

WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the
West Oxfordshire District Council
held via video conferencing at 2:00pm on **Wednesday 29 July 2020**

PRESENT

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

Officers: Giles Hughes (Chief Executive); Elizabeth Griffiths (Chief Finance Officer and Deputy Chief Executive); Chris Hargraves (Planning Policy Manager); Vanessa Scott (Climate Change Manager); Janice Bamsey (Senior Planner (Policy)); Melanie Dodd (Biodiversity Officer); Andrea Clenton (Principal Planner, Major Developments); Keith Butler (Head of Democratic Services); and Amy Barnes (Senior Strategic Support Officer).

20. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 24 June 2020 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

21. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Rosa Bolger.

22. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor St John declared an interest as he was a Trustee of the Wychwood Project who were mentioned a number of times throughout the agenda.

23. RECEIPT OF ANNOUNCEMENTS

23.1 Former Councillor Chris Dorward

The Chairman advised the meeting that he was sorry to have to report the death of Christina (Chris) Dorward earlier in the month.

Chris was first elected to the Council for the Eynsham Ward in 1983, and served for 12 years, when she did not stand for re-election in 1995.

Chris served on Finance and General Purposes, Policy, Planning and Housing Committees at various times, and was highly regarded and respected by colleague councillors and staff.

Councillor Cooper stated that he had had the privilege of serving with Chris, who he remembered as a proud Scot from Aberdeen. He advised that she had been the secretary to the principal of Hertford College, Oxford and Councillor Cooper had been honoured to have known her as a friend for 35 years.

Councillor Rylett spoke as a fellow Eynsham resident and stated that he had met Chris a number of times and had always been extended a warm welcome. He remembered a number of fascinating talks with her and agreed that she had been well respected.

23.2 Councillor Julian Cooper

The Chairman announced that Councillor Cooper had recently reached a significant milestone as a District Councillor, delivering 30 years' service to the residents of West Oxfordshire. He expressed his gratitude to Councillor Cooper for his dedication and passed on his congratulations.

23.3 Oxfordshire Growth Board

Councillor Mills advised that a meeting of the Growth Board had been held the day prior to this meeting and he had made the OxLEP aware of the Council's disappointment that there was no West Oxfordshire Business Representative on their board.

23.4 Pavement Licensing Policy

Councillor MacRae advised that the Council had introduced a Pavement Licensing Policy in response to the Business and Planning Act which became law on 22 July 2020. It was hoped that the licences would generate footfall for businesses and help to raise the profile of the District. He expressed his thanks to the officers involved for their hard work in progressing the policy so quickly.

23.5 Climate Action Working Group

Councillor Harvey announced the winners of the recent Climate Change Young Peoples Art Competition. The winners of the Activity 1 category were Lexie Boshier and Nicole Harris with their song entry and of the Activity 2 category the winner was Millie Freer with her artwork. He advised that the winners would each receive a native tree for planting and the Council would arrange for the winners to receive their prize during the tree planting season.

23.6 Eat Out to Help Out Scheme

Councillor Morris endorsed the recently rolled out 'Eat Out to Help Out' scheme which encouraged the public to support local restaurants and eateries by offering 50% off food between Monday and Wednesday each week, throughout August. He hoped the scheme would work hand in hand with the Pavement Licensing Policy announced by Councillor MacRae earlier in the meeting. Councillor Morris encouraged businesses to sign up and residents to support their community.

24. PARTICIPATION OF THE PUBLIC

There was no participation by members of the public.

25. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE EXECUTIVE AND COUNCIL COMMITTEES

The Council considered the report of the Head of Democratic Services setting out the recommendations made by the Cabinet and the Audit and General Purposes Committee at their meetings held on 22 and 23 July 2020 respectively.

In proposing the recommendations, Councillor Mills drew attention to the table on Annex I, (a) (i) and advised that reference to the Southill Solar also needed to be included as this had to be rolled over to this year.

RESOLVED: That the recommendations made by the Cabinet and the Audit and General Purposes Committee at their meetings held on 22 and 23 July 2020 respectively be approved in relation to:-

- a) Finance and Service Performance Report 2019/20 Year End (Minute No. CT/25(b)/2020/2021); and
- b) Councillor Gifts and Hospitality (Minute No. AGP/5/2020/2021)

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

The reports of the meetings of the Cabinet and the Council's Committees held since 24 June 2020 were received.

26.1 Start Time of Meetings

Minute No. F&M/6/2020/2021

Councillor Enright requested if the start time of meetings could be reconsidered in the short term due to the pressures that many councillors were under with the changes to work, family commitments and childcare provision due to Covid-19.

In response, Councillor Cotterill advised that he would put the request to Councillors at the next Finance & Management Overview and Scrutiny meeting.

26.2 Update on Businesses in Witney Town Centre

Minute No. CT/24.4/2020/2021

Councillor Coles asked if the Leader could provide an update on how businesses in Witney Town Centre were faring since the opening up of some roads.

Councillor Mills advised that he would speak to the Business Development Manager and get back to Councillor Coles with a response.

26.3 Woodstock Car Parking Review

Minute No. CT/25/2020/2021

Councillor Cooper asked if there was an update on the car parking review for Woodstock.

In response Councillor MacRae reiterated that many of the officers had been redeployed to work on the response to the Covid-19 pandemic resulting in a delay to this piece of work. However, further delay had been incurred due to the Mayor requesting paper copies of the survey, against officer advice, resulting in the collation of data being more complex and lengthy.

26.4 Naming of Garden Village

Minute No. CT/27/2020/2021

Councillor Haine advised that communication had been received from Eynsham Parish Council, expressing dissatisfaction with the content of the Cabinet minutes in relation to the above item. Therefore, he suggested that paragraph 3 on page 8 of the minutes be removed, to alleviate any ambiguity.

26.5 Section 106 work

Minute No. A&GP/4/2020/2021

Councillor Acock asked the Chief Finance Officer if there was any news on the initial date suggested for this work to be completed.

In response, Elizabeth Griffiths advised that there was no end date as yet. She had attended meetings with staff members and had briefed the project manager. The Project Initiation Document was being created, along with a risk register and project timeline. There were six departments involved in the work at present so it would take some time to coordinate and establish the resources needed.

27. CLIMATE ACTION FOR WEST OXFORDSHIRE: BIENNIAL REPORT

The Council considered the previously circulated report of the Climate Change Manager comprising the biennial report on Climate Action requested by Council in January 2020, and which (i) focussed on progress made during the first six months of the Climate Action work programme and framework; (ii) gave further details of additional Climate Action being taken forward by the Council and already underway as part of an evolving work programme; and (iii) sought approval for new Climate Action work proposed for implementation in the short to medium-term.

The report asked Members to note the contents and agree the next proposed steps.

Councillor Harvey introduced the report and expressed his thanks to the author and Climate Change Manager, Ness Scott. Councillor Harvey outlined the steps that had moved climate change further up the awareness agenda with both officers and councillors and was pleased to report back on regular meetings with a number of outside bodies, all of whom had shown a high level of participation. He proposed the recommendations as laid out.

A number of issues were discussed including a 25% net increase in Biodiversity, the installation of Electric Vehicle Charging Points and the desire to see these issues carried through further into the planning spectrum.

Councillor Coles welcomed the report and acknowledged the high level of work that had been delivered. He was pleased with the results from the Climate Action survey which had placed Biodiversity at the higher level of priority. He referred to the depletion in nature and in particular the dramatic drop in the level of bird life, all of which were noted by Councillor Harvey.

Councillor Doughty passed her congratulations to the team involved and queried the work being undertaken to manage trees, wild flowers, borders, verges and open spaces. Councillor Harvey agreed to liaise with officers and respond accordingly.

Members felt it was important to assist the Climate Change Manager and queried if the team was likely to expand in the future.

The Leader expressed his support for the work done to date and referred to the importance of the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 and how the Council had an opportunity to be innovative and lead on Climate Change. He felt that Members and officers had an increasingly important role to play and he complimented the officers on the work so far.

The recommendation in the report was seconded by Councillor Al-Yousuf.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the contents of the biennial report on Climate Action for West Oxfordshire be noted; and
- (b) That the recommendations for new Climate Action proposed in the short to medium-term be approved.

28. GARDEN VILLAGE AREA ACTION PLAN

The Council considered the recommendations arising from the meeting of the Cabinet held 22 July 2020, in the context of the previously circulated report of the Planning Policy Manager and the draft of the pre-submission Garden Village Area Action Plan (AAP) which had been amended and republished on the website since consideration at Cabinet.

Councillor Haine introduced the report and highlighted the inclusion of 31 Policies and the seven core themes. He encouraged Members to respond to the consultation which he

proposed be extended to eight weeks from the standard six weeks as detailed in the report.

This was seconded by Councillor Harvey.

Councillor Levy addressed Members and requested an amendment to recommendation c) as detailed below. He expressed thanks to Members and officers for the work done so far, and to Chris Hargraves for addressing many of the issues raised, but did not feel the recommendations were sufficient.

- c) *In the meantime, the Council mandates the Leader of the Council to write to the Secretary of State and to our MP to seek confirmation that all Section 106 funds derived from the development of Salt Cross must only be used in Salt Cross, in Eynsham or in the provision of links to Hanborough and that if there is money remaining from S106 contributions, it will be used to support other transport initiatives in West Oxfordshire.*

Councillor Leffman seconded the amendment and advised that the County Council had been in discussions regarding the potential that any leftover S106 monies could be clawed back. She was concerned that any leftover money would be put into a pot by the County Council and used for other works across the County. She felt it was important to retain control of the spending of S106 contributions to ensure it was spent in West Oxfordshire, for the benefit of those residents moving to Salt Cross.

Councillors Enright and Graham supported the amendment. Councillor Graham also thanked the Cabinet Member for the consideration in changing the consultation period and highlighted the importance of encouraging participation.

In response to the amendment, the Leader made reference to the advice provided by officers on the issues relating to Land Capture value and did not feel that the residents of Salt Cross would miss out. He urged Members not to support the amendment because residents needed the improvements to the A40 to happen.

Members debated the importance of securing any remaining S106 money for local communities and the strict rules that applied to these legal agreements. There was some feeling that the proposals had been well laid out and were due to go out for public consultation.

In response to the amendment, Councillor Haine thanked Members for their contributions to the debate and reminded them that there was unlikely to be much S106 left over once all of the projects proposed were carried out. He also referred to the email circulated by officers which explained the funding details and read out an email from the Chief Executive summarising the situation. Having considered this information, Councillor Haine did not feel able to support the amendment.

The Monitoring Officer led a named vote on the amendment, which was lost, by 17 votes to 29.

Councillor Rylett thanked officers for their work and residents for their engagement and commended some parts of the AAP which he hoped would be followed through in practice. He expressed his disappointment at the transport strategy report and suggested that an independent report be commissioned.

Councillor Cooper raised a concern that the AAP made little mention of Bladon which he felt would be affected greatly.

The importance of public consultation was highlighted and residents were encouraged to participate. Following a number of comments from Councillors relating to specific villages and towns, Members were urged to respond to the consultation and highlight their points.

Having considered the report and having heard from the Members present, the recommendations were agreed subject to the consultation period being extended to eight weeks.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the previously circulated pre-submission draft Area Action Plan (AAP) be approved for the purposes of formal publication for a statutory period of eight weeks in accordance with Regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012;
- (b) That the Chief Executive be authorised, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning, to make any minor factual/typographical amendments to the pre-submission draft AAP in conjunction with Officers, prior to formal publication; and
- (c) That, subject to there being no significant issues raised during the statutory eight week period, the pre-submission draft Area Action Plan (AAP) be formally submitted to the Secretary of State in accordance with Regulation 22 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 including any minor modifications.

29. SEALING OF DOCUMENTS

The Council received and noted the report of the Head of Paid Service which gave details of documents numbered 11813 to 11818a sealed since its last meeting.

The meeting closed at 4.09 pm

CHAIRMAN