

Council Agenda



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Summons to attend a meeting of Council

to be held on Wednesday 10 February 2021 at 7.00 pm
As a Virtual Meeting

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "M Reed".

Margaret Reed
Head of Legal and Democratic

To watch this virtual meeting, follow this link to the council's YouTube channel:
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCTj2pCic8vzucpzlaSWE3UQ>

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Agenda

Open to the public including the press

1. Apologies for absence

To record apologies for absence.

2. Minutes

(Pages 10 - 15)

To adopt and sign as a correct record the Council minutes of the meeting held on 9 December 2020.

3. Declarations of disclosable pecuniary interest

To receive any declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests in respect of items on the agenda for this meeting.

4. Urgent business and chair's announcements

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

5. Public participation

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

6. Petitions

To receive any petitions from the public.

7. Treasury management and investment strategy 2021/22

(Pages 16 - 54)

Cabinet, at its meeting on 5 February 2021, will consider a report on the council's treasury management and investment strategy for 2021/22.

The Joint Audit and Governance Committee considered the report at its meeting on 26 January 2021 and had not recommended any adjustments to the strategy.

The committee resolved to recommend Cabinet to approve the treasury management strategy, the prudential indicators and limits for 2021/22 to 2023/24 and the annual investment strategy 2021/22 as set out in the report.

The report of the interim head of finance, which Cabinet will consider on 5 February

2021, is attached.

The recommendations of Cabinet will be circulated to all councillors following the Cabinet meeting.

8. Capital strategy 2021/22 to 2030/31

(Pages 55 - 68)

Cabinet, at its meeting on 5 February 2021, will consider a report on the capital strategy for 2021/22 to 2030/31.

The report of the interim head of finance, which Cabinet will consider on 5 February 2021, is attached.

The recommendations of Cabinet will be circulated to all councillors following the Cabinet meeting.

9. Revenue budget 2021/22 and capital programme to 2025/26

Cabinet, at its meeting on 5 February 2021, will consider a report on the draft revenue budget 2021/22, and the capital programme to 2025/26.

The report of the interim head of finance, which Cabinet will consider on 5 February 2021, will be circulated to all councillors.

The recommendations of Cabinet will be circulated to all councillors following the Cabinet meeting.

The Scrutiny Committee will consider this report at its meeting on 8 February 2021. Any views will be reported to Council.

10. Council tax 2021/22

To consider the report of the interim head of finance on the setting of the council tax for the 2021/22 financial year - report to follow.

11. Review of Joint Statement of Licensing Policy

(Pages 69 - 115)

At its meeting on 28 January 2021, the Licensing Acts Committee considered the report of the Head of Housing and Environment. This proposed a statement of licensing policy, jointly developed with South Oxfordshire District Council. A copy of the report of the Head of Housing and Environment considered by the Licensing Acts Committee and the draft policy agreed for recommendation to Council is attached.

Recommendations to Council: to

1. authorise the Head of Housing and Environment to make minor editorial changes to the Joint Statement of Licensing Policy, and
2. adopt the proposed Joint Statement of Licensing Policy with effect from 12 February

2021.

12. Pay policy statement 2021/22

(Pages 116 - 120)

To consider the report of the head of corporate services on the adoption of a pay policy statement to meet the requirements of the Localism Act - attached.

13. Councillors' allowances scheme

(Pages 121 - 152)

To consider the report of the head of legal and democratic, and the recommendations of the Joint Independent Remuneration Panel, on a revised councillors' allowances scheme to run from 1 April 2021 - attached.

14. Progress on approved council motions

(Pages 153 - 169)

To note progress on the approved Council motions – attached.

15. Update on Oxfordshire Growth Board

To receive an update on the Oxfordshire Growth Board from Councillor Neil Fawcett, Cabinet member for strategic partnerships and place.

16. Report of the leader of the council

1. To receive the report of the leader of the council.
2. Urgent cabinet decisions

In accordance with the Scrutiny Committee Procedure Rules, a Cabinet or Cabinet member decision can be taken as a matter of urgency, if any delay by the call in process would seriously prejudice the council's or the public's interest or that the decision cannot reasonably be deferred. Treating the decision as a matter of urgency must be agreed by the chair of the Scrutiny Committee and must be reported to Council, together with the reasons for urgency.

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

Additional Restrictions Grant – Round 2

On 20 January 2021, Councillor Bethia Thomas, Cabinet member for Community Engagement, took a decision to approve the Vale of White Horse District Council's Additional Restrictions Grant Scheme Round 2 and authorise the interim head of development and regeneration, in consultation with the interim Head of Finance to award grants.

The chair of the Scrutiny Committee agreed to waive call in to allow the grants to be awarded immediately and during the national lockdown period of 5 January to 15 February 2021.

17. Questions on notice

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

1. Question from Councillor Eric Batts to Councillor Catherine Webber, Cabinet member for Climate Emergency and Environment.

Whilst I am sure the cabinet member for Climate Emergency and the Environment will agree with me that the suspension of the garden collection service beyond the usual Christmas period due to staff sickness has been very unfortunate, we wish all the Biffa staff a speedy recovery. However, this a significant inconvenience to the residents of the Vale who avail themselves and may I add, pay for this service. Could the Cabinet member please advise how many households pay for this service and are impacted by the suspension, and what the income from this service has been for the first three quarters of the current financial year?

2. Question from Councillor Nathan Boyd to Councillor Emily Smith, Leader of the council

We note with interest the flurry of letter writing to government and various local bodies to try and influence policies and represent our residents. With the push for transparency and the Corporate Plan focus on this matter, could the Leader please check and confirm by listing out these letters over the last three months to ensure that we have been made aware of all letters of influence and requests that have been sent by this administration either as Leader, Deputy Leader or by our Chief Executive on behalf of the Council that we should be aware of, and any responses received?

3. Question from Councillor Matthew Barber to Councillor Emily Smith, Leader of the council

Given the recent press coverage of the proposed merger of the Vale of White Horse with South Oxfordshire district councils, can the Leader confirm whether she supports such a move and if so how she considers such a merger would improve the financial position of the councils in Southern Oxfordshire?"

4. Question from Councillor Andy Foulsham, to Councillor Helen Pighills, Cabinet member for Healthy Communities

Following the governments' mishandling of Free School Meals for children over Christmas, and then the national coverage of poor-quality Free Schools Meals being provided during lockdown, our communities, town and parish councils have responded generously. But what is being done by this council to ensure children and their families in the Vale of White Horse have enough food as the Covid pandemic continues?

5. Question from Councillor David Grant to Councillor Judy Roberts, Cabinet member for Development and Infrastructure

As a councillor in the Western Vale, I am aware of the consequences of the promises made by the previous administration to allocate S106 monies to the now defunct Wessex Leisure Centre Scheme. Funds that were generated from major developments in Faringdon, Great Coxwell, and other areas close by, were directed to help construct a facility in Grove that our residents would never realistically use.

Now we know there was never enough money to build the grandiose £18.8 million Wessex Leisure Centre at Grove proposed by the previous administration, what reassurance can the Cabinet member give to the town and parish councils in the Faringdon area that appropriate funds previously earmarked for the Wessex project will now be used for community infrastructure in the Faringdon area? And will ward members and key local stakeholders be consulted about what projects would benefit local communities best, giving them the facilities that they deserve?

6. Question from Councillor Bob Johnston to Councillor Catherine Webber, Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency and the Environment

The Climate and Ecological Emergency (CEE) Bill being proposed by cross Party Members of Parliament and supported by many Vale residents reminds us that as well as a climate crisis we also face an ecological crisis. Could the Cabinet member explain what action this council is taking to protect our local wildlife and increase biodiversity around the Vale? And how can we work with our neighbouring authorities and MPs to make sure that CEE Bill is supported and results in more urgent action at every level of government?

7. Question from Councillor Richard Webber to Councillor Andy Crawford, Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Assets

The budget before us tonight shows a further reduction in projected government financial support to this council accumulating to more than £14.5 million over the five years of our Medium Term Financial Plan, a fall of 62%. The Council is only allowed by Government to increase Council Tax by 2% per annum which if taken in full will see council tax revenue increase by only approximately £400,000 per annum over the five years.

Vale of White Horse District Council is clearly far from unique in finding itself in this financial quandary. What steps is this Council taking to explain to Government the consequences of their policy decisions and persuade them to both adequately and fairly fund local councils who not only deliver vital services all year round but which have played a major part in assisting the Government in dealing with the ongoing COVID 19 pandemic?

8. Question from Jenny Hannaby to Councillor Emily Smith, Leader of the council

In July 2020, after the first wave of the Covid-19 pandemic, this council resolved to “ask the Chair of the Joint Health and Overview Scrutiny Committee of Oxfordshire County Council to convene a meeting with the aim of setting up a rapid and transparent Task

Force to analyse and ascertain the reasons for the observed excess deaths and infection rates in Oxfordshire's care homes during the previous three months". What was the response to the Leader's letter on our behalf and what action has been taken in response to our request?

18. Motions on notice

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

A. Motion proposed by Councillor Nathan Boyd, seconded by Councillor Elaine Ware.

This Council notes:

1. The recent endorsement of the "Twenty is Plenty" campaign by Oxfordshire County Council in its role as Highways Authority which means all new residential roads will have a 20 mph speed limit.
2. The evidence that introduction of 20mph limits even without formal enforcement results in much safer speed profiles and this is particularly beneficial in the vicinity of schools, community hubs and care facilities.

This Council believes that as the Local Planning Authority we could look to facilitate the campaign by designing in a 20 Mph speed limit policy for new developments via the emerging local plan.

The Council further believes that there may be a role for a "best practice guide" and case studies for parish Councils to help them facilitate 20mph limits where there is local demand.

Council requests officers to prepare a report for the Scrutiny Committee on the practical implications.

B. Motion to be proposed by Councillor Paul Barrow, seconded by Councillor Richard Webber

The flooding in Oxfordshire over Christmas served as yet another reminder of the importance of flood defences and effective road-side drainage as climate change makes flood events more common and more extreme. As well as planning policy needed to take increasing flood risk seriously, it is vital that the Environment Agency are properly funded to help them protect communities and the local economy from the devastating impact of flooding.

Council notes:

- The excellent partnership work between this council, the Environment Agency and other partners on the Oxford Flood Alleviation Scheme which will protect South Hinksey, Kennington and North Hinksey as well as Oxford City once built.
- There is a Flood Alleviation Scheme designed to protect parts of Abingdon around the River Ock that the Environment Agency believe will protect the Town. This scheme is unfunded.
- That the likelihood and severity of flooding on the scale of what Abingdon experienced in

2007 and South Hinksey experienced in 2014 is increasingly likely.

- The impact of flooding on our communities can be devastating – for residents personally affected, financially in the damage caused to property, and the impact on our electricity and transport infrastructure which has a knock-on impact for businesses and the local economy.
- The financial constraints that limit infrastructure maintenance by Oxfordshire County Council, such as clearing gullies once every three years and adopting a reactive approach to flooding.

Council asks the Leader to:

- Write to the Secretary of State for DEFRA and the Chief Secretary to the Treasury asking for the Environment Agency funding for flood alleviation schemes to be increased significantly and for the Abingdon Flood Alleviation Scheme specifically to be funded as part of the government's next budget round.
- Continue to work through our partnerships, such as the Growth Board and OxLEP, to highlight the importance of flood alleviation in our district and action to protect residents and businesses.
- Write to Oxfordshire County Council to encourage the development of a rational, comprehensive and cost-effective management plan for maintenance of roadside gullies and drainage, liaising with landowners to clear important drainage ditches and involving increased funding.

C. Motion to be proposed by Councillor Jenny Hannaby, seconded by Councillor Ron Batstone

Council notes that the Wessex Leisure Centre project was put on hold in October 2018 at a point when it was clear that the total of Section 106 Developer contributions already collected and those to be received in the future fell very significantly short of the amount required to fund the project. Council is also aware that the current restrictions imposed by the COVID 19 pandemic and the unknown potential implications of the need to maintain social distancing and other measures may impact the nature of leisure facilities for the foreseeable future. However, recognising that earmarked funds are and will become available this Council:

1. Asks officers to initiate early engagement with residents and stakeholders in the Grove and Wantage area to inform the best use of the S106 leisure funds generated locally that were previously allocated to the ill-fated Wessex Leisure Centre.

2. As part of this work, asks officers in its infrastructure, policy and legal teams to disentangle these S106 agreements and in doing so acknowledge that it may then be necessary to consult further with other local communities about what recreation and leisure facilities are required in the areas that generated some of those S106 contributions.

3. Notes that the new and more flexible CIL Spending Strategy adopted by Cabinet reinforces this Council's intention to use CIL developer contributions to pay for community infrastructure, including for leisure provision, in a way that assists the delivery of larger projects to the benefit of the whole community.

4. Enthusiastically supports the recent changes to the Vale's CIL Charging Strategy which will see a near doubling of CIL infrastructure funding to this District over the life of

the Local Plan.

5. Supports the prioritisation work on the Vale's Active Communities Strategy to inform how best to use S106, CIL and other funding to provide recreation facilities and opportunities for communities across the district.

19. Exclusion of the public

To consider whether to exclude members of the press and public from the meeting for the following item of business under 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 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.

20. Revenue budget 2021/22 and capital programme to 2025/26

The confidential appendix A 6 to the revenue budget 2021/22 item (agenda item 9) will be circulated to all councillors.