

Minutes

of a meeting of the

Council



held on Wednesday 13 February 2019 at 7.00 pm
at The Ridgeway, The Beacon, Portway, Wantage, OX12 9BY

Open to the public, including the press

Present:

Members: Councillors Monica Lovatt (Chairman), Ben Mabbett (Vice-Chairman), Alice Badcock, Mike Badcock, Matthew Barber, Eric Batts, Ed Blagrove, Yvonne Constance, Roger Cox, Margaret Crick, Charlotte Dickson, St John Dickson, Debby Hallett, Robert Hall, Jenny Hannaby, Dudley Hoddinott, Simon Howell, Vicky Jenkins, Bob Johnston, Mohinder Kainth, Sandy Lovatt, Chris McCarthy, Mike Murray, Chris Palmer, Helen Pighills, Julia Reynolds, Judy Roberts, Robert Sharp, Janet Shelley, Emily Smith, Reg Waite, Elaine Ware and Catherine Webber

Officers: Steven Corrigan, Adrian Duffield, Simon Hewings, William Jacobs, Holly Jones, Margaret Reed, Richard Spraggett and Mark Stone

Number of members of the public: 14

Co.56 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Duffield and Hayward.

Co.57 Minutes

RESOLVED: to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 12 December 2018 as a correct record and agree that the Chairman sign them as such.

Co.58 Declarations of disclosable pecuniary interest

Councillor Robert Sharp declared a personal interest in item 8 relating to the Local Plan as he owned property that he was proposing for development, which was not allocated for development in the Local Plan.

Councillor Mike Badcock declared an interest in the motion on the Oxford to Cambridge Expressway as the council's representative on the Oxfordshire Growth Board Infrastructure Advisory Sub-Group at which he had received confidential information.

Co.59 Urgent business and chairman's announcements

The Chairman thanked those who had attended her recent civic dinner at which £1200 was raised for her chosen charity SSAFA. She provided details of two forthcoming events with all proceeds going to SSAFA:

- The Waterloo Band and Bugles of the Rifles on Saturday 2 March at Amey Theatre, Abingdon
- The Chairman's charity golf tournament on Friday 12 April at Drayton Golf Club

Co.60 Public participation

The Chairman advised that five members of the public had registered to address Council. Those who had registered to address Council on items on the agenda did so at the particular item.

Ms Hayleigh Gascoigne asked the following question of Councillor Cox, Cabinet member for planning:

"What assurances can the council give that it will work closely with the developer, Taylor Wimpey, to work towards a much shorter timescale to get the park open as soon as it is ready and safe to use? What policies can be put in place for the future to avoid such long periods of time before residents can use new facilities, such as the District Community Centre currently being built, which is also on Great Western Park?"

Councillor Cox responded as follows:

"Until Taylor Wimpey notifies the council that the park is complete to the required standard the council are not in a position to adopt it. The S106 agreement stipulates that once the council has received that notification, inspected and agreed that the park is completed to council's satisfaction, a 12 month period commences before the council can take the transfer.

However, officers are working closely with Taylor Wimpey to determine if there is a way to make the whole neighbourhood park available for residents to use as soon as possible, even before the land has transferred to public ownership at the end of the 12-month maintenance period. We are anticipating a notification very soon from Taylor Wimpey that their work is finished, and we will work closely with them to make these facilities available for our residents to use as soon as possible".

Co.61 Petitions

No petitions were submitted to Council.

Co.62 Local Plan 2031 Part 1: adopted policies map

Councillor David Kay, Chairman of North Hinksey Parish Council, addressed Council in support of the Cabinet recommendation to make a factual correction to a map which had incorrectly shown that some land at North Hinksey had been excluded from the Green Belt.

Council considered Cabinet's recommendation, made at its meeting on 4 February 2019, to make a factual correction to the Adopted Policies Map (December 2016), which supports the Local Plan 2031 Part 1.

RESOLVED: to agree to make a factual correction to the Council's Adopted Local Plan Part 1 Policies Map in relation to the boundary of the Green Belt at North Hinksey village, as set out in Appendix 1 to the head of planning's report to Cabinet on 4 February 2019.

Co.63 Local Plan 2031 Part 2: main modifications

Councillor Robert Sharp declared a personal interest in this item and left the meeting during its consideration - see Minute Co. 58.

Councillor Richard Bahu, representing St Helen Without Parish Council, addressed Council on the Local Plan. He questioned the reasoning behind removing land in the parish from the Green Belt and urged Council to retain it in the Green Belt.

Council considered Cabinet's recommendations, made at its meeting on 4 February 2019, on Local Plan Part 2. Following the Examination, the Planning Inspector had suggested a series of main modifications to make the plan 'sound' and invited the council to draw up a schedule for the inspector's approval. The Cabinet report summarised the main modifications and Cabinet recommended Council to allow the modifications subject to consultation.

Whilst the majority of councillors supported the recommendations some spoke in support of the retention of Shippon within the Green Belt.

RESOLVED: to

1. agree to undertake a six-week public consultation on the Main Modifications to the Local Plan 2031: Part 2, as identified by the Planning Inspector presiding over the Part 2 plan examination, and necessary for the plan to be found Sound, as set out at appendix 3 of the head of planning's report to Cabinet on 4 February 2019;
2. agree to publish the additional Modifications to the Local Plan 2031: Part 2, as set out at appendix 9 of the head of planning's report; and
3. authorise the head of planning, in consultation with the Cabinet member for planning, to make any necessary minor amendments and corrections to the Local Plan 2031: Part 2 and its associated documents up to and prior to plan adoption.

Co.64 Section 106 request - Marcham Parish Council local facilities

Mr David Walton addressed Council in support of the request. Marcham has been without a village hall for about 15 years, and the Community has been working hard to secure a replacement on Anson Field. The plan includes a new village hall, with changing rooms for sports, a new junior football pitch and a new Multi-Use Games and tennis area, as well as the existing cricket pitch, children's play area, and a replacement adult football pitch. Due to the physical constraints of the site, it is not possible to make the new adult football pitch quite as wide as that recommended by the Football Association – by a matter of a few metres. In requesting Council approve the application for s106 funds he requested that Council amend the scheme to provide

for the football pitch size to meet the Football Association standards as far as is practicable for the site.

Council considered Cabinet's recommendation, made at its meeting on 4 February 2019, on a request from Marcham Parish Council for Section 106 funds towards community and sports facilities.

Councillors Webber and Johnston agreed to withdraw an amendment they had moved and seconded in relation to the pitch sizes. However, they and Council agreed to accept an amendment moved by Councillor Barber and seconded by Councillor Murray to authorise the chief executive to agree the wording of the agreements in relation to the size of the pitches.

RESOLVED: to

1. create a budget for £305,095.74 for a combined village hall and sports pavilion/clubhouse, multi-use games area including tennis court and sports pitches (cricket & football) project in Marcham;
2. agree to secure a funding agreement with Marcham Parish Council for the use of these section 106 monies of which the terms included should be passed on to The Arthur Anson Memorial Trust through a further separate funding agreement between Marcham Parish Council and The Arthur Anson Memorial Trust;
3. authorise the chief executive, in consultation with the ward councillors and Marcham Parish Council, to agree the wording of the agreements in relation to the size of the football pitches to ensure that the football pitches meet the Football Association size standard, subject to the land available; and
4. agree to pay Marcham Parish Council £305,095.74 once the funding agreements mentioned above are signed.

Co.65 Treasury management mid-year monitoring 2018/19

Council considered Cabinet's recommendations, made at its meeting on 4 February 2019, on the treasury management activities for the first six months of 2018/19.

The Joint Audit and Governance Committee had considered the report at its meeting on 28 January 2019 and had not recommended any adjustments to the strategy as a result of the first six months' activities. That committee and Cabinet had concluded that the treasury management activities had operated within the agreed parameters set out in the approved treasury management strategy.

The Cabinet member advised that following a request from the Joint Audit and Governance Committee there is an amendment to the table at paragraph 10 on page 21 of the report. An updated table was circulated at the meeting which showed that forecast investment interest for the year is likely to come in under budget primarily as a result of interest rates rises being slower than predicted.

RESOLVED: to approve the head of finance's treasury management mid-year monitoring report 2018/19 to Cabinet on 4 February 2019 subject to the amended table attached to these minutes.

Co.66 Treasury management and investment strategy 2019/20

Council considered Cabinet's recommendations, made at its meeting on 4 February 2019, on the council's treasury management strategy for 2019/20.

The Joint Audit and Governance Committee considered the report at its meeting on 28 January 2019 and had not recommended any adjustments to the strategy. Cabinet agreed to recommend Council approve the strategy.

RESOLVED: to

1. approve the treasury management strategy 2019/20, as set out in appendix A to the head of finance's report to Cabinet on 4 February 2019;
2. approve the prudential indicators and treasury limits for the period 2019/20 to 2021/22, as set out in appendix A to the head of finance's report to Cabinet on 4 February 2019; and
3. approve the annual investment strategy 2019/20, as set out in appendix A (paragraphs 41 to 82), to the head of finance's report to Cabinet on 4 February 2019, and the lending criteria detailed in table 5.

Co.67 Capital strategy 2019/20 to 2028/29

Council considered Cabinet's recommendations, made at its meeting on 4 February 2019, on the council's capital strategy 2019/20 to 2028/29.

Council noted that the adoption of a capital strategy ahead of the 2019/20 financial year is a requirement of the updated CIPFA prudential code and that Council will be required to review the strategy on an annual basis. The strategy will provide the overall policy framework for capital expenditure and investment although there are a number of key building blocks that underpin the strategy that are still being developed, including:

- An asset management strategy and maintenance plan
- Medium term service planning, and
- Consistent management of projects and programmes

Council welcomed the strategy as a key document for the council going forward.

RESOLVED: to approve the capital strategy 2019/20 to 2028/29 which is contained in appendix one of the report of the head of finance to Cabinet on 4 February 2019.

Co.68 Revenue Budget 2019/20 and Capital Programme to 2023/24

Mr Crawford addressed Council on this item and asked a question of Councillor Cox, Leader of the council.

He expressed the view that the council's budget was not sustainable with a budget deficit of £1.5million predicted by 2023/24 having used the current reserves of £12.3million to support revenue expenditure.

He highlighted the cost of The Beacon, the 5 council's partnership which was not realising savings and an alleged payoff to a departing chief executive as areas in which the taxpayer had not been well served.

He asked the following question of Councillor Cox:

“Given the parlous state of the financial position the current administration has created at the Vale why should the electorate have any faith that it can deliver anything but more financial mismanagement and misery in the future?”

Councillor Cox undertook to provide a written response.

The Chairman referred to regulations that require councils to record the names of those councillors 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.

The Chairman reminded councillors that they were not entitled to vote on any issue affecting the level or administration of the council tax or other decisions which might affect the making of any such calculation such as the budget, if they were over two months in arrears with their council tax payments. Where such circumstances applied, councillors were under a statutory obligation to disclose the restriction placed on them and refrain from voting at the relevant meeting. No councillor made any such declaration.

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

Councillor Sharp, Cabinet member for finance, presented the Cabinet’s proposals for the revenue budget 2019/20 and capital programme to 2023/24. On behalf of the council he thanked officers for their part in continuing to control costs and in preparing the draft budget.

Councillor Sharp moved and Councillor Cox seconded a motion to approve Cabinet’s recommendations as follows:

1. set the revenue budget for 2019/20 as set out in appendix A.1 to the head of finance’s report to Cabinet on 4 February 2019;
2. approve the capital programme for 2019/20 to 2023/24 as set out in appendix D.1 to the head of finance’s report, together with the capital growth bids set out in appendix D.3 of the report;
3. set the council’s prudential limits as listed in appendix E to the head of finance’s report,
4. approve the medium term financial plan to 2023/24 as set out in appendix F.1 to the head of finance’s report;

In moving the recommendation Councillor Sharp drew attention to the funding issues facing the council – rising expenditure with lower central government funding and lower investment returns.

Councillor Smith moved and Councillor Hoddinott moved an amendment in the following terms:

“Council notes the Medium-Term Financial Plan showing that if nothing changes, we will run out of money during 2023-24.

Council recognises the £9million of predicted savings from the 5 councils partnership outsourcing exercise has not materialised and while the overall financial cost to this council is yet to be finalised, the Vale will ‘break even at best’.

Council notes the huge uncertainty about the future of this council's funding from central government ahead of this year's spending review – particularly as Vale has been relying heavily on New Homes Bonus – and recognises the need to take proactive action to protect council services.

Therefore, Council resolves to amend the budget to include in the 2019/20 budget a growth bid to create a Commercial Investment Projects Fund".

The £50k fund would be drawn down during the year to pay for resource and expertise to explore how to maximise the council's investments and identify appropriate revenue generating schemes then make recommendations to council. The s151 officer had confirmed that the amendment, if carried, would not impact on the robustness of the budget estimates and adequacy of reserves.

Whilst a number of councillors spoke in support of the amendment, because it would support the development of a more commercial approach for the council and bring in additional revenue, other councillors expressed views that the council could not afford the proposal and that any benefits would not be realised before the outcome of the government spending review.

The Chairman called for a recorded vote on the amendment which was lost with the votes recorded as follows:

For	Against	Abstentions
Councillors	Councillors	Councillors
Margaret Crick	Alice Badcock	
Debby Hallett	Mike Badcock	
Jenny Hannaby	Matthew Barber	
Dudley Hoddinott	Eric Batts	
Bob Johnston	Edward Blagrove	
Helen Pighills	Yvonne Constance	
Judy Roberts	Roger Cox	
Emily Smith	Charlotte Dickson	
Catherine Webber	St John Dickson	
	Robert Hall	
	Simon Howell	
	Vicky Jenkins	
	Mohinder Kainth	
	Monica Lovatt	
	Sandy Lovatt	
	Ben Mabbett	
	Chris McCarthy	
	Mike Murray	
	Chris Palmer	
	Julia Reynolds	
	Robert Sharp	
	Janet Shelley	
	Reg Waite	
	Elaine Ware	
Total: 9	Total: 24	Total: 0

A number of councillors spoke against the budget proposals. There were no plans to address the gradual decline in council reserves. The promised financial savings from the 5 councils partnership outsourcing exercise had not materialised, grants had been cut, capital leisure projects had been halted and other projects delayed.

However, the majority of councillors supported the budget proposals. In light of the uncertainty over New Homes Bonus, and in anticipation of the government's review of local government funding, it was necessary to set a prudent budget recognising the current pressures on funding.

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

For	Against	Abstentions
Councillors	Councillors	Councillors
Alice Badcock	Margaret Crick	
Mike Badcock	Debby Hallett	
Matthew Barber	Jenny Hannaby	
Eric Batts	Dudley Hoddinott	
Edward Blagrove	Bob Johnston	
Yvonne Constance	Chris McCarthy	
Roger Cox	Helen Pighills	
Charlotte Dickson	Judy Roberts	
St John Dickson	Emily Smith	
Robert Hall	Catherine Webber	
Simon Howell		
Vicky Jenkins		
Mohinder Kainth		
Monica Lovatt		
Sandy Lovatt		
Ben Mabbett		
Mike Murray		
Chris Palmer		
Julia Reynolds		
Robert Sharp		
Janet Shelley		
Reg Waite		
Elaine Ware		
Total: 23	Total: 10	Total: 0

RESOLVED: to

1. set the revenue budget for 2019/20 as set out in appendix A.1 to the head of finance's report to Cabinet on 4 February 2019;
2. approve the capital programme for 2019/20 to 2023/24 as set out in appendix D.1 to the head of finance's report, together with the capital growth bids set out in appendix D.3 to the head of finance's report;
3. set the council's prudential limits as listed in appendix E to the head of finance's report;

4. approve the medium term financial plan to 2023/24 as set out in appendix F.1 to the head of finance's report.

Co.69 Council Tax 2019/20

Council considered the report of the head of finance on the setting of the Council Tax for the 2019/20 financial year.

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

For	Against	Abstentions
Councillors	Councillors	Councillors
Alice Badcock		
Mike Badcock		
Matthew Barber		
Eric Batts		
Edward Blagrove		
Yvonne Constance		
Roger Cox		
Margaret Crick		
Charlotte Dickson		
St John Dickson		
Robert Hall		
Debby Hallett		
Jenny Hannaby		
Dudley Hoddinott		
Simon Howell		
Vicky Jenkins		
Bob Johnston		
Mohinder Kainth		
Monica Lovatt		
Sandy Lovatt		
Ben Mabbett		
Chris McCarthy		
Mike Murray		
Chris Palmer		
Helen Pighills		
Julia Reynolds		
Judy Roberts		
Robert Sharp		
Janet Shelley		
Emily Smith		
Reg Waite		
Elaine Ware		
Catherine Webber		
Total: 33	Total: 0	Total: 0

RESOLVED:

1. To note that at its meeting on 12 December 2018 the council calculated the council tax base 2019/20:
 - (a) for the whole council area as 51,706.2 [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 2019/20 (excluding parish precepts) is £6,809,189
3. That the following amounts be calculated for the year 2019/20 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Act:
 - (a) £74,961,096 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) £64,203,980 being the aggregate of the amounts which the council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3) of the Act.
 - (c) £10,757,116 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) £208.04 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) £3,947,927 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) £76.35 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 2019/20 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	£979.22
Band B	£1,142.42
Band C	£1,305.63
Band D	£1,468.83
Band E	£1,795.24
Band F	£2,121.64
Band G	£2,448.05
Band H	£2,937.66

5. To note that for the year 2019/20 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	£137.52
Band B	£160.44
Band C	£183.36
Band D	£206.28
Band E	£252.12
Band F	£297.96
Band G	£343.80
Band H	£412.56

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 2019/20 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 2019/20 is not excessive in accordance with principles approved under Section 52ZB Local Government Finance Act 1992.

Co.70 Pay policy statement 2019/20

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 pay policy statement for 2019/20 attached to the report of the head of corporate services to Council on 13 February 2019.

Co.71 Report of the leader of the council

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

Co.72 Questions on notice

Prior to consideration of the questions the Chairman adjourned the meeting at 9.10pm for a short comfort break.

The meeting reconvened at 9.15pm.

Prior to the expiry of two and a half hours, Council considered and rejected an option, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 82, to suspend Council Procedure Rule 12, which restricts the duration of a meeting to three hours, to allow Council to complete the business.

Council agreed, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 12, to extend the duration of the meeting by half an hour.

1. Councillor Margaret Crick to Councillor Roger Cox, Leader of the Council

With memories of the devastating floods in Abingdon in 2007, and climate change predicted to increase instances of flooding, residents in South Abingdon are very concerned about the Environment Agency's decision to cancel plans for a flood storage facility at Abingdon Common.

Has the leader been given any further information about alternative proposals? And how can this council put pressure on the Environment Agency to ensure action is taken to reduce flooding risk in Abingdon?

Councillor Cox undertook to provide a written response.

2. Councillor Catherine Webber to Councillor Ed Blagrove, Cabinet Member for Corporate Services

Vale of White Horse District Council is preparing to return to a purpose-built headquarters in Crowmarsh Gifford. Can the Cabinet member confirm that he will work with South Oxfordshire District Council to ensure that the new building is designed to be carbon neutral and energy efficient, and that despite the lack of public transport to the site, all efforts are being made to minimise the number of car journeys that staff and members will be required to make?

Bearing in mind the lack of public transport to Crowmarsh Gifford, what plans does the Cabinet member have to ensure residents and members have meeting places available to use within the Vale, so that residents struggling to access council support online or over the phone can reach us?

Councillor Blagrove undertook to provide a written response

3. Councillor Bob Johnston to Councillor Elaine Ware, Cabinet Member for Housing and Environment

When established in the 1990's, Registered Social Landlords decorated their properties periodically, especially when tenants exchanged properties or moved out, in order to ensure that properties were in good repair and in good decorative order. I understand that most internal repairs and decorating are no longer routinely provided.

Can the Cabinet Member explain why housing providers operating in the Vale no longer carry out routine interior decoration? And is there anything this council can do to help ensure that tenants who are elderly, have disabilities, or are on low incomes are provided with well decorated homes in good working order?

Councillor Ware undertook to provide a written response

4. Councillor Catherine Webber to Councillor Ed Blagrove Cabinet member for corporate services

In July 2016 Council passed the following motion "This council resolves to manage our public consultations with openness and transparency, using industry best practice. Our public consultations will use open-ended questions that encourage a range of responses, and officers will produce consultation reports that highlight all major concerns raised and the actions to be taken in response. Where we have control of the consultation, we will ensure openness and transparency. Where we are part of a governing body managing the consultation, we will openly encourage openness and transparency."

What progress has been made since this motion was passed to improve our

consultations and ensure responses from the public and parish councils influence our decision making in meaningful ways?

Why are we still seeing situations such as Shippon Parish not being consulted in relation to a bid for Garden Village status, a respondent to the Local Plan consultation having his Reg 19 response missed out, and the ideas from key stakeholders at the launch event for Oxfordshire Plan 2050 not included in the vision and aspirations document?

Answer

Councillor Blagrove responded as follows:

“As Councillor Webber alludes the referenced motion was passed, and the Council's consultation approach is guided by our published Customer Engagement Charter 2016 - 20 and Statement of Community Involvement, which, as was a stated aim of the motion, reflects good practice as set out in the Market Research Society and relevant planning guidance.

In an aim to make our consultation process as user friendly as possible, we have received responses to customer feedback that the ‘Objective’ system was extremely difficult to use, and therefore, whilst the ‘Objective’ system could carry out consultations we strived to make things as user friendly as possible.

We will now use our acquired Smart Survey consultation software, which is used in the business sector by the likes of Microsoft, BP, the AA & HSBC and in the public and charities sector by Met Police, Ofsted, The Environment Agency and central government to name but a few, and we shall use this for all consultations – I am pleased to say we will use this for the first time during the forthcoming Vale Local Plan modifications consultation due to launch next week on 18 February.

As per the original motion we do use open-ended questions to gain customer feedback whenever this is appropriate; I say this as there is always the need to balance the desire for open ended questions with the additional cost of analysing the significant volume of data that is gathered from them, which much of the time is time & money well spent, but it is not a ‘one size fits all’, solution.

Alongside open-ended questions (such as do you have any further comments / other etc) we also routinely use open questions in line with industry good practice (which are non-leading questions) in addition to closed questions where appropriate (leading questions).

We also have cases, such as, Local Plan (Regulation 19) and Neighbourhood Plan (Regulation 16) consultation questions which are prescribed by legislation. Hence the need for “Where we have control of the consultation” being included in the 2016 motion.

Reports of consultations with responses as appropriate are routinely published on the ‘Have Your Say’ section of our website or the Local Plan pages. A reminder to all at Council this is beyond what we are legislatively required to do - for planning consultation we are only required to provide a report to the inspector and there is no requirement for most non-planning consultations - but we believe in our approach and that this supports our ongoing commitment to openness and transparency.

In reference to the specific instances the councillor asks:

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- Regarding Shippon this was largely due to unfortunate human errors incurred when officers are dealing with high demand and tight timescales, it is not an excuse but an explanation. I know that Cllr Webber will be aware of this as the relevant team have already apologised for the oversight to the parish and to Cllr Catherine Webber as the ward councillor. It is worth acknowledging that there was no obligation to consult, but there was the intention, and so the formal apology was made.
- With regards to Reg 19, the team are not aware of any respondents not being captured but accept that there was one at Reg 18 which was addressed at Reg 19. Again, the team had about 7000 comments to manually handle through the old Objective consultation system, which, as we have already established, was not user friendly. As already stated, action has been taken to replace the system for all forthcoming consultations.
- In terms of Oxfordshire Plan 2050 and the views raised at the stakeholder event, this was also discussed at the Cabinet meeting on 4th February and while I am not aware of the views Cllr Webber is referring to both Cabinet Members and Officers present were keen to point out the Oxfordshire Plan document you reference in your question is a high level strategic document and some of the views expressed may not be appropriate content at this time but may hold value as we continue with the process. As members should be aware, we are about to start the public consultation process which provides ample opportunity for people to feed in their thoughts. We anticipate the engagement process will raise many issues all of which will be collected, fed back and considered before the next iteration of the plan”.

Supplementary question

In response to a supplementary question Councillor Blagrove stated that whilst it was not possible to provide a guarantee similar issues would not affect future consultations every effort would be made to reduce the risks with the updated system referred to in his answer above.

5. Councillor Emily Smith to Councillor Roger Cox, Leader of the Council

In December 2014 Council passed a motion to: include “written information about Vale activities, service and programmes with future council tax demands”. When looking into progress on this motion I learned that neither Finance or Communications officers were aware of this decision by Council and confirmed that the requested information for residents was never produced.

Was the Leader aware that this decision by Council was not actioned? Can he seek assurances from officers that other motions passed by members since 2014 have been actioned and that mechanisms are in place to track future motions?

Councillor Cox undertook to provide a written response

6. Councillor Emily Smith to Councillor Roger Cox, Cabinet Member for Planning

Last summer Transport for New Homes and the Foundation for Integrated Transport report received national press coverage. Their report highlighted the problems with new housing estates being designed around car use, adding to traffic congestion and preventing healthy communities developing. They highlighted Great Western Park as an example of poor practice and the report appeared on the BBC News website under the headline 'Young couples trapped in car dependency'. In November, Oxfordshire County Council unanimously passed a motion to invest in 'Active Travel' and allocate more space for cyclists and pedestrians. But the County Council cannot ensure pedestrians and cyclists are prioritised in new housing developments without collaboration with local planning authorities.

How is the Cabinet member working with county colleagues and others to ensure that the Vale's planning policies prioritise cyclists and pedestrians and reduce car dependency when we permit new housing developments? Have any specific changes been discussed as a result of the 'Active Travel' motion at the County Council?

Councillor Cox undertook to provide a written response

7. Councillor Judy Roberts to Councillor Eric Batts, Cabinet Member for Legal and Democratic

I welcome the announcement that Homes England have approved a grant for the only 'Vale affordable housing in perpetuity project' off the Eynsham Road. The Oxfordshire Community Land Trust have already prepared their planning application for this development but require the easement from the Vale for which this grant was awarded to progress the scheme. The Vale applied for this grant in Summer 2018 and the scheme has been in development for a lot longer. So, please can the Cabinet member explain why the easement has still not been signed?

Councillor Batts undertook to provide a written response

8. Councillor Debby Hallett to Councillor Roger Cox, Cabinet Member for Planning

At the request of Council in October 2018, the leader of the council wrote to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government to request that they review the definition of housing 'affordability'. The minister for housing's reply told us unequivocally that it has *always* been this council's responsibility and within our power to set our affordable housing policies to reflect local circumstances. We don't need Government to redo anything. Council can set our policies to reflect our own local circumstances. I'm surprised this was apparently news to the leader.

The national policy requires that affordable rent be *at least* 20% below market rents, and similarly, that affordable sales prices be *at least* 20% below market sales prices. The system is set up so that we rely on market developers to provide solutions to our local affordable housing needs. Clearly that's not been a success. Recent reports tell us local house prices are between 7 and 17 times annual earnings, when we know a healthy ratio is about 4 or 5 times annual earnings.

Although it was the leader who wrote the letter to Ministry of Housing Communities & Local Government about affordability, it is the cabinet member for planning to whom I direct this question. What are some of the options to consider that could finally make a

dent in the problem of a lack of genuinely affordable housing in Vale?

Councillor Cox undertook to provide a written response

9. Councillor Debby Hallett to Councillor Roger Cox, Cabinet Member for Partnership and Insight

How much money did Vale decide to contribute to the Environment Agency's recently-cancelled Abingdon flood scheme? What was the evidence supporting this decision, who decided, when, and by what means?

Councillor Cox undertook to provide a written response

10. Councillor Jenny Hannaby to Councillor Roger Cox, Cabinet Member for Planning

There is a recurring problem with new build housing developments not being completed to an acceptable standard in line with the approved plans.

There are examples from around the Vale where developers are not building roads, drainage, homes and play areas to the specifications agreed when planning permission was granted which then creates work for this council to rectify – at a cost for this council and disruption to residents.

Does the Cabinet member agree that councils should have more legal powers in relation to planning enforcement? And if so, what is the Cabinet member doing to lobby government to return responsibility for all building control matters to local councils?

Councillor Cox undertook to provide a written response

Co.73 Motions on notice

1. Councillor Catherine Webber moved, and Councillor Debby Hallett seconded the following motion:

“Council notes that:

- a) the recent 2018 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report states that we have just 12 years to act on climate change if global temperature rises are to be kept within the recommended 1.5 degrees Celsius;
- b) all governments (national, regional and local) have a duty to limit the negative impacts on climate breakdown, and local governments that recognise this should not wait for their national governments to change their policies. UK county, district and city councils need to commit to aggressive reduction targets and carbon neutrality as quickly as possible;
- c) districts are well placed to lead the world in reducing carbon emissions, as their responsibility for planning policies opens up a range of sustainable transport, buildings and energy opportunities;
- d) Council has already shown foresight when it comes to addressing the issue of Climate Change, having signed the Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change in 2007. In 2008, Council agreed a Climate Change Strategy, introduced by Councillor Mary de Vere, which provided the framework for the council to set about reducing the

carbon footprint of its own activities and of the local community. Between 2008 and 2013, this council collaborated with the Energy Saving Trust on the development of a strategy to reduce area-wide carbon emissions, as well as with the Carbon Trust, to produce a Carbon Management Plan which sets out how the council planned to reduce energy and fuel use in its own buildings and vehicles. All of this has led to a 30% drop in energy use in our buildings through 2018; and

e) although the Vale of White Horse District Council is managing to deliver absolute carbon reductions despite the upward pressures on carbon emissions caused by changes in the structure of its operations and services and variability caused by factors such as the weather, it is not delivering the necessary absolute carbon reductions fast enough to meet either the UK's 2050 80% reduction target or the 1.5 degree celsius target.

In light of the above, the Council therefore agrees to:

1. Join other councils in declaring a Climate Emergency;
2. Ask the leader to write to the Secretary of State requesting that they provide the necessary powers and resources to make local action on climate change easier;
3. Request that, in light of the recent IPCC report and the latest Vale of White Horse District Council data (published June 2018), officers review the council's Climate Change Strategy and Carbon Management Plan with the aim of bringing a report to Cabinet in the autumn of 2019, after consideration by Scrutiny. The review should include the option of adopting an early carbon neutral target for the Vale, and proposals for regular reporting to Scrutiny Committee the progress with the strategy and plan;
4. Ask officers to ensure that as the council's policies are routinely reviewed, specific consideration is given to how policies, and our related decisions and actions, affect our contribution to climate change, and where necessary, update these policies to reduce our impact wherever possible;
5. Ask officers to provide the cost and the most appropriate training for members and officers about how to promote carbon neutral policies for future consideration by Cabinet; and
6. Continue to work with partners across the district, county and wider region to deliver widespread carbon reductions."

Amendment

Councillor Blagrove moved and Councillor Ware seconded an amendment in the following terms with deleted words shown by a strikethrough and additional words in bold

"Council notes that:

- a) the recent 2018 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report states that we have just 12 years to act on climate change if global temperature rises are to be kept within the recommended 1.5 degrees celsius;
- b) all governments (national, regional and local) have a duty to limit the negative impacts on climate breakdown, and local governments that recognise this should not wait for their national governments to change their policies. UK county, district and city councils need to commit to aggressive reduction targets and carbon neutrality as quickly as possible;

c) districts are well placed to lead the world in reducing carbon emissions, as their responsibility for planning policies opens up a range of sustainable transport, buildings and energy opportunities;

d) Council has already shown foresight when it comes to addressing the issue of Climate Change, having signed the Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change in 2007. In 2008, Council agreed a Climate Change Strategy, introduced by Councillor Mary de Vere, which provided the framework for the council to set about reducing the carbon footprint of its own activities and of the local community. Between 2008 and 2013, this council collaborated with the Energy Saving Trust on the development of a strategy to reduce area-wide carbon emissions, as well as with the Carbon Trust, to produce a Carbon Management Plan which sets out how the council planned to reduce energy and fuel use in its own buildings and vehicles. All of this has led to a 30% drop in energy use in our buildings through 2018; and

e) ~~Request that, in light of the recent IPCC report and the latest Vale of White Horse District Council data (published June 2018),~~ **Notes that work has commenced on a officers-review of the council's Climate Change Strategy and Carbon Management Plan in collaboration with the Oxfordshire Energy Strategy**, with the aim of bringing a report to Cabinet **as soon as possible, and no later than Autumn 2019**, the review to come forward to include the option **feasibility** of adopting an early carbon neutral target for the Vale, and proposals for regular reporting to **Cabinet, Scrutiny Committee and where necessary full Council** the progress with the strategy and plan;

~~e) although the Vale of White Horse District Council is managing to deliver absolute carbon reductions despite the upward pressures on carbon emissions caused by changes in the structure of its operations and services and variability caused by factors such as the weather, it is not delivering the necessary absolute carbon reductions fast enough to meet either the UK's 2050 80% reduction target or the 1.5 degree celsius target.~~

In light of the above, the Council therefore agrees to:

1. Join other councils in declaring a Climate Emergency;
2. Ask the leader to write to the Secretary of State requesting that they provide the necessary powers and resources to make local action on climate change easier; **to seek confirmation of the Government's intention to work with local government on climate change strategies;**
3. Ask **that as** officers, ~~to ensure that as the~~ **as per** the council's policies, are routinely ~~reviewed currently reviewing policy and strategies,~~ **with** specific consideration ~~is being~~ given to how policies, and our related decisions and actions, affect our contribution to climate change, and where necessary, update these policies to reduce our impact wherever possible; **As far as possible, the reporting templates for Council, Cabinet and committees to be amended to include an 'Environmental Impact' section;**
4. Ask officers to provide the cost **and availability of,** and the most appropriate training **options** for members and officers about how to promote carbon neutral policies for future consideration by Cabinet;
5. **Request the Cabinet member for housing and environment to bring to Council a report on the activities of the Oxfordshire Environmental Partnership, of which the Vale is a member on the Vale's environmental policies & strategies; and**
6. Continues **the positive collaborative** work with partners across the district, county and wider region to deliver widespread carbon reductions”.

With the consent of Council the mover and seconder of the original motion accepted the amended wording.

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 67, which provides for a recorded vote if three members request one, the Chairman called for a recorded vote on the motion which was declared carried with the voting as follows:

For	Against	Abstentions
Councillors	Councillors	Councillors
Alice Badcock		Yvonne Constance
Mike Badcock		
Matthew Barber		
Eric Batts		
Edward Blagrove		
Roger Cox		
Margaret Crick		
Charlotte Dickson		
St John Dickson		
Robert Hall		
Debby Hallett		
Jenny Hannaby		
Dudley Hoddinott		
Simon Howell		
Vicky Jenkins		
Bob Johnston		
Mohinder Kainth		
Monica Lovatt		
Sandy Lovatt		
Ben Mabbett		
Chris McCarthy		
Mike Murray		
Chris Palmer		
Helen Pighills		
Julia Reynolds		
Judy Roberts		
Robert Sharp		
Janet Shelley		
Emily Smith		
Reg Waite		
Elaine Ware		
Catherine Webber		
Total: 32	Total: 0	Total: 1

RESOLVED:

That Council notes that:

- a) the recent 2018 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report states that we have just 12 years to act on climate change if global temperature rises are to be kept within the recommended 1.5 degrees Celsius;
- b) all governments (national, regional and local) have a duty to limit the negative impacts on climate breakdown, and local governments that recognise this should not

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wait for their national governments to change their policies. UK county, district and city councils need to commit to aggressive reduction targets and carbon neutrality as quickly as possible;

c) districts are well placed to lead the world in reducing carbon emissions, as their responsibility for planning policies opens up a range of sustainable transport, buildings and energy opportunities;

d) Council has already shown foresight when it comes to addressing the issue of Climate Change, having signed the Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change in 2007. In 2008, Council agreed a Climate Change Strategy, which provided the framework for the council to set about reducing the carbon footprint of its own activities and of the local community. Between 2008 and 2013, this council collaborated with the Energy Saving Trust on the development of a strategy to reduce area-wide carbon emissions, as well as with the Carbon Trust, to produce a Carbon Management Plan which sets out how the council planned to reduce energy and fuel use in its own buildings and vehicles. All of this has led to a 30% drop in energy use in our buildings through 2018; and

e) Work has commenced on a review of the council's Climate Change Strategy and Carbon Management Plan in collaboration with the Oxfordshire Energy Strategy, with the aim of bringing a report to Cabinet as soon as possible, and no later than Autumn 2019, the review to come forward to include the feasibility of adopting an early carbon neutral target for the Vale, and proposals for regular reporting to Cabinet, Scrutiny Committee and where necessary full Council the progress with the strategy and plan.

In light of the above, the Council therefore agrees to:

1. Join other councils in declaring a Climate Emergency;
2. Ask the leader to write to the Secretary of State to seek confirmation of the Government's intention to work with local government on climate change strategies;
3. Ask that as officers, as per the council's policies, are currently reviewing policy and strategies, that specific consideration be given to how policies, and our related decisions and actions, affect our contribution to climate change, and where necessary, update these policies to reduce our impact wherever possible. As far as possible, the reporting templates for Council, Cabinet and committees to be amended to include an 'Environmental Impact' section;
4. Ask officers to provide the cost and availability of the most appropriate training options for members and officers about how to promote carbon neutral policies for future consideration by Cabinet;
5. Request the Cabinet member for housing and environment to bring to Council a report on the activities of the Oxfordshire Environmental Partnership, of which the Vale is a member on the Vale's environmental policies and strategies; and
6. Continue the positive collaborative work with partners across the district, county and wider region to deliver widespread carbon reductions.

Councillor Mike Badcock declared an interest in the following motion left the meeting and did not take part in the discussion on it – see Minute C0. 58.

2. Councillor Smith moved, and Councillor Johnston seconded a motion in the following terms:

“Council notes that although Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet have discussed possible route options, this Council has not debated its position in relation to the proposed Oxford to Cambridge Expressway.

Council notes that all possible routes through the government’s chosen corridor will have a direct impact on residents in the Vale of White Horse District and our environment for decades.

Council recognises the benefits of closer working between Oxford and Cambridge Universities, supporting new business in the region and improving access to amenities and services, but on the basis of the evidence currently available does not accept that spending between £4billion to £7billion on a new road is the best way to achieve these aims.

In particular, Council notes:

- the contradictory nature of the Expressway scheme’s stated aims; a strategic highway for through traffic and freight with limited junctions cannot also be a road serving new housing developments.
- claims that the Expressway is a solution to congestion and safety on the A34 are misleading. The A34 is not a stated priority for this scheme, and some of the possible routes will bring more traffic through residential areas.
- insufficient work has been done on the potential of enhanced rail links to deliver better outcomes for passengers, freight, and sustainable economic growth along the corridor
- the risk the Expressway poses to the viability of East-West Rail has not been assessed
- there has been no environmental impact assessment of this scheme, which stands to destroy swathes of countryside and valuable ecosystems.
- that despite the scheme being worked on since 2015 and the devastating impact on our communities, there has been no public consultation
- that increased road building will inevitably have a serious negative impact on air quality and carbon emissions at a time when all public bodies must seek to use every part of their planning, investment and delivery mechanisms to improve air quality and reduce our carbon emissions.

Therefore, Council resolves to oppose the Oxford to Cambridge Expressway.

Council requests that the leader of the council, at stakeholder meetings they attend with Highways England, Department for Transport and relevant Government ministers:

1. make clear this council’s opposition to the Expressway
2. call for greater investment by central government in, and more assessment of, sustainable transport infrastructure options for the Oxford to Cambridge corridor.”

Amendment

Councillor Blagrove moved and Councillor Murray seconded an amendment in the following terms with deleted words shown by a strikethrough and additional words in bold:

“Council notes that although Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet have discussed possible **Corridor** ~~route~~ options, this Council has not **yet** debated its position in relation to the

proposed Oxford to Cambridge Expressway **and its routes and will bring forward a debate once the consultations begin.**

Council notes that all possible routes through the government's chosen corridor will have a direct impact on residents in the Vale of White Horse District and our environment ~~for decades.~~

Council recognises the benefits of closer working between Oxford and Cambridge Universities, supporting new business in the region and improving access to amenities and services, ~~but on the basis of the evidence currently available does not accept and~~ **will welcome, as part of the forthcoming consultations, the opportunity to review the evidence that supports** spending between £4billion to £7billion on a new road ~~as is~~ the best way to achieve these aims.

Council welcomes the following, as confirmed by Minister of State Jesse Norman during parliamentary debate on January 11 2018:

- **We are still at early stages. On all routes there needs to be further Process, Discussions, Consultations & Review**
- **Government & Highways England needs to do further serious analytical work to develop & design route options that are workable for communities, and the environment.**
- **Local feedback is an important part of the process**
- **Government wishes to develop the scheme in a way that is sensitive to the natural, the built and the historic environment**
- **A full environmental consultation will take part as part of the development of the route options**
- **Commitment to continue to work with stakeholders before the public consultation**
- **There will be a full public consultation on Route options to help shape the design so that it meets the needs of the local community and businesses, where people can have their say on the route options and the wider case for an expressway**
- **The final summary to the debate:
There will be "ample opportunity for members of the house and their constituents to express their views and shape the decision on the expressway"**

In particular Council notes:

- ~~the contradictory nature of the Expressway scheme's stated aims; a strategic highway for through traffic and freight with limited junctions cannot also be a road serving new housing developments.~~
- ~~claims a wish to see that the Expressway is part of the~~ **a solution to congestion and safety on the A34 are misleading, A40 & A420. We wish to see the current review of safety on the A34 is not a stated priority for this scheme, and some of the possible routes will bring more traffic through residential areas.**
- **We welcome the confirmation from Minister of State Jesse Norman during parliamentary debate with Oxfordshire MPs on 11th January, that work on a potential Expressway will be integrated with work on enhancement to the East West rail network.**
- **Council notes, as is legally required, any route must include a full and thorough environmental impact assessment of this scheme**

- ~~insufficient work has been done on the potential of enhanced rail links to deliver better outcomes for passengers, freight, and sustainable economic growth along the corridor.~~
- ~~the risk the Expressway poses to the viability of East West Rail has not been assessed~~
- ~~there has been no environmental impact assessment of this scheme, which stands to destroy swathes of countryside and valuable ecosystems.~~
- ~~that despite the scheme being worked on since 2015 and the devastating impact on our communities, there has been no public consultation~~
- ~~that increased road building will inevitably have a serious negative impact on air quality and carbon emissions at a time when all public bodies must seek to use every part of their planning, investment and delivery mechanisms to improve air quality and reduce our carbon emissions.~~

Therefore, Council resolves to ~~oppose~~ **engage fully in the consultation process and challenge, wherever required, on the proposed** Oxford to Cambridge Expressway.

Council requests that the leader of the council (**or an allotted cabinet deputy**), at stakeholder meetings they attend with Highways England, Department for Transport and relevant Government ministers:

1. Make clear this council's ~~opposition~~ **concerns regarding any negative potential impact of the Expressway on Vale residents that may emerge during the consultation.**
2. **Welcome the commitment to call for** greater investment by central government in, ~~and more assessment of,~~ sustainable transport infrastructure options for the Oxford to Cambridge corridor **and elsewhere.**
3. **Commits to using all reasonable measures to alert residents to the public consultations, including, but not limited to, links on our website and a press release to confirm the dates and how residents of the Vale can get involved, once these details are established."**

On being put to the vote the amendment was declared carried.

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 12, which restricts the duration of meetings to three hours, the Chairman advised that consideration of the motion would be deferred until a future meeting of Council.

The meeting closed at 10.00pm

Minute Item 65

Treasury activity

10. The mid-year performance of the two councils is summarised in the tables below¹.

	South	Treasury investments £000	Non-treasury loan £000	Sub Total £000	Property investment £000	Overall total £000
1	Average investment balance	149,265	15,000	164,265	5,075	169,340
2	Budgeted investment income	1,160	311	1,471	194	1,665
3	Actual investment income	818	312	1,130	196	1,326
4	surplus/(deficit) (3) - (2)	(342)	1	(341)	2	(339)
5	Annualised rate of return	1.10%	4.16%	1.38%	7.72%	1.57%

	Vale	Treasury investments £000	Property investment £000	Overall total £000
1	Average investment balance	73,370	8,442	81,812
2	Budgeted investment income	225	225	450
3	Actual investment income	400	323	723
4	surplus/(deficit) (3) - (2)	175	98	273
5	Annualised rate of return	1.09%	5.33%	1.77%

For property, the balance shown is the fair value of investment properties as at 31 March 2018.