

## WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

At the Annual Meeting of the  
**WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**  
held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Woodgreen,  
Witney, on Wednesday 26 April 2017 at the conclusion of the Ordinary Meeting of the Council.

### PRESENT

Councillors: N A MacRae MBE (Chairman), Mrs M J Crossland (Vice Chairman), A J Adams, Mrs J C Baker, M A Barrett, A C Beaney, R J M Bishop, M Brennan, Mrs L C Carter, Mrs L J Chapman, A S Coles, J C Cooper, D A Cotterill, C Cottrell-Dormer, C G Dingwall, Mrs J M Doughty, H B Eaglestone, P Emery, Mrs E H N Fenton, E J Fenton, S J Good, J Haine, P J Handley, A D Harvey, Miss G R Hill, H J Howard, E H James, Ms E P R Leffman, Mrs L E C Little, R D J McFarlane MBE, J F Mills, T J Morris, K J Mullins, Dr E M E Poskitt, G Saul, T B Simcox, H E T St John and B J Woodruff.

#### 1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

By virtue of the provisions of the Local Government Act 1972, Mr MacRae took the Chair and invited nominations for the office of Chairman. It was:

**RESOLVED:** that Mr N A MacRae MBE be elected Chairman of the Council for the ensuing year.

The Chairman signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office and thanked Members for their support. Mr MacRae advised that he would continue to do his best to promote West Oxfordshire throughout the County and beyond.

#### 2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

The Chairman invited nominations for the office of Vice-Chairman.

**RESOLVED:** that Mrs M J Crossland be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Council for the ensuing year.

The Vice-Chairman signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office and thanked Members for their support. Mrs Crossland indicated that she was proud to continue to represent the Council which she considered to be amongst the best in the Country.

#### 3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors N G Colston, D S T Enright, A M Graham, P D Kelland, R A Langridge, A H K Postan, Mrs C E Reynolds and G H L Wall.

#### 4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest from Members or Officers relating to items to be considered at the meeting.

#### 5. RECEIPT OF ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no further announcements from the Chairman, Leader, Members of the Cabinet or the Head of Paid Service.

#### 6. PARTICIPATION OF THE PUBLIC

There were no submissions from members of the public under the provisions of the Council's Rules of Procedure.

## 7. APPOINTMENT OF EXECUTIVE MEMBERS

The Leader of the Council announced his appointment of the Deputy Leader and other Executive Members in accordance with Article 7.5 of the Constitution.

Mr Mills took the opportunity to thank Members and Officers for their support during the previous year which had been a particularly busy one for the Authority. He advised that he did not intend to make any changes to the composition of the Executive.

## 8. REVIEW OF MEMBER STRUCTURES AND DEMOCRATIC COSTS

The report of the Strategic Director and Head of Paid Service which sought Members' consideration of options for amending the Council's Committee structure and how to take this matter forward was received and considered.

Mr Mills reminded Members that this issue had been raised at the beginning of the previous municipal year when the initial intention had been to consider the matter in the autumn. However, external constraints had imposed significant demands upon Officers during the course of the year, not least upon the Head of Democratic Services in his role as Returning Officer. Members joined with Mr Mills in expressing their thanks and appreciation to Mr Butler and his team for their work on the Council's behalf.

Mr Mills acknowledged that there were strongly held views amongst Members on the issues set out in the report. In order to give all Members the opportunity to debate these issues and to express their views, he proposed that the report be referred to the Overview and Scrutiny Committees for further consideration.

The proposition was seconded by Mr Morris.

Mr Handley expressed his support for the recommendation, indicating that this was not a trivial matter but one that warranted in depth consideration. He suggested that the current scrutiny process demonstrated that West Oxfordshire was a living Council, prepared to debate relevant issues. Mr Handley noted that, whilst the County Council had reduced its formal scrutiny process, this had not resulted in any significant savings in terms of resources as issues that would have been addressed in that forum were now dealt with at Locality Meetings.

Mr Handley considered that it was important that meetings should be open to the public with scrutiny being conducted in a transparent and apolitical manner and questioned whether any significant financial savings would be made given that Officer time would be taken up in other forums. Mr Handley considered that the existing arrangements worked well and believed West Oxfordshire's current structure to be the best in Oxfordshire giving all Members the opportunity to get involved in the decision making process to which the public were able to gain access.

Ms Leffman welcomed the review but, given that the chairmanship of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees was held by the majority group, expressed some doubt that the scrutiny process could be considered apolitical. Ms Leffman also expressed concern that meetings of the Human Resources Committee were often cancelled at a time when major changes to staffing arrangements were taking place and suggested that the remit of committees should be considered as part of the review.

Mrs Crossland agreed that the report was far reaching and that it would be foolish to rush into decisions without taking time to consider all the potential ramifications. Overview and Scrutiny was an important function which should be retained and Mrs Crossland indicated that she would not wish to see increased levels of delegation to Officers.

Mr Cooper indicated that it would be helpful to have the views of new Members such as Mr Mullins during the review and went on to express his appreciation of the Council's Officers whom he believed to be some of the best in all levels of local government. He considered that it was

beneficial for the Council to consider its democratic structure from time to time and suggested that the Council should set a timetable for the review.

Mr Coles also welcomed the review as an example of good practice. Given the current challenges facing local government, Mr Coles considered this to be an ideal opportunity to review the democratic structures. Going forward, Mr Coles expressed the hope that it would be possible for at least one Member of the opposition groups to be offered the Chairmanship of a Scrutiny Committee as a reflection of good practice. With regard to staffing, Mr Coles noted that a TUPE transfer only offered six months protection and suggested that there was a need for Members to scrutinise what was going to occur in relation to the Council's workforce. Those staff retained would be expected to do more and shoulder a greater burden. The Council needed to be clear in its approach and the report provided a good starting point.

Mrs Chapman expressed her support for the recommendation as consideration by the Overview and Scrutiny Committees would enable all Members to express their views.

Mr Howard noted that there appeared to be a good deal of agreement as to the approach to be taken but cautioned against letting the matter drift on. He reminded Members that Officers would be heavily involved in the preparation of the budget towards the end of the year and considered it would be helpful to set a timescale, suggesting that a final decision on the way forward should be made by September or October.

Mr Morris was pleased to see that all Members welcomed the review and the arrangements proposed. As to a timescale, he suggested that it was more appropriate for the Overview and Scrutiny Committees to set their own work programme.

Summing up, Mr Mills indicated that it was not for the Cabinet to dictate how the Overview and Scrutiny Committees set their agenda but asked Members to be mindful of the fact that the Head of Democratic Services would not be in a position to attend meetings until after the General Election on 8 June. He stressed that he did not have a particular view as to the timescale for the review as it was more important to ensure that the matter was considered fully through the due process. Whilst acknowledging the views expressed, Mr Mills emphasised that any decision had to be subject to due consideration.

On being put to the vote the recommendation

**WAS CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

**RESOLVED:** That the Overview and Scrutiny Committees be invited to give consideration to, and make recommendations upon, the options for amending the Council's Committee structure and the question of the electoral cycle and the number of members of the Council.

## 9. APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEES

The report of the Head of Paid Service regarding the appointment of Committees of the Council was received and considered.

With reference to paragraph 3.6 of the report, Mr Mills advised that, in order for the overall entitlements of political balance to be achieved, the political groups had agreed that the Conservative Group be allocated an additional seat on the Finance and Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee, that the Labour Group be allocated an additional seat on the Economic and Social Overview and Scrutiny Committee and to the Liberal Democrat Group having one seat on each of those Committees and two seats on the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Mr Mills then proposed the recommendations and this was seconded by Mr Morris and on being put to the vote was carried.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the Committees indicated in paragraph 3.2 of the report be appointed, with the specified membership, for the period to the next annual meeting of the Council or to the approval of any revised member meeting structures, whichever is the sooner;
- (b) That seats on those Committees be allocated to the political groups in accordance with the rules relating to political balance, and as indicated in the Table under paragraph 3.5 of the report; subject to the necessary adjustments referred to in the report;
- (c) That Members be appointed to each of the Committees in accordance with the wishes of the political groups as shown in the Appendix to these minutes;
- (d) That in accordance with, and subject to the exceptions in, Rule 4 of the Council Procedure Rules, all Members of each political group not appointed to a committee or sub-committee be named as alternate members for the member or members of that group who have been appointed to that committee or sub-committee;
- (e) That seats on those Committees be allocated to the political groups in accordance with the rules relating to political balance, and as indicated in the Table under paragraph 3.2 of the report, subject to the Conservative Group being allocated an additional seat on the Finance and Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee, to the Labour Group being allocated an additional seat on the Economic and Social Overview and Scrutiny Committee and to the Liberal Democrat Group having one seat on each of those Committees and two seats on the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- (f) That the Licensing Committee be re-constituted for 2017-2018, with a membership of 11; and
- (g) That the seats on the Licensing Committee be allocated to the political groups in accordance with the principles of political balance, and be filled in accordance with their wishes, with the Committee to comprise nine Conservative members and one each from the Labour and Liberal Democrat Groups.

10. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN PRO-TEM FOR THE ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES

**RESOLVED:** that Mr N A MacRae MBE be appointed Chairman pro-tem of the Council's Committees for those meetings to be held following this meeting.

The meeting closed at 3.15pm

CHAIRMAN

\* Chairman  
# Vice Chairman

**WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**  
**MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES AND SUB-COMMITTEES 2017/2018**

**(CHAIRMAN OF COUNCIL: N A MacRae \*  
VICE-CHAIRMAN: Mrs M J Crossland #)**

**CABINET (6)**

<b>Member</b>	<b>Area of Responsibility</b>
J F Mills <b>(Leader of the Council)</b>	<b>Leader of the Council:</b> Policy Framework; Corporate Plan; Co-ordination of Executive functions; Public Relations; Emergency Planning; Oxfordshire Partnership Board; Oxfordshire Growth Board; Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership; Oxfordshire Leaders; Representation on Regional and National Bodies; Parish/Town Council Liaison
T J Morris <b>(Deputy Leader)</b>	<b>Resources:</b> Finance and Management; Equalities and Diversity; Customer Services; Information Technology and services; Asset Management; Council Tax and Benefits; Health and Safety; Councillor Development
Mrs J C Baker	<b>Leisure and Health:</b> Tourism; Visitor Information Centres; Sports and Leisure Facilities and Strategy; Arts and Sports Development/Grants; Village Hall Grants; Playground Grants; Young Persons Champion; Community and Public Health; Oxfordshire Health Improvement Board; Elderly Persons Champion; Assets of Community Value; Safeguarding; Support to the voluntary sector
Mrs C E Reynolds	<b>Environment and Community Safety:</b> Community Safety Partnerships; Crime and Disorder; Neighbourhood Policing; Scrutiny of Police and Crime Commissioner; Environment Partnership; Licensing; Car Parking and Transport; Waste Collection and Recycling; Street Scene (Cleansing Litter and Grounds Maintenance); Energy Advice; Flood Alleviation; Environmental and Regulatory Services
J Haine	<b>Strategic Planning and Economy:</b> Regional Spatial Strategy; Local Plan; Government planning policies and guidance; Conservation and Design; Design and Historic Environment Champion for the District; Landscape/Biodiversity; Strategic Housing; Economic Development; Rural Development; Business Liaison; Inward Investment
C G Dingwall	<b>Housing and Shared Services:</b> 2020 Vision; Member of the 2020 Programme Board and Joint Committee; Shared Services; Efficiency Agenda; Broadband Champion; Performance Management; Housing Allocations; Provision of Affordable Housing; Homelessness; Sheltered Housing Accommodation; Supporting People

Conservative			Labour	Liberal Democrat
<b>AUDIT AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE (17)</b>				
A J Adams * Mrs J C Baker N G Colston C G Dingwall H B Eaglestone	E J Fenton Miss G R Hill H J Howard R A Langridge Mrs L E C Little	R D J McFarlane A H K Postan H E T St John # B J Woodruff	D S T Enright	A M Graham Dr E M E Poskitt
<b>MISCELLANEOUS LICENSING SUB-COMMITTEE (5)</b>				
M Brennan S J Good #	E H James N A MacRae *			J C Cooper
<b>STANDARDS SUB-COMMITTEE (5)</b>				
A J Adams A C Beaney # R J M Bishop	N A MacRae * T N Owen (Standing Deputy)			A M Graham
<b>HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE (7)</b>				
Mrs J C Baker Mrs L J Chapman * J Haine	J F Mills T J Morris Mrs C E Reynolds #			Ms E P R Leffman
<b>DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE (24)</b>				
M A Barrett A C Beaney R J M Bishop N G Colston D A Cotterill C Cottrell-Dormer Mrs M J Crossland #	H B Eaglestone P Emery Mrs E H N Fenton E J Fenton S J Good J Haine * P J Handley	H J Howard P D Kelland R A Langridge A H K Postan T B Simcox	D S T Enright G Saul	J C Cooper K J Mullins Dr E M E Poskitt
<b>LOWLANDS</b>				
M A Barrett Mrs M J Crossland * H B Eaglestone P Emery	Mrs E H N Fenton E J Fenton S J Good # J Haine	P J Handley H J Howard P D Kelland R A Langridge	D S T Enright	K J Mullins

**UPLANDS AREA PLANNING SUB-COMMITTEE**

A C Beaney R J M Bishop N G Colston D A Cotterill # C Cottrell-Dormer	J Haine * A H K Postan T B Simcox	G Saul	J C Cooper Dr E M E Poskitt
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(Ex officio Non-Voting Member: (Mrs M J Crossland, Vice Chairman of Development Control Committee))

**URGENCY COMMITTEE (11)**

D A Cotterill Mrs M J Crossland P Emery	J Haine P J Handley N A MacRae	J F Mills * T J Morris # Mrs C E Reynolds	D S T Enright	J C Cooper
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**ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (14)**

M A Barrett A C Beaney Mrs M J Crossland Mrs J M Doughty	H B Eaglestone Mrs E H N Fenton # P J Handley * P D Kelland	Mrs L E C Little T N Owen B J Woodruff	Mrs L C Carter G Saul	J C Cooper
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**FINANCE AND MANAGEMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (14)**

A J Adams Mrs L J Chapman D A Cotterill C Cottrell-Dormer P J G Dorward	P Emery * S J Good A D Harvey # H J Howard E H James	A H K Postan G H L Wall	G Saul	K J Mullins
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**ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (14)**

R J M Bishop M Brennan D A Cotterill * P J G Dorward	H B Eaglestone P Emery Mrs E H N Fenton E J Fenton	Miss G R Hill H J Howard A H K Postan #	A S Coles	A M Graham Ms E P R Leffman
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**LICENSING COMMITTEE (11)**

H B Eaglestone Mrs E H N Fenton E J Fenton	S J Good # A D Harvey E H James	Mrs L E C Little N A MacRae * A H K Postan	G Saul	Ms E P R Leffman
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