

Minutes

of a meeting of the

Council



held on Wednesday 17 July 2024 at 7.00 pm
at The Ridgeway, The Beacon, Portway, Wantage, OX12 9BY

Open to the public, including the press

Councillors: Kiera Bentley (Chair), Oliver Forder (Vice-Chair), Paul Barrow, Ron Batstone, Cheryl Briggs, Robert Clegg, Mark Coleman, Andy Cooke, Eric de la Harpe, Debra Dewhurst, Amos Duveen, Lucy Edwards, Neil Fawcett, Andy Foulsham, Katherine Foxhall, Debby Hallett, Jenny Hannaby, Scott Houghton, Diana Lugova, Robert Maddison, Patrick O'Leary, Viral Patel, Sally Povolotsky, Helen Pighills, Mike Pighills, Jill Rayner, Judy Roberts, Andrew Skinner, Emily Smith, Bethia Thomas and Max Thompson

Officers: Steven Corrigan, Democratic Services Manager, Simon Hewings, Head of Finance, Mark Stone, Chief Executive and Vivien Williams, Head of Legal and Democratic and Monitoring Officer (interim).

13. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Sue Caul, James Cox, Andrew Crawford, Hayleigh Gascoigne, Sarah James, Val Shaw and Peter Stevens.

14. Minutes

RESOLVED: to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 22 May 2024 as a correct record and agree that the Chair sign them as such.

15. Declarations of interest

Steven Corrigan, Democratic Services Manager, advised that he would leave the room during Council's decision of agenda item 10 as it directly impacted him.

16. Urgent business and chair's announcements

There were no items of urgent business.

The Chair provided an update on the events she had attended including a reception to acknowledge the launch of the Oxfordshire Council Charter, D-Day celebrations, blue plaque unveilings, a civic dinner hosted by the lord-lieutenant of Oxfordshire and the Bishop of Dorchester and the Wing Muster at Abingdon Airfield with cadets from across Oxfordshire.

17. Public participation

Two members of the public had registered to ask a question the details of which are set out below.

- A. Cath Convery asked the following question of Councillor Bethia Thomas, Leader of the council:

“My name is Cath Convery I am here as a citizen of the village of Harwell and this is not aimed in anyway at my councillors.

Transparency is one of the keys to public procurement and the work of councillors and politicians at all levels. At recent Harwell Parish Council meeting, several issues regarding service delivery to the parish have been discussed. I also note that one of the questions today is from Cllr Dewhurst who is asking why the process of getting a doctor’s surgery on GWP has been obfuscated (my words not hers).

Other areas have included:

1. Why Vale of White Horse District Council didn’t join the contract that Oxford City have recently let for leisure provision
2. The limited hours and season of the opening of Abingdon Outdoor pool
3. Potential changes to the refuse contract, such as moving to a three week rota or reducing the size of the green bins.
I’m not clear if these are changes to contracts or specification have been accessible to the public during the decision-making phase.

So specifically for this meeting. If the Capita contract discussion on this agenda pertains to the next contract’s specification, why is the public being asked to leave the meeting”?

Councillor Thomas undertook to provide a written response.

- B. Councillor Clarke of Western Valley Parish Council asked the following question of Councillor Diana Lugova, Cabinet member for planning:

“Given the considerable and ongoing issues encountered with the timely provision of critical infrastructure and fundamentally flawed planning requirements with Great Western Park; what work has been done or is planned to prevent a reoccurrence with Valley Park?

Examples are the lack of health centre and allotments, insufficient off street parking and drop off spaces at the schools”.

Councillor Lugova undertook to provide a written response.

18. Petitions

The Chair of council advised of the receipt of a petition submitted by Botley and North Hinksey Parish Council signed by in excess of 1400 signatures regarding the closure of the Harcourt Hill swimming pool facility and urging the council to find a way to keep the pool open for the coming year and find a solution for its long term future. As the petition had in excess of 500 signatures it would come before Council for discussion at a future meeting.

19. Local Authority Housing Fund: Round 3

Council considered Cabinet’s recommendation, made at its meeting on 28 June 2024, to add additional funding to the approved capital programme to purchase homes under Local Authority Housing Fund 3 (LAHF 3).

Council was advised that Cabinet had 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. The remaining funds would come from the council’s capital programme.

RESOLVED: to add £1.644 million to the approved capital programme, part funded by Local Authority Housing Fund 3 funding of £747,000, to purchase four homes under this scheme.

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

The Chair of council referred to an email sent to all members on Tuesday 16 July 2024 which advised that due to the lack of a planning decision in respect of the proposed facility the item would not be considered at this Council meeting. Once, and if, planning permission is granted, the report would be brought back to Council.

21. 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 Sutton Courtenay by-election and the establishment of a new political group.

A revised recommendation was circulated to all members which reflected the outcome of discussions with group leaders.

RESOLVED: to

1. allocate seats to each political group as set out in the schedule below;
2. appoint councillors and substitutes to sit on the committees and panels as set out in the schedule below:
3. 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.

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	

Joint Scrutiny Committee, 5 Members

Liberal Democrat (4)	Green (1)
Judy Roberts	
Peter Stevens	
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 (4)	Green (1)	Independent Voice for Vale (1)
Ron Batstone	Sarah James	Sally Povolotsky
Diana Lugova		
Rob Maddison (Chair)		
Max Thompson (Vice-Chair)		
Preferred substitutes		
Liberal Democrat (4)	Green (3)	Independent Voice for Vale (1)
Eric de la Harpe	Cheryl Briggs	Debra Dewhurst
Scott Houghton	Katherine Foxhall	
Patrick O’Leary	Viral Patel	
Mike Pighills		

Joint Staff Committee, 5 Members

Liberal Democrat (4)	Green (1)
Mark Coleman	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 (10)	Green (1)	Independent Voice for Vale (1)
Paul Barrow	Cheryl Briggs	Sally Povolotsky
Ron Batstone (Chair)		
Kiera Bentley		
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 (10)	Green (1)	Independent Voice for Vale (1)
Paul Barrow	Cheryl Briggs	Sally Pocolotsky
Ron Batstone (Chair)		
Kiera Bentley		
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 (2)	Independent Voice for Vale (1)
Paul Barrow	Sally Povolotsky
Rob Clegg (Chair)	
PREFERRED SUBSTITUTES	
Liberal Democrat (3)	Independent Voice for Vale (1)
Mark Coleman	Debra Dewhurst
Debby Hallett	
Val Shaw	

Climate Emergency Advisory Committee, 7 Members

Liberal Democrat (6)	Green (1)
Kiera Bentley	Sarah James
Robert Clegg	
Eric de la Harpe (Vice Chair)	
Hayleigh Gascoigne (Chair)	
Scott Houghton	
Max Thompson	
Preferred substitutes	
Liberal Democrat (6)	Green (3)
Ron Batstone	Viral Patel
Amos Duveen	Katherine Foxhall
Rob Maddison	Cheryl Briggs
Mike Pighills	
Jill Rayner	
Val Shaw	

22. Statutory Officer Appointments: Monitoring Officer, Electoral Registration Officer, and Returning Officer

Steven Corrigan, Democratic Services Manager, left the meeting during Council's consideration of this item.

Council considered the report on the Statutory Officer Appointments of Monitoring Officer, Electoral Registration Officer, and Returning Officer from the head of corporate services. The report outlined the recommendations from the Joint Staff Committee and requested that, if council were satisfied, for those recommendations for the posts to be approved.

Leader of the Council, Councillor Thomas, introduced the report and highlighted that the Council had received a large number of applicants for the position of Monitoring Officer and had been through an extensive recruitment process. She indicated that the council had used independent consultants to sift through all the applications before then it was shortlisted by officers. After this, two candidates were then interviewed by the Joint Staff Committee. She confirmed that the recommendation from the committee was to appoint Nicholas Bennett as Monitoring Officer, Steven Corrigan as Electoral Registration Officer and Returning Officer and Susan Baker as Deputy Electoral Registration Officer.

RESOLVED: That Council:

1. appoints Nicholas Bennett as Monitoring Officer for Vale of White Horse District Council with effect from them commencing their role as the councils' Head of Legal and Democratic Services,
2. in terms of the Representation of the People Act 1983 and all related legislation, appoints Steven Corrigan as the council's Electoral Registration Officer with immediate effect and to designate Susan Baker as Deputy Electoral Registration Officer,
3. in terms of section 35 of the Representation of the People Act 1983 and all related legislation, appoints Steven Corrigan as the council's Returning Officer with immediate effect, with authority to act in that capacity for elections to the council and all or any parish and town councils within the council's area,
4. authorises the council's Electoral Registration Officer to act in respect of all related electoral, poll or referendum duties, including in relation to county council elections, national, regional, and local polls, or referenda,
5. authorises the Monitoring Officer (currently an interim arrangement) to make any consequential changes required to the Constitution to reflect these changes.

23. 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](#).

24. Questions on notice

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?

Written response

Thank you for your question; I understand that some ward members, around the area most affected by the reservoir, have had close contact with GARD and that members across this council are aware of their views. As I am sure you are aware GARD "a group of individuals whose aim is to identify and promote viable solutions to meet the future needs of water users in the Thames Water Region." Whilst they are not the body ultimately tasked to undertake this function by Government, they contribute to this important debate and have made their views well known to key decision makers, as do those with alternative views.

Our council's position on SESRO was highlighted by a unanimous resolution of the Council in December 2021. Vale "opposes the reservoir proposal unless or until the

case for need for this specific solution (over and above the other potential cheaper, less disruptive, and less environmentally impactful solutions) has been clearly tested, demonstrated and agreed by independent scientific experts.”

So, at present our view is similar to GARD’s publicly expressed position, though this could change in the future.

In due course we will have a role to play as a statutory consultee in the formal decision making process for the SESRO proposal. As elected members, especially myself as leader, we cannot allow ourselves to appear predetermined in our views by aligning ourselves too closely with a campaigning organisation at this time, however much we may individually support its aims.

Supplementary Question

Does the Leader of this administration and majority group agree that as the Leader of the council she should be available to listen to residents views whether they are in alignment or not with this councils position, when requested to meet and discuss issues that are important to them - and if so, then my question remains, as GARD represents a significant group of residents from the Vale, when will the leader agree to a meeting to listen to their concerns, objections, scientific and technical evaluations, or assign this to the relevant cabinet member ?

Councillor Bethia Thomas, Leader of the council undertook to provide a written response.

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?

Written response

I welcome this opportunity to clarify the responsibility of the council with regard to the cleansing of the A34, what we currently do and our strategy for the future.

In cleansing the A34, the council is required to follow Defra’s [code of practice on litter and refuse](#). This means the A34 and lay-bys are cleansed to Grade A (No litter or refuse) and B (Predominately free of litter and refuse apart from some small items) standards. The council is not responsible for road sign maintenance or the cutting back of verges.

Cleansing the A34 must be done in conjunction with National Highways, who authorise closures for road works which we take advantage of to access the road when it is safe to do so, and OCC who are responsible for cutting back many of the verges.

The council undertakes its cleansing responsibilities through a contract with Biffa. The contract is output based and states the contractor should clean the roads to the standards set out in the Litter Code of Practice.

Biffa consider it unsafe to access the verges on this road without suitable traffic management. As the A34 is two laned, with a narrow hard shoulder, Biffa’s policy only allows access to the

verges to clear litter when the road is partially or fully closed. When there is no planned road closure, but urgent cleansing is required, Biffa subcontract verge cleansing to a company that have had specialist training on working on the side of roads without lane closures. In addition to general verge litter picking, Biffa attend to the 28 lay-bys that are on the A34. These are visited at least twice a week to empty the bins and to litter pick where it is safe to do so. The council's Waste Team frequently monitor Biffa's performance around the lay-bys, and bin servicing is found to be good. Problems only occur when bins are blocked by fly tipped items. Keep Britain Tidy undertake independent inspections against the code of practice grades, with the latest information being from February of this year. They looked at 120 locations in Vale, grading each for litter, detritus, graffiti and fly-posting. The lay-bys are frequently litter picked, and in the last survey all inspected sites across the district were found to be grade A or B for litter. The contract performance is also monitored through a set of contract measures, and an annual performance report to Scrutiny. The report for 2023 was reviewed by Scrutiny on Monday 15 July 2024.

As part of the forthcoming waste resources and street cleansing strategy, a greater emphasis will be placed on street cleansing and the council will look to work more collaboratively with its partners in the county council, national highways, local groups including parish/town councils, and voluntary organisations and community groups. The aims of the strategy will be to:

- Reduce litter through a localised, community-driven approach.
- Reduce fly tipping.
- Clean streets in partnership with, and sensitive to, local needs.

Whoever the council employs to undertake street cleansing from 2026 (when the current contract with Biffa ends) will also be required to have a collaborative approach which looks for continual improvement, and the service specifications are currently being drafted to reflect the increased emphasis required in street cleansing.

Supplementary question and answer

In response to a supplementary question asking whether the provisions set out in the written response would be included in the council's Corporate Plan, Councillor Coleman responded that it would not be appropriate to include specific details relating to the A34. The Corporate Plan included high level details of key elements of council delivery rather than specific issues.

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.

Written response

Street trading and mobile caterers provide a valuable service to local communities, and it is encouraging to hear of the successful operation at The Crown Inn in Marcham; a model that is replicated at a number of venues across the Vale (and also in South Oxfordshire).

This operational model didn't exist when the 2014 joint street trading policy was adopted, and we/officers recognise the need to update the policy to acknowledge and support new and innovative operations, such as the one at The Crown Inn.

Officers are in the process of preparing a new proposed street trading policy. This will include a new section specifically for where multiple traders plan to trade simultaneously from one or more sites. This will aim to simplify the process for these traders, whilst still being compliant with the legislative requirements.

The proposed draft policy will be subject to a public consultation which all interested parties will be encouraged to respond to. The consultation is expected to take place during September and October 2024. Officers will work with the council's Communications and Engagement Team to publicise the consultation to ensure it reaches as wide an audience as possible. All responses will be taken into consideration before a revised new joint street trading policy is taken to the General Licensing Committee for consideration and adoption. Once adopted the application form and process will also be reviewed to ensure they reflect the requirements of local traders.

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?

Written response

The manifesto is one thing, the policies of government are often another, so I will not comment in detail at this stage. It is likely that councils will be at the forefront of delivery on the priorities for the new government which include more affordable homes, reducing homelessness and boosting sustainable and inclusive growth.

The Chief Executive, at my request, has recently contacted DLUCH, now known as the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, to ask that should any conversations be held around devolution or linked matters that the Vale of White Horse is contacted directly so that elected members are able to contribute to those discussions. Any revised devolution settlement aiming to unlock new opportunities and ensure that councils are suitably equipped to deliver at pace will require financial stability for local government addressing its funding challenges with no further unfunded costs burdens upon it from government. The new government’s manifesto promise of a multi year financial settlement, once implemented, should allow easier future planning. In the absence of increased funding then there will need to be a continuing focus on driving efficiencies and generating revenue during times of challenging financial restraints. Planning reform and long term plans for housing - with or without housing targets - must ensure that there is enough infrastructure to mitigate development. It is likely that the NPPF will be redefined and strategic planning reintroduced in a move to boost housing supply.

The council has made clear its desire to work in partnership with government in planning and housing delivery rather than having targets imposed upon it. Going forward, the council will continue to take part in cross boundary collaboration with its neighbouring areas. We await the specifics of the new initiatives and any new legislation so that we can align our own activities to achieve the desired outcomes.

Supplementary question and answer

I thank the leader for the response and thank her for offering to forward the letter from the new Secretary of State. I completely appreciate manifesto promises of late have meant very little. The Labour Government today announced the English Devolution bill in the King’s speech, this does give us something more concrete to work with and does the leader have a viewpoint on how this will impact our district, specifically the passage about new powers to local leaders to produce Local Growth Plans?

Councillor Bethia Thomas, Leader of the council, undertook to provide a written response.

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?

Written response

The council is not responsible for the provision of health facilities within our District, The Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board (BOBICB) are responsible for delivery of health services in Oxfordshire; I have always been clear about this with local members and residents and am therefore surprised by the question.

Our function as a council has been to work to support the ICB in delivery of the health centre at Great Western Park following the inclusion of the site, and involvement of the council, in the original 2008 planning application for Great Western Park (GWP).

As per the GWP S106 Agreement, the council will take transfer of the site and receive associated commuted sums from Taylor Wimpey, however this does not guarantee delivery of the health centre. The commuted sums defined in the S106 agreement were not of a magnitude which would have enabled delivery, hence the need to work with partners to establish a funded delivery route.

The council have therefore been working with relevant parties, led by the ICB, to bring forward delivery, which has resulted in achieving successful outcomes such as a variation to the S106 to include the identified delivery route and the approval of a business case by the ICB. The parties continue to work together to move the project forward and ensure that all elements are aligned.

The structure of the local NHS has changed a number of times during this long process, as has their view of exactly what provision is needed at GWP. This has been the cause of much frustration for the council, local councillors and the community. Whatever mechanism is required within the NHS to approve the development of a health centre is up to them. The Vale will continue to cooperate in whatever way we can to support the NHS in progressing the project.

To ensure local members are kept informed of the progress, officers have established a regular mechanism for updating elected representatives immediately affected by the project, which includes an update on progress across all workstreams and critical project stages to ensure clarity on the project going forward.

Supplementary question and answer

Why wasn't the information in respect of the requirement for an Integrated Care Board approved business case passed to elected representatives and parish councils sooner?

Councillor Bethia Thomas, Leader of the council undertook to provide a written response.

25. Motions on notice

- (1) Councillor Foxhall moved, and Councillor de la Harpe seconded the motion as set out on the agenda at item 12(1):

Following debate, the motion was declared carried.

RESOLVED: That

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) Councillor Thompson moved, and Councillor Rayner seconded the motion as set out on the agenda at item 12(2):

Following debate, the motion was declared carried.

RESOLVED:

That 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 LGBTQ+ 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 LGBTQ+ 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.
- asks cabinet to consider how the Council could best support organising an annual public event from February 2025 to mark LGBTQ+ history month.
- ask 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.

26. Exclusion of the public

RESOLVED: to exclude members of the press and public from the meeting for the following item of business under Part 1 of Schedule 12A Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 and as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006 on the grounds that:

- i. it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act, and
- ii. the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

27. End of Capita contract in September 2025 and options for the services still within the contract

See confidential minute.

Council considered a confidential report on the decisions taken by Cabinet at its meeting on 28 June 2024 regarding the end of the initial period of the Capita contract in September 2025 and the provision of services in the future.

Council noted the decisions taken by Cabinet and agreed to the cost of the proposed service arrangements set out in the report.

The meeting closed at 8:20pm

Chair:

Date: