee and will, therefore, be politically balanced but will not in itself contribute to the total political balance of the council's committees.
18. As a statutory committee with a specified membership substitutes may not be appointed.

Eligibility to sit on committees and panels.

- Any member of the council may be appointed to any committee with the following exceptions and caveats:
- No member of Cabinet may sit on any Scrutiny Committee;
- No member of Cabinet may sit on the Joint Audit and Governance Committee;
- No member of Cabinet may sit on the Planning Committee;
- No member may sit on an Area Committee if they do not represent that area;
- The Chair or Vice Chair of Council may not be the Chair or Vice Chair of any committee or panel;
- No Cabinet member may be the Chair or Vice Chair of any committee or panel with the exception of the Joint Staff Committee;
- Most panels meet during the daytime, and only members who have some daytime availability should be selected for these panels. This includes General Licensing Committee and Licensing Acts Committee, which do most of their work through daytime panels.
- The requirement for members to declare disclosable pecuniary interests, other registrable interests and non-registrable interests or any conflicts of interest applies to all committees and panels.

Appointments

19. Officers have invited group leaders to submit the names of members they wish to sit on each of the above bodies. A table of nominations will be circulated prior to the meeting.

Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee

20. Council is invited to appoint a representative and a named substitute to the Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel

21. Council is invited to appoint a representative and a substitute to the Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel.

Future Oxfordshire Partnership Scrutiny Panel

22. The Scrutiny Panel is non-statutory and is only advisory, unlike the council's scrutiny functions. The ability of the constituent council scrutiny committees is primary regarding the statutory ability to scrutinise the Future Oxfordshire Partnership. The chair will be elected by the members of the Scrutiny Panel.

23. As a non-statutory panel, the Scrutiny Panel does not need to be politically balanced, but councils are asked to have regard to their own political balance in making appointments.

24. Council is invited to appoint three representatives to the Scrutiny Panel.

Financial implications

25. There are no direct financial implications.

Legal implications

26. These are set out in the body of the report.

Climate and ecological impact implications

27. There are no climate or ecological implications arising from this report.

Equalities implications

28. There are no equality implications arising from this report.

Conclusion

29. In deciding the committees and panels it wishes to establish for the 2024/25 year, Council is required to allocate seats to political groups in the same proportion as they hold on the council as a whole. Against that background, Council is invited to establish the committees and panels set out in the table in paragraph 9 of this report and to appoint councillors to them. Council is also invited to appoint councillors to the area committees, the Climate Emergency Advisory Committee and the Licensing Acts Committee and to appoint representatives to the Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel and the Future Oxfordshire Partnership Scrutiny Panel. If all committee and panel seats and substitute places are not filled at the meeting, Council is invited to delegate authority to the head of legal and democratic to make appointments in accordance with the wishes of the relevant group leader.

Background Papers: None.



Record of individual Cabinet member decision

Local Government Act 2000 and the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012

Decision made by	Councillor Andy Foulsham
Key decision?	No
Date of decision (same as date form signed)	3 May 2024
Name and job title of officer requesting the decision	Michael Folayan Planning Policy Officer (Neighbourhood)
Officer contact details	Tel: 07548 955909 Email: michael.folayan@southandvale.gov.uk
Decision	To recommend to Council: 1. To make the East Hanney Neighbourhood Development Plan, so that it becomes part of the council's development plan. 2. To delegate to the Head of Policy and Programmes, in consultation with the appropriate Cabinet Member and in agreement with the Qualifying Body, East Hanney Parish Council, the making of minor (non-material) modifications, the correction of any spelling, grammatical, typographical or factual errors together with any improvements from a presentational perspective.
Reasons for decision	1. The making of the East Hanney Neighbourhood Development Plan (the Plan) would not breach, or otherwise be incompatible with, any EU or human rights obligations, including the following Directives: the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive (2001/42/EC); the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive (2011/92/EU); the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC); the Wild Birds Directive (2009/147/EC); the Waste Framework Directive (2008/98/EC); the Air Quality Directive (2008/50/EC); and the Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC). In addition, no issues arise in respect of equality under general principles of EU law or any EU equality directive. In order to comply with the basic condition on the European Union legislation, Vale of White Horse District Council prepared a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) screening (January 2023), which concluded that the Plan is unlikely to have a significant effect on the environment and therefore a full SEA is not required.

	<p>2. The Plan would not give rise to significant environmental effects on European sites. The council screened the Plan's potential impact on EU Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and this was completed in January 2023. The HRA screening report concluded that the Plan would not have any likely significant effects on the integrity of European sites in or around Vale of White Horse, either alone or in combination with other plans or programmes and that an Appropriate Assessment was therefore not required.</p> <p>3. The council is satisfied that the Plan is in all respects fully compatible with Convention rights contained in the Human Rights Act 1988. There has been full and adequate opportunity for all interested parties to take part in the preparation of the Plan and to make their comments known.</p> <p>Referendum</p> <p>4. A referendum relating to the adoption of the East Hanney Neighbourhood Development Plan was held on Thursday 11 April 2024.</p> <p>5. The question which was asked in the Referendum was: <i>'Do you want Vale of White Horse District Council to use the Neighbourhood Plan for East Hanney to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?'</i></p> <p>6. The result was as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Yes = 186 votes (93%) b. No = 14 votes (7%) (Unmarked/void = 0%) c. Turnout = 19.4% <p>7. The majority of local electors who voted, voted in favour of the Plan; therefore, the East Hanney Neighbourhood Development Plan has become part of the council's development plan.</p> <p>8. As the Plan was approved at the local referendum and the council is satisfied that the making of the Plan would not breach, or otherwise be incompatible with, any EU or human rights obligations, the council is required to make the East Hanney Neighbourhood Development Plan so that it continues to be part of the council's development plan.</p>
<p>Alternative options rejected</p>	<p>The council's options are limited by statute. Paragraph 38A (4)(a) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 sets out that the council must make a neighbourhood plan if more than half of those voting at the referendum have voted in favour of the plan being used to help decide planning applications in the plan area.</p> <p>The only circumstance where the district council should not make this decision is where the making of the plan would breach, or would otherwise be incompatible with, any EU obligation or any of the</p>

	<p>Convention rights (within the meaning of the Human Rights Act 1998).</p> <p>Section 3 of the Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017, which came into force on 19 July 2017, amends section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 to ensure that neighbourhood plans have full legal effect once they have passed their local referenda. In the very limited circumstances that the council might decide not to make the neighbourhood development plan, it will cease to be part of the development plan for the area.</p> <p>In this case, the referendum result was in favour of the plan, and so the East Hanney Neighbourhood Development Plan has become part of the council's development plan. For the reasons set out in paragraphs 1 to 3, the council is satisfied that the East Hanney Neighbourhood Development Plan would not breach or be incompatible with EU obligations or human rights legislation.</p>
Climate and ecological implications	<p>The Plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development, it includes objectives addressing this. Sustainable development can be summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.</p> <p>In terms of climate and ecological implications, the Plan seeks to have a positive impact, containing an objective concerned with maintaining and improving the natural environment. The plan contains policies on a number of topics, including nature recovery and biodiversity (EHNP 9), the retention of trees and hedgerows (EHNP 6) and, flood mitigation and climate change in relation to new housing (ENHP 16).</p>
Legal implications	<p>The legal implications are set out elsewhere in the report on the basis of which it is considered that the council should now proceed to make the East Hanney Neighbourhood Development Plan. The process undertaken and proposed accords with planning legislation.</p>
Financial implications	<p>The Government makes funding available to local authorities to help them meet the cost of their responsibilities around neighbourhood planning. A total of £20,000 can be claimed for each neighbourhood planning area. In the case of neighbourhood plan reviews, a local planning authority may make only one claim for substantive modifications to a specific neighbourhood plan in their area within each 5-year window from the date that plan was first made. The council becomes eligible to apply for this additional grant once the council issue a decision statement detailing the intention to send the plan to referendum.</p> <p>Any costs incurred in the formal stages in excess of Government grants is borne by the council. Staffing costs associated with supporting community groups and progressing neighbourhood plans through the formal stages are funded by the council. It is expected that costs associated with progressing this neighbourhood plan can be met from within the existing neighbourhood planning budget.</p>
Equalities implications	<p>No implications.</p>

Other implications	The council is required to comply with the statutory requirements (to consider whether the East Hanney Parish Neighbourhood Development Plan should be made following successful local referendum), which this recommendation seeks to achieve. In view of the considerations referred to elsewhere in this report, as the majority of those voting have voted in favour of the plan at its local referendum, a decision not to make the plan would place the council at risk of a legal challenge.			
Background papers considered	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. East Hanney Neighbourhood Development Plan and supporting documents 2. National Planning Policy Framework (2023) 3. National Planning Policy Guidance (July 2014 and subsequent updates) 4. Vale of White Horse District Council Local Plan 2031 Part 1 5. Vale of White Horse District Council Local Plan 2031 Part 2 6. Vale of White Horse SEA/HRA Screening Statement (2023) 7. Representations submitted in response to the East Hanney Neighbourhood Development Plan 8. Relevant Ministerial Statements 			
Declarations/ conflict of interest? Declaration of other councillor/ officer consulted by the Cabinet member?	None			
List consultees		Name	Outcome	Date
	Ward councillors	Councillor Sally Povolotsky	No comments	05/04/24
	Legal legal@southandvale.gov.uk		No comments	05/04/24
	Finance Finance@southandvale.gov.uk		No comments	05/04/24
	Climate and biodiversity climateaction@southandvale.gov.uk	Jessie Fieth	No comments	28/03/24
	Diversity and equality equalities@southandvale.gov.uk	Equalities Team	No implications	28/03/24
	Property property@southandvale.gov.uk	Chris Mobbs	No comments	28/03/24
	Communications communications@southandvale.gov.uk		No comments	05/04/24

Confidential decision? If so, under which exempt category?	No
Call-in waived by Scrutiny Committee chairman?	n/a
Has this been discussed by Cabinet members?	n/a
Cabinet portfolio holder's signature To confirm the decision as set out in this notice.	Signature Councillor Andy Foulsham Date 3 May 2024

ONCE SIGNED, THIS FORM MUST BE HANDED TO DEMOCRATIC SERVICES IMMEDIATELY.

For Democratic Services office use only		
Form received	Date: 7 May 2024	Time: 11:25
Date published to all councillors	Date: 7 May 2024	
Call-in deadline	Not applicable as this is not a key decision but instead contains a recommendation to Council on 22 May 2024.	



Record of individual Cabinet member decision

Local Government Act 2000 and the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012

Decision made by	Councillor Andy Foulsham
Key decision?	No - This form contains the cabinet member recommendation. The decision on the recommendation will be made by full Council
Date of decision (same as date form signed)	3 May 2024
Name and job title of officer requesting the decision	Tom Gill Planning Policy Officer (Neighbourhood)
Officer contact details	Tel: 07510 921689 Email: thomas.gill@southandvale.gov.uk
Decision	To recommend to Council: 1. To make the Sutton Courtenay Neighbourhood Development Plan, so that it becomes part of the council's development plan. 2. To delegate to the Head of Policy and Programmes, in consultation with the appropriate Cabinet Member and in agreement with the Qualifying Body, Sutton Courtenay Parish Council, the making of minor (non-material) modifications, the correction of any spelling, grammatical, typographical or factual errors together with any improvements from a presentational perspective.
Reasons for decision	1. The making of the Sutton Courtenay Neighbourhood Development Plan (the Plan) would not breach, or otherwise be incompatible with, any EU or human rights obligations, including the following Directives: the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive (2001/42/EC); the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive (2011/92/EU); the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC); the Wild Birds Directive (2009/147/EC); the Waste Framework Directive (2008/98/EC); the Air Quality Directive (2008/50/EC); and the Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC). In addition, no issues arise in respect of equality under general principles of EU law or any EU equality directive. In order to comply with the basic condition on the European Union legislation, Vale of White Horse District Council prepared a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) screening (November 2021), which concluded that the Plan is unlikely to have a significant effect on the environment and therefore a full SEA is not required.

	<p>2. The Plan would not give rise to significant environmental effects on European sites. The council screened the Plan's potential impact on EU Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and this was completed in November 2021. The HRA screening report concluded that the Plan would not have any likely significant effects on the integrity of European sites in or around Vale of White Horse, either alone or in combination with other plans or programmes and that an Appropriate Assessment was therefore not required.</p> <p>3. The council is satisfied that the Plan is in all respects fully compatible with Convention rights contained in the Human Rights Act 1988. There has been full and adequate opportunity for all interested parties to take part in the preparation of the Plan and to make their comments known.</p> <p>Referendum</p> <p>4. A referendum relating to the adoption of the Sutton Courtenay Neighbourhood Development Plan was held on Thursday 11 April 2024.</p> <p>5. The question which was asked in the Referendum was: <i>'Do you want Vale of White Horse District Council to use the Neighbourhood Plan for Sutton Courtenay to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?'</i></p> <p>6. The result was as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Yes = 479 votes (88.5%) b. No = 61 votes (11.3%) (Unmarked/void = 0.2%) c. Turnout = 22.9% <p>7. The majority of local electors who voted, voted in favour of the Plan; therefore, the Sutton Courtenay Neighbourhood Development Plan has become part of the council's development plan.</p> <p>8. As the Plan was approved at the local referendum and the council is satisfied that the making of the Plan would not breach, or otherwise be incompatible with, any EU or human rights obligations, the council is required to make the Sutton Courtenay Neighbourhood Development Plan so that it continues to be part of the council's development plan.</p>
<p>Alternative options rejected</p>	<p>The council's options are limited by statute. Paragraph 38A (4)(a) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 sets out that the council must make a neighbourhood plan if more than half of those voting at the referendum have voted in favour of the plan being used to help decide planning applications in the plan area.</p> <p>The only circumstance where the district council should not make this decision is where the making of the plan would breach, or would otherwise be incompatible with, any EU obligation or any of the</p>

	<p>Convention rights (within the meaning of the Human Rights Act 1998).</p> <p>Section 3 of the Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017, which came into force on 19 July 2017, amends section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 to ensure that neighbourhood plans have full legal effect once they have passed their local referenda. In the very limited circumstances that the council might decide not to make the neighbourhood development plan, it will cease to be part of the development plan for the area.</p> <p>In this case, the referendum result was in favour of the plan, and so the Sutton Courtenay Neighbourhood Development Plan has become part of the council's development plan. For the reasons set out in paragraphs 1 to 3, the council is satisfied that the Sutton Courtenay Neighbourhood Development Plan would not breach or be incompatible with EU obligations or human rights legislation.</p>
<p>Climate and ecological implications</p>	<p>The Plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development, including an objective addressing this. Sustainable development can be summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.</p> <p>In terms of climate and ecological implications, the Plan seeks to have a positive impact, containing objectives concerned with maintaining and regenerating parcels of green space in addition to trees and vegetation of amenity value within the Parish.</p> <p>The plan also contains a Biodiversity policy (SC6), setting out biodiversity principles and requiring a biodiversity net gain of at least 10% on all development proposals.</p>
<p>Legal implications</p>	<p>The legal implications are set out elsewhere in the report on the basis of which it is considered that the council should now proceed to make the Sutton Courtenay Neighbourhood Development Plan. The process undertaken and proposed accords with planning legislation.</p>
<p>Financial implications</p>	<p>The Government makes funding available to local authorities to help them meet the cost of their responsibilities around neighbourhood planning. A total of £20,000 can be claimed for each neighbourhood planning area. In the case of neighbourhood plan reviews, a local planning authority may make only one claim for substantive modifications to a specific neighbourhood plan in their area within each 5-year window from the date that plan was first made. The council becomes eligible to apply for this additional grant once the council issue a decision statement detailing the intention to send the plan to referendum.</p> <p>Any costs incurred in the formal stages in excess of Government grants is borne by the council. Staffing costs associated with supporting community groups and progressing neighbourhood plans through the formal stages are funded by the council. It is expected that costs associated with progressing this neighbourhood plan can be met from within the existing neighbourhood planning budget.</p>

Equalities implications	No implications.		
Other implications	The council is required to comply with the statutory requirements (to consider whether the Sutton Courtenay Neighbourhood Development Plan should be made following successful local referendum), which this recommendation seeks to achieve. In view of the considerations referred to elsewhere in this report, as the majority of those voting have voted in favour of the plan at its local referendum, a decision not to make the plan would place the council at risk of a legal challenge.		
Background papers considered	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sutton Courtenay Neighbourhood Development Plan and supporting documents 2. National Planning Policy Framework (2023) 3. National Planning Policy Guidance (July 2014 and subsequent updates) 4. Vale of White Horse District Council Local Plan 2031 Part 1 5. Vale of White Horse District Council Local Plan 2031 Part 2 6. Vale of White Horse SEA/HRA Screening Statement (2021) 7. Representations submitted in response to the Sutton Courtenay Neighbourhood Development Plan 8. Relevant Ministerial Statements 		
Declarations/ conflict of interest? Declaration of other councillor/ officer consulted by the Cabinet member?	None		
List consultees		Name	Outcome
	Ward councillors	Councillor Richard Webber	No comments 05/04/24
		Councillor Andy Cooke	No comments 05/04/24
	Legal legal@southandvale.gov.uk		No comments 05/04/24
	Finance Finance@southandvale.gov.uk		No comments 05/04/24
	Climate and biodiversity climateaction@southandvale.gov.uk	Jessie Fieth	No comments 28/03/24
	Diversity and equality equalities@southandvale.gov.uk	Equalities Team	No implications 28/03/24
	Property	Chris Mobbs	No comments 28/03/24

	property@southandvale.gov.uk			
	Communications communications@southandvale.gov.uk		No comments	05/04/24
Confidential decision? If so, under which exempt category?	No			
Call-in waived by Scrutiny Committee chairman?	n/a			
Has this been discussed by Cabinet members?	n/a			
Cabinet portfolio holder's signature To confirm the decision as set out in this notice.	Signature Councillor Andy Foulsham Date 3 May 2024			

ONCE SIGNED, THIS FORM MUST BE HANDED TO DEMOCRATIC SERVICES IMMEDIATELY.

For Democratic Services office use only		
Form received	Date: 7 May 2024	Time: 11:25
Date published to all councillors	Date: 7 May 2024	
Call-in deadline	Not applicable as this is not a key decision but instead contains a recommendation to Council on 22 May 2024.	

Joint Audit and Governance Committee



Report of Head of Finance

Author: Steven Corrigan

Telephone: 07717 274704

E-mail: steven.corrigan@southandvale.gov.uk

Date: 15 April 2024

Local Code of Corporate Governance

Recommendation

That the committee recommends the revised local code of corporate governance for adoption by each Council for inclusion in the councils' constitution.

Purpose of Report

1. To consider a proposed new local code of corporate governance and recommend its adoption by each council.

Strategic Objectives

2. The adoption of a revised Local Code of Corporate Governance supports the following strategic objectives:
 - Openness and accountability in South Oxfordshire
 - Working in an open and inclusive way in the Vale of White Horse

Background

3. The councils are responsible for ensuring that their business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for. To this end members and senior officers are responsible for ensuring that proper arrangements exist for the governance of the councils' affairs and stewardship of its resources.
4. The Annual Governance Statement is based on a Local Code of Good Governance which forms part of the councils' constitution. As the Annual Governance Statement is

a statutory requirement, the councils are required to take account of any revised guidance.

5. Currently, the councils have a Local Code of Corporate Governance which is based on guidance in the CIPFA/SOLACE Framework for Corporate Governance. In 2016 CIPFA/SOLACE carried out a review of the Framework for Corporate Governance 2007 (as amended by the 2012 addendum). As a result, in April 2016 CIPFA/SOLACE published a new framework document “Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework 2016 Edition” with the key focus of governance processes and structures centring on the attainment of sustainable economic, societal and environmental outcomes. This year’s Annual Governance Statement recognised that a redrafted code would be brought forward to reflect the updated CIPFA guidance.
6. The attached draft local code of corporate governance (Appendix 1) is intended to replace the out-of-date protocol in the councils’ constitution and reflects updated CIPFA guidance which outlines the following seven principles:
 - Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values and respecting the rule of law
 - Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement
 - Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable, economic, social and environmental benefits
 - Determining the interventions necessary to optimize the achievement of the intended outcomes
 - Developing the Council’s capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it
 - Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management
 - Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting and audit, to deliver accountability
7. The revised local code of corporate governance provides further levels of detail on which the council can monitor its progress against each of the seven principles and demonstrates how the councils’ internal processes and governance framework support the delivery of those principles. The committee is requested to review the document to ensure members are satisfied it accurately reflects the councils’ governance arrangements in meeting the core principles set out above.
8. The draft has been considered by the Constitution Review Working Group and where appropriate updated in response to members’ views.
9. It is proposed that progress on delivery against the code is reviewed by officers and that this informs the future development of the Annual Governance Statement for consideration by this committee.

Financial Implications

10. The Annual Governance Statement is approved alongside the Annual Statement of Accounts. The Local Code of Corporate Governance provides the basis for assurance on managing risks and performance through internal control and strong public financial management.

Legal Implications

11. The preparation and publication of a local Code of Corporate Governance is in accordance with guidance set out in Delivering Good Governance in Local Government (CIPFA/SOLACE, 2016) and Good Governance in the Public Sector (CIPFA/IFAC, 2014).

Climate and ecological impact implications

12. There are no direct implications arising from this report. However, the proposed Local Code of Corporate Governance provides the basis for assurance on defining outcomes in terms of sustainable, economic, social and environmental benefits.

Equalities implications

13. The proposed Local Code of Corporate Governance includes an acknowledgment of the importance of equality matters and how they are addressed.

Risks

14. An effective Corporate Governance framework demonstrates good governance to the public and stakeholders. The revised Local Code of Corporate Governance demonstrates how the councils will achieve this.

Conclusion

15. The committee is asked to endorse the revised Code and recommend it to each Council for adoption and inclusion in the councils' constitution.

Background Papers:

CIPFA/Solace Delivering Good Governance in Local Government: Framework 2016

Code of Corporate Governance

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- Core Principles..... 3
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- How we measure and report performance against the principles..... 5
- Appendix A - Actions and behaviours to be taken by the councils that demonstrate good governance. 9

Introduction

The councils' Code of Corporate Governance is based upon the CIPFA / SOLACE publication entitled "Delivering Good Governance in Local Government: Framework 2016 Edition."

This document replaces the previous code of governance – **Delivering Good Governance: The Local Code of Governance our Local Code of Governance.**

This updated Code, adds detail of expected behaviours and actions in order to comply with the 2016 CIPFA guidance and provides a best practice framework for governance across the council.

What do we mean by Governance?

'The International Framework: Good Governance in the Public Sector' defines 'governance' as comprising the arrangements (including political, economic, social, environmental, administrative, legal and other arrangements) put in place to ensure that the intended outcomes for stakeholders are defined and achieved. The Framework also states that to deliver good governance in the public sector both governing bodies and individuals working for them must aim to achieve the councils' objectives while acting in the public interest at all times.

Governance is about how the council ensures that it is doing the right things, in the right way, for the right people in a timely, inclusive, open, honest and accountable manner. Good governance leads to effective:

- leadership and management
- performance and risk management
- stewardship of public money
- public engagement and outcomes for our citizens and service users.

Good governance will enable the council to provide services and deliver its Corporate Plan whilst ensuring that there are mechanisms in place to identify and mitigate any risk.

Core Principles

The councils' Code of Corporate Governance is based on the following seven core principles as set out in 'The International Framework: Good Governance in the Public Sector' published by CIPFA / SOLACE:

- A. Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law.
- B. Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement.
- C. Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social, and environmental benefits.
- D. Determining the interventions necessary to optimize the achievement of the intended outcomes.

- E. Developing the councils' capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it.
- F. Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management.
- G. Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting, and audit to deliver effective accountability.



Source: 'The International Framework: Good Governance in the Public Sector' published by CIPFA / SOLACE

The Code specifically identifies the actions and behaviours taken by the councils in relation to each of these core principles and associated sub principles. The Code, along with its supporting infrastructure is set out below at Appendix A.

The Annual Governance Statement provides evidence of the council's compliance with the seven core principles.

Responsibilities

Councillors and officers are collectively responsible for the governance of the council. This is achieved by councillors setting the policy parameters and officers delivering services within these parameters.

The statutory officers, the Head of Paid Service (Chief Executive), Section 151 Officer (Chief Finance Officer) and the Monitoring Officer have responsibility for advising council and cabinet on legislative, financial operational matters and ensuring that the council is governed effectively in line with the requirements of this Code.

The Joint Audit and Governance Committee is responsible for monitoring, governance matters and recommending this Code to council for adoption and will ensure its effectiveness.

How we measure and report performance against the principles

On an annual basis, each of our Heads of Service will be asked to complete assurance statements explaining actions they have taken throughout the financial year to assess and evidence compliance with the expected behaviours, as set out in Appendix A, within their areas of responsibility.

These statements then inform and support our Annual Governance Statement, which forms a part of our end of year Statement of Accounts, and also identify actions needed for the forthcoming year to address any areas of non-compliance. We review the information from the Managers Assurance Statements to update this code with the evidence of our compliance.

The Joint Audit and Governance Committee is responsible for recommending this Code to council for adoption and ensuring it is reviewed annually to ensure its effectiveness and that it is updated accordingly.

Appendix A - Actions and behaviours to be taken by the councils that demonstrate good governance.

Core Principle A. Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law.		
Sub Principle: Behaving with integrity	Lead Officers	Evidence base
<p>1. Ensure that members and officers behave with integrity and lead a culture where acting in the public interest is visible and consistently demonstrated thereby protecting the reputation of the councils.</p>	Head of Legal and Democratic / People and Culture Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The councils have a Councillor Code of Conduct which is in compliance with the Localism Act 2011 and sets out expected behaviours with the aim of maintaining public confidence in both the councils and council members. The code of conduct is embedded within our constitution which is published on each council's website: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Constitution – South Oxfordshire District Council ○ Constitution – Vale of White Horse District Council ○ Councillor's Code of Conduct South Oxfordshire District Council ○ Councillor's Code of Conduct Vale of White Horse District Council • An Employee Conduct Policy forms part of each officer's contract of employment and covers expected behaviours. The Employee Conduct Policy is published within a set of contractual policies on each council's website: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Contractual Policies - South Oxfordshire District Council ○ Contractual Policies - Vale of White Horse District Council • There is also a Code of Conduct for Officers which, together with the Code of Conduct for Members includes and builds on the Nolan Principles. • For both officers and council members to maintain transparency and identify and mitigate any potential conflicts, the council maintains a Register of Interests and a Register of Gifts and Hospitalitys. Registers for officers are held internally but both registers for members are available within the details for each council member on our websites: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Councillors - South Oxfordshire District Council ○ Councillors - Vale of White Horse District Council • In keeping with our Constitution, council meetings and committees are conducted in accordance with procedure rules which include expected behaviours for decision makers. Declarations of interest are made and minuted at the start of each meeting to avoid conflict arising during the meetings. The constitution also includes a protocol for interaction between officers and members and can be found on each councils' website:
<p>2. Ensure that members take the lead in establishing values for the councils and officers and that they are communicated and understood. These will build on the Seven Principles of Public Life (The Nolan Principles).</p>	Head of Legal and Democratic	
<p>3. Lead by example and use the values as a framework for decision making and other actions.</p>	All Heads of Service/Service Managers	
<p>4. Demonstrate, communicate and embed values through appropriate policies and processes which will be reviewed on a regular basis to</p>	All Heads of Service/Service Managers	

ensure they are operating effectively.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Constitution – South Oxfordshire District Council ○ Constitution – Vale of White Horse District Council
Sub Principle: Demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values	Lead Officers	Evidence base
<p>5. Seek to establish, monitor and maintain the councils' ethical standards and performance.</p> <p>6. Underpin personal behaviour with ethical values and ensure they permeate all aspects of the councils' culture and operation.</p> <p>7. Develop and maintain robust policies and procedures which place emphasis on agreed ethical values.</p> <p>8. Ensure that external providers of services on behalf of the organisation are required to act with integrity and in compliance with ethical standards expected by the councils.</p>	<p>Head of Legal and Democratic</p> <p>All Heads of Service/Service Managers</p> <p>All Heads of Service/Service Managers</p> <p>All Heads of Service/Service Managers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● This Code of Corporate Governance is set out within our Constitution which includes a requirement to operate in an ethical manner. This is reinforced within both the Protocol on Member and Officer Relations and the Officer Code of Conduct. The standards of conduct for councillors and any complaints arising are overseen by the Joint Audit and Governance Committee. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Constitution – South Oxfordshire District Council ○ Constitution – Vale of White Horse District Council ● Each council states a set of values on our internal intranet. These include an expectation for officers to demonstrate a commitment to upholding integrity and ethical values. We plan and provide services and policies in a fair, inclusive and equal way to promote good relations as set out in our Diversity and Inclusion Strategy available on our website. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Equalities – South Oxfordshire District Council ○ Equalities – Vale of White Horse District Council ● We recognise in our Procurement Strategy that the purchase of goods, services and works should promote ethical procurement. Each council publishes a statement on its website for organisations and individuals selling to the council which covers expected standards of conduct as well as ethical and legal requirements. These requirements also take into account the National Procurement Policy Statement PPN 5/21, the National Procurement Strategy for Local Government in England 2018, The Public Contracts Regulations 2015, the Local Government Transparency Code 2015 and the Modern Slavery Act 2015. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Selling to the council – South Oxfordshire District Council ○ Selling to the council – Vale of White Horse District Council
Sub Principle: Respecting the rule of law	Lead Officers	Evidence base
9. Ensure members and officers demonstrate a strong	Head of Legal and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Our templates for reports, policies and decision making are available to officers on our internal intranet and include sections to record legal implications.

<p>commitment to the rule of the law as well as adhering to relevant laws and regulations.</p>	<p>Democratic / People and Culture Manger</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Members on decision making committees, such as licensing panels and planning committees, receive bespoke training to cover the legal aspects of their roles. The Monitoring Officer provides training to officer and members on good decision making.
<p>10. Create the conditions to ensure that the statutory officers, other key post holders, and members are able to fulfil their responsibilities in accordance with legislative and regulatory provisions.</p>	<p>Chief Executive</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Our Chief Executive has the role of Head of Paid Service with overall accountability for the governance arrangements and officers operating within the councils. The Head of Legal and Democratic has the statutory role of Monitoring Officer, who ensures the council, council officers and members operate legally and maintain the highest standards of conduct in all they do. The Chief Finance Officer (Section 151) has overall responsibility for the councils financial position.
<p>11. Strive to optimise the use of the full powers available for the benefit of citizens, communities and other stakeholders.</p>	<p>All Heads of Service/Service Managers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All statutory officers meet regularly to discuss governance issues We have an Anti-Fraud, Corruption and Bribery Policy which aims to help officers understand when and who to contact if they have concerns about fraud, bribery or corruption. This also emphasises the need for officers to adhere to legal requirements and ensure all procedures and practices remain above reproach. We publish the policy on our websites within the contractual policies section. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contractual Policies – South Oxfordshire District Council Contractual Policies – Vale of White Horse District Council
<p>12. Deal with breaches of legal and regulatory provisions effectively.</p>	<p>Head of Legal and Democratic / People and Culture Manger</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Our Whistleblowing Policy is available to officers on our internal intranet, and this explains how officers can raise concerns about suspected wrongdoing and how the councils manage any allegations.
<p>13. Ensure corruption and misuse of power is dealt with effectively.</p>	<p>Head of Legal and Democratic / People and Culture Manger</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Our Whistleblowing Policy is available to officers on our internal intranet, and this explains how officers can raise concerns about suspected wrongdoing and how the councils manage any allegations.

Core Principle B. Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement.

Sub Principle: Openness	Lead Officers	Evidence base
<p>14. Ensure an open culture through demonstrating, documenting and</p>	<p>All Heads of Service/Service Managers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> South Oxfordshire District Council has a specific theme of openness and accountability within its four-year Corporate Plan. The plan is available on the council website: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Corporate Plan 2020- 2024 - South Oxfordshire District Council

<p>communicating the councils' commitment to openness.</p> <p>15. Make decisions that are open about actions, plans, resource use, forecasts, outputs and outcomes. The presumption will be for openness. If that is not the case, a justification for the reasoning for keeping a decision confidential will be provided.</p> <p>16. Provide clear reasoning and evidence for decisions in both public records and explanations to stakeholders and will be explicit about the criteria, rationale and considerations used. In due course, the councils will ensure that the impact and consequences of those decisions are clear.</p> <p>17. Use formal and informal consultation and engagement to determine the most appropriate and effective interventions / courses of action.</p>	<p>All Heads of Service/Service Managers</p> <p>All Heads of Service/Service Managers</p> <p>All Heads of Service/Service Managers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vale of White Horse District Council has a specific theme of working in an open and inclusive way within its four-year Corporate Plan. The plan is available on the council website: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Corporate Plan 2020 – 2024 - Vale of White Horse District Council • We publish agendas and minutes for council meetings and committees on each councils' website. Agenda items are supported by a reports pack with documents supporting topics being discussed and these can be accessed individually as well. The reports set out the background and information supporting the agenda item and explains if an item is considered confidential. This detail is available on the individual committee/meeting pages from the listing on the main meetings webpage. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Meetings list – South Oxfordshire District Council ○ Meetings list – Vale of White Horse District Council • Exemptions from publication are the exception with the public interest test being applied. The Monitoring Officer adjudicates on requests for exemption at the point of publication • Each council has a Decision Register on their website recording decisions made by any of the councils' decision makers. The register can be searched by key words, by date ranges and by specific decision makers. As well as a summary outline, a link is provided to the individual decision notice which includes reasons for the decision. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Decision Register – South Oxfordshire District Council ○ Decision Register – Vale of White Horse District Council • We make information available in many ways and to support openness and accountability in how we operate we publish sets of easy to access information within a Data Hub on each council's website. The information includes our decisions, performance and data reports and items we publish under the Transparency Regulations and Code 2015 and Model Publication Scheme. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Data Hub – South Oxfordshire District Council ○ Data Hub – Vale of White Horse District Council • Each council publishes live and closed consultations on their website and a specific Statement of Community Involvement covering the planning policy and planning development consultation process. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Data Hub – South Oxfordshire District Council ○ Data Hub – Vale of White Horse District Council
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Sub Principle: Engaging comprehensively with institutional stakeholders	Lead Officers	Evidence base
<p>18. Effectively engage with institutional stakeholders to ensure that the purpose, objectives and intended outcomes for each stakeholder relationship are clear so that outcomes are achieved successfully and sustainably.</p> <p>19. Develop formal and informal partnerships to allow for resources to be used more efficiently and outcomes achieved more effectively.</p> <p>20. Ensure that partnerships are based on trust, a shared commitment to change, a culture that promotes and accepts challenge among partners and that the added value of partnership working is explicit.</p>	<p>All Heads of Service/Service Managers</p> <p>All Heads of Service/Service Managers</p> <p>All Heads of Service/Service Managers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each council has a Communications and Engagement Strategy setting out how we encourage our stakeholders to voice their views on our work and services. These are available on each councils' website: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communications and Engagement Strategy – South Oxfordshire District Council Communications and Engagement Strategy – Vale of White Horse District Council The councils have a Deputy Chief Executive with responsibility, set out in our constitution, for Partnerships who acts as the councils' representative in communication with our strategic partners. This role is also the lead for the Five Councils' Partnership.

Sub Principle: Engaging stakeholders effectively, including individual citizens and service users	Lead Officers	Evidence base
21. Establish a clear policy on the type of issues that the councils will meaningfully consult with or involve communities, individual citizens, service users and other stakeholders to ensure that service (or other) provision is contributing towards the achievement of intended outcomes.	All Heads of Service/Service Managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The public are able to observe most business at council meetings and can register to speak to or ask questions about items on council or committee agendas. The agendas are published 5 working days ahead of the meetings and a calendar of meetings and explanation of the responsibilities for each meeting are published on the councils' websites: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Meetings – South Oxfordshire District Council ○ Meetings – Vale of White Horse District Council • Each council has a Communications and Engagement Strategy setting out how we encourage our stakeholders to voice their views on our work and services. These are available on each councils website: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Communications and Engagement Strategy – South Oxfordshire District Council ○ Communications and Engagement Strategy – Vale of White Horse District Council • We publish ways that residents can get involved and have their say in the councils' work through Consultation and Engagement activities. This includes details on each council's website and an option to register an interest to be kept informed of our consultations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Consultations - South Oxfordshire District Council ○ Consultations - Vale of White Horse District Council • The above web pages also include specific guidance for consultation about planning policy and planning development by way of a Statement of Community Involvement. • Larger scale or longer-term projects may include their own ways of engaging with residents, such as through sounding boards and newsletters. For example the Didcot Garden Town delivery which spans both councils: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Didcot Garden Town – South Oxfordshire District Council ○ Didcot Garden Town - Vale of White Horse District Council • Both councils are working together on a Joint Local Plan which will inform planning policy and decisions for the districts. The consultation used interactive maps, a video and images designed to work on various
22. Ensure that communication methods are effective, and that members and officers are clear about their roles with regard to community engagement.	All Heads of Service/Service Managers	
23. Encourage, collect and evaluate the views and experiences of communities, citizens, service users and organisations of different backgrounds including reference to future needs.	All Heads of Service/Service Managers	
24. Implement effective feedback mechanisms in order to demonstrate how their views have been taken into account.	All Heads of Service/Service Managers	

<p>25. Balance feedback from more active stakeholder groups with other stakeholder groups to ensure inclusivity.</p>	<p>All Heads of Service/Service Managers</p>	<p>platforms. An Equalities Impact Screening Assessment ensured proper consideration to equality and diversity. The next stage is a consultation statement and a statement of preferred options for further comment. Details are published on each councils' website:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Joint Local Plan 2041 – South Oxfordshire District Council ○ Joint Local Plan 2041 – Vale of White Horse District Council
<p>26. Take account of the interests of future generations of taxpayers and service users.</p>	<p>All Heads of Service/Service Managers</p>	

Core Principle C. Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social, and environmental benefits.

Sub Principle: Defining outcomes	Lead Officers	Evidence base
<p>27. Have a clear vision set out in a corporate plan, which is an agreed formal statement of the councils' purpose and intended outcomes containing appropriate performance indicators, which provide the basis for the councils' overall strategy, planning and other decisions.</p>	<p>Head of Policy and Programmes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both councils have a four-year Corporate Plan setting out strategic themes with projects and performance measures associated with each theme. The plans are available on the councils' websites: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Corporate Plan 2020- 2024 - South Oxfordshire District Council ○ Corporate Plan 2020 – 2024 - Vale of White Horse District Council
<p>28. Specify the intended impact on, or changes for, stakeholders including citizens and service users which may be immediately or over the course of a year or longer.</p>	<p>Head of Policy and Programmes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Corporate Plan for each council explains why each theme has been adopted and the aims over a four-year period and has focus on sustainability. This is due to be reviewed and a new plan adopted in 2024 • The councils have a risk management framework which includes corporate and operational Risk Registers to help identify, mitigate and manage the risks that may affect us achieving our stated aims. Individual projects include monitoring of the risks associated throughout the lifetime of the project through a risk register as part of our approach to project management.

<p>29. Deliver defined outcomes on a sustainable basis within the resources that will be available.</p> <p>30. Identify, mitigate and manage risks to the achievement of outcomes.</p> <p>31. Manage residents' expectations effectively with regard to determining priorities and making the best use of the resources available.</p>	<p>All Heads of Service/Service Managers</p> <p>All Heads of Service/Service Managers</p> <p>All Heads of Service/Service Managers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each council publishes a Corporate Performance Report on a quarterly basis which has explanations for key activities set out by each theme in the Corporate Plan as well as updates on performance and is monitored and updated by responsible officers. The Corporate Performance Report is available on each councils' website: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Corporate Performance - South Oxfordshire District Council Corporate performance - Vale of White Horse District Council All officers are aware of their responsibility to achieve value for money with council resources. The Corporate Plan provides residents with a detailed scheme of priorities.
<p>Sub Principle: Sustainable economic, social, and environmental benefits</p>	<p>Lead Officers</p>	<p>Evidence base</p>
<p>32. Consider and balance the combined economic, social, equality and environmental impact of policies, plans and decisions when taking decisions about service provision.</p> <p>33. Take a longer-term view with regard to decision making, taking account of risk and acting transparently where there are potential conflicts between the councils' intended outcomes and short-term factors such as the political cycle or financial constraints.</p>	<p>All Heads of Service/Service Managers</p> <p>All Heads of Service/Service Managers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The councils' activities are guided by our four-year Corporate Plan and by fulfilling our statutory responsibilities. Key measures are reviewed and reported via quarterly and annual corporate plan performance reports. The reports are subject to an approval process by our senior management team, Scrutiny Committee, Climate and Ecological Emergency Advisory Committee and Cabinet which ensures the necessary checks and balances are in place around monitoring, evaluation, decision-making and policymaking. Our decision-making process includes statements explaining the implications of the decision affecting at least the following and these are embedded within our reporting and decision-making templates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> climate and ecological legal financial. Other implications that may be considered are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> equalities and diversity health and safety crime and disorder risks. Consultation is required with council leads for:

34. Determine the wider public interest associated with balancing conflicting interests between achieving the various economic, social and environmental benefits, through consultation where possible, in order to ensure appropriate trade-offs.	All Heads of Service/Service Managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ legal advice ○ financial advice ○ procurement ○ infrastructure ○ equalities ○ communications. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In keeping with the Public Services Social Value Act 2012, our Procurement Strategy requires us to consider how the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of our area may be improved when we buy public service contracts. Each council publishes a statement on its website for organisations and individuals selling to the council which covers adding social value. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Selling to the council – South Oxfordshire District Council ○ Selling to the council – Vale of White Horse District Council ● Each councils' Corporate Plan has taken account of the wider public interest as each has been developed following engagement with residents and took account of hundreds of responses that informed the priorities each council will deliver. ● Each council has declared a Climate Emergency and developed a Climate Action Plan. Regular reports and updates are published that tie in with each council's Corporate Plan: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Climate Action – South Oxfordshire District Council ○ Climate Action – Vale of White Horse District Council ● We plan and provide services and policies in a fair, inclusive and equal way to promote good relations as set out in our Corporate Equality Policy available on our website. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Equalities – South Oxfordshire District Council ○ Equalities – Vale of White Horse District Council
35. Ensure fair access to services.	All Heads of Service/Service Managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Selling to the council – South Oxfordshire District Council ○ Selling to the council – Vale of White Horse District Council ● Each councils' Corporate Plan has taken account of the wider public interest as each has been developed following engagement with residents and took account of hundreds of responses that informed the priorities each council will deliver. ● Each council has declared a Climate Emergency and developed a Climate Action Plan. Regular reports and updates are published that tie in with each council's Corporate Plan: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Climate Action – South Oxfordshire District Council ○ Climate Action – Vale of White Horse District Council ● We plan and provide services and policies in a fair, inclusive and equal way to promote good relations as set out in our Corporate Equality Policy available on our website. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Equalities – South Oxfordshire District Council ○ Equalities – Vale of White Horse District Council

Core Principle D. Determining the interventions necessary to optimize the achievement of the intended outcomes.		
Sub Principle: Determining interventions	Lead Officers	Evidence base
36. Ensure decision makers receive objective and rigorous analysis of a variety of options	All Heads of Service/	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● As covered in evidence for points 32 to 35 above, our decision-making documents include the need to record associated risks and seek input

39. Engage with internal and external stakeholders in determining how services and other courses of action should be planned and delivered.	All Heads of Service/ Service Managers	<p>line manager or supervisor. Goals and objectives are identified for the coming 12 months along with support and development needs to achieve agreed targets..</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our Annual Budget Setting Process is explained in our reports on the Revenue Budget and Capital Programme presented to each council's Cabinet, Scrutiny Committee and Council for approval. Issues affecting the budget setting are listed along with reflection of the budget base estimated in the previous year Medium Term Financial Plan. The annual budget follows a programme of internal scrutiny and challenge across the council by the Head of Finance and Strategic Finance Team. The budget information is available on each councils' website by year of budget and has supporting documents including the Medium-Term Financial Plan: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Annual budget information – South Oxfordshire District Council ○ Annual budget information – Vale of White Horse District Council
40. Consider and monitor risks facing each partner when working collaboratively including shared risks.	All Heads of Service/ Service Managers	
41. Ensure arrangements are flexible and agile so that the mechanisms for delivering outputs can be adapted to changing circumstances.	All Heads of Service/ Service Managers	
42. Establish appropriate key performance indicators (KPIs) as part of the planning process in order to identify how the performance of services and projects is to be measured.	All Heads of Service/ Service Managers	
43. Ensure capacity exists to generate the information required to review service quality regularly.	All Heads of Service/ Service Managers	
44. Prepare budgets in accordance with organisational objectives, strategies and the medium-term financial plan.	Head of Finance	
	Head of Finance	

45. Inform medium- and long-term resource planning by drawing up realistic estimates of revenue and capital expenditure aimed at developing a sustainable funding strategy.		
Sub Principle: Optimising achievement of intended outcomes	Lead Officers	Evidence base
46. Ensure the medium-term financial plan integrates and balances service priorities, affordability and other resource constraints.	Strategic Finance Manager/ S151 Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each council has a Treasury Management Strategy describing the management of cashflow, banking, money market and capital transactions which is approved annually for the year ahead. A report on activity and performance against the strategy for the previous year is presented to the Joint Audit and Governance Committee and includes a review of economic conditions and factors impacting investments. Both the annual reports and the strategies are available on each councils' website: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Treasury Management - South Oxfordshire District Council ○ Treasury Management - Vale of White Horse District Council • A Medium-Term Financial Plan providing a forward budget model for the next five years is agreed as part of each council's annual budget setting process. • Our Annual Budget Setting Process is explained in our reports on the Revenue Budget and Capital Programme presented to each council's Cabinet, Scrutiny Committee and Council for approval. Issues affecting the budget setting are listed along with reflection of the budget base estimated in the previous year Medium Term Financial Plan. The annual budget follows a programme of internal scrutiny and challenge across the council by the Head of Finance and Strategic Finance Team. The budget information is available on each councils' website by year of budget and has supporting documents including the Medium-Term Financial Plan: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Annual budget information – South Oxfordshire District Council ○ Annual budget information – Vale of White Horse District Council • In keeping with the Public Services Social Value Act 2012, our Procurement Strategy requires us to consider how the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of our area may be improved when we buy public service contracts.
47. Ensure the budgeting process is all-inclusive, taking into account the full cost of operations over the medium and longer term.	Strategic Finance Manager/ S151 Officer	
48. Ensure the medium-term financial plan sets the context for ongoing decisions on significant delivery issues or responses to changes in the external environment that may arise during the budgetary period in order for outcomes to be achieved while optimising resource usage.	Strategic Finance Manager/ S151 Officer	
49. Ensure the achievement of 'social value' through service planning and commissioning.	All Heads of Service/ Service Managers	

		<p>Each council publishes a statement on its website for organisations and individuals selling to the council which covers adding social value.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Selling to the council – South Oxfordshire District Council ○ Selling to the council – Vale of White Horse District Council
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Core Principle E. Developing the councils’ capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it.

Sub Principle: Developing the councils’ capacity	Lead Officers	Evidence base
50. Review operations, performance and use of assets on a regular basis to ensure their continuing effectiveness.	All Heads of Service/ Service Managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both councils operate a shared service, although remaining separate legal and sovereign entities so benefit from partnership and collaborative working across all service areas, for example working together on a Joint Local Plan 2041. The councils jointly work with other organisations for service delivery, for example through the 5 Councils Partnership.
51. Improve resource use through appropriate application of techniques such as benchmarking and other options in order to determine how the councils’ resources are allocated so that outcomes are achieved effectively and efficiently.	All Heads of Service/ Service Managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each council has identified organisations that can impact upon council services and representatives contribute through forums and committees that are responsible for them to maintain an effective partnership. The lists and representatives are available on each council’s website: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Partnership organisations – South Oxfordshire District Council ○ Partnership organisations – Vale of White Horse District Council • South Oxfordshire District Council recognises the benefit from collaborating and working in partnership. An example is set out in the Corporate Plan objective to protect and restore our natural world which lists projects to work in partnership and to establish a Local Nature Partnership now established. The plan is available on the council website: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Corporate Plan 2020- 2024 - South Oxfordshire District Council
52. Recognise the benefits of partnerships and collaborative working where added value can be achieved.	All Heads of Service/ Service Managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vale of White Horse District Council has a specific theme of working in partnership within its four-year Corporate Plan. This sets out a commitment to partnership working with other councils, authorities and businesses, non-profit organisations, community and residents’ groups to achieve our aims and objectives effectively, efficiently and fairly. The plan is available on the council website:
53. Develop and maintain an effective workforce plan to enhance the strategic allocation of resources.	All Heads of Service/ Service Managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Corporate Plan 2020 – 2024 - Vale of White Horse District Council • Both councils have a Performance Management Process ‘Let’s Talk’. This involves continuous constructive conversations between council officers and their line manager or supervisor. Goals and objectives are identified for the coming 12


		<p>months along with support and development needs to achieve agreed targets. The process includes training for managers or supervisors who need to review performance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each service area within the councils has a business recovery team and Business Resilience Plan which feeds into the corporate plan, where critical processes and contingencies are mapped. • Our internal audit team have responsibility to review, appraise and report on the soundness and adequacy of our control systems and also our economical, efficient and effective use of resources.
Sub Principle: Developing the capability of the councils' leadership and other individuals.	Lead Officers	Evidence base
<p>54. Develop protocols to ensure that elected and appointed leaders negotiate with each other regarding their respective roles early on in the relationship and that a shared understanding of roles and objectives is maintained.</p> <p>55. Publish a statement that specifies the types of decisions that are delegated and those reserved for the collective decision making of the governing body.</p> <p>56. Ensure the leaders and the chief executive have clearly defined and distinctive leadership roles within a structure whereby the chief executive leads the councils in implementing strategy and</p>	<p>Head of Legal and Democratic</p> <p>Head of Legal and Democratic</p> <p>Chief Executive</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The councils deliver mandatory councillor training for those newly appointed to the role. This is supported by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ a clear three-month training plan ○ members handbook ○ online resources ○ a 'buddy system' to provide support to those new to the role • Our Constitution includes a protocol for interaction between officers and members and a scheme of delegation. • Part 2 of the Constitution covers decision making processes and the Scheme of Delegation set out functions which are the responsibility of the Cabinet, Council and local choice functions, and delegation to officers. The constitution can be found on each councils' website: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Constitution – South Oxfordshire District Council ○ Constitution – Vale of White Horse District Council • We have job descriptions in place setting out roles and responsibilities for all officers including our Chief Executive and senior management roles • Our senior officers and managers have development plans set out as part of their regular review under our Performance Management process. • We have an Induction Programme for officers which includes mandatory training and procedures in addition to service area specific requirements and personalisation to the individual officer.

<p>managing the delivery of services and other outputs set by members and each provides a check and a balance for each other's authority.</p> <p>57. Develop the capabilities of members and senior management to achieve effective shared leadership and to enable the organisation to respond successfully to changing legal and policy demands as well as economic, political and environmental changes and risks by ensuring:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ members and officers have access to appropriate induction tailored to their role and that ongoing training and development matching individual and organisational requirements is available and encouraged; ○ members and officers have the appropriate skills, knowledge, resources and support to fulfil their roles and responsibilities and ensuring that they are able to update their knowledge on a continuing basis; and ○ personal, organisational and system-wide 	<p>Head of Legal and Democratic / People and Culture Manager</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job Descriptions are in place for each role which set out the expected skills, knowledge and responsibilities. Our performance management programme, as covered in the section above, identifies ongoing training and development needs. • Each service area produces a Monthly Members Update which reports on service team performance and discusses key tasks and issues as well as budget and staffing pressures. The updates are discussed at monthly catch up meetings between the Head of Service and the relevant portfolio holder. • Our Annual Governance Statements, also see point 84 below, sets out actions for the coming year following review of the governance arrangements in order to address any issues identified. • All members undergo an induction process upon being elected with bespoke training provide, some of which is mandatory. • The councils operate a corporate training support programme.
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development through shared learning, including lessons learnt from governance weaknesses both internal and external.		
58. Ensure that there are structures in place to encourage public participation.	All Heads of Service/ Service Managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Both councils encourage participation by service teams in Local Government Association peer-supported improvement programmes, including peer challenges.
59. Take steps to consider the leadership's effectiveness and ensure leaders are open to constructive feedback from peer review and inspections.	Head of People and Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Both councils have a Performance Management Process 'Let's Talk'. This involves continuous constructive conversations between council officers and their line manager or supervisor. Goals and objectives are identified for the coming 12 months along with support and development needs to achieve agreed targets. The process includes training for managers or supervisors who need to review performance. The Chief Executive Officer is held to account by the Leaders of the councils and their performance is monitored by the Joint Staff Committee.
60. Hold staff to account through regular performance reviews which take account of training or development needs.	All Heads of Service/ Service Managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have a Corporate Training System 'LEAH' to deliver training modules and to ensure key policies and procedures are read by council officers. This includes statutory policies such as those covering data protection and health and safety.
61. Ensure arrangements are in place to maintain the health and wellbeing of the workforce and support individuals in maintaining their own physical and mental wellbeing.	All Heads of Service/ Service Managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Both councils promote and support the need to take care of Personal Wellbeing both physically and mentally. Our internal intranet has a list of wellbeing resources officers can use, which includes a free and confidential telephone support programme and 'Healthy Advantage' app. A wellbeing group works with our Strategic HR team to identify wellbeing activities.

Core Principle F. Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management.

Sub Principle: Managing risk	Lead Officers	Evidence base
62. Recognise that risk management is an integral part of all activities which must	Head of Finance/ Internal Audit Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The councils have a Risk Management Framework comprising a Risk Management Strategy and Risk Management Policy and Guidance. These documents set out the approach to assessing and managing risks across all

<p>be considered in all aspects of decision making.</p> <p>63. Implement robust and integrated risk management arrangements and ensure that they are working effectively.</p> <p>64. Ensure that responsibilities for managing individual risks are clearly allocated.</p>	<p>Head of Finance/ Internal Audit Manager</p> <p>All Heads of Service/ Service Managers</p>	<p>operations and are available to officers within our intranet. The overall process for managing risks is:</p>  <pre> graph TD 1((1. Validate objectives within corporate and service plans, project plans and business operations.)) --> 2((2. Identify risks to achieving objectives including inherent and residual risks.)) 2 --> 3((3. Evaluate and prioritise risks taking into account the risk appetite agreed by the councils.)) 3 --> 4((4. Implementation of action plans to mitigate risks within agreed risk appetite.)) 4 --> 5((5. Monitor review and update risk profile and actions on an ongoing basis.)) 5 --> 1 </pre> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The approach includes regular review and update of corporate and operational Risk Registers to help manage the risks that may affect us achieving our stated aims. The risks identified are aligned with our Corporate Plan objectives and specific officers are named as owners of each risk. • A Corporate Risk Review is repeated each half year to the councils' Joint Audit and Governance Committee. This reports on progress of the corporate risk registers as outlined in the risk management strategy. • Individual projects include monitoring of the risks associated throughout the lifetime of the project as part of our approach to project management. • The councils internal audit function takes a risk-based approach.
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Sub Principle: Managing performance	Lead Officers	Evidence base
<p>65. Monitor service delivery effectively including planning, specification, execution and independent post implementation review.</p> <p>66. Make decisions based on relevant, clear objective analysis and advice pointing out the implications and risks inherent in the councils' financial, social and environmental position and outlook.</p> <p>67. Ensure effective audit, scrutiny or oversight function is in place which encourages constructive challenge and debate on policies and objectives before, during and after decisions are made thereby enhancing the councils' performance and that of any organisation for which it is responsible.</p> <p>68. Provide members and senior management with regular reports on service delivery plans and on progress towards outcome achievement.</p>	<p>All Heads of Service/ Service Managers</p> <p>All Heads of Service/ Service Managers</p> <p>Head of Legal and Democratic / Head of Finance/ Internal Audit Manager</p> <p>All Heads of Service/ Service Managers</p> <p>All Heads of Service/ Service Managers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our decision-making process includes statements explaining the implications of the decision affecting at least the following and these are embedded within our reporting and decision making templates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ climate and ecological ○ legal ○ financial. Other implications that may be considered are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ equalities and diversity ○ health and safety ○ crime and disorder ○ risks. Consultation is required with council leads for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ legal advice ○ financial advice ○ climate and ecological advice ○ procurement ○ infrastructure ○ equalities ○ communications. • Each council's committee structure, as set out in our Constitution, which includes a Scrutiny Committee with functions including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ review and scrutiny of decisions made by the Cabinet, Council, committees and officers ○ review the councils' progress in achieving policy aims and performance targets ○ review the performance of individual services or Cabinet member portfolios ○ consider and make recommendations on mechanisms to encourage and enhance community participation in the development of policy options. • Heads of service have monthly catch-up meetings with the relevant portfolio holder to provide a Monthly Members Update covering progress within the service area.

69. Ensure there is consistency between specification stages (such as budgets) and post implementation reporting (e.g. financial statements).		
Sub Principle: Robust internal control	Lead Officers	Evidence base
<p>70. Align the risk management strategy and policies on internal control with achieving objectives.</p> <p>71. Evaluate and monitor the councils risk management and internal control arrangements on a regular basis.</p> <p>72. Ensure effective counter fraud, anti-corruption and whistleblowing arrangements are in place.</p> <p>73. Ensure additional assurance on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the framework of governance, risk management and control is provided by the internal auditor.</p> <p>74. Ensure an effective audit and scrutiny function is in place which is independent of the</p>	<p>Head of Finance/ Internal Audit Manager</p> <p>Head of Finance/ Internal Audit Manager</p> <p>Head of Finance/ Internal Audit Manager/Head of Legal and Democratic</p> <p>Head of Finance/ Internal Audit Manager</p> <p>Head of Finance/ Internal</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (70) As set out in Core Principle F above, our Risk Management Strategy aligns identified risks with our Corporate Plan objectives. • (71) There is a half yearly review of risks which is reported to our Joint Audit and Governance Committees. • (71) In line with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS), the internal audit and risk manager (chief audit executive) provides an annual internal opinion and report to the Joint Audit and Governance Committee (JAGC) on the overall effectiveness of the councils' governance framework, risk management and control. The annual opinion is used by the councils to inform the annual governance statement. • (72) The councils have an in-house Counter Fraud Team and Corporate Fraud is managed through our internal audit team. Our approach to procurement is to ensure high standards of conduct are in place for employees engaged in procurement activity including honesty, integrity, impartiality and objectivity. Our Whistleblowing Policy is available to all staff through our intranet. Contractual policies for staff are included on each council's website and include our Anti-Fraud, Corruption and Bribery Policy and Anti Money Laundering Policy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Contractual Policies - South Oxfordshire District Council ○ Contractual Policies - Vale of White Horse District Council • 73 & 74 ties in with 87 & 88 • (73) The internal audit plan is a risk-based plan, which is developed through consideration of the corporate risk registers and corporate objectives. The plan focuses on areas where internal audit can provide assurance on the effectiveness of governance, risk management, and internal control processes.

<p>executive and accountable to each council and which</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ provides a further source of effective assurance regarding arrangements for managing risk and maintaining an effective control environment; and ○ that recommendations are listened to and acted upon. 	<p>Audit Manager/Head of Legal and Democratic Services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (73) Quarterly updates are provided to the JAGC on the internal audit plan, other audit work (e.g. government returns), and status of internal audit recommendations. • (73) Work is underway to establish an organisational wide assurance map. The purpose of assurance mapping is to draw all sources of assurance together in one chart or table to show the areas where assurance is received. It can be used as a tool for governance arrangements by management and the audit committee to take an objective view of the councils' risks, identify any gaps and confirm 'Do we really know what we think we know?'. It also informs the internal audit plan
<p>Sub Principle: Managing data</p>	<p>Lead Officers</p>	<p>Evidence base</p>
<p>75. Ensure effective arrangements are in place for the safe collection, storage, use and sharing of data, including processes to safeguard personal data.</p> <p>76. Ensure effective arrangements are in place and operating effectively when sharing data with other bodies.</p> <p>77. Review and audit regularly the quality and accuracy of data used in decision making and performance monitoring.</p>	<p>Data Protection Officer/ All Heads of Service/ Service Managers</p> <p>Data Protection Officer/ All Heads of Service/ Service Managers</p> <p>Head of Finance/Internal Audit Manager</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have an Information Governance Framework of policies, procedures and guidance which covers topics across four main themes of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Data Protection and Privacy ○ Information Access and Rights ○ Information Security ○ Records Management. • Arrangements for data sharing with other bodies is detailed within contractual clauses or within Data Sharing/Processing Agreements for partnerships which are not contract based. • The need for accuracy of information is a key data protection principle set out in our Data Protection Policy. • We have an Information Governance Team which liaises with service areas to provide advice and review compliance with the requirements of our Information Governance Framework. We also use the Information Commissioner's Office self-assessment tool to monitor the councils' compliance with expected Information Governance Accountability requirements. • We have a Security Policy to ensure that the requirement for and use of critical employee facing information technologies, within the councils' managed network service infrastructure, are properly managed to minimise any security risks to the business.
<p>Sub Principle: Strong public financial management</p>	<p>Lead Officers</p>	<p>Evidence base</p>

78. Ensure financial management supports both long term achievement of outcomes and short-term financial and operational performance.	S151 Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Medium-Term Financial Plan providing a forward budget model for the next five years is agreed as part of each council's annual budget setting process. • Each council has a Treasury Management Strategy describing the management of cashflow, banking, money market and capital transactions which is approved annually for the year ahead. A report on activity and performance against the strategy for the previous year is presented to the Joint Audit and Governance Committee and includes a review of economic conditions and factors impacting investments. Both the annual reports and the strategies are available on each councils' website: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Treasury Management - South Oxfordshire District Council ○ Treasury Management - Vale of White Horse District Council • Part 3 of the Constitution covers codes, protocols and procedures and includes Financial Procedure Rules setting out how the councils' financial affairs are to be managed. This includes the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Heads of Service, in consultation with the Head of Finance, prepare, monitor and report on financial plans for the services for which they are responsible. ○ The Head of Finance ensures there are adequate levels of internal control and check taking into account the risks involved. <p>The constitution can be found on each councils' website:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Constitution – South Oxfordshire District Council ○ Constitution – Vale of White Horse District Council
79. Ensure well developed financial management is integrated at all levels of planning and control, including management of financial risks and controls.	S151 Officer	

Core Principle G. Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting, and audit to deliver effective accountability.

Sub Principle: Implementing good practice in transparency	Lead Officers	Evidence base
80. Write and communicate reports for the public and other stakeholders in a fair, balanced and understandable style appropriate to the intended audience ensuring	All Heads of Service/ Service Managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both councils have a style guide published internally, which emphasises the need for plain English, encourages use of active language and discourages the use of jargon and acronyms. • Each council has a Communications and Engagement Strategy setting out our commitment to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Have a clear and defined purpose and audience ○ Be accessible and inclusive

<p>that they are easy to access and interrogate.</p> <p>81. Strike a balance between providing the right amount of information to satisfy transparency demands and enhance public scrutiny while not being too onerous to provide and for users to understand.</p>	<p>All Heads of Service/ Service Managers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To be timely with our communications and feedback ○ The be concise and honest <p>The strategies are available on each council’s website:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Communications and Engagement Strategy – South Oxfordshire District Council ● Communications and Engagement Strategy – Vale of White Horse District Council ● Both councils’ websites offer easy access to up to date information.
<p>Sub Principle: Implementing good practice in reporting</p>	<p>Lead Officers</p>	<p>Evidence base</p>
<p>82. Report at least annually on performance, value for money and the stewardship of its resources to stakeholders in a timely and understandable way.</p> <p>83. Ensure members and senior management own the results.</p> <p>84. Ensure robust arrangements for assessing the extent to which the principles contained in this framework have been applied and publish the results on this assessment including an action plan for improvement and evidence to demonstrate good governance in an annual governance statement.</p>	<p>S151 Officer/ Internal Audit Manager</p> <p>Chief Executive Head of Finance</p> <p>All Heads of Service/</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Each year both councils’ statement of accounts is subject to an external audit review which includes an assessment of whether the councils have made proper arrangements to secure value for money in its use of resources. The External Auditor’s report is embedded within the approved statement of accounts which are published annually on each council’s website: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● External Audit of Accounts - South Oxfordshire District Council ● External Audit of Accounts - Vale of White Horse District Council ● An Annual Governance Statement forms a part of each councils’ statement of accounts. This reports on the extent of the councils’ compliance with their principles and practices of good governance, including how we have monitored the effectiveness of the governance arrangements and sets out action for planned changes in the coming year. This statement provides an assurance to the council and its stakeholders that good governance arrangements are in place. The Annual Governance Statement is published on each councils’ website: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Annual Governance Statement – South Oxfordshire District Council ● Annual Governance Statement – Vale of White Horse District Council

<p>85. Ensure that the framework is applied to jointly managed or shared service organisations as appropriate.</p> <p>86. Ensure the performance information that accompanies the financial statements is prepared on a consistent and timely basis and the statements allow for comparison with other similar organisations.</p>	<p>Service Managers</p> <p>All Heads of Service/ Service Managers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information that accompanies the financial statements is compiled in accordance with the CIPFA Code of Practice for Local Authority Accounting.
<p>Sub Principle: Assurance and effective accountability</p>	<p>Lead Officers</p>	<p>Evidence base</p>
<p>87. Ensure that recommendations for corrective action made by external audit are acted upon.</p> <p>88. Ensure an effective internal audit service with direct access to members is in place which provides assurance with regard to governance arrangements and that recommendations are acted upon.</p> <p>89. Welcome peer challenge, reviews and inspections from regulatory bodies and implement recommendations.</p> <p>90. Gain assurance on risks associated with delivering</p>	<p>Head of Finance/S151 officer</p> <p>All Heads of Service/ Service Managers</p> <p>All Heads of Service/ Service Managers</p> <p>Head of Finance/ All</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The External Auditor's report is embedded within the approved statement of accounts which are published annually on each council's website: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> External Audit of Accounts - South Oxfordshire District Council External Audit of Accounts - Vale of White Horse District Council Recommendations raised by External Auditors are discussed at the Joint Audit and Governance Committees and actioned accordingly. The structure of the councils in house internal audit function is such that the internal audit and risk manager (chief audit executive) reports functionally to the Joint Audit and Governance Committee (JAGC), with unfettered access to the co-chairs of the committee. The internal audit and risk manager provides assurance to the JAGC with regard to governance arrangements through individual audit reports and a quarterly update report. Reports from the councils' Joint Audit and Governance Committee are published though each council's website: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Joint Audit and Governance Committee - South Oxfordshire District Council Joint Audit and Governance Committee - Vale of White Horse District Council

