

WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the
WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL
held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Woodgreen,
Witney, on Wednesday 22 January 2020 at 2:00pm

PRESENT

Councillors: Harry Eaglestone (Chairman), Jake Acock, Alaa Al-Yousuf, Luci Ashbourne, Andrew Beaney, Richard Bishop, Rosa Bolger, Jill Bull, Laetisia Carter, Louise Chapman, Nathalie Chapple, Andrew Coles, Owen Collins, Julian Cooper, Derek Cotterill, Suzi Coul, Maxine Crossland, Marilyn Davies, Duncan Enright, Hilary Fenton, Ted Fenton, Steve Good, Andy Graham, Jeff Haine, David Harvey, Gill Hill, David Jackson, Ed James, Liz Leffman, Nick Leverton, Dan Levy, Norman MacRae MBE, Martin McBride, Michele Mead, James Mills, Toby Morris, Neil Owen, Elizabeth Poskitt, Alex Postan, Carl Rylett, Geoff Saul, Harry St John and Ben Woodruff.

46. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 23 October 2019 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

47. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Joy Aitman, Mike Cahill, Nigel Colston, Jane Doughty, Richard Langridge and Kieran Mullins.

48. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Harvey declared an interest in Agenda Item 20 – Sealing of Documents because he was a tenant of Newman Court.

Councillor Cooper declared an interest in relation to the budget because he was a member of the Oxfordshire pension fund.

49. RECEIPT OF ANNOUNCEMENTS

49.1 Former Councillor Tom Smith

The Chairman announced the recent passing of former Councillor Tom Smith who had been elected to represent Minster Lovell in May 1980 and served in that capacity for 20 years. The Chairman gave a full account of the committees and chairmanships Councillor Smith had held and Members stood in silence to remember his service and to acknowledge his passing.

49.2 Welcome to Jan Britton, Publica Managing Director

The Chairman welcomed Jan Britton, the new Managing Director of Publica to the meeting and suggested that any Members who had not yet had the opportunity to meet Mr Britton could take the opportunity after the meeting.

49.3 Oxfordshire Growth Board

The Leader thanked those Members who had attended the Growth Board workshop the previous week, which had given an oversight of the work of the Board and the Oxford and Cambridge Arc. He advised that he would be attending a meeting of the Board the following week where the initial findings of the recent review would be discussed. In addition, he would be attending South East England Councils meeting on behalf of West

Oxfordshire, discussing Digital Infrastructure for Oxfordshire, and a meeting of Oxford and Cambridge Arc Leaders.

In response, Councillor Poskitt requested that the Leader circulated a brief resume after the Growth Board meeting, updating Members on the work being done.

The Leader explained that the review had come about as a result of similar comments made and the workshop had been organised to provide Members with this information as stated above.

49.4 'Scrap Fly Tipping' campaign

Councillor MacRae announced that the Council would be launching a 'Scrap Fly Tipping' campaign towards the middle of February to highlight and educate people about the dangers and repercussions of fly tipping.

49.5 Multi-Use Play Park, Madley Park

Councillor Mead provided an update on the multi-use play park at Madley Park which it was hoped would be open in around two months' time, weather permitting.

50. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE EXECUTIVE

The Council considered the report of the Head of Democratic Services setting out the recommendations made by the Cabinet at its meetings held on 18 December 2019 and 15 January 2020, and noted that the recommendation regarding the adoption of the Council Plan 2020-2024 would be considered as a separate agenda item later in this meeting.

The Leader proposed the recommendations, commending the proposal to continue to finance the work by Southill Solar. This was seconded by Councillor Morris, who highlighted the fact that recommendations b) and c) would directly benefit the residents of West Oxfordshire.

Councillor Bolger proposed an amendment that recommendation c) relating to Council Tax exemption for care leavers be amended to extend the qualifying age for assistance to 25. She felt that the age specified by the Children's Society should be given consideration and queried how this would be means tested. The amendment was seconded by Councillor Cooper.

In response, the Leader expressed his disappointment that Councillor Bolger had not raised these concerns when the item had been considered by Cabinet in December. He emphasised that this was a County wide proposal, involving six Principal Councils and Thames Valley Police, which had all worked together to develop the scheme. He highlighted that this example of county wide partnership working had built on the original motion submitted to Council.

A request was made for voting on the amendment to be recorded, and it was then put to the vote, with the voting being as follows.

For the amendment: Councillors Acock, Ashbourne, Bolger, Carter, Coles, Collins, Cooper, Davies, Enright, Graham, Jackson, Levy, Poskitt, Rylett and Saul.

Against the amendment: Councillors Al-Yousuf, Beaney, Bishop, Bull, Chapman, Cotterill, Coul, Crossland, Eaglestone, Hilary Fenton, Ted Fenton, Good, Haine, Harvey, Hill, James, Leverton, MacRae, McBride, Mead, Mills, Morris, Owen, Postan, St John and Woodruff

Abstentions: Councillors Chapple and Leffman.

There being 15 votes in favour and 26 against, with two abstentions, the amendment was **defeated**.

Councillor Chapman spoke to the original motion and encouraged Members to approve the scheme and start helping young people from April 2020. She felt this should not be a political issue and work needed to keep moving forwards with the potential to look at the age range in the future.

The substantive motion was then put to the vote, and a prior request was made for voting on the proposition to be recorded.

For the motion: Councillors Acock, Al-Yousuf, Ashbourne, Beaney, Bishop, Bolger, Bull, Carter, Chapman, Chapple, Coles, Collins, Cooper, Cotterill, Coul, Crossland, Davies, Eaglestone, Enright, Hilary Fenton, Ted Fenton, Good, Graham, Haine, Harvey, Hill, Jackson, James, Leffman, Leverton, Levy, MacRae, McBride, Mead, Mills, Morris, Owen, Poskitt, Postan, Rylett, Saul, St John and Woodruff

Against the motion: None.

Abstentions: None.

There being 43 votes in favour the proposition was **carried unanimously**.

RESOLVED: That the recommendations made by the Cabinet at its meetings held on 18 December 2019 and 15 January 2020 be approved in relation to:-

- a) Prosecution of Housing and Tenancy Fraud on behalf of Social Housing Providers (Minute No. CT/75(c)/2019/2020);
- b) Council Tax Support Scheme (Minute No. CT/78/2019/2020);
- c) Council Tax Exemption for Care Leavers (Minute No. CT/86/2019/2020);
- d) Household Duty of Care Offences – Setting the Fixed Penalty Notice Level (Minute No. CT/87/2019/2020)
- e) Budget 2020/2021 (Minute No. CT/89/2019/2020); and
- f) Loan Refinancing – Southill Community Energy (Southill Solar) – Capital Programme (Minute No. CT/91/2019/2020).

51. REPORTS OF THE CABINET AND THE COUNCIL'S COMMITTEES

The reports of the meetings of the Cabinet and the Council's Committees held between 7 November 2019 and 15 January 2020 were received.

51.1 Service Performance 2019/2020 – Quarter Two Minute No. E&S/49/2019/2020

Councillor Leffman asked if there was an update on staffing levels in the Planning Enforcement Team. Councillor Beaney advised that the latest information would be forwarded, and also referred to the special meeting of the Economic and Social Overview and Scrutiny Committee which would be considering staffing in both Planning Enforcement and Housing.

51.2 Committee Work Programme 2019/2020 Minute No. FMOS/48/25/2019/2020

Councillor Cooper requested an update on the latest position regarding the project to introduce Electric Vehicle Charging Points. Councillor Harvey advised that mini-tenders were due by 30 January 2020, and would be assessed on 31 January, with a report to be considered by Cabinet in February.

51.3 Budget 2020/2021

Minute No. EnvO&S/38/2019/2020

Councillor Ted Fenton asked if there was an update on recycling promotion and the possibility of vehicle messaging. Councillor MacRae advised that he had asked officers to investigate and report back.

51.4 Oxford & North Cotswold Train Services – Revised Timetable

Minute No. CAB/73.3/2019/2020

Councillor Acock highlighted the downgrading of train services in his Ward and elsewhere, and asked whether the Leader would write to the MP asking him to pursue the matter and promote the dualling of the Cotswold line.

Councillor Mills advised that this would be discussed at the Growth Board next week. He was supportive of improvements being made at Oxford station and would continue to make a case for improved rail services in West Oxfordshire.

51.5 Local Development Scheme Update

Minute No. CAB/85/2019/2020

Councillor Rylett advised that Members had recently undertaken a site visit to a Passivhaus development at Southmoor and queried whether the Council would be aiming to make the Garden Village carbon neutral. He also requested an update on the naming of the Garden Village. In response, Councillor Haine believed that zero carbon could not be demanded but assured Councillor Rylett that officers would be pushing for it as much as was possible and viable. Further to a comment from Councillor Leffman, he confirmed that he was happy to promote the desirability of appropriate legislation via the MP.

In relation to the naming of the Garden Village, Council Haine advised that it was still under consideration and that a report would be submitted to Cabinet in due course.

52. COUNCIL PLAN 2020-2024

The Council considered the report of the Chief Executive and the recommendation from the Cabinet meeting held on 15 January to adopt the draft Council Plan circulated with the report.

Councillor Mills proposed the adoption of the draft Plan, highlighting the themes as detailed in paragraph 2.7 of the report. He also endorsed the recommendation that authority be delegated to the Chief Executive to make any minor amendments, such as the inclusion of relevant photographs, in consultation with himself. This was seconded by Councillor Morris.

The majority of members welcomed the plan, which they felt reflected the discussions across all political groups and the views across the District. However, a number of topics were felt to be either missing or low on information in the Plan including social injustice, rural poverty and references to young people.

Councillor Acock felt that further detail could be provided on how the Council would be tackling mental health issues and what young people could expect the Council to do for them. In response, Councillor Mead reminded Members that Vision 2 related specifically to Healthy Towns and Villages and this included the issue of rural isolation.

Councillors were in agreement that the references and commitment to Climate Change in the plan should be welcomed and it was recognised that the older buildings in the District also needed to be looked at to find ways of making them more energy efficient.

In seconding the proposal, Councillor Morris thanked officers throughout the organisation for their work and input into the plan. He reminded Members that the document had been considered by each of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees, which he felt had allowed Councillors to take ownership of the content. This was felt to be the start of the journey towards making West Oxfordshire a better place to live and work.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the draft Council Plan 2020-2024 be approved; and
- (b) That the Chief Executive be authorised to make minor textual, typographical and image changes to the Plan prior to its publication, following consultation with the Leader of the Council.

53. CLIMATE ACTION FOR WEST OXFORDSHIRE

The Council considered the report of the Climate Change Manager, which set out a proposed framework and timescales for developing a Carbon Action Plan as the mechanism for delivering West Oxfordshire District Council's commitment to becoming carbon neutral by 2030.

The report also outlined a proposed framework and timescales for developing a Climate Change Strategy for West Oxfordshire, influencing change and driving forward Climate Action across the District working with partners and stakeholders including residents and community groups, planners and developers, land owners and businesses.

Councillor Harvey proposed the recommendations in the report and thanked the Climate Change Manager, other officers and the cross party Climate Change Working Group for their work. He felt that the issue had achieved rapid progression and all involved had responded to the challenge.

Councillor Harvey advised that there had been several meetings of the Working Group and that development and planning were fundamental. He reminded Members of a number of projects taking place including a project to plant saplings at Burford. He also referred to the section of the report which detailed the CO₂ emissions at leisure centres, and stated that government funding and backing were required to assist in what was necessary to address climate change. The proposal was seconded by Councillor MacRae.

Members queried the lack of a residents' panel as originally agreed and the frequency of Working Group reports being submitted to Council. Councillor Graham proposed an amendment to assert the formation of a panel of residents and require a report to each Council meeting. During discussion, it was noted that officers were developing the concept of the panel and that work was ongoing. With regard to the frequency of reporting back to Council, pCouncillor Harvey observed that there could be more than the suggested two per year, depending on progress and the need for decisions.

The amendment was put to the vote and was **defeated**.

Councillor MacRae thanked the report author and reminded Members that Climate Change was evolving rapidly. He noted the work that the Working Group had already undertaken and also referenced the Citizens Panel in Oxford, where the enthusiasm had been infectious.

Councillor Rylett assured Members that as a member of the Working Group, he would expedite the creation of the residents' panel.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the contents of the report and proposals to develop and publish: a Carbon Action Plan for the Council by August 2020 and a Climate Change Strategy for West Oxfordshire by February 2021, be noted; and
- (b) That the Council agrees to the proposed structure and way forward for delivering Climate Action for West Oxfordshire, including the continuation of the Climate Change Working Group and the biannual consideration of progress reports and recommendations from the Group, as referenced in paragraph 2.10.1 of the report.

(Councillor Woodruff left the meeting at this juncture)

54. NOTICE OF MOTION – TREE PLANTING

The Council considered the report of the Head of Democratic Services which considered the motion proposed by Councillor Postan and seconded by Councillor Harvey at the meeting of the Council held 31 July 2019. At that meeting it had been agreed to refer the motion to the Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee and Development Control Committee for consideration.

The report advised that having given consideration to the motion, Officers were doubtful that the desired objective could be achieved by way of a planning condition. However, efforts had been made to identify an appropriate mechanism by which to drive the request forward.

In June 2019, in considering a previous motion regarding climate change, the Council had established a Working Group to assist in the formulation of its plans to become carbon neutral by 2030 and to encourage others in the District to follow its example.

The Working Group had identified the development control process as one of the key ways in which to advance the Council's environmental objectives and expressed support for the production of a revitalised sustainability checklist. The Business Manager, Development Management, had suggested that inclusion of a request for additional tree planting could form part of this revised checklist.

It was envisaged that the Climate Change Action Group would become the principal forum for considering the development of a Carbon Action Plan for the Council and a wider reaching Climate Change Strategy and it was recommended that the Council agree that inclusion of a request for additional tree planting be incorporated within a revitalised sustainability checklist to be developed by that group.

Councillor Enright supported the recommendation in the report and queried whether GPS could be used to map the trees in the District, referring to a relevant Lord Lieutenant initiative. Councillor Mills was not certain of the details of the specific project but agreed to investigate.

Councillor Mills wholeheartedly supported the idea especially from a biodiversity viewpoint and he commended the offer of advice from the Wychwood project regarding the types of trees to be planted and assured Members that advice was being sought from a wide variety of organisations.

As the original proposer, Councillor Postan felt that was a huge variety of expertise to call on. He made reference to a complete aerial survey of the District and commended the attitude of the officers to assist with this request.

RESOLVED: That the Council agrees that inclusion of a request for additional tree planting be incorporated within a revitalised sustainability checklist.

55. NOTICE OF MOTION – EUROPEAN NATIONALS

The Council considered the report of the Head of Democratic Services which considered the motion proposed by Councillor Carl Rylett and seconded by Councillor Andy Graham at its meeting held 23 October 2019. The motion had been referred to the Economic and Social Overview and Scrutiny Committee for consideration prior to its determination.

Following consideration of the report of the Executive Director – Commissioning attached as an appendix to the report, the Economic and Social and Overview and Scrutiny Committee had resolved:-

- That the Council be recommended to adopt the Home Office advice and guidance for local authorities including a toolkit and recommendations contained therein.
- That a Working Party comprised of Councillors Ashbourne, Beaney, Leverton and Rylett be established to undertake an audit of what action the Council was taking and what was being done elsewhere.
- That the Council be recommended to request that the Leader of the Council writes to the Home Secretary seeking clarification and suggesting improvements to the European Settlement scheme.

Councillor Rylett introduced the report, and referred to the first meeting of the Working Party, which had taken place the previous week. It had been noted that whilst the Home Office Guidance was good, there was still more that could be done, in particular with harder to reach groups, and that further information and guidance from the Home Office was awaited.

Councillor Rylett then proposed the following:

- (a) That the Council adopts the Home Office advice and guidance for local authorities including a toolkit and recommendations contained therein;
- (b) That the Leader of the Council writes to EU citizens resident in the district giving advice on applying for Settled Status. This notice shall inform EU citizens of any potential consequences of not applying for the EU Settlement scheme;
- (c) That the Leader of the Council writes to the Home Secretary to seek assurances over the rights of EU Citizens and suggesting improvements for the European Settlement scheme, which include
 - supporting the provision of physical proof of Settled Status
 - seeking to improve the level of assistance provided to older and vulnerable citizens, including those who may have difficulty using digital applications
 - that during negotiations with the EU the UK Government will prioritise the confirmation of EU citizens' rights post-Brexit so as to reduce uncertainty and anxiety for those affected
 - ensuring that the authority set up to monitor EU Citizens' rights will be properly funded, truly independent and up and running on the first day after the UK leaves the transition period, and that it will be able to act rapidly and fairly when faced with complaints from EU citizens and their families
 - ensuring that the continuation of citizens' rights will be guaranteed throughout citizens' lifetimes
 - a review of charges and waivers for applications for British citizenship by EU citizens and their children

The proposition was seconded by Councillor Graham.

Councillor Morris advised that he supported the recommendations as put forward by the Economic & Social Overview & Scrutiny Committee and he felt it was important to

communicate with those individuals who were not on the electoral register. Councillor Ashbourne agreed with this statement, considering that the most vulnerable residents were unlikely to be registered voters on the electoral roll and encouraged Council to agree to the recommendations as laid out in the report. Councillor Rylett suggested that the second part of his amendment could be withdrawn but felt that the third part should be retained. On being put to the vote, the amendment was lost.

Councillor Morris therefore proposed the recommendations as outlined in the report and, on being seconded by Councillor Mills, this was put to the vote.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That Home Office advice and guidance for local authorities be adopted, including the toolkit and the recommendations contained therein; and
- (b) That the Leader of the Council writes to the Home Secretary seeking clarification and suggesting improvements to the European Settlement scheme.

56. NOTICE OF MOTION – LIVE STREAMING OF COUNCIL AND COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The Council considered the report of the Executive Director Commissioning, asking Members to consider the motion proposed by Councillor Jake Acock and seconded by Councillor Andy Graham at its meeting held 23 October 2019, and referred to the Finance and Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee for consideration prior to determination. The full text of the relevant draft minute of the meeting of the Finance and Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee held 27 November 2019 was attached as Annex 2 to the report.

Councillor Enright stated that this decision should have stated that the information be submitted back to the Committee in the first instance because it needed a fully costed plan.

Councillor Acock agreed that the issue should be referred back to Finance and Management, for full consideration and costings for live streaming and broadcasting of meetings from the Council Chamber and both of the committee rooms at the Woodgreen offices.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That further study was required on the various methods of recording available, location options and cost of installation;
- (b) That the meetings rooms to be included in the evidence gathering should be Committee Rooms 1 & 2 and the Council Chamber, and that feedback should be sought from other Councils which had installed systems, or were due to do so; and
- (c) That the Finance and Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee be requested to consider the costings and other information prior to further consideration by the Council.

57. NOTICE OF MOTION – RAW SEWAGE

The following motion had been received in the names of Councillors Norman MacRae and Steve Good, namely:-

“This Council calls on HM Government to ban the dumping of raw sewage into our rivers, with the ultimate aim of restoring our rivers to a state where we can safely swim in them and to protect their environment and biodiversity”.

Councillor MacRae proposed the motion and reminded Members of the problem areas across the District. He recognised that some success had been achieved at Finstock in resolving issues but the major issue related to untreated sewage entering the water courses. He reminded Members that the Council had no statutory powers in the matter.

The proposal was seconded by Councillor Good who stated that effluent was flowing into the Thames. He felt there was a danger that the District could be seen as an international embarrassment.

Councillor Postan saw the motion as the Council taking positive action because the agencies were not protecting residents or looking after their customers.

Councillor Rylett agreed that this was an unacceptable situation and the Council should write to the Secretary of State. He proposed an amendment to the motion to include designating areas of the river as specific bathing zones. This was seconded by Councillor Acock but on being put to the vote, the amendment was lost.

Members agreed that the situation was a disgrace and additional pressure needed to be put on the government to take notice. It was recognised that the recently held Water Day had raised a number of issues including the inadequate storage space at water treatment plants.

In summing up, Councillor MacRae reminded Members that the Council had no statutory powers other than some relating to public health.

On being put to the vote the motion was carried, and it was -

RESOLVED: That the Council calls on HM Government to ban the dumping of raw sewage into our rivers, with the ultimate aim of restoring our rivers to a state where we can safely swim in them and to protect their environment and biodiversity.

58. NOTICE OF MOTION – LOCAL ELECTRICITY BILL

The following motion had been received in the names of Councillors David Harvey and Harry St John, namely:-

“West Oxfordshire District Council offers support to the Local Electricity Bill and writes to organisers of the campaign for the Bill, Power for People, (at 8 Delancey Passage, Camden, London NW1 7NN or info@powerforpeople.org.uk) expressing this support”.

Councillor Leffman advised that she had visited the Power for People website which advised that the Bill had been submitted to Parliament in September 2018. Accordingly, she proposed an amendment to recognise it, i.e. the following additional text:

“In addition, in recognition of the fact that this bill failed in its passage through the last parliament, this Council agrees to write to our MP Robert Courts, in his capacity as Parliamentary Private Secretary to the Secretary of State for Environment, asking him to make every effort to revive this bill and bring it before the House of Commons during this parliamentary session”.

The amendment was seconded by Councillor Graham, and the proposer and seconder of the original motion agreed to incorporate it into the substantive motion.

Councillor Ted Fenton advised that members had received email correspondence from Power for People. The Bill had 150 Members supporting it and the proposal was for the bill to be taken back to Parliament shortly.

Councillor Bolger strongly supported the revised motion and welcomed co-operative schemes. She endorsed investing in the community and felt this was exactly the type of initiative on which the Council should be working together.

RESOLVED: That West Oxfordshire District Council offers support to the Local Electricity Bill and writes to organisers of the campaign for the Bill, Power for People, (at 8 Delancey Passage, Camden, London NW1 7NN or info@powerforpeople.org.uk) expressing this support. In addition, in recognition of the fact that this bill failed in its passage through the last parliament, this Council agrees to write to our MP Robert Courts, in his capacity as Parliamentary Private Secretary to the Secretary of State for Environment, asking him to make every effort to revive this bill and bring it before the House of Commons during this parliamentary session.

59. NOTICE OF MOTION – TREE COVER AND ONGOING MAINTENANCE

The following motion had been received in the names of Councillors Andy Graham and Nathalie Chapple, namely:-

“West Oxfordshire District Council recognises the benefits trees provide for the climate, air quality, wildlife, people’s well-being and flood management; commits to doubling tree cover within the local authority area by 2030, including through growing more trees and woods on council-owned land; and resolves to write to the appropriate Minister to request more funding for councils to increase tree cover and for ongoing maintenance”.

The Chairman advised that he would not be exercising his discretion for this motion to be debated at this meeting, and after it had been proposed and seconded he would propose that it was referred to the Climate Change Working Group for consideration and advice.

The motion was then proposed and seconded, and it was subsequently -

RESOLVED: That the motion having been duly proposed and seconded shall stand referred without discussion to the Climate Action Working Group, for consideration and advice.

(Councillor Leffman left the meeting at this point)

60. NOTICE OF MOTION – ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS

The following motion had been received in the names of Councillors Jake Acock and Andy Graham, namely:-

“West Oxfordshire District Council places great importance upon communications with councillors, whether that be sending out agendas for meetings or through regular email updates.

West Oxfordshire District Council also places great importance upon environmental credentials and cost-effective projects.

Therefore, this council resolves that we will no longer send paper copies of communications including agendas for all meetings and will issue every councillor with an iPad for council business.

This will allow the council to:

- a) have stronger greener credentials and help to tackle the climate crisis.*
- b) be more cost and staff efficient.*
- c) be more GDPR friendly.*

This council resolves that this will be added to the 2020 budget and that all councillors will be issued with an iPad by May 2020”.

The Leader asserted that it would have been preferable for this to have been raised at an Overview and Scrutiny Committee rather than being presented direct to Council.

The Chairman advised that he would not be exercising his discretion for this motion to be debated at this meeting, and after it had been proposed and seconded, he would propose

that it was referred to the Finance & Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee for consideration and advice.

The motion was then proposed and seconded. The proposer, Councillor Acock, emphasised the main reasons for the motion, and agreed that referral to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee was appropriate. In seconding, Councillor Graham stated that he had undertaken some research which he would make available.

It was then -

RESOLVED: That the motion having been duly proposed and seconded shall stand referred without discussion to the Finance and Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee, for consideration and advice.

61. NOTICE OF MOTION – OXFORD/CAMBRIDGE EXPRESSWAY

The following motion had been received in the names of Councillors Andy Graham and Dan Levy, namely:-

“West Oxfordshire District Council supports Oxfordshire County Council's decision passed in November that building the Oxford/Cambridge Expressway flies in the face of Oxfordshire's commitment to reduce the use of the car, an action which is necessary to tackle the climate change emergency, which local government, including Oxfordshire, has signed up to.

West Oxfordshire District Council does not support the building of the Expressway irrespective of which route is chosen.

This decision, if taken, should be communicated to Highways England and the Minister of Housing, Communities & Local Government forthwith.”

The Leader addressed Members and advised that he was ‘mainly in support’ of the motion. He reminded Members that this was a Highway’s England project and suggested that, for accuracy, the motion be amended to refer to the Secretary of State for Transport and not the Minister for Housing. The proposer and seconder agreed to incorporate this into the motion.

Councillor Coles supported the motion and raised concerns that the project would jeopardise meadows and woodland areas.

Councillor Ted Fenton agreed that Highways England were not supplying the necessary information, the project had not been properly planned and the build would be environmentally destructive.

Councillor Morris supported the motion as amended and recognised that the District needed better infrastructure, alternative options needed to be looked at but localised pollution and congestion needed to be reduced.

The proposer and seconder thanked Members for their support and the motion, with “Secretary of State for Transport” replacing “Minister of Housing, Communities & Local Government”, was **carried unanimously**.

62. NOTICE OF MOTION – CLIMATE ACTION BIODIVERSITY PLAN

The following motion had been received in the names of Councillors David Harvey and Norman MacRae, namely:-

“This Council tasks the Climate Action Working Group to come forward with the Climate Action Biodiversity plan to be presented to full council in due course.”

In proposing and seconding the motion, Councillors Harvey and MacRae both referred to the need for tree planting, but did not believe that a decision to aim to double the

amount of coverage by 2045 would be the best way forward. Consideration by the Climate Change Working Group was considered to be appropriate, as it was a forum which had the capacity to receive detailed advice and look into matters in depth.

Councillor Coles was supportive of the motion, but was nonetheless disappointed because he had highlighted the need for an updated Biodiversity Plan some time previously, and the reaction to that had not been as quick as he felt it should have been.

Councillor Graham proposed an amendment to replace “in due course” with “as a matter of urgency”, which was seconded by Councillor Chapple. Councillors Morris, Harvey and Mills spoke against the amendment prior to it being put to the vote, considering that it was clear to officers that this was regarded as important, and that its urgency was understood.

On being put to the vote, the amendment was **defeated**.

The motion was then put to the vote and was **carried unanimously**.

63. PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS 2020/2021

The Council considered the report of the Head of Democratic Services, which sought approval of a programme of meetings for the 2020/2021 civic year.

Councillor Cooper queried the dates for some of the Area Planning Sub-Committee meetings in the draft programme, and Councillor Haine undertook to respond to him.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Calendar of Meetings for 2020/2021 as set out in the Annex to the report be approved; and
- (b) That the times for the first meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees after the annual meeting of the Council be as set out in the Annex, but that each Committee be invited to consider the timing of its subsequent meetings during the year.

64. SEALING OF DOCUMENTS

The Council received and noted the report of the Head of Paid Service which gave details of documents numbered 11700 to 11724 sealed since its last meeting.

The meeting closed at 6.15 pm

CHAIRMAN