

Minutes

of a meeting of the

Council



held on Wednesday 6 October 2021 at 7.00 pm
at the First floor, 135 Eastern Avenue, Milton Park, Milton, OX14 4SB

Open to the public, including the press

Present:

Members: Councillors Margaret Crick (Chair), Jerry Avery, Ben Mabbett, Paul Barrow, Ron Batstone, Samantha Bowring, Nathan Boyd, Cheryl Briggs, Andy Cooke, Andrew Crawford, Eric de la Harpe, Andy Foulsham, Hayleigh Gascoigne, David Grant, Jenny Hannaby, Simon Howell, Alison Jenner, Diana Lugova, Sarah Medley, Patrick O'Leary, Helen Pighills, Judy Roberts, Janet Shelley, Emily Smith, Bethia Thomas, Max Thompson, Catherine Webber and Richard Webber

Councillors in attendance remotely (not eligible to vote): Matthew Barber, Eric Batts, Amos Duveen, Neil Fawcett, Debby Hallett, Bob Johnston, Mike Pighills, Val Shaw and Elaine Ware

Patrick Arran, Steven Corrigan and Mark Stone (all in person). Steve Culliford, Simon Hewings (attending remotely).

Co.33 Apologies for absence

None.

Co.34 Minutes

RESOLVED: to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 14 July 2021 as a correct record and agree that the Chair sign them as such.

Co.35 Declarations of disclosable pecuniary interest

None.

Co.36 Urgent business and chair's announcements

The Chair provided general housekeeping advice. She reported that she, together with the council's Cycling Champion, Councillor de la Harpe, had attended the Women's Tour cycling race (Oxfordshire stage).

Co.37 Public participation

No members of the public had registered to address Council.

Co.38 Petitions

None.

Co.39 Making the Appleton with Eaton Development Plan

Council considered the recommendation of Councillor Hallett, Cabinet member for Corporate Services and Transformation, made on 20 September 2021, to make the Appleton with Eaton Neighbourhood Development Plan part of the development plan for Vale.

RESOLVED:

1. To make the Appleton with Eaton Development Plan so that it continues to be part of the council's development plan.
2. To authorise the head of planning, in consultation with the appropriate Cabinet member and in agreement with the Qualifying Body, the correction of any spelling, grammatical, typographical or factual errors together with any improvements from a presentational perspective.

Co.40 Making the Chilton Development Plan

Council considered the recommendation of Councillor Hallett, Cabinet member for Corporate Services and Transformation, made on 20 September 2021, to make the Chilton Neighbourhood Development Plan part of the development plan for Vale.

RESOLVED:

1. To make the Chilton Development Plan so that it continues to be part of the council's development plan.
2. To authorise the head of planning, in consultation with the appropriate Cabinet member and in agreement with the Qualifying Body, the correction of any spelling, grammatical, typographical or factual errors together with any improvements from a presentational perspective.

Co.41 Making the West Hanney Development Plan

Council considered the recommendation of Councillor Hallett, Cabinet member for Corporate Services and Transformation, made on 20 September 2021, to make the West Hanney Development Plan part of the development plan for Vale.

RESOLVED:

1. To make the West Hanney Development Plan so that it continues to be part of the council's development plan.
2. To authorise the head of planning, in consultation with the appropriate Cabinet member and in agreement with the Qualifying Body, the correction of any spelling, grammatical, typographical or factual errors together with any improvements from a presentational perspective.

Co.42 Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule - Adoption

Council considered Cabinet's recommendations, made at its meeting on 1 October 2021 on the council's Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule.

RESOLVED: to adopt the Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule (set out at Appendix 2 to the head of planning's report to Cabinet on 1 October 2021) and the Community Infrastructure Levy Instalments Policy (set out at Appendix 3 to the report), with an implementation date of 1 November 2021.

Co.43 Treasury Management Outturn 2020-21

Council considered Cabinet's recommendations, made at its meeting on 1 October 2021, on the outturn performance of the treasury management function for the financial year 2020/21. The Joint Audit and Governance Committee and Cabinet had considered the head of finance's report and were satisfied that the treasury activities had been carried out in accordance with the treasury management strategy and policy.

RESOLVED: to

1. approve the treasury management outturn report 2020/21; and
2. approve the actual 2020/21 prudential indicators within the report.

Co.44 Councillors' Allowances Scheme

Council considered the report of the Head of Legal and Democratic covering the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel on a revised councillors' allowances scheme.

Councillor Smith moved, and Councillor Boyd seconded, the following motion.

It is recommended that Council agrees:

1. The recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel set out in their report as to the levels of basic and special responsibility allowances as set out in paragraph 7 of the report, with the exception of the recommended minimum threshold on the payment of the special responsibility allowance to the Leader of the main opposition group which will be disapplied
2. That the revised scheme should apply from 1 April 2022
3. That a task group comprising a member from each group consider the proposed content of a Parental Leave Policy for elected members and report back to Council with its recommendations at its meeting in December 2021
4. To authorise the Head of Legal and Democratic to finalise and implement a councillors' allowances scheme based on the decision in 1 and the IRP report
5. To thank the members of the IRP for their work in reviewing the councillors' allowances scheme.

In supporting the motion councillors supported the view that there should be no lower threshold on the payment of the special responsibility allowance to the Leader of the

largest opposition group. The role, irrespective of the size of the group, provided an important scrutiny challenge and helped keep councillors engaged in the council business. A number of councillors welcomed the proposal to introduce a councillors' parental leave policy.

On being put to the vote the motion was agreed:

RESOLVED: to

1. approve the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel set out in their report as to the levels of basic and special responsibility allowances as set out in paragraph 7 of the report of the Head of Legal and Democratic to Council on 7 October 2021, with the exception of the recommended minimum threshold on the payment of the special responsibility allowance to the Leader of the main opposition group which will be disapplied;
2. apply the revised scheme from 1 April 2022;
3. establish a task group comprising a member from each group consider the proposed content of a Parental Leave Policy for elected members and report back to Council with its recommendations at its meeting in December 2021;
4. authorise the Head of Legal and Democratic to finalise and implement a councillors' allowances scheme based on the decision in 1 and the IRP report; and
5. thank the members of the IRP for their work in reviewing the councillors' allowances scheme.

Co.45 Report of the leader of the council

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

Co.46 Update on Oxfordshire Growth Board

Council received a written update report on the Oxfordshire Growth Board (now known as The Future Oxfordshire Partnership) from Councillor Fawcett, Cabinet member for Strategic Partnerships and Place.

Co.47 Questions on notice

A. Question from Councillor Bob Johnston to Councillor Neil Fawcett, Cabinet Member for Strategic Partnerships and Place

Could Cabinet Member Neil Fawcett update the Council and the public on the imminent roll out of the civic enforcement programme?

Written response

Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) are planning to start Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) on-street on 1 November 2021. Details can be found on OCC website <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/new-parking-enforcement>. In addition, OCC are conducting a major communications campaign to get the message across to users and we are pushing the messages on social media (as attached). Throughout the

process we have updated all councillors, town and parish councils and will continue to do so as we reach the start date.

When the scheme is introduced in November the initial approach will be advisory helping residents to get used to the new scheme and then enforcement officers will move to issuing penalty enforcement notices.

If councillors are aware of any places where enforcement of existing restrictions could create a serious problem, please report them using the form on the website. Please encourage town and parish councils to do the same.

The Vale of White Horse District Council is in the process of making minor amendments required to the car parking Orders to bring them in line with CPE. For example, the levels of fines will reduce slightly. This work will be completed early 2022 in the interim the Vale Council will continue to enforce our off-street pay and display car parks as we do at the moment.

Once enforcement starts there will be regular monitoring meetings of the scheme. We will be able to pick up on any problems that have been identified and raise any 'hot spots'.

As enforcement improves, and the inevitable knock on impact becomes clear, we expect to see more applications for new restrictions and/or residents parking zones. Again, it would be very useful if councillor and town and parish councils feed those requests in.

In the meantime, I would like to thank all the officers who have worked so hard on this scheme against a tight timetable.

B. Question from Councillor Eric de la Harpe to Councillor Catherine Webber, Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency and Environment

Could the Cabinet Member summarise the new Tree Policy for residents and explain how it may apply in cases where Vale residents wish to plant trees on land that is owned by South Oxfordshire District Council? In particular, the Rye Farm area on the south bank of the Thames at Abingdon.

Written response

The Policy for the planting of trees on Council Land is a joint policy across both South Oxfordshire District Council and Vale of White Horse District Council. As you can imagine, one of the key benefits of having a joint policy of this nature is that it also allows for a common application form and process for residents. As a result, residents of either district will be in a position to submit an application to plant trees on Council land in either district, in accordance with the policy. So, for example, those who want to plant on Rye Farm will be able to submit one application form even if the area to be planted crosses both districts.

The purpose of this policy is to outline how South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse District Councils will protect, plant and manage trees on the land they own, and how the community will be supported with their tree planting initiatives. It is an overarching document, setting out principles for planting trees (using the guide for planting trees), supporting biodiversity, caring for and managing trees on council land and encouraging communities to get involved and to benefit from beautiful trees.... trees which benefit our bodily health by providing cleaner air to breathe by sequestering carbon, but also our mental health. These principles will be used as a benchmark for future plans and policies developed by the Councils and will inform current projects that involve trees.

Written response

The Oxfordshire Community Land Trust has been in contact with the Regulator of Social Housing to respond to stage two enquiries about becoming a Registered Provider. We understand they anticipate hearing in early October if they have met the eligibility conditions and the registration criteria to enable formal registration to take place.

Supplementary question and answer

In response to Councillor Ware's supplementary question seeking confirmation of the anticipated completion date of the project, assuming the Trust's registration request is approved, Councillor Roberts responded that work on site should start in March but it was not possible to provide a completion date.

E. Question from Councillor Simon Howell to Councillor Crawford, Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Assets

Could the Cabinet Member advise Council of how many customers have cancelled their direct debits for the garden waste/brown bin service since the start of August, by each week to the end of September, and confirm how much lost annual income this equates to for the Council.

Written response

The total number of cancelled direct debits for the Council's Garden Waste scheme over the period in question was 223. The weekly breakdown is appended below. This amounts to 0.89% of our total 25,000 Garden Waste customers. Residents are not required to inform us of the reason for cancellation and it is therefore not possible to know why direct debits were cancelled. However, over any 8-week period it is likely that a proportion of our residents will move away. Research* shows that on average approximately 4.4% of people move house each year or 0.67% in an 8-week period and which, therefore, is the number the Council may reasonably expect to be cancelled for this reason.

The annualised net loss of income from 223 cancellations is slightly less than £3,000 when taking into account the reduced fees that the Council pays to our contractor for the service.

It may be also worth stressing that during this period this Council took the decision to hold in abeyance new customers wishing to join the service. These amounted to 143 prospective customers at the time of writing. The annualised net loss after taking into account these future customers – i.e. 223 less 143 = 80 - is less than £1,000.

Week commencing	Number of cancellations
02 August 2021	40
09 August 2021	47
16 August 2021	15
23 August 2021	33
30 August 2021	12
06 September 2021	22
13 September 2021	26
20 September 2021	20
27 September 2021	8
Total	223

*<https://www.gravenhill.co.uk/blog/how-often-do-we-move-house-and-why>
Vale of White Horse District Council – Council minutes

F. Question from Councillor Nathan Boyd to Councillor Thomas, Cabinet Member Community Engagement

Land banking is a pitfall in our complex planning system where developers buy and store a pipeline of land and obtain planning permission for that land, with no immediate intention to build the homes that have been approved. Could the Cabinet Member for Planning advise the current number of homes to which planning has been granted yet construction has yet to be started?

Written response

As at 1 April 2021 there were 8,461 homes (residential (Class C3) and residential accommodation and care (Class C2)) with planning permission waiting to be built. These were made up of 4,521 homes with outline planning permission, 1,289 homes with full permission on sites where construction had not started, and 2,651 homes not yet completed on sites where construction had started.

G. Question from Councillor Elaine Ware to Councillor Helen Pighills Cabinet Member for Healthy Communities

A meeting was held in March this year to discuss the Leisure Needs for Wantage, Faringdon and the surrounding area. The issues raised at this meeting were to form part of the formal consultation to identify leisure needs throughout the area and use of S106 funds. It has now been over six months and there has been no further update. Would the Cabinet Member inform Council of the current status of this project and when will a formal consultation take place?

Written response

While community engagement and consultation is not strictly my portfolio I am happy to respond to the question. The formal consultation with sporting groups has taken place and the consultation with town/parish councils is in progress. In March 2021 sporting groups in and around Wantage, Faringdon and Grove were invited to complete a survey asking about their view of the current and future needs for leisure facilities in the area. At the same time, we were hoping to consult with the affected towns and parish councils, but several of them felt this was rushed and wanted to delay the meetings until they could discuss it formally with all their members. This week the Faringdon Town Council and Great Coxwell Parish Council participated in a feedback session. Grove Parish Council will have their feedback session on Tuesday 19th October. Officers are waiting for Wantage Town Council to confirm a suitable day and time for their feedback session - likely to be the week commencing 18 October. Once the town/parish feedback sessions are complete, the final report will be expected within 2 weeks. In the meantime, officers have been working on the details of each agreement pertaining to the Wessex Leisure Centre to ensure smooth operations once the needs assessment is complete.

Supplementary question and answer

In response to Councillor Ware's supplementary question, Councillor Pighills confirmed that regular updates on progress would be provided and ward councillors kept informed of the meetings arranged with parish and town councils.

H. Question from Councillor Janet Shelley to Councillor Bethia Thomas Cabinet Member for Community Engagement

In early March a project commenced on improving planning enforcement. To date there has been no update of progress on this significant and urgent project. Meanwhile Ward Members are receiving numerous complaints about the lack of service and that the backlog is the prime excuse for no action. Would the Cabinet Member provide an update on the current situation including details of the number of staff employed in the Enforcement Team and the number of outstanding actions as at 30 September 2021.

Written response

We provided an update in July on the progress of the planning enforcement review, where stage one had been completed and we were moving into stage two, the action plan. We shared the action plan and mission statement with group leaders. All priority one actions have commenced and some of priority two actions have started. As part of the priority actions we have undertaken IT improvement, officer/councillor training on planning conditions and we are progressing the review of the Planning Enforcement Statement. A GDPR issue has delayed progress of the statement and our ability to undertake councillor consultation on a draft. However, we expect to be able to progress and report the statement to Cabinet, 3 December.

There are 16 actions, of which 2 have been completed, 12 are in progress and 2 have not yet started. There are 8 shared posts staff (7.36FTE) split 60:40 between South (4.36FTE) and Vale (3FTE).

Supplementary question and answer

In response to Councillor Shelley's supplementary question, Councillor Thomas undertook to provide an update on the completion of the project once she had been briefed by officers.

I. Question from Councillor Elaine Ware to Councillor Catherine Webber Cabinet Member Climate Emergency and Environment

Could the Cabinet Member advise Council:

- a. Having previously advised Council of the waiting list due to administrative issues, how many residents are still on the waiting list for the Garden Waste Service
- b. How many new customers for Garden Waste have been taken on but are still waiting for brown bins to be delivered.
- c. How many existing customers have cancelled their subscription to this garden waste service since the start of August.

Written response

My colleague the Cabinet Member for Finance and Assets has already, in response to the earlier question, outlined that we have 143 customers waiting to join the garden waste service, and indicated that, out of a customer base of

25,000, 223 customers have cancelled their subscription since the start of August. In answer to part b) - How many new customers for Garden Waste have been taken on but are still waiting for brown bins to be delivered - there are currently 6 deliveries that have yet to be made.

Supplementary question and answer

In response to Councillor Ware's supplementary question, Councillor Webber confirmed that she understood that the backlog of 2,000 caused by administrative issues had been cleared and that the 6 deliveries would be made within the next few days.

Co.48 Motions on notice

Council considered the following motions from councillors in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 38.

- (1) Councillor Catherine Webber moved, and Councillor Hayleigh Gascoigne seconded the motion as set out in the agenda at agenda item 16:

After debate and on being put to the vote the motion was agreed.

RESOLVED: that

Council notes:

Vale of White Horse District Council declared a Climate Emergency in February 2019, and since then has included the Climate Emergency in its Corporate Plan, set up a Climate Emergency Advisory Committee and declared its ambitions by setting its own carbon targets.

Our climate action targets are to become:

- carbon neutral within our own operations by 2030, with an aim for a 75 per cent reduction in carbon emissions in our own operations by 2025
- a carbon neutral district by 2045, with an aim for a 75 per cent reduction in carbon emissions in the district by 2030

UK100 is a network of highly ambitious local government leaders, which seeks to devise and implement plans for the transition to clean energy that are ambitious, cost effective and take the public and business with them.

It supports decision-makers in UK towns, cities and counties in their transition to Net Zero. It is the only network for UK local leaders focused solely on climate, clean energy and clean air policy.

Over 100 councils have already joined this group and taken the pledge to reach net zero by 2030 for all council owned assets and wider by 2045. By working together with other councils, we are fulfilling one of the corporate plan projects of partnership, and together we show greater strength.

The Climate Emergency is something that affects not just the residents in our council area, but the whole country, and in fact the whole world.

We will need to work together and learn from each other if we are to find workable solutions for tackling Climate Change.

We will have the best chance of meeting our carbon targets by being part of a wider community, sharing knowledge with partners who face similar issues, by translating ambitions into concrete actions.

Council resolves to become a member of the UK:100 Network, which requires the Council to:

- reaffirm our commitment to council operations to become carbon neutral by 2030 and become a carbon neutral district by 2045
- report our carbon emissions annually
- commit to limiting the use of offsets, and if used, to be as local as possible
- sign up to the UK:100 Pledge www.uk100.org/membership

(2) Councillor Samantha Bowring moved, and Councillor Bethia Thomas seconded the motion as set out in the agenda at agenda item 16:

After debate and on being put to the vote the motion was agreed.

RESOLVED: that

In March 2020, as we were faced with the economic fallout from the pandemic, the Government did the right thing and increased Universal Credit and Working Tax Credit by £20 a week.

Council notes that this £20 a week payment is now to be cut, coming into effect for families on Universal Credit from 6 October. This cut will mean the biggest overnight cut to the basic rate of social security since the modern welfare state began, more than 70 years ago.

According to analysis by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 21% of all working-age families will experience a £1,040-a-year cut to their incomes from this week.

Many of the same families will be seeing an increase in National Insurance costs. Lower income households spend more of their income on basic essentials such as food and utilities, and the cost of these is currently rising fast.

The Government says it wants to support people back into work as we emerge from the crisis, but working families make up around 60% of families who will be affected.

Council acknowledges the concerns raised by local and national charities (including as Elmore, Citizens Advice Bureau and the Joseph Rowntree Foundation) about the significantly negative impact this cut will have on the financial security and well being of those effected in our district.

Council deplores the decision of the Government to remove the 'temporary' uplift in Universal Credit which will directly impact at least 5,248* families in the Vale of White Horse district.

Council reiterates its corporate plan commitment to support vulnerable members of our community and resolves to ask the Leader to write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (copied to our local MPs) expressing its grave concern about the impact on families within the Vale and to request that the decision to cut the Universal Credit uplift be reversed, and that the uplift be incorporated permanently into Universal Credit.

*The total number of households on Universal Credit as of May 2021 is 6,200; of which 5,248, are in payment. Stats from GOV.UK.

Co.49 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 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.

Co.50 Office Accommodation Inter Authority Agreement

Council considered Cabinet's recommendation, made at its meeting on 1 October 2021, on the inter authority agreement between Vale of White Horse District Council and South Oxfordshire District Council in respect of a new office building.

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

For	Against	Abstentions
Councillors	Councillors	Councillors
Jerry Avery		Nathan Boyd
Paul Barrow		Simon Howell
Ron Batstone		Ben Mabbett
Samantha Bowring		Janet Shelley
Cheryl Briggs		
Andy Cooke		
Andrew Crawford		
Margaret Crick		
Eric de la Harpe		
Andy Foulsham		
Hayleigh Gascoigne		
David Grant		
Jenny Hannaby		
Alison Jenner		
Diana Lugova		
Sarah Medley		
Patrick O'Leary		
Helen Pighills		
Judy Roberts		
Emily Smith		
Bethia Thomas		
Max Thompson		
Catherine Webber		
Richard Webber		
Total: 24	Total: 0	Total: 5

Council agreed Cabinet's recommendation to include a budget in the capital programme for Vale of White Horse District Council's share of the fit-out costs.

The meeting closed at 9.00pm