

Agenda



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Date: 8 February 2024
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A meeting of the Cabinet

will be held on Friday 16 February 2024 at 10.30 am
Meeting Room 1, Abbey House, Abbey Close, Abingdon, OX14 3JE

To watch this virtual meeting, follow this link to the council's [YouTube channel](#).

Cabinet Members:

Councillors

Bethia Thomas (Chair)	Lucy Edwards
Mark Coleman (Vice-Chair)	Neil Fawcett
Sue Caul	Andy Foulsham
Andy Crawford	Diana Lugova
Debra Dewhurst	Helen Pighills

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Vivien Williams,
Head of Legal and Democratic (Interim)

Agenda

Open to the Public including the Press

1. Apologies for absence

To record apologies for absence.

2. Minutes

(Pages 6 - 14)

To adopt and sign as correct records the minutes of the Cabinet meetings held on 1 and 19 December 2023.

3. Declarations of interests

To receive declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests, other registrable interests and non-registrable interests or any conflicts of interest in respect of items on the agenda for this meeting.

4. Urgent business and chair's announcements

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

5. Public participation

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

6. Recommendations and updates from other committees

To consider any recommendations to Cabinet from other committees.

7. Motion referred by Council

The following motion was passed by Council on 13 December 2023, which asks Cabinet to take action as set out below:

“This Council has already made action on Climate Change a priority, in the 2020-2024 Corporate Plan and with the declaration of a Climate Emergency in February 2019. As many other local councils have recognised, the climate emergency is intertwined with a crisis in nature and this council has shown a strong commitment already to Nature Recovery in existing planning policy on Biodiversity Net Gain, and in motions passed by the council, for example the recent motion on the treatment of sewage in the district.

Council acknowledges that:

- Our societies and economies are intimately linked with and depend on biodiversity and nature. The natural world is essential for the provision of nutritious food (with soil and pollinators having a vital role), clean water, clean air, medicines, and protection from extreme weather, as well as being our source of energy and raw materials.
- The State of Nature 2023 report^[1] shows a continuing decline in the UK's wildlife. The UK, like most other countries worldwide, has seen significant loss of its plants, animals and fungi. The UK is now one of the most nature-depleted countries on Earth.

¹[1] https://stateofnature.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/TP25999-State-of-Nature-main-report_2023_FULL-DOC-v12.pdf

- In June 2023, a Thames Valley Environmental Record Centre Study commissioned by our Council reported that more grassland had been lost in Vale of White Horse and South Oxfordshire than across other parts of Oxfordshire and England.
- Actions to restore nature and biodiversity, as well as being vital for their own sake, often have an important co-benefit of storing carbon, so help to address climate change.
- The Environment Act (2021) puts the onus on local authorities to take responsibility for nature through Local Nature Recovery Strategies and the Biodiversity Duty
- Our residents have made it clear through their responses to the May 2022 Joint Local Plan Issues Consultation that they believe protecting and restoring our natural environment should be a very high priority.
- A 2020 review from Public Health England^{2[2]} found that improving access to green space has health and well-being benefits and can help local authorities to address health and well-being issues, climate change and inequalities in their local area.

Council resolves to:

1. Ask Cabinet to ensure that addressing the climate and ecological emergencies and nature recovery remain strategic priorities for planning policies and design guides for new development through proposals in the Joint Local Plan (JLP), whilst seeking to support the principle of increasing equality of access for people to natural, green spaces.
2. Ask Cabinet to consider proposing that nature recovery has equal priority with climate change as headline themes for the Vale of White Horse District Council Corporate Plan, 2024 – 2028.
3. Ask Cabinet to consider extending the remit of CEAC to support Cabinet in addressing the twin priorities of Climate Change and Nature Recovery.
4. Ask Cabinet to consider support for a higher than nationally set level of Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) through the JLP and work with partners to support effective local use of any BNG offsetting arising from development in the Vale of White Horse.
5. Ask cabinet to consider and propose measurable targets and standards for biodiversity increase within our own Council's operations and land holdings, in the area managed for nature and in species diversity, seeking also to increase community engagement.
6. Support the work of the Cabinet Member for Climate Action and the Environment in engaging with partners and local charities and environmental organisations in supporting nature recovery and in opposing damage, such as that caused by sewage spills and other pollution incidents that damage nature in our district.
7. Work pro-actively with partners to develop and to support the production of a Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Oxfordshire.
8. Look for opportunities to extend partnership with local charities and environmental organisations to deliver nature recovery in Vale of White Horse.
9. Seek to identify further habitat bank sites to build on the success of the Duxford Old River project and support new opportunities for landowners to

^{2[2]}

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/904439/Improving_access_to Greenspace_2020_review.pdf

- diversify their income streams and deliver nature recovery.
10. Ask Cabinet to consider the Council becoming a responsible body for Conservation Covenants as a possible route to securing biodiversity net gain.
 11. Where relevant, continue to include advocating for nature and ecological diversity in our responses as consultee to major infrastructure projects.
 12. Ask officers to continue to ensure that climate action and ecological initiatives are embedded within all council work areas.”

Cabinet is asked to receive the motion and note that officers are working on implementing the actions; officers will report back in due course.

8. Climate Action Fund - Policy and Guidance

(Pages 15 - 25)

To consider the head of policy and programmes' report.

9. Introduction of a garden waste permit scheme

(Pages 26 - 36)

To consider the report of the head of corporate services and the head of housing and environment.

10. Future Direction of The Beacon, Wantage

(Pages 37 - 62)

To consider the head of development and corporate landlord's report.

11. Treasury Management 2023/24 Mid-Year Monitoring Report

(Pages 63 - 76)

To consider the head of finance's report.

12. Treasury Management and Investment Strategy 2024/25

(Pages 77 - 114)

To consider the head of finance's report.

13. Capital Strategy 2024/25 to 2033/34

(Pages 115 - 138)

To consider the head of finance's report.

14. Revenue Budget 2024/25 and Capital Programme 2024/25 to 2028/29

(Pages 139 - 179)

To consider the head of finance's report.

15. Corporate Plan 2024 to 2028 Approach

(Pages 180 - 197)

To consider the head of policy and programmes' report.

16. Exclusion of the public, including the press

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

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

Exempt information under section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972

17. Future Direction of The Beacon, Wantage

(Pages 198 - 374)

To note the exempt appendices to the head of development and corporate landlord's report.