

# Council Agenda



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## Summons to attend a meeting of Council

to be held on Wednesday 17 July 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. Apologies for absence

To record apologies for absence.

### 2. Minutes

(Pages 8 - 19)

To adopt and sign as a correct record the Council minutes of the meeting held on 22 May 2024.

### 3. 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.

### 4. Urgent business and chair's announcements

To receive notification of any matters which the chair determines should be considered as urgent business and the special circumstances which have made the matters urgent, and to receive any announcements from the chair.

### 5. Public participation

To receive any questions or statements from members of the public that have registered to speak.

### 6. Petitions

To receive any petitions from the public.

### 7. Local Authority Housing Fund: Round 3

Cabinet, at its meeting on 28 June 2024, considered a report on the additional grant funding made available under Local Authority Housing Fund 3 (LAHF 3) to support the provision of housing for the council's refugee accommodation programme building on previous rounds which the council has taken advantage of.

The Cabinet [agenda](#) circulated to all members includes the relevant report.

Cabinet resolved to accept the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities' grant of £747,000 (indicative Local Authority Housing Fund 3 allocation) to deliver four homes that meet the eligibility criteria outlined within the Local Authority Housing Fund 3 prospectus, and to authorise the deputy chief executive – transformation and operations to sign the Memorandum of Understanding with the Department for Levelling Up,

Housing and Communities, which sets out the understanding between both parties for the use of funding.

**RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL:** To add £1.644 million to the capital programme, part funded by Local Authority Housing Fund 3 funding of £747,000 to purchase four homes under the Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF) scheme.

## **8. S106 Request - Milton Parish Council - New Community Hall with Sporting Facilities, Potash Lane, Milton**

(Pages 20 - 29)

To consider the report of the head of finance on a proposal to award funds to Milton Parish Council towards a new community hall with sporting facilities in Milton parish – attached.

## **9. Review of political balance and allocation of seats to committees**

(Pages 30 - 35)

To consider the report of the head of legal and democratic on a review of the political balance – attached.

## **10. Statutory Officer Appointments: Monitoring Officer, Electoral Registration Officer, and Returning Officer**

(Pages 36 - 40)

To consider the report of the head of corporate services on the appointment of a monitoring officer, and electoral registration officer and a returning officer – attached.

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

To receive the report of the leader of the council.

## **12. Questions on notice**

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

### **A. Question from Councillor Povolotsky to Councillor Thomas, Leader of the council**

Can the leader please explain why she has not made any attempts to meet with GARD - The Group Against Reservoir Development, despite their continued requests to meet, since she became leader in late 2022?

### **B. Question from Councillor Debby Hallett to Councillor Mark Coleman, Cabinet Member for Environmental Services and Waste**

For the 13 years I've been a member of this council, I have tried to urge the council to improve the litter and detritus removal on the verges and in the shrubs and trees alongside the A34.

The A34 is almost always strewn with rubbish, tyres and detritus. Highway repair crews leave their cones and frames and sandbags behind. Right now, the weeds have grown

up enough that it's harder to see. (I recognise that there was recently a one-off blitz to get some control back. I am more concerned with the regular maintenance programme and less in heroics that make for good social media posts.)

What is Vale's responsibility to residents regarding litter removal from the A34, and what is our strategy for meeting that responsibility?

**C. Question from Councillor Robert Clegg to Councillor Helen Pighills, Cabinet Member for Community Health and Wellbeing**

The Joint Street Trading Policy, adopted by the Vale of White Horse District Council and South Oxfordshire District Council in 2014, sets out our framework for the management of street trading across the two district areas. The only substantial amendment to this policy since its adoption came into effect in 2020 and related to food hygiene and health and safety. The policy sits within the national legislative framework set out by the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act of 1982.

In the decade since our policy was first adopted, the catering industry has faced many headwinds and has suffered as a consequence. The number of public houses across the UK has plummeted and street food vendors have also struggled, a situation exacerbated by but not limited to the Covid-19 pandemic. Those who have survived have often done so by innovating, adopting new approaches to better serve their customers.

Partnerships between "wet-led" public houses and mobile caterers, serving high-quality food from customised trucks or stalls, are one such innovation that has proven successful under these challenging market conditions. The Crown Inn in Marcham, in the ward which I serve, frequently hosts food trucks owned & operated by small, local businesses. After decades of the Crown struggling to stay open, the pub is now thriving and is a source of great pride to the village. The food trucks arrangement has proven immensely popular, to the benefit of the pub, the trucks, and the community. I understand that the chain owning the Crown has achieved similar success across the Vale, and also in South Oxfordshire. However, the variety of food offered by the mobile caterers at the Crown is constrained by the specifics of the Joint Street Trading Policy.

Could the Cabinet member please outline what opportunities there may be for making the policy more flexible and supportive of the local businesses of today, while still consistent with the relevant national legislation? For example, the Vale's [Application for a Street Trading Consent](#) form constrains applicants to specify their Days and Hours of Operation (Section 4) within a regular, weekly pattern, despite the 1982 Act (Sections 3.2.b, 4.1.a) being worded in a less specific manner. Other district councils have adopted more flexible approaches to licencing street trading, often aided by modern digital technology, and I know that many local residents would like to see the Council (and our colleagues in South Oxfordshire) to follow suit.

**D. Question from Councillor Viral Patel to Councillor Bethia Thomas, Leader of the Council:**

We've had some exciting times since we last met as a council, as Labour establish a new government we wait to see how well they govern in their first term in office. The manifesto promises cover many of the things our residents rely on to live happy, healthy and fulfilling lives, from homelessness, public ownership of rail, climate change, nature recovery and even the introduction of a National Care Service, it is a laundry list of needs

and wants, many of which directly reference the governance of our districts. Specifically, the Labour manifesto references:

*[Labour will introduce] “new statutory requirement for Local Growth Plans that cover towns and cities across the country. Local leaders will work with major employers, universities, colleges, and industry bodies to produce long-term plans that identify growth sectors and put in place the programmes and infrastructure they need to thrive. These will align with our national industrial strategy.”*

*“Housing need in England cannot be met without planning for growth on a larger than local scale so we will introduce effective new mechanisms for cross-boundary strategic planning.”*

*[Labour] “will also widen devolution to more areas, encouraging local authorities to come together and take on new powers.”*

*“On housing and planning we will seek to consolidate powers to allow for improved decision making.”*

Can the leader tell us how she believes these manifesto statements will impact the governance in the Vale of White Horse District Council and any implications for democratic accountability?

**E. Question from Councillor Debra Dewhurst to Councillor Bethia Thomas, Leader of the council**

For a number of years, local councillors, including myself and Councillor Gascoigne, have been pushing for much needed medical facilities in Blewbury and Harwell ward, in the form of the Health Centre on Great Western Park (GWP).

Can you please explain why it has only come to light recently, to elected representatives and parish councils, that progress could not have been made with the GWP Health Centre until the Integrated Care Board (ICB) approved a business case and why local representatives for the immediately affected parishes of Western Valley and Harwell were not informed this was what was needed?

### **13. Motions on notice**

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

- (1) Motion to be proposed by Councillor Katherine Foxhall, seconded by Councillor Eric de la Harpe:

This council recognises that:

- The UK is committed by the Climate Change Act and by the Glasgow Climate Pact to reducing its carbon emissions to net zero by 2050, and to reducing them by 68% from 1990 levels by 2030.
- The Climate Change Committee has estimated that Local Authorities have powers or influence over roughly a third of emissions in their local areas.
- This council is already committed to reducing its own carbon emissions to net zero

by 2030 and to supporting our District to achieve the same by 2045.

This council resolves to:

- Ask Cabinet to consider the use of SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound) targets and reporting to deliver and monitor our carbon emissions reduction targets for Council and District emissions.
- Consider innovative financing options to deliver the climate action that we need to meet our targets and to support a just transition for our residents.
- Ask the Leader to write to the Secretary of State to request that all Local Authorities are given statutory duties, powers and funding to enable them to deliver locally for a Net Zero transition in line with the UK's legal commitments.

(2) Motion to be proposed by Councillor Max Thompson, seconded by Councillor Jill Rayner:

LGBTQ+ people have a long contributed to political, economic, social and cultural life in the Vale of White Horse, the UK, and the wider world. However, their stories have often been omitted from history books and wider discourse.

Vale has a proud record of recognising and supporting the importance of equality and diversity. Examples include the fact that Council has an adopted Diversity and Inclusion strategy and since 2019 has reconfirmed its commitments to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in motions on Islamophobia, and anti-Semitism, and trans rights and we strive to embed those values across our service delivery.

Regrettably however, some politicians and political campaigns still seek to vilify and ridicule members of the LGBTQ+ community and there has been an uptick of violence and hate crimes towards LGBTQ+ persons in recent years.

There are many important international days for LGBTQ+ awareness that Council does not currently mark externally, including International Day against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia, which falls on 17 May, and Transgender Day of Remembrance, which falls on 20 November. February 2025 marks 20 years of LGBT+ history month, which Council has not hitherto marked with any large-scale external communications or events.

Council therefore resolves to:

- Recognise the damage done to individuals across the LGBTQ+ community by Section 28 of the Local Government Act (1988), which required local authorities to take restrictive approaches across areas such as education, publicity and communications, which means that the harm done to the LGBTQ+ community, and others, has extended long past the legislation's removal in 2003.
- Restate its belief that LGBTQ+ persons are valued members of our community.
- Endorse the view that support for LGBTQ+ groups is not, and must not, be limited to raising the flag during Pride month.
- Ask cabinet to consider developing a communications strategy that highlights and marks the International Day against Homophobia; Biphobia and Transphobia, the

Transgender Day of Remembrance 17th May, 20th November and LGBT+ History month. The development of such a strategy could support and make visible the various initiatives across the Vale and periods of LGBTQ+ awareness beyond pride.

- Ask Cabinet to consider how the Council could best support organising an annual public event from February 2025 to mark LGBT+ history month.
- Ask the Leader of the Council to write to the relevant Government Minister asking that they note the commitment to supporting equality for all of this Council, emphasising the importance of education and understanding as key drivers against intolerance in all spheres.
- Note that the Leader has asked the EDI Champions to meet with officers and report back to her, and update Council as required, on matters relating to the above on a bi-annual basis.

#### **14. Exclusion of the public**

To consider whether to exclude members of the press and public from the meeting for the following item of business under Section 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended on the grounds that:

- (i) It is likely that there will be disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A, and
- (ii) the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

#### **15. End of Capita contract in September 2025 and options for the services still within the contract**

(Pages 41 - 48)

To consider the report of the Deputy Chief Executive: Partnerships – attached.