

# Public Document Pack



Tuesday, 12 January 2021

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## COUNCIL

You are summoned a meeting of the Council will be held remotely, via Cisco Webex on  
**Wednesday, 20 January 2021 at 12.30 pm.**

Giles Hughes  
Chief Executive

To: Members of the Council

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

Due to the current social distancing requirements and guidance relating to Coronavirus
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West Oxfordshire District Council, Council Offices, Woodgreen, Witney, OX28 1NB

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Regulations 2020 – Part 3 – Modification of meetings and public access requirements  
this meeting will be conducted remotely using Cisco Webex.

Members of the public will be able to follow the proceedings through a broadcast on [West Oxfordshire District Council Facebook account](#) (You do not need a Facebook account for this).

Recording of Proceedings – The law allows the public proceedings of Council, Cabinet, and Committee Meetings to be recorded, which includes filming as well as audio-recording. Photography is also permitted. By participating in this meeting, you are consenting to be filmed.

As a matter of courtesy, if you intend to record any part of the proceedings please let the Committee Administrator know prior to the start of the meeting.

# AGENDA

1. **Minutes of Previous Meeting**

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 28 October 2020

2. **Apologies for Absence**

To receive any apologies for absence

3. **Declarations of Interest**

To receive any declarations from Members of the Committee on any items to be considered at the meeting

4. **Receipt of Announcements**

To receive any announcements from The Chairman, Leader, Members of the Cabinet or the Head of Paid Service.

5. **Participation of the Public**

To receive any submissions from members of the public, in accordance with the Council's Rules of Procedure.

6. **Recommendations from the Executive (Pages 9 - 12)**

Purpose:

To receive and consider recommendations made by the Cabinet and the Council's Committees in the period since 28 October 2020.

Recommendation:

That the recommendations set out in Annex 1 to the report be adopted.

7. **Report of the Cabinet and the Council's Committees (Pages 13 - 94)**

To receive the reports of the following meetings of the Cabinet and the Council's Committees. Unless otherwise stated, copies are attached:

8. **Programme of Meetings for 2021/2022 (Pages 95 - 100)**

Purpose:

To consider and agree a programme of meetings for the civic year 2021/2022.

Recommendations:

(a) That the Calendar of Meetings for 2021/2022 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.

**9. Scheme of Members' Allowances for 2021/2022 (Pages 101 - 104)**

Purpose:

To consider the report and recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel for the allowances to be applicable for the financial year 2021/2022.

Recommendations:

- (a) That the Council considers the report and recommendations from the Independent Remuneration Panel as set out in the Appendix to the report, and specified in paragraph 2.3 of the report;
- (b) That, in the event of the Council approving the recommendations from the Panel and of any pay award for staff not being in place at the start of the financial year 2021/2022, the increases for Councillors be backdated to 1 April 2021; and
- (c) That, in the event of any changes arising to the scheme of allowances, the section 151 officer be authorised to amend the scheme as formally set out in Part 6 of the Council's Constitution to reflect those changes.

**10. Motion- Policing in West Oxfordshire (Pages 105 - 108)**

Purpose:

To consider the motion originally proposed and seconded at Council on 26 February 2020, in the context of the discussion at the meeting of the Economic and Social Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 19 November 2020.

Recommendation:

That the Council considers and determines the motion in the light of the discussion at the meeting of the Economic and Social Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

**11. Motion - CCTV in Witney (Pages 109 - 116)**

Purpose:

To consider the motion originally proposed and seconded at Council on 26 February 2020, in the context of its consideration by the Economic and Social Overview and Scrutiny Committee and any further comments by the proposer

and seconder.

Recommendation:

That the Council considers the matter in the context of its consideration by the Economic and Social Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and any further comments from the proposer and seconder.

**12. Motion - Tenants Forum (Pages 117 - 126)**

Purpose:

To consider the motion originally proposed and seconded at Council on 26 February 2020, in the context of the comments and recommendation of the Economic and Social Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Recommendation:

That the Council considers and determines the motion in the light of the recommendation of the Economic and Social Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

**13. Notice of Motion - 20mph Speed Limits**

The following Motion has been received in the names of Councillors Ted Fenton and Jane Doughty, namely:-

*"In December 2020 Oxfordshire County Council unanimously resolved to support the premise that 20mph is the optimum speed limit in built-up areas. This Council supports that decision and whilst it is not the highways authority decisions are made which can affect road safety. Layout of new roads, traffic calming in existing roads and the provision of safe space for active travel are all matters on which this Council has an influence. West Oxfordshire District Council therefore resolves to include consideration of appropriate measures to improve road safety in all relevant decisions, especially planning, to ensure that its roads are as safe as possible for all users".*

**14. Notice of Motion - Find Test Trace Isolate and Support System**

The following Motion has been received in the names of Councillors Duncan Enright and Owen Collins, namely:-

*"This Council notes that:*

*1. both the Local Government Association and the National Audit Office have issued reports showing the urgent need for a properly funded local Find Test Trace Isolate and Support System (FTTIS) for Covid-19 and all other pandemics*

*to follow. They show the urgent need to give (FTTIS) back, properly funded, to local public health professionals under the leadership of Directors of Public Health.*

*2. The international evidence and scientific advice for a local approach has been overwhelming from the outset. It leads to swift, timely responses, good compliance rates, and better control of this disease.*

*3. The local evidence from the 150 LAs which are now undertaking part of the FTTIS system shows that local works better than national.*

*4. It will be many months before sufficient numbers of people are vaccinated to suppress the spread of the virus, so we need a robust system in place now - for the sake of the population's health, and to reduce further damage to our economy.*

*This Council therefore urges the government to redirect funding intended for private sector organisations for FTTIS in the coming months to local authorities and local NHS."*

**15. Notice of Motion - Transport along the A40 Corridor**

The following Motion has been received in the names of Councillors Dan Levy and Carl Rylett, namely:-

*"This Council notes that Oxfordshire County Council at its meeting in November 2020 passed a motion, set out below, relating to transport along the A40 corridor:*

*The decision, last autumn now, by the Oxfordshire LEP to withdraw the funding from the Loop Farm project (Duke's Cut to Loop Farm Roundabout), a long-promised relief road to the A40 round Oxford, undermines sensible solutions to the endless traffic jams on the A40 between Witney and Oxford roundabouts. Given that the use of public money should be productive Council asks Cabinet to review the plans presently being offered and adopt a long-term strategy that will meet the public's needs for the next twenty years at least and as part of this work, Council asks the Cabinet to consider undertaking a feasibility study should funding be confirmed to look at a rail link from Carterton, Witney and Eynsham to Oxford.*

*West Oxfordshire District Council welcomes this motion from the County Council, and commits to working positively and actively with the County Council when the proposed review is undertaken, and recognises that the residents and*

*businesses of West Oxfordshire are hindered by the inadequate infrastructure for travel along the A40 corridor”.*

**16. Emergency / Urgency Delegations (Pages 127 - 140)**

Purpose:

To note decisions taken under the emergency and urgency delegation arrangements approved by Council on 13 May 2020.

Recommendation:

That the report be noted.

**17. Sealing of Documents (Pages 141 - 142)**

Purpose:

To note the documents sealed since the last report.


Recommendation:

That the report be noted

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 <b>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</b>	<b>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</b>
Name and date of Committee	<b>Council: Wednesday 20 January 2021</b>
Report Number	<b>Agenda Item No. 6</b>
Subject	<b>Recommendations from the Executive</b>
Wards affected	All
Accountable member	Councillor Michele Mead, Leader of the Council Email: <a href="mailto:michele.mead@westoxon.gov.uk">michele.mead@westoxon.gov.uk</a>
Accountable officer	Keith Butler Head of Democratic Services Tel: 01993 861521 Email: <a href="mailto:keith.butler@westoxon.gov.uk">keith.butler@westoxon.gov.uk</a>
Summary/Purpose	To receive and consider recommendations made by the Cabinet and the Council's Committees in the period since the last meeting of the Council.
Annexes	<a href="#">Annex 1</a> – Schedule of recommendations
Recommendation	That the recommendations set out in <a href="#">Annex 1</a> to the report be adopted.
Corporate priorities	To support the Council's priorities to protect the environment whilst supporting the local economy, to meet the current and future needs of residents and to provide efficient and value for money services, whilst delivering quality front line services.
Key Decision	No
Exempt	No
Consultees/ Consultation	None

**1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1. The Council is required to consider any recommendations made by the Cabinet and the Council's Committees since its last meeting.

**2. MAIN POINTS**

- 2.1. The recommendations set out in [Annex I](#) have been extracted from the reports of the meetings of the Cabinet held since the last Council meeting.
- 2.2. There is also a meeting of Cabinet to be held on 13 January 2021. It is likely that this will give rise to recommendations to Council and the text of the Annex reflects the recommendations contained in the applicable reports. The decisions arising from that meeting will be circulated on Friday 15 January.

**3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1. There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

**4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1. None

**5. RISK ASSESSMENT**

- 5.1. Not applicable

**6. CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1. Whilst there may be climate change implications arising from specific items within the schedule, there are none arising directly from this report.

**7. ALTERNATIVES/OPTIONS**

- 7.1. The above are as set out in the relevant reports to the meetings of the Cabinet/Committee, and the decisions or minutes of those meetings.

**8. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 8.1. None

	Meeting and Date	Subject and Agenda Item No. or Minute Reference	Recommendations
(a)	Cabinet 18 November 2020	Acquisition of Emergency (Move on) Accommodation (Minute no. CT/73(b) and (c)/2020/2021)	The recommendations: (a) That the sum detailed in the report be added to the 2020/21 Capital Programme to cover all costs of acquisition and remedial works to bring the accommodation up to appropriate standards; and (b) To approve any consequential adjustments to the prudential indicators and borrowing limits to support the acquisition.
(b)	Cabinet 16 December 2020	Litter Bin Placement and Renewal Programme (Minute no. CT/82(d) /2020/2021)	The recommendation that the Council increases the annual capital budget by £13,000 per annum over the next five years, to give an annual total of £25,000 for bin purchases and fitting.
(c)	Cabinet 13 January 2021	Changes to Contract Procedure Rules (Agenda Item No. 8)	The anticipated recommendation that the Council adopts the proposed revised Contract Procedure Rules, with immediate effect.
(d)	Cabinet 13 January 2021	Budget 2021/2022 (Agenda Item No. 9)	The anticipated recommendations that Council approves: (i) the Council Tax Base, calculated as £44,917.91 for the year 2021/22; (ii) Authorising the Chief Finance Officer to submit the National Non-Domestic Rates Return I (NNDRI) to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government by the submission date of 31 January 2021; and (iii) Authorising the Chief Finance Officer to approve the annual uprating of allowances and non-dependant deductions in the Local Council Tax Support Scheme in line with national regulations.

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## WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

### CABINET

Record of decisions taken at the meeting of the Cabinet held  
via video conferencing on Wednesday 18 November, 2020 at 2.00pm.

### PRESENT

Councillors: Michele Mead (Leader); Toby Morris (Deputy Leader); Suzi Coul, Marilyn Davies, Jeff Haine, David Harvey and Norman MacRae MBE.

Also in Attendance: Councillors Richard Bishop, Jill Bull, Mike Cahill, Laetisia Carter, Nathalie Chapple, Julian Cooper, Derek Cotterill, Harry Eaglestone, Duncan Enright, Hilary Fenton, Ted Fenton, Steve Good, Andy Graham, Liz Leffman, Dan Levy, Martin McBride, James Mills, Geoff Saul and Harry St John.

Officers: Frank Wilson (Executive Director, Finance); Jon Dearing (Group Manager, Resident Services); Bill Oddy (Group Manager – Commercial Development); Mandy Fathers (Business Manager for Operational Support and Enabling); Chris Hargraves (Planning Policy Manager); Scott Williams (Business Manager Waste); Maria Wheatley (Parking Manager); Vanessa Scott (Climate Change Manager); Martin Holland (Business Manager Contracts); Keith Butler (Head of Democratic Services) and Amy Bridgewater-Carnall (Senior Strategic Support Officer).

#### 60. NOTICE OF DECISIONS

RESOLVED: That the record of the decisions taken at the meeting held on 21 October 2020, copies of which had been circulated, be approved and signed as a correct record.

#### 61. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Rosa Bolger.

#### 62. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Bishop and Harvey declared interests in Item 11 Community Facility Grants because they were members of Combe Parish Council and Witney Town Council respectively, and both organisations had applied for grants.

63. PARTICIPATION OF THE PUBLIC

Mr John White, Mayor of Burford, spoke in that capacity in relation to agenda item 8, Face to Face Customer Access Review. He stated that there were inaccuracies in the report, offered differing statistics for the Burford Visitor Information Centre and outlined his reasons for believing that the centre should remain open. A copy of his submission is attached as Appendix A to the original copy of these minutes.

Oxfordshire County Councillor, Hilary Biles, addressed Members in relation to agenda item 9, Approval of the Approach to Community Recycling (Bring Sites) in West Oxfordshire. She outlined the reasons that she felt the bring sites at New Street and Albion Street should remain open and requested that the decision be deferred for further information and consideration. A summary of her submission is attached as Appendix B to the original copy of these minutes.

64. RECEIPT OF ANNOUNCEMENTS

64.1 Covid Numbers in WODC

Councillor Mead was pleased to be able to advise Members that there were signs that the number of Covid cases in West Oxfordshire was declining. Although still early days, it was hoped that this was a step in the right direction and the Council would continue to promote the message of 'Hands, Face, Space'.

In response to a question from Councillor Graham, the Leader advised that she did not have the exact numbers but would circulate further information once it had been received.

64.2 Business Grants

Councillor Morris asked fellow Members to promote the Business Grants to any business affected by the second lockdown. He recommended that businesses apply and advised that, even if a business had been successful in the first round of grants, this was not an automatic process and businesses would need to apply again.

64.3 Thanks to Ubico

Councillor MacRae thanked Ubico for their hard work in tidying up the Memorial Gardens for the Remembrance Weekend, which many residents had attended to pay their respects.

#### 64.4 Clinically Vulnerable Residents

Councillor Coul advised that officers and Members were in the process of contacting over four thousand clinically vulnerable residents in West Oxfordshire in light of the second lockdown. She passed her thanks on to everyone for their support in making this achievable.

#### 65. LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME (LDS) UPDATE

The Cabinet received and considered the report of the Planning Policy Manager, updating Members and providing them with information on which planning policy documents the Council intended to prepare, and when.

A Local Development Scheme (LDS) was required under section 15 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and must specify the documents which would comprise the Local Plan for the area. It was a requirement to publish the LDS and keep it up to date, with revisions annually or as necessary.

WODC's most recent LDS was approved in May 2020, however, a number of issues had arisen since then resulting in further revisions being required.

An updated version of the LDS, covering the period November 2020 to November 2023 was attached at Annex A to the report and the changes were summarised in paragraphs 2.2 to 2.10 of the report.

Councillor Haine introduced the report, highlighted the key changes and proposed the recommendations as laid out. This was seconded by the Leader, Councillor Mead.

Councillor St John queried the dates for the revision of the Local Plan and was advised of the need to carry out a review every five years. In response to a question from Councillor Graham regarding the Infrastructure Delivery Plan, Councillor Haine advised that he did not have the details to hand but would include Councillor Graham in the response he was due to circulate to Councillors Cooper and Poskitt.

Having been proposed and duly seconded, Cabinet agreed the recommendations.

DECISION: That the updated Local Development Scheme attached at Annex A to the report be approved.

REASONS: To ensure transparency and enable effective engagement, provide information on Neighbourhood Planning.

OPTIONS: None appropriate.

66. SAFEGUARDING POLICY AND PROCEDURES

The Cabinet received and considered the report of the Group Manager for Resident Services, which introduced new Safeguarding Policy and Procedures for approval and adoption.

The Care Act 2014 placed a duty on local authorities with regards to people's wellbeing and providing services, information and advice. The Council also discharged a number of functions that impacted on the lives of adults and as a consequence had a significant role to play in safeguarding adults along with the provision of their welfare.

Through the implementation of this Policy the Council would ensure there was a corporate-wide policy on safeguarding covering all council services, providing a clear strategic direction and clear lines of accountability. It was noted that a similar policy would be adopted for Publica Group Ltd and internal consultation and engagement would be undertaken as necessary to ensure effective implementation and delivery.

A copy of the Safeguarding Policy and Procedures was attached as an appendix to the report.

The Cabinet Member for Housing, Councillor Davies, outlined the report, reminded Members of the importance of safeguarding and proposed the recommendations as laid out.

This was seconded by Councillor MacRae who reminded Members that safeguarding was relevant to all members of society.

In response to a question from Councillor Graham, Councillor Davies agreed that the policy would be reviewed annually and appropriate training rolled out.

Having been proposed and duly seconded, Cabinet agreed the recommendations.

DECISION: the Safeguarding Policy and Procedures attached at Annex A to the report be approved and adopted.



REASONS: To assist with the delivery of excellent modern services, whilst supporting and building prosperous and inclusive local communities and facilitating healthy lifestyles and better wellbeing for everyone.

OPTIONS: Members could choose to not to adopt the Policy or amend the content if considered necessary.

67. FACE TO FACE CUSTOMER ACCESS REVIEW

The Cabinet received and considered the report of the Group Manager for Resident Services, which proposed some changes to the Council's face to face offer to better reflect the demand on all access channels.

The Council currently supported five face to face customer access points at Elmfield, Woodgreen, Witney Town Centre Shop (TCS), Burford Visitor Information Centre (VIC) and Witney Shop Mobility. The report suggested that as more customers continued to access services digitally, the footfall at face to face access points had been declining for some time.

In addition, the need to keep residents and staff safe as part of the Covid response had led to a review of the data relating to face to face customer service provision. Section 2 of the report detailed a review of each of the contact centres.

The report also outlined the steps required to reopen the Witney Town Centre Shop, the proposal to remove the payment kiosk and rearrange the interior to make the space safe once Covid restrictions were lifted. An appendix to the report also detailed the data collected in relation to the Witney TCS reception footfall.

Section 3 of the report detailed the financial implications including savings relating to the removal of the payment kiosk, grant funding of the Shop Mobility Services and a one-off cost for providing Covid screening at the Witney TCS.

The Cabinet Member for Resources, Councillor Morris introduced the report and thanked the Mayor of Burford for attending the meeting and highlighting the concerns raised by Burford residents, which he would review. He reiterated the intention to re-open the Witney TCS as soon as the current lockdown concluded and advised that discussions regarding the Witney Shop Mobility service were progressing. Councillor Morris agreed that tourism was an important part of the

economy of West Oxfordshire and felt it was correct to include the VIC's within the review. He therefore proposed the recommendations as laid out.

This was seconded by Councillor Harvey who agreed that the Council was right to review the use and costings of services.

Councillor Enright welcomed the review and highlighted the importance of finding out what was and was not important to residents. He therefore hoped that the review would include some level of public consultation.

Councillor Cotterill addressed Members and reiterated the comments made by the Mayor of Burford. He felt it was important to retain the VIC in order to provide information to foreign tourists who may not access the information digitally and requested that the poster on display in the window be addressed because it contained inaccurate information. Councillor Morris agreed that this would be looked at.

In response to a query from Councillor St John, Councillor Morris agreed to share the staffing costs related to the Witney Town Centre Shop.

Having been proposed and duly seconded, Cabinet agreed the recommendations.

#### DECISIONS:

- (a) That the intention to reopen the Witney Town Centre Shop (TCS) as soon as the current lockdown concludes be noted;
- (b) That a formal project be instigated to establish the Community Hub options referred to in paragraph 2.14 of the report;
- (c) That the future of the Visitor Information Centre service (at Witney TCS and Burford) forms part of the current Tourism Review, with services remaining suspended;
- (d) That the payment kiosk at the Witney TCS be removed; and
- (e) That the Witney Shop Mobility service remains suspended and the possibility of grant funding another organisation to deliver the service be explored.

REASONS: To provide efficient and value for money services whilst delivering quality front line services.

OPTIONS: Members could choose to retain the current arrangements, however this may not best meet the customer's needs.

68. APPROVAL OF THE APPROACH TO COMMUNITY RECYCLING (BRING SITES) IN WEST OXFORDSHIRE

The Cabinet received and considered the report of the Business Manager Waste, which updated Members on the issues being experienced at the community recycling sites in West Oxfordshire and sought approval for their permanent removal.

The report explained that 'Bring' site provision had been part of the waste service offered by West Oxfordshire District Council for over fifteen years with fifteen recycling bring sites in the District, three of which were on private caravan/camping parks. A list of all the sites and their facilities were attached as an appendix to the report.

The sites varied in size and offered residents the opportunity to recycle mixed recycling and glass, amongst other things but it was felt that due to the effective kerbside collection service provided, the negatives of policing the sites outweighed the positives in the amount and quality of material received.

The report cited a number of problems experienced at the sites including recycling material frequently being left outside the bins, non-recyclable items being left including mattresses, large waste electricals and increasingly hazardous waste. Significant costs were also being spent on clearing material being left and it was felt that this resource could be redeployed on other street cleansing activities.

Members were asked to consider approving the permanent removal of the community recycling (bring site) facilities and increase the standard number of items for the bulky waste collection from 3 to 4, with the fee remaining at £27.68 in the 2021-22 financial year. It was noted that closure of the sites would be handled in a structured and managed way, with effective communication in order to mitigate the issues being experienced with high levels of contamination, fly tipping and misuse.

The report noted the risk that recycling performance could decrease by 6.7% if the bring sites were removed from service and that some material did not transfer into the kerbside service, but, on balance, the anticipated benefits both financial,

reputational and in building in greater capacity for the UBICO operation, looked to outweigh this.

The financial implications were detailed in full in section three of the report and included a breakdown of the operational costs, costs of fly-tipping clearance, the income streams relating to recycling and the proposal to retain the fee for bulky waste as currently set.

The Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee had considered the report at their meeting on 1 October 2020 and an extract of the minutes from that meeting were attached as Annex B to the report. The Committee had made the following recommendations:

- (a) That the risks and financial, and performance related implications of removing the community recycling (bring site) facilities are noted;
- (b) That Cabinet take into account that the permanent removal of the community recycling (bring site) facilities should not take place until the location of each site has been considered in relation to the travel time needed to reach alternative sites, the option of CCTV has been explored and more focus has been placed on prosecuting fly-tippers and carrying out enforcement. However, effective communication was necessary in order to mitigate the issues being experienced with high levels of contamination, fly tipping and misuse; and
- (c) The Committee considered that residents should be consulted prior to the closure of sites.

Councillor MacRae introduced the report and expressed his thanks to Councillor Biles and the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee for their input. He proposed a minor amendment to recommendation c) to include the words 'as soon as is practicable' and provided Members with photographic evidence of the misuse of the sites and the difference in appearance once a site had been cleared. He reiterated the provision of the comprehensive kerbside collection service and responded to the proposals put forward by the scrutiny committee.

With regards to the suggestion of CCTV, Councillor MacRae reminded Members of the cost implications of installing this along with the resource requirements. He reported that there was no statutory obligation to consult with residents and he had

received positive feedback from Hanborough Parish Council since clearing their nearest site.

Councillor MacRae concluded by commending the work of officers and reminded Members that communication was key in this process.

This was seconded by Councillor Coul who advised that she had attended the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and was satisfied that the queries raised had been answered.

Councillor Cooper queried the reference to 'Narrow support' in section 3.1 of the report and was advised that this referred to the additional cost incurred when access was needed along streets that were too narrow for the refuse vehicles.

Councillor Leffman urged Councillor MacRae to consider the distance that some residents would need to travel to a recycling centre if the bring sites were closed.

Some Members felt that it was not acceptable to remove a service without proper consultation, however, the Cabinet Member and officers assured them that the service was still being provided via the kerbside collection. Officers also confirmed that larger cardboard boxes could be broken down and left by the side of the blue bins for collection during the weekly collections.

In response to a question from Councillor Graham, officers confirmed that there were 400 blue bins in stock and larger households were able to request extra capacity bins.

Councillor Saul queried the lack of a feasibility exercise and felt that increasing the bulky waste collection number from three to four was not commensurate. He suggested that the cost of this service should be reduced, the frequency of collections increased or households could be entitled to a set number of free collections per year.

Following comments made about the distance needed to travel, lower income families and those without transport, Councillor MacRae reminded Members that the sites were also being used to illegally dispose of trade waste.

Some Members welcomed the removal of the sites which appeared cleaner and more in keeping with their areas and reiterated the message that residents should be encouraged to 'reduce' their waste in line with Climate Change initiatives.

Having been proposed and duly seconded, Cabinet agreed the recommendations.

DECISIONS:

- (a) That the risks and financial, and performance related implications of removing the community recycling (bring site) facilities be noted, as set out in this report;
- (b) That approval be given for the permanent removal of the community recycling (bring site) facilities, in a structured and managed way, with effective communication in order to mitigate the issues being experienced with high levels of contamination, fly tipping and misuse; and
- (c) That approval be given for the bulky waste collection standard number of items to be increased from 3 to 4 as soon as is practicable, with the fee remaining at £27.68 in the 2021-22 financial year.

REASONS: To ensure the Council continues to deliver excellent modern services whilst ensuring the financial sustainability of the Council.

OPTIONS: Members could decide to retain all or some of the sites whilst acknowledging the issues being experienced and the potential increase in costs by having to service the sites more frequently.

69. OXFORDSHIRE PARK AND CHARGE AND OFF STREET PARKING ORDER

The Cabinet received and considered the joint report of the Parking Services and Climate Change Managers, which set out the Council owned car park locations selected as part of Tranche One of the Oxfordshire Park and Charge project; and detailed the requirement to make a number of variations to the Off-Street Parking Order.

Since April 2020, Council-owned car parks have been considered for their suitability for Electric Vehicle Charging Points (EVCP) under the Oxfordshire Park & Charge project and against Innovate-UK selection criteria: the focus of the project being to provide off-street charging access to those people without their own parking and charging facilities at home.

Following successful site surveys of various locations, six Council owned car parks had been selected as part of Tranche One of the project. A map detailing the location of the sites was provided at section 2.9 of the report along with a table

outlining the number of EVCP's, parking bays allocated to EVCP's and the total number of parking places available at each site.

The delays incurred due to Covid and the expected completion timeframe for Tranche One were outlined along with the proposal to communicate with Town and Parish Councils to advise of the works.

Alongside this, there was a need to update and renew the West Oxfordshire Off-Street Parking Order 2007 to incorporate the management and regulation of any potential electrical vehicle charging bays in any of the car parks. Other areas of land had also been identified as suitable and needed to be included in the Order including Langdale Gate, Marriotts Close, Woolgate and the front car park at Woodgreen Council offices. Following the successful refurbishment of Marriotts Multi Story Car Park the owners had proposed a variation to the waiting restrictions to extend and simplify the lengths of stay per level.

Councillor MacRae presented the report and welcomed the opportunity to move the project forwards. This was seconded by Councillor Harvey who supported the work undertaken by officers and Members of the Climate Action Working Group in ensuring the Council could meet its target to become a net zero carbon council.

In response to a question from Councillor Cooper regarding Woodford Way in Witney, Councillor Harvey explained that any future residential developments would also require the capability to install EVCP's.

Councillor Leffman queried when Charlbury Car Park would be included in the project and was advised that Councillor Harvey would investigate and respond accordingly.

Further queries were responded to relating to the timescales, the separate, delayed WODC project with Chargemaster and how it was hoped to move this forwards with other partners and Publica.

Following a query from Councillor Graham, Councillor Harvey clarified the statistics relating to electric vehicle ownership but advised that this was a rapidly changing scenario and future numbers were difficult to predict.

Having been proposed and duly seconded, Cabinet agreed the recommendations.

## DECISIONS:

- (a) That the information provided on locations for electric vehicle charging points (EVCP) in Council-owned car parks included as part of Tranche One of the Oxfordshire Park & Charge in West Oxfordshire be noted;
- (b) That the front Car Park at the Council Offices Woodgreen, Witney, be added to the Off-Street Parking Order, to enable enforcement and regulation of the scheduled electrical vehicle charging bays;
- (c) That the request to simplify the maximum waiting times at Marriotts Walk Multi Story Car Park, Witney be agreed, with the maximum waiting times to be as set out in the table under paragraph 3.3 of the report; and
- (d) That the Group Manager for Resident Services be authorised, following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Environment, (i) to carry out public consultation on the West Oxfordshire District Council Off-Street Parking (Consolidated) Order 2020 by notice of proposal; and either (ii) if it is unopposed, to make the Order or (iii) to review and consider any representations and make a final decision on the Order.

REASONS: To protect the environment whilst supporting the local economy; to work with communities to meet the current and future needs of residents; to provide efficient and value for money services whilst delivering quality front line services.

OPTIONS: Members could choose not to deliver EVCP infrastructure through the Park and Charge project and could retain the Parking Order as it is but this would leave it outdated and un-enforceable.

## 70. COMMUNITY FACILITIES GRANTS

The Cabinet received and considered the report of the Business Manager Contracts, which detailed the applications received for grant aid from the Community Facilities Grants Scheme.

Councillors Bishop and Harvey left the meeting for the duration of this item having previously declared interests.

It was noted that this was the second round of funding and six applications had been received. These were detailed in full at Annex A to the report along with the amount



requested, funding breakdown and a summary of the work that the grant would be used for.

The six organisations and associated costs were:

Filkins & Broughton Poggs Parish Council	£8,400
Combe Village Hall & Recreation Ground	£6,647
Glympton Village Hall	£8,212
Chipping Norton Theatre	£12,934
Bampton Community Archive	£48,750
Witney Town Council	£39,952

Councillor Coul presented the report and stated how vital this funding was to organisations, especially during the recovery phase since Covid-19. She was pleased to propose the recommendations as laid out and this was seconded by Councillor Morris.

Councillor Mills was pleased to support the recommendations and reminded Members of the value that groups such as the Bampton Community Archive gave to the local community.

Having been proposed and duly seconded, Cabinet agreed the recommendations.

DECISION: That grants be awarded in accordance with the recommendations set out in Annex A to the report.

REASONS: To work with communities to meet the current and future needs and aspirations of residents.

OPTIONS: Members could choose to offer differing levels of grant aid but within the budgets established for these purposes.

#### 71. APPOINTMENT OF REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

The Cabinet received and considered the report of the Head of Democratic Services, which requested the consideration of the appointment of representatives to specified

outside bodies, following recent changes in the roles and membership of the Cabinet.

Councillor Mead introduced the report and it was noted that Councillor Mills would retain his appointment to South East England Councils, contrary to recommendation (b) in the report which would be removed. Subject to this amendment, she proposed the recommendations as laid out.

This was seconded by Councillor Morris.

Councillor Mills addressed Members, thanked the Leader for allowing him to retain his appointment to South East England Councils and outlined some of the work they carried out.

Having been proposed and duly seconded, Cabinet agreed the recommendations.

#### DECISIONS:

- (a) That it be noted that Councillor Michele Mead has replaced Councillor James Mills as the appointee to the Oxfordshire Partnership Board; the LGA General Assembly; the Oxfordshire Leaders Group; and the Oxfordshire Growth Board;
- (b) That Councillor Suzi Coul be appointed to West Oxfordshire Local Advisory Board (GLL Better); Oxfordshire Community Foundation: Adviser to Grants Panel; and Community First (Oxfordshire), as replacement for Councillor Michele Mead; and
- (c) That Councillor Merilyn Davies be appointed to Oxfordshire Safer Communities Partnership; Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel; and West Oxfordshire Community Safety Partnership, as replacement for Councillor Norman MacRae.

REASONS: To ensure the Council is represented appropriately on Outside Bodies following the recent changes in Leadership of the Council and Cabinet Membership.

OPTIONS: The Cabinet could choose to amend the appointments as it sees fit.

## 72. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED: That, in view of the likely disclosure of exempt information, as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, (information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person), the public be excluded from the meeting for the remaining item of business.

73. ACQUISITION OF EMERGENCY (MOVE ON) ACCOMMODATION

The Cabinet received and considered the report of the Group Manager for Resident Services, which proposed the funding and acquisition of Emergency Homeless Accommodation within the District.

The Homeless Reduction Act 2017 introduced new legal duties on Housing Authorities to prevent homelessness occurring. The homeless hostel in Chipping Norton supported the Council's duty with some capacity, but the property was not sufficient in size to meet all the Council's needs. As a consequence officers were reliant on other forms of temporary accommodation, such as motel and bed and breakfast establishments.

The opportunity to purchase a privately owned property had become available and, having been recently refurbished, was already available to use for multiple occupations.

The total estimated costs of the acquisition were outlined in section 2.7 of the report and the cost of supporting residents in emergency accommodation, such as bed and breakfast or motels, was also highlighted.

The Cabinet Member for Housing, Councillor Davies presented the report and, in proposing the recommendations, thanked officers for their work in bringing this forward.

The proposal was seconded by Councillor Morris.

Having been proposed and duly seconded, Cabinet agreed the recommendations.

DECISIONS:

- a) That the acquisition of the property be approved subject to:
  - i. completion of due diligence being carried out by Legal and Property Services;
  - ii. confirmation of the financing arrangements set out in paragraph 3.4 of the report or, if varied, achieving a minimum business case return as per the recently approved Recovery Investment Strategy;
  - iii. sign off of the detailed Heads of Terms by the Chief Finance Officer in consultation with Cabinet Member for Housing and Cabinet member for Resources;

- b) Council be requested to add the sum detailed in the report to the 2020/21 Capital Programme to cover all costs of acquisition and remedial works to bring the accommodation up to appropriate standards; and
- c) Council be recommended to approve any consequential adjustments to the prudential indicators and borrowing limits to support the acquisition.

REASONS: To facilitate healthy lifestyles and better wellbeing for everyone whilst supporting and building prosperous and inclusive local communities; and to deliver excellent modern services whilst ensuring financial sustainability.

OPTIONS: The Council could continue with existing arrangements or source alternative solutions.

The meeting closed at 3.45 pm

Leader of the Council

## WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the Economic and Social Overview & Scrutiny Committee  
held via video conferencing at 6.30pm on Thursday 19 November 2020

### PRESENT

Councillors: Andrew Beaney (Chairman), Laetisia Carter (Vice-Chairman), Joy Aitman, Jill Bull, Julian Cooper, Jane Doughty, Harry Eaglestone, Hilary Fenton, Andy Graham, Nick Leverton, Neil Owen and Carl Rylett.

Also in attendance: Councillors Marilyn Davies, Duncan Enright, Toby Morris and Geoff Saul.

Officers and others in Attendance: Giles Hughes (Chief Executive); Elizabeth Griffiths (Chief Finance Officer); Andy Barge (Group Manager for Strategic Support); Mandy Fathers (Business Manager Operational Support); Keith Butler (Head of Democratic Services); and Amy Bridgewater-Carnall (Senior Strategic Support Officer); Superintendent Emma Garside, Cherwell and West Oxfordshire Local Area Commander; and Inspector Stephen Hookham (Thames Valley Police).

### 13. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 17 September 2020 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### 14. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Jake Acock and Luci Ashbourne.

### 15. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

### 16. PARTICIPATION OF THE PUBLIC

There were no submissions from members of the public in accordance with the Council's Rules of Procedure.

17. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman, Councillor Beaney thanked all those Members who had managed to attend the Domestic Violence Awareness Raising session on 12 November 2020 and advised that the recording of the briefing would be uploaded to the Councillor Portal in due course. He encouraged any Members who had been unable to attend on the evening, to watch the recording.

18. PRIVATE TENANTS FORUM

The Committee received and considered the report of the Group Manager, Resident Services, which asked Members to consider the purpose, benefits and outcomes of forming a Private Rented Sector Tenant's Forum, further to the consideration of the matter at the meeting of the Committee held 17 September relating to the motion proposed at the Council meeting on 26 February 2020.

The report outlined the current level of properties privately rented in West Oxfordshire and clarified the statutory duties for which the Council was responsible. A table at section 2.4 of the report highlighted the number and type of complaints that the Council had administered during 2019 and 2020. The report recognised that there were already formal routes for Private Rented Sector tenants to receive advice and make complaints regarding their landlords; through the Council's existing regulatory services and (Council commissioned) CAWO service.

Officers also felt that a Private Tenant Forum would not be an appropriate place to raise/discuss individual complaints, however two options were proposed for Councillors to consider:

- 1) Create a webpage specifically for the private rent sector. This would be an informative area for customers giving advice, guidance and signposting to other organisations, such as CAWO and Shelter. Through our Customer Satisfaction Web Survey, we could then establish what other needs these tenants have.
- 2) Conduct a Needs Survey with Private Rented Sector tenants; directly where we have the contact details (e.g. Housing Benefit recipients) or on the Council's Website front page. This survey could be conducted in parallel with the above data collection process.

The proposer of the motion, Councillor Saul addressed Members and he thanked officers for the report. He felt that it was important to make it clear that the forum would not be the place to put forward individual complaints but that it should be used to ensure that residents were aware of their rights.

He felt that the two options in the report were viable and it was worth considering a dedicated web page similar to Redbridge London Borough Council.

Councillor Leverton agreed with the comments made and hoped a forum would help to maintain a good relationship between renter, tenants and letting agents. He suggested that the Council could provide information for individuals and link with the Citizens Advice Bureau to offer further assistance if needed.

The Cabinet Member for Communities and Housing, Councillor Davies assured the meeting that this was something that Cabinet felt passionate about and wanted to protect private renters. It was noted that engaging with landlords was key but Members needed to be mindful of how much influence the Council had in private matters.

Members were supportive of both options in general and requested that these be put back to Council for consideration as a good starting point.

RESOLVED: That Council agree to:

- 1) Create a webpage specifically for the private rent sector. This would be an informative area for customers giving advice, guidance and signposting to other organisations, such as CAWO and Shelter. Through our Customer Satisfaction Web Survey, we could then establish what other needs these tenants have.
- 2) Conduct a Needs Survey with Private Rented Sector tenants; directly where we have the contact details (e.g. Housing Benefit recipients) or on the Council's Website front page. This survey could be conducted in parallel with the above data collection process.

19. POLICE, COMMUNITY SAFETY AND CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION

The Committee received a presentation from Superintendent Emma Garside, the Thames Valley Police Cherwell and West Oxfordshire Local Area Commander.

Superintendent Garside introduced herself and her colleague Inspector Hookham. She advised that she had taken over the role in June 2020 and outlined the priorities for Thames Valley Police which were consistent across twelve areas. She gave a detailed update on the reduction of crime, burglaries and robberies, knife crime and bringing offenders to justice with an increase in weapons offensive.

Superintendent Garside and Inspector Hookham answered questions and queries from Members of the Committee including the impact of Covid-19, breaches of legislation and the use of mobile technology.

Levels of Anti-Social Behaviour were discussed and it was recognised that PCSO's were engaging well with their communities.

Councillor Graham raised the issue of Hate Crimes and queried the level of Police involvement with the LGBT communities. In response, Superintendent Garside encouraged Councillors not to wait for formal meetings but to contact her if the need arose. Councillor Graham agreed to send her his contact details as a point of contact.

Members were advised that police officers received initial training in Hate Crimes but this was not necessarily repeated throughout the year. Officers were actively involved in national campaigns to raise awareness of the issue and help to raise the profile of the impact of hate crimes on victims and their communities.

In concluding, Superintendent Garside thanked Members for their input and assured them that they could contact her directly if they needed to.

The Chairman thanked her and Inspector Hookham for attending and answering questions from the Committee and asked them to pass the Council's thanks to all officers working across West Oxfordshire and Cherwell.

RESOLVED: That the update be noted.

20. BUDGET 2021/2022

The Committee received and considered the report of the Chief Finance Officer, which provided details of the budget for the following year. Funding would not



be determined until the new year and therefore Members were reminded that this draft was an early indication and would be subject to change.

The Chief Finance Officer introduced the report and highlighted the key points. The estimated budget gap in 2021/22 was approximately £3m pre Covid and it was noted that the pandemic had resulted in a large impact on the Council's income and investments.

The Chief Finance Officer explained that the Budget could be considered as expected and that there would be a funding shortfall of £2 million over 2021/22 and a total of £9 million over the next five years. The Chief Finance Officer also drew attention to the difficulties the Council's Leisure Operator GLL had faced over recent months and the difficulties also faced by the Council's commercial tenants. She continued that the Budget for 2021/22 was based on a £5 uplift in Council Tax for a Band D property, but highlighted that savings in office supplies and working arrangements, owing to the move to working from home, had saved an approximate £300,000.

Councillor Morris thanked officers for the report and reminded the Committee that there was a great deal of uncertainty at the present time.

In response to a question from Councillor Graham, Mrs Griffiths advised that she did not know the figure of extra Council Tax revenue to be generated from new properties but would send a breakdown after the meeting.

Councillor Cooper asked for assurance that the figures relating to GLL would not increase. In response, Mrs Griffiths explained that the figure quoted was the maximum fee the Council could lose but did not know if requests for further financial assistance would be forthcoming. There was no indication that GLL were looking to pull out of West Oxfordshire and Members were assured that robust discussions were being had.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

## 21. PUBLIC OPEN SPACE CCTV PROVISION AND MONITORING ARRANGEMENTS

The Committee received and considered the report of the Group Manager, Strategic Support, which provided a progress update on upgrading the public open space CCTV cameras covering areas of Carterton and Witney and associated monitoring control room arrangements.

The report advised that West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC) owned and operated a public open space Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) system in the district, consisting of 61 cameras - 57 in Witney and four in Carterton. The town centre public space CCTV scheme was introduced in the town in 2002 and expanded to cover Carterton town centre in 2008; and the scheme was upgraded (digitised) and expanded to include Marriotts Walk in 2009.

Monitoring of West Oxfordshire's cameras took place at Witney Police station, with the staff employed by Thames Valley Police (TVP) and a service level agreement in place with the Council. Within Oxfordshire, monitoring control rooms were also located in Oxford City, Banbury and Abingdon.

In late autumn 2018, WODC commissioned CDC Technical Services to undertake an independent review of the public space CCTV systems in Witney and Carterton town centres.

In addition to this work, a motion was put to Council in February 2020 by Councillors Duncan Enright and Laetisia Carter and was referred to this Committee for comment and advice, asking that "*The Council therefore resolves to call a meeting with stakeholders at the earliest opportunity, and to seek to expedite the replacement of the system with a target date for completion by the end of Summer 2020.*".

The report explained the restrictions and difficulties that had resulted in slow progress being made, however, further steps had been made following a meeting in January 2020 and a number of decisions were in place by March 2020. Unfortunately, Covid-19 had regrettably slowed progress once more.

Mr Barge outlined the report and summarised the key points, including the proposal for the Districts to enter into a memorandum of understanding as detailed at section 4.1 of the report.

In response to a query from Councillor Beaney, Mr Barge explained that there would be less capacity and a higher cost involved if West Oxfordshire chose to work independently.

As the proposer of the motion, Councillor Enright thanked officers for the report and hoped that this would have given Cabinet the impetus to move work forwards

more swiftly. He welcomed the report and requested that Members be kept up to date as more news was available.

Mr Barge then answered various queries from Members including the potential to use wireless re-deployable cameras, the benefits of primary monitoring at a central location and future technologies involving mobile phones.

The issue of funding was discussed and it was felt that part of the funding model should be based on the number of cameras an area had as well as the level of crime in that area. It was noted that some town councils paid a contribution for the equipment and it was hoped a decision making paper would be forthcoming in the new year.

RESOLVED: The update and reasons for the delays are noted and Members welcome the proposed next steps towards upgrading the public open space CCTV provision.

22. MOTION: POLICING IN WEST OXFORDSHIRE

The Committee gave consideration to the following motion proposed by Councillor Laetisia Carter and seconded by Councillor Duncan Enright at the meeting of the Council held 26 February 2020 and referred to this Committee for consideration and comment:-

*"Despite remaining a low crime area residents of West Oxfordshire are rightly concerned about the increase in crime, particularly involving vulnerable people/young people and antisocial behaviour across the district. Our Community Safety Plan is reaching its end in 2021. Policing is under increasing financial pressure. West Oxfordshire District Council would like to work in closer partnership with Thames Valley Police to increase capacity to police our towns and villages. As a response to growing complex crime the Council resolves to negotiate with Thames Valley Police to put more police officers on patrol in West Oxfordshire, including the possibility of jointly funded posts."*

Councillor Carter addressed Members and outlined her reasons for believing the motion should go forwards. She explained some of the problems being faced by residents and felt that the Council should mirror the example put forward by Carterton Town Council, which had helped to fund a PCSO post. Councillor

Carter did not feel that it was fair that some towns could afford to bolster their policing and wanted the District Council to do so.

This was seconded by Councillor Enright who reiterated the importance of the Community Safety Plan.

The Committee agreed that this was an important issue and recognised the difficulties that communities experiencing anti-social behaviour had to deal with.

The Chairman reminded Members of the previously discussed Budget item and asked the proposer if she wished to include a sum of money in the motion, to help guide officers. Councillor Carter felt that should be left blank so as not to restrict the work in priority areas. The Cabinet Member for Finance also felt it would be helpful to have an idea of the amount of funding and where Councillors would like this to come from.

The Cabinet Member for Communities addressed the Committee and reiterated the level of work that the Council was already involved in with the Police, including weekly updates from the Community Officers, the focus on recognising and reducing instances of Domestic Violence and the previously discussed funding for improved CCTV systems.

Councillor Bull advised that Carterton Town Council had part funded the PCSO post independently of the District Council and suggested that Town and Parish Councils be approached to consider similar actions. She therefore proposed that the response to the motion be that Council should encourage Town and Parish Councils to support or part fund PCSOs in their own towns.

This was seconded by Councillor Leverton. On being put to the vote the result was tied and the Chairman chose not to exercise his casting vote.

Councillor Enright suggested a compromise whereby the Council would look at proceeding with the Community Safety Plan with a view to employing more police officers and encourage Town and Parish Councils to look at the Carterton model.

Councillor Carter did not want to dictate to town and parish councils, without the District Council looking at the principle of bolstering TVP funding first and this was seconded by Councillor Cooper.

On being put to the vote, the result was again tied and the Chairman felt that the committee was not able to make a decision based on the information available.

In conclusion, the Committee was generally supportive of community initiatives but was concerned that the responsibility for funding should not fall to the District Council alone, especially in the current financial climate. It was recognised that discussions with town and parish councils should be supported with a view to advising how they could jointly fund PCSO posts if they wished.

The Chairman proposed that Council be advised that the Committee was unable to reach a decision and requested that the minutes from this meeting be presented as an overview of Members' opinions.

## 23. DRAFT STRATEGIC VISION FOR OXFORDSHIRE

The Committee received and considered the report of the Chief Executive, which presented the draft Strategic Vision produced by the Oxfordshire Growth Board, and invited it to make comments to Cabinet, which would be considering its response at its meeting on 16 December 2020.

The Chief Executive outlined the report and explained that this would come into effect when the new documents were produced.

The Committee was generally supportive of the document but a number of issues were raised relating to some of the wording and areas of work that could be strengthened. These included:

- The consultation period was noted and it was hoped that this would encourage transparency;
- The reference to Health and Wellbeing was welcomed but it was noted that the document did not touch on Social Care;
- Overall the ambitions in the document were supported but some of the wording was felt to compromise a little and could perhaps be made stronger – whilst it was saying the right things, it was not always strong enough;
- More reference could be made to the world class universities and schools in the County and the drive to support learning, including lifelong learning, without leaving any sectors of the community behind.
- More content could also be added on inclusion and diversity

The Chief Executive thanked Members for their input and agreed that whilst the intent was there, the documentation could be made more robust in some areas.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted, and the above comments be presented to Cabinet for consideration.

24. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee received and considered the report of the Head of Democratic Services, which updated it on progress on the 2020/21 work programme.

The Chairman drew Members attention to the items on the agenda for the January 2021 meeting and requested that questions relating to the Domestic Violence officers and the GLL presentation be put forward in advance.

Councillor Cooper requested that 'Rail Strategy Document' be added to the Committee's work programme for January. This was following the inclusion of an item on the Growth Board agenda entitled "Investment in Rail Connectivity Report".

RESOLVED: That the report be noted and the Work Programme updated as requested.

25. CABINET WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee received and considered the report of the Head of Democratic Services, which gave members the opportunity to comment on the Cabinet Work Programme published on 20 October 2020.

RESOLVED: That the contents of the Cabinet Work Programme published on 20 October 2020 be noted.

26. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

There were no questions from Members.

The meeting closed at 9:15 pm



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## WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the Audit and General Purposes Committee held via video conferencing at 6:00 pm on Thursday 26 November 2020

### PRESENT

Councillors: Jane Doughty (Chairman), Andy Graham (Vice-Chairman), Joy Aitman, Luci Ashbourne, Andrew Beaney, Julian Cooper, Harry Eaglestone, Duncan Enright, Gill Hill, Martin McBride, James Mills, Alex Postan and Harry St John.

Officers in Attendance: Elizabeth Griffiths (Chief Finance Officer); Michelle Burge (Chief Accountant); Clare Williams (Interim Finance Business Manager); Emma Cathcart (Counter Fraud Manager); Lucy Cater (Assistant Director, South West Audit Partnership); Peter Barber (Engagement Lead, Grant Thornton); Siobhan Barnard (Assistant Manager, Audit, Grant Thornton); Keith Butler (Head of Democratic Services); and Amy Bridgewater-Carnall (Senior Strategic Support Officer).

### 13. MINUTES

RESOLVED: that the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 23 July 2020, copies of which had been circulated, be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### 14. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TEMPORARY APPOINTMENTS

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Richard Langridge, and the following resignations and temporary appointments were received and noted:-

Councillor Joy Aitman for Councillor Mike Cahill

Councillor Julian Cooper for Councillor Elizabeth Poskitt

Councillor James Mills for Councillor Jake Acock

### 15. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

16. PARTICIPATION OF THE PUBLIC

There were no submissions from members of the public.

17. INTERNAL AUDIT ANNUAL PLAN 2020/21 AND PROGRESS REPORT

The Committee received and considered the report of the Chief Finance Officer, which presented a revised Internal Audit Plan 2020/21 and outlined a summary of the work undertaken by Internal Audit since the last meeting of the Committee.

The primary role of Internal Audit was to provide assurance that the Council's systems provide for a proper administration of its affairs. To this end, Internal Audit carried out a programme of audits that agreed annually with the Council's Management Team and the Audit and General Purposes Committee. The Internal Audit service was provided to the Council by SWAP Internal Audit Services (SWAP).

SWAP was due to present an internal audit plan covering 2020/21 to the Audit and General Purposes Committee in April 2020. However, due to the COVID-19 outbreak and subsequent lockdown, this Committee was postponed. As a result of the outbreak, an updated approach had to be implemented and a significant proportion of the planned work was likely to be pushed back.

Annex A to the report detailed how SWAP had supported WODC during quarter one, the work undertaken and a plan as to how to undertake the audits in the revised plan.

Annex B to the report detailed the work undertaken during quarter two executive summaries of finalised audit assignments, a progress report on follow up of high priority recommendations and a summary of progress against all internal audit recommendations.

Finally, the report presented the recommendations made following an External Quality Assessment undertaken earlier in the year, for information purposes.

Ms Lucy Cater, Assistant Director of South West Audit Partnership) introduced the report and highlighted the key information. In response to a query from Councillor St John, Ms Cater advised that Alix Wilson, Head of South West London Audit Partnership and Russell Banks, Chief Internal Auditor at Orbis had undertaken the external assessment.

Councillor Enright passed his thanks to the team at SWAP for their update.

Councillor Doughty thanked Ms Cater for a thorough report and for attending the meeting to guide Members through the information.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the revised 2020/21 Internal Audit Annual Plan be approved;
- (b) That the report at [Annex B](#) is noted; and
- (c) That the External Quality Assessment (EQA) undertaken for SWAP Internal Audit Services be noted, as included at [Annex C](#).

18. UPDATE ON THE SECTION 106 AGREEMENTS PROJECT

The Committee received and considered the report of the Chief Finance Officer, which provided an update on the above project.

Annex A to the report set out the progress made to date against key project milestones. The overall project status was amber, with good progress being made and records being added to the live system. It was hoped that the uploading of records would be completed before the end of the calendar year, but with collation of information from so many departments still ongoing there was a risk of some slippage.

Good progress had been made though with consistent involvement and engagement across the whole organisation. The system had been signed off in test and implemented in the live environment with loading of the current total of 147 records in progress.

Prior to the Chief Finance Officer outlining the report, the Chairman took the opportunity to congratulate the team on the work achieved so far.

In response to queries from Councillors Cooper and Enright, Mrs Griffiths advised that access to the database was currently available for internal staff and was not yet available to the public or parish or town councils. Due to the volume of legal agreements, terms and conditions and caveats included in S106 agreements, officers felt it was important to limit access.

In response to a query from Councillor Postan, Mrs Griffiths explained that it would be possible to run reports and pull information from the data but it was important to temper expectations as this was a working document.

Councillor St John asked how far the data went back and whether it would be possible to filter the information by Ward. He also queried if it could be confirmed that developers would be able to avoid paying contributions as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. Mrs Griffiths advised that she was not aware of developers being released from their duty to pay but would liaise with the project team. It was also confirmed that the information in the S106 database dated back to 2012 as this was when Business World had been installed.

Members thanked officers for their update and to the Audit team for their work. Following a question from Councillor Graham, Ms Cater advised that the Cyber Security Audit was not complete but was underway, with a report due at the next meeting.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

19. COUNTER FRAUD UNIT UPDATE

The Committee received and considered the report of the Counter Fraud Manager, which provided assurances regarding the counter fraud activities of the Council along with direct updates as appropriate.

The Audit and General Purposes Committee's role was to oversee the Council's counter fraud arrangements.

Work plans for the Counter Fraud team detailing progress and results were highlighted for comment and consideration and were attached as annexes A and B to the report. Also included was the annual update in relation to the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA), the Investigatory Powers Act 2016 (IPA), the Council's existing authorisation arrangements and the outcome of the recent inspection by the Investigatory Powers Commissioner's Office (IPCO).

The Counter Fraud Manager, Ms Emma Cathcart outlined the report and highlighted the work carried out by the Counter Fraud Unit (CPU) as a consequence of the recent pandemic. This work had centred on providing advice relating to fraud risk and abuse, most significantly in relation to the Small Business

Grant Fund, Retail, Leisure and Hospitality Grant Funding and Discretionary Grant payments.

Members discussed the process involved in debt recovery and explained that in some circumstances, staff disciplinary action had been implemented. Councillor Graham raised a concern about the potential for misuse of budgets by managers and was reassured that accounting procedures, protocols and need for appropriate sign off were measures designed to ensure security.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

20. INFORMING THE AUDIT RISK ASSESSMENT 2019/20

The Committee received and considered the report of the Chief Finance Officer, which enabled Members to discuss a response to the Council's external auditors (Grant Thornton LLP) regarding how it gained assurance on matters such as fraud, breaches of internal control and compliance with laws and regulations.

A document entitled "Informing the audit risk assessment for West Oxfordshire District Council" had been provided by Grant Thornton and was attached as Annex A to the report.

Peter Barber from Grant Thornton outlined the report and answered questions from members including:

- The table of contents – how areas were set and could other areas be included;
- Collective investments;
- How much attention had been given to the Redmond Review;
- Clarification on Earmarked and usable reserves.

Following a robust presentation and discussion, Members noted the report.

RESOLVED: That the Committee confirms the management response to the auditor risk assessment is a true reflection of the Council's management processes.

21. STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2019/2020

The Committee received and considered the report of the Chief Finance Officer, which presented the Council's audited Statement of Accounts for the period 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020, for consideration and approval.

The Council's Chief Finance Officer was responsible for ensuring that the statement of accounts were prepared and published no later than 31 May immediately following the end of a year. On 31 May, the statement of accounts was submitted to the Council's auditors, Grant Thornton, to undertake the formal audit of the accounts.

It was the Audit & General Purposes Committee's role to formally approve the Statement of Accounts, along with the Grant Thornton Audit Findings Report, on behalf of the Council, following the completion of the audit process.

Previously, the audited Statement of Accounts, along with the Grant Thornton Audit Findings Report, would have been presented to the Audit & General Purposes Committee for formal approval prior to 31 July. However, due to resourcing issues within Grant Thornton the 2019/20 audit was not complete by the end of July and the draft (unaudited) accounts were presented to the Committee to review and approval.

The audit was now complete and attached to the report was the Audit Findings Report for West Oxfordshire District Council (see Annex A). The report detailed all of the work that Grant Thornton had undertaken as part of their formal audit of the accounts, outlined the key findings and matters arising from the statutory audit process.

In presenting the report Mr Barber of Grant Thornton advised that all indicators pointed to the work being completed by the end of November 2020 and would be ready to sign off. He reminded Members that this had been a very challenging time for Grant Thornton and the Council and the accounts had been delayed as a result of staffing levels and conflicting priorities.

Mr Barber thanked the officers for their work in compiling the accounts and assured Members that they had been subject to some very robust discussions. He guided the Committee through the highlights of the report, and included information relating to property, plant and equipment and the Oxfordshire Pension Fund.

The Chief Finance Officer responded to queries from Members and thanked the officers from Grant Thornton for their assistance and support in producing the accounts.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Grant Thornton Audit Findings for West Oxfordshire District Council report be noted;
- (b) That the Statement of Accounts 2019/20 be approved; and
- (c) That the Chief Finance Officer and the Chair of the Committee be authorised to write a letter of representation on behalf of the Committee and Council to Grant Thornton to enable the opinion to be issued.

22. CORPORATE RISK REGISTER UPDATE

The Committee received and considered the report of the Chief Executive, which provided an update on the changes to the Council's Corporate Risk Register as at the end of Quarter Two of 2020/2021.

The Chief Finance Officer outlined the report and answered queries from Members.

In response to a question from Councillor St John, it was highlighted that a glossary of terms was provided at page 99 of the report.

Councillor Graham queried who would be consulted on the Draft Commissioning and Procurement User Guide as referred to in the table on page 5 of the report.. Officers agreed to find out and respond to him outside of the meeting.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

23. MISCELLANEOUS LICENSING SUB-COMMITTEE REPORT

The reports of the meetings of the Miscellaneous Licensing Sub-Committee held on 24 July and 27 August 2020, copies of which had been circulated, were received and noted.

The meeting closed at 7:43 pm

CHAIRMAN



## WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the  
Finance and Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee  
held via video conferencing at 12:30 pm on Wednesday 9 December 2020

### PRESENT

Councillors: Derek Cotterill (Chairman); Alex Postan (Vice-Chairman); Alaa Al-Yousuf, Rosa Bolger, Louise Chapman, Maxine Crossland, Harry Eaglestone, Steve Good, Gill Hill, Liz Leffman, Dan Levy, James Mills, Elizabeth Poskitt, Geoff Saul and Harry St John.

Also in Attendance: Councillors Duncan Enright and Toby Morris.

Officers: Elizabeth Griffiths (Chief Finance Officer and Deputy Chief Executive); Clare Williams (Interim Finance Business Manager); Ciaran O’Kane (Senior Procurement Business Partner); Keith Butler (Head of Democratic Services); and Amy Bridgewater-Carnall (Senior Strategic Support Officer).

#### 22. MINUTES

Councillor Al-Yousuf requested that paragraph 19 of the minutes be amended to record his request to the Chief Finance Officer to report on compliance with the Statement of Investment Principles approved last year.

Subject to this amendment it was

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 7 October 2020 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

#### 23. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TEMPORARY APPOINTMENTS

The following temporary appointment was reported –

Councillor Elizabeth Poskitt for Councillor Julian Cooper

#### 24. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

#### 25. PARTICIPATION OF THE PUBLIC

There were no requests received.

## 26. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2020-2021

The Committee considered the previously circulated report from Democratic Services, which invited it to consider its Work Programme for the remainder of 2020/2021.

The report asked Members to take into account the impact of the cancellation of the previous scheduled meetings of the Committee, and a revised format had been prepared following consultation with an overarching aim of making the programme more focused and relevant.

The Chairman highlighted the changes that had been made with a view to helping the Committee carry out their role more effectively by looking at work that was relevant to their remit and would add value to the decision making process.

Councillor St John raised a query relating to the Investment Property Review and asked the dividing line between officers and the managing agents was clear and if access to the property schedule was available. The Chief Finance Officer assured the Committee that officers were very involved in the process and asked Councillor St John to email his detailed question to her.

Councillor St John also queried when the Council had last looked at its scrutiny processes and Councillor Morris advised that a review was undertaken in 2017 at the request of Councillor Cooper.

RESOLVED: That the new style work programme be adopted.

## 27. CABINET WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee received and considered the report of the Head of Democratic Services which gave Members the opportunity to comment on the Cabinet Work Programme published on 17 November 2020.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

## 28. UPDATE ON 2021/2022 BUDGET

The Committee received and considered the report of the Chief Executive, which provided details of the budget for the following year. Funding would not be determined until the new year and therefore Members were reminded that this draft was an early indication and would be subject to change.

The Chief Finance Officer introduced the report and highlighted the key points. The estimated budget gap in 2021/22 was approximately £3m pre Covid and it was

noted that the pandemic had resulted in a large impact on the Council's income and investments.

The Chief Finance Officer explained that the Budget could be considered as expected and that there would be a funding shortfall of £2 million over 2021/22 and a total of £9 million over the next five years. The Chief Finance Officer also drew attention to the difficulties the Council's Leisure Operator GLL had faced over recent months and the difficulties also faced by the Council's commercial tenants. She continued that the Budget for 2021/22 was based on a £5 uplift in Council Tax for a Band D property, but highlighted that savings in office supplies and working arrangements, owing to the move to working from home, had saved an approximate £300,000.

The Chief Finance Officer advised that there had been approximately £75,000 in terms of savings from Democratic Services due to the lack of elections, no expenses being submitted and more virtual working.

Mrs Griffiths answered queries from Members and clarified the Council's position in relation to Tax Base calculations, the current situation involving GLL and Business Rates revenue.

Councillor Morris echoed the statements made by the Chief Finance Officer and reminded Members that the future was unknown. He referred to the savings already made by Publica and suggested that the increase in Council Tax would be the £5 referred to previously.

In response to a question from Councillor Postan regarding unused surplus funds, Mrs Griffiths assured Members that the budgets had been scrutinised very closely and officers had been robust in deciding if projects were still current and relevant. Councillor Postan requested that any future re-examinations of projects be considered by the Committee.

Councillor Morris concluded by reminding Members that officers were busy managing the finances following the recent pandemic and supporting businesses for the future.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

## 29. PROPOSED CHANGES TO CONTRACT PROCEDURE RULES

The Committee received and considered the report of Senior Procurement Business Partner, Mr Ciaran O'Kane, which advised that Procurement wished to simplify the

procurement process for low value procurements. To support this change, officers were looking to change the thresholds outlined in the current Contract Procedure Rules (CPD's) and align them with all other Publica Councils. The proposed changes would enable officers to self-serve under £25,000.

The Procurement team currently approved all Purchase Orders over £10,000. This would not change under the new process and therefore the team would retain an element of control over the self-serve process.

It was also noted that allowing officers to self-serve would result in an increase in spend levels with local contractors (where appropriate) resulting in benefits to the local economy.

Mr O'Kane introduced the report and highlighted the key points which it was hoped would free up the procurement team to work on more complex procurements.

In response to a query from Councillor Levy, Mr O'Kane advised that the splitting of orders was not an appropriate practice and would not be allowed moving forwards.

Councillor Bolger supported the proposal that the procedures be aligned with the other Publica partners and asked if specific examples relating to West Oxfordshire could be provided. She also enquired if it was possible to have a breakdown of the procurements made below £10,000 and below £25,000 and queried the reference to the local economy. In response, Mr O'Kane advised that he could provide examples and a breakdown as requested after the meeting. He explained that at present, any procurement above £10,000 was put out to tender nationwide and these measures would enable officers to approach three local contractors instead.

Having considered the report, the Committee

RESOLVED: That Council be recommended, via Cabinet, to adopt the proposed revised Contract Procedure Rules appended to this report.

### 30. COUNCIL PRIORITIES AND SERVICE PERFORMANCE REPORT 2020-21 QUARTER TWO

The Committee received and considered the report of the Chief Executive which provided details of the Council's progress towards achieving its aim and priorities set out in the Council Plan 2020-2024, and service performance during Q2.

The Chief Finance Officer highlighted the key aspects of the report and answered questions from Members.

Councillor St John referred to the introduction of a new IT system for Revenue and Benefits and hoped that this would be hard tested before going live.

The Chief Finance Officer assured Members that those involved in the implementation of the system were very aware that the system was critical and this would ultimately help those officers in their everyday work. Councillor St John requested that his thanks be passed to the team for their hard work.

Members raised the issue of the colour printing in the papers which was not easy to read against a white background. Officers agreed to feed this back.

The Chairman thanked the Chief Finance Officer for her attendance.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

### 31. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

Councillor Postan had submitted two questions before the meeting relating to Brokers and Projects respectively.

The first question was:

"Current procedure with Council holdings of collective investments relies on one retained broker. We have no established principles or guidelines or formal objectives. To improve our administration of the considerable assets under management could we obtain a detailed analysis from our broker of the various fund managers' rules and objectives and to establish a portfolio overview of individual fund holdings and where there may be over emphasis through duplication and conflicting fund manager actions with regard to rebalancing, value, momentum and asset allocation."

In response to the question, the Chairman reminded Members that the Investment Strategy contained a lot of the information referred to but it may not be in a desirable format. The Chief Finance Officer advised that officers would be holding a strategy session with the Council's advisors, Arlingclose next week and she had forwarded the question to them to address.

The second question was:

"Two significant initiatives that I have introduced (EV charging and Key worker mortgage assistance) have both failed to achieve their original intentions.

The cause of the failures might lie with a failure from members to clearly specify the objectives and the worthy but scattered implementation by the officers attending to

the initiative. From now on, new motions or calls for action would be better served by starting to work through by the use of "start and finish" groups with a clear description of the intended outcome and a defined reporting date.

Could this become the default position from now on."

The Chief Finance Officer agreed with the sentiment of this statement as project management was an area of work that she was keen to strengthen. She advised that Publica had been addressing this issue over the past year and had recognised that it was unfair to expect officers to absorb projects on top of their day jobs.

Councillor Enright queried if there was a procurement strategy attached to the Council Plan. Mr O'Kane advised that there was a strategy but it had been recognised that it was out of date and needed further work. He did advise that a User Guide was due to be published shortly.

Members also discussed the merits of forming Task and Finish Groups but recognised that it was important that the toolkits were used and followed appropriately.

The meeting closed at 2.00pm

CHAIRMAN

## WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee  
held via video conferencing at 2 p.m. on Thursday 10 December 2020

### PRESENT

Councillors: Alaa Al-Yousuf (Chairman), Martin McBride (Vice Chairman), Richard Bishop, Jill Bull, Mike Cahill, Owen Collins, Harry Eaglestone, Duncan Enright, Ted Fenton, Liz Leffman, James Mills, Elizabeth Poskitt and Alex Postan.

Also in attendance: Councillors Toby Morris and Harry St John.

Officers in attendance: Elizabeth Griffiths (Chief Finance Officer); Bill Oddy (Group Manager - Commercial Development, Leadership and Management Team); Philip Measures (Service Leader ERS); David Rudland (Senior Officer ERS); Scott Williams (Business Manager Commissioning Strategy, Environmental Services); Simon Cluley (Ubico); Keith Butler (Head of Democratic Services); Amy Bridgewater-Carnall (Senior Strategic Support Officer); and Ben Amor (Strategic Support Officer).

### 13. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 1 October 2020 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### 14. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TEMPORARY APPOINTMENTS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Andrew Coles and Ben Woodruff, and from Councillor Collins for delayed arrival. The following temporary appointments were notified:

Councillor James Mills for Councillor Ben Woodruff

Councillor Duncan Enright for Councillor Andrew Coles

### 15. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

### 16. PARTICIPATION OF THE PUBLIC

No submissions were received from the public in accordance with the Council's Rules of Procedure.

17. CALL-IN OF CABINET DECISION – COMMUNITY RECYCLING – BRING SITES IN WEST OXFORDSHIRE

The Committee was requested to consider the call-in request relating to the Cabinet decision of 18 November 2020 (minute no. 68) in respect of the future approach to community recycling bring sites in the district.

The Chairman advised that a brief statement by the Cabinet Member for Environment had been circulated to the Committee earlier that day, as follows:

*"At the original presentation of this item, I said that we would not be suddenly removing the bins but would do so in discussion with the relevant Town and Parish Council. I would like to take this opportunity to make clear what I meant.*

*Before the sites are considered for removal, our officers will be consulting with the associated Town or Parish Council and the Ward Member(s).*

*In any event and being appreciative of the strong likelihood of significant amounts of recycling items being generated over Christmas and the New Year period, it is not intended to begin any changes before 1st February 2021.*

*I hope this helps."*

The Chairman also advised the Committee of the recommendations that (a) the Committee should decide whether or not to support the call-in request; and (b) that, if the request was supported, the Committee should determine whether it wished to submit any additional comments to Cabinet.

Councillor Leffman questioned how, if town or parish councils wished to retain bring sites in their respective parishes, this would be dealt with by the District Council. In response, the Group Manager responded that the cost of managing the bring sites would require further consideration, but that Officers were willing to undertake discussions with local councils on this matter and that an Officer from the Council's Waste Team was shortly to be redeployed to a role in the communications team with specific responsibility for Environment Promotions, to assist with this.

Councillor Fenton thanked the Cabinet Member for the information he had circulated and commented that the most common issue with bring sites was the



overflowing of waste in the vicinity surrounding the various containers, especially cardboard waste.

Councillor Fenton then proposed that the call-in should not be taken forward and requested that instead an increase in community consultation and engagement with local residents and councils be undertaken before any further action by the Council. The proposition was seconded by Councillor Postan.

In supporting the proposition, Councillor Bishop explained that he had received much correspondence from residents regarding the removal of one bring site in his Ward. He added that he felt the matter had been badly handled by the Cabinet particularly in relation to communication and that for these reasons he would be supporting the proposition made by Councillors Fenton and Postan.

Councillor Mills highlighted that some sites had been removed at the request of local councils and residents as many had become frustrated by the level of mess and abuse of the sites. He added that he considered education for residents was important, in terms of what the sites could and should be used for. The Chairman responded that this had been the case in Hanborough and that removal of that particular bring site had resulted in two extra parking spaces in the car park being made available.

Various Members supported the suggestion that a leaflet previously circulated to all of the district's residents annually regarding items that could be recycled at the sites should be reproduced and circulated again to residents. Members also echoed the comments made earlier in the meeting by Members relating to further and improved consultation by the Council.

Councillor Enright sought confirmation that there would be no cost to the local councils for removal or relocation of any bring sites and that this operation would be funded by the District Council as had been previously discussed at Cabinet and Council. In response, the Group Manager explained that if there were any additional budget implications from the removal or relocation of any sites or in the management of the sites, this information would need to be reported to the Cabinet owing to any possible budget implications.

Councillor Postan added that by locating the bring sites in prominent and visible locations; this would help to mitigate risks of fly tipping.

Councillor MacRae as the Cabinet Member then addressed the Committee and explained that communication was paramount and that he as the Cabinet Member with the relevant Officers needed to ensure this was improved going forward. Councillor MacRae, in reference to the leaflet referred to by the Committee, explained this was published on the Council's website and that he would ensure attention was drawn to it.

Councillors Cahill and Enright confirmed they were satisfied that the request for Cabinet to reconsider the matter need not be pursued.

RESOLVED: That the request for Cabinet to reconsider the decisions taken at its meeting on 18 November 2020 be not pursued.

18. WASTE SERVICE

The Committee received a verbal update and presentation on the Waste Service across West Oxfordshire from a Ubico representative and officers.

The Chairman extended his thanks on behalf of the Committee to the Ubico teams for their ongoing work in challenging times.

Councillor Fenton questioned whether crews were suitably protected when dealing with disposable facemasks that needed to be cleared from pavements and public spaces. In response, officers confirmed that crews were suitably protected and that facemasks were collected by grabbers and placed in bags so that no hand contact was required.

Councillor Leffman asked whether information regarding fly tipping could be separated into figures at ward level to enable the Council to determine whether certain areas within the district faced higher rates of fly tipping than others.

In response to a question from Councillor Mills, officers confirmed that stickers were left on fly tips highlighting that the Council had been made aware of the incident and that the matter was being dealt with.

RESOLVED: That the update be noted.

19. AIR QUALITY

The Committee received a verbal update followed by questions on the Air Quality situation across West Oxfordshire.

In response to various questions from Members, Officers reported that most Plans were dependent upon development schemes coming forward and would be contributed to by national schemes to remove the sale of new petrol and diesel powered vehicles in the future; real time air quality monitors had previously been used by the Council but there were issues in relation to the costs of both the internal and external maintenance of them; the Highways Authority and County Council had a duty to respond to issues of air quality; air quality data was currently produced monthly and levels varied over the months around the target figure of 40 micrograms of particulars and the County Council could implement restrictions on daytime traffic in attempts to mitigate particulars in certain areas where higher levels were regularly recorded.

The Chairman thanked the Officers for their presentations and attendance and asked for the presentations to be circulated to the Committee after the meeting.

RESOLVED: That the update be noted.

20. APPROACH TO LITTER BIN PLACEMENT AND RENEWAL PROGRAMME IN WEST OXFORDSHIRE

The Committee considered the report of the Business Manager - Waste, which sought to update Members on the issues being experienced with litter and dog bins in the District and to seek approval for a renewal programme to be delivered over the following five years.

The Group Manager Commercial Development, Leadership and Management Team advised that communication with some local parish and town council clerks had been undertaken and the recommendations arose from the fact that dog waste could now be placed in ordinary waste bins owing to its eventual incineration. The Group Manager added that in addition to the plan to reduce the number of bins in conservation areas to help improve the street scene, a pilot for smart bins was also intended to be trialled. Replacement bins were also being provided where bins were known to be in a poor condition.

Members expressed their support for the trial of smart bins but raised concern regarding the issue of smell from dog waste being placed in ordinary waste bins and questioned how this would be managed by the Council. In response, the Group Manager explained that where issues of smell could be expected to cause a

public nuisance it was likely a standard dog waste bin would be installed alongside an ordinary waste bin. He added that replacement bins owing to poor condition were carried out on a like for like basis.

Councillor Eaglestone commented that he had faced difficulties in requesting the installation of new waste bins in his Ward. The Chairman advised that he should raise this matter with Officers outside of the meeting.

RESOLVED: That the recommendations to Cabinet be supported.

## 21. UPDATE ON THE 2021/2022 BUDGET

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Finance Officer which provided an update on the developing budget for 2021/22.

The Chief Finance Officer introduced the report and explained that the Budget could be considered as expected and that there would be a funding shortfall of £2 million over 2021/22 and a total of £9 million over the next five years. The Chief Finance Officer also drew attention to the difficulties the Council's Leisure Operator GLL had faced over recent months and the difficulties also faced by the Council's commercial tenants. She continued that the Budget for 2021/22 was based on a £5 uplift in Council Tax for a Band D property, but highlighted that savings in office supplies and working arrangements, owing to the move to working from home, had saved an approximate £300,000.

Councillor Morris drew attention to the fact that many of the variables for the Budget were still to be confirmed by the Government and that whilst changes to the New Homes Bonus had been deferred for a further year, the Budget needed to be based on a worst-case scenario. He added that recent calculations estimated the savings generated because of the transfer to Publica in 2017 were now around £8 million and, given the current national financial climate, considered the £5 precept increase was correct and one that should be supported by Council.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

22. COUNCIL PRIORITIES AND SERVICE PERFORMANCE REPORT 2020-21 QUARTER TWO

The Committee considered the report which provided details of the Council's progress towards achieving its aims and priorities set out in the Council Plan 2020-2024, and service performance during Q2.

Councillor Fenton questioned whether it was yet possible to calculate the total cost of the impact of Covid-19 on the Council. In response, the Chief Finance Officer explained that the Council was constantly being required to readjust its expectations and further information was required regarding how the Council's commercial input had fared before any suitable calculations could be undertaken.

The Chairman thanked the Chief Finance Officer for her attendance and continued efforts during the current situation.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

23. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2020/2021

The Committee was provided with an update on its work programme for 2020/21.

The Chairman advised that with regard to Bulk Waste Charges as outlined in paragraph 2.6 of the report, this would be considered at either the February or April 2021 Committee meeting.

The Chairman also advised that the Flood Prevention, Drainage and Sewerage Issues item was expected at the February 2021 Committee meeting alongside the Ubico Budget and Business Plan. He added that the Climate Change Manager would produce a summary from the Climate Action Working Group meeting that had taken place on 10 December 2020 and which would be circulated to all Members in advance of its presentation to Council in February 2021.

Councillors Mills requested the Group to be mindful of the Oxfordshire/Cambridgeshire Arc Work that was continuing.

Councillor McBride requested that he be included in invitations to future meetings of the Climate Action Working Group.

RESOLVED: That the Committee Work Programme be noted.

24. CABINET WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee received and considered the report of the Head of Democratic Services, which gave members the opportunity to comment on the Cabinet Work Programme published on 17 November 2020.

25. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

There were none.

The Chairman thanked all present for their attendance and closed the meeting.

The meeting closed at 4.20 pm

CHAIRMAN

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WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

Record of decisions taken at the meeting of the Cabinet held  
via video conferencing on Wednesday 16 December, 2020 at 2.00pm.

PRESENT

Councillors: Michele Mead (Leader); Toby Morris (Deputy Leader); Suzi Coul, Marilyn Davies, Jeff Haine, David Harvey and Norman MacRae MBE.

Also in Attendance: Councillors Alaa Al-Yousuf, Andrew Beaney, Richard Bishop, Julian Cooper, Derek Cotterill, Harry Eaglestone, Duncan Enright, Hilary Fenton, Ted Fenton, Andy Graham, Gill Hill, Dan Levy, James Mills, Elizabeth Poskitt, Alex Postan, Carl Rylett and Harry St John.

Officers: Giles Hughes (Chief Executive); Elizabeth Griffiths (Chief Finance Officer); Frank Wilson (Executive Director, Finance); Bill Oddy (Group Manager, Commercial Development); Chris Hargraves (Planning Policy Manager); Scott Williams (Business Manager Waste); Maria Wheatley (Parking Manager); Fiona Woodhouse (Parking Projects and Contracts Officer); Christine Cushway (Business Manager, Assets); Jasmine McWilliams (Assets Manager); Keith Butler (Head of Democratic Services) and Amy Bridgewater-Carnall (Senior Strategic Support Officer).

74. NOTICE OF DECISIONS

RESOLVED: That the record of the decisions taken at the meeting held on 18 November 2020, copies of which had been circulated, be approved and signed as a correct record.

75. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Steve Good.

76. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

77. PARTICIPATION OF THE PUBLIC

Mrs Jo Lamb addressed Members regarding Agenda Item 08 – Parking In Woodstock: Public Consultation. A copy of her submission is attached as Annex A to the original copy of these minutes.

78. RECEIPT OF ANNOUNCEMENTS

78.1 Update on Covid Numbers

The Leader, Councillor Mead addressed Members and advised that unfortunately the number of reported Covid-19 cases had almost doubled in West Oxfordshire. She assured the meeting that she would circulate the numbers shortly and strongly encouraged everyone to continue delivering the 'Hands, Face, Space' message.

The Leader also thanked all Members, officers and staff for their endeavours over what had been a challenging year, and she wished everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

78.2 Clinically Vulnerable Residents, Leisure Centres and Ongoing Support for those in need

Councillor Coul advised that the Council had been successful in contacting all of the Clinically Vulnerable Residents in the District following news of the second lockdown. She thanked everyone involved for making this possible.

She also advised that two of the District's Leisure Centres would be open on additional days throughout the Christmas period – Witney Leisure Centre planned to open on Boxing Day and the Carterton Leisure Centre would open on New Years' Day.

Finally, Councillor Coul reminded Councillors that nobody should be going hungry in the District, especially over Christmas. She therefore urged Members to let officers know if there was someone in their Ward in need of support and it would be put in place for them.

78.3 Waste Service Update

Councillor MacRae updated the meeting on the arrangements for refuse and recycling collections throughout the Christmas Period. He encouraged Councillors and the public to consult the Facebook page and the website for details of the

change in collection time and reminded everyone that Christmas trees would also be collected after Christmas. Councillor MacRae also announced that one of the fleet's Corsa vans had reached the end of its life and would be replaced with an electric vehicle.

He also took the opportunity to thank all of the staff at Ubico for their hard work over the year and for keeping the streets of the District clean and tidy.

#### 78.4 Covid Business Grants

Councillor Morris addressed Members and advised that to date 558 businesses had received Business Grants in West Oxfordshire with 141 applications still being processed. So far, approximately £915,000 had been provided and the Council was set to have provided well over a £1m worth of assistance to local businesses once the outstanding applications had been processed.

#### 79. FUNDING FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A MASTERPLAN FOR HANBOROUGH STATION

The Cabinet received and considered the report of the Planning Policy Manager, which asked Members to agree the release of additional funds from the Council's unallocated Housing and Planning Delivery Grant (HPDG) to support the development of a masterplan for Hanborough Station.

The report reminded Members that the Local Development Scheme included reference to the possible development of a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for Hanborough Station. This document would need to be prepared by specialist transport consultants and the District Council had received confirmation from Oxfordshire County Council that it was able to provide £15,000 of funding.

As the overall cost of the masterplan was likely to be around £30,000, the District Council had been asked to provide match funding of £15,000 to enable the work to proceed.

In June 2020, Members agreed a release of £132,000 from the Council's unallocated HPDG to support the final stages of the preparation and adoption of the Garden Village Area Action Plan (AAP) and other SPDs. This report requested approval to release a further £15,000 to enable the development of the masterplan. Subject to the approval of Members, the scope and timetable of the Station Masterplan SPD

would be included in a future update of the Council's Local Development Scheme (LDS).

The Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning, Councillor Haine introduced the report and drew attention to the key points in the report. Councillor Morris seconded the recommendation and applauded the opportunity for match funding with the County Council.

Members were supportive of the recommendations but assurance was sought that Active Travel, cycle connectivity and bus routes would be at the forefront of the project. Councillor Haine agreed that the purpose of the master plan was to improve all aspects of travelling to and from the station.

Having considered the report, the Cabinet agreed that the recommendations be approved.

DECISION: That approval be given for the release of £15,000 from the Council's unallocated Housing and Planning Delivery Grant (HPDG) to support the development of a masterplan for Hanborough Station.

REASONS: To help identify and deliver a number of improvements to Hanborough Station, having a positive effect in terms of a number of elements of the Council Plan (2020-2024) including climate change, a vibrant economy and strong local communities.

OPTIONS: Cabinet could choose not to release the funding or request funding from an alternative source.

#### 80. INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING STATEMENT

The Cabinet received and considered the report of the Planning Policy Manager, which asked Members to consider and approve the West Oxfordshire Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS) for 2019/20, attached at Annex A to the report.

The report advised that changes made to the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Regulations in 2019 brought in a requirement for local planning authorities to produce an annual Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS) which must be published by 31 December each year and cover the previous financial year (1 April - 31 March).

The main purpose of the IFS was to set out in a transparent manner, future infrastructure requirements and expected costs, contributions received (both financial and non-financial) during the previous financial year, anticipated funding from developer contributions (e.g. Section 106 and CIL) and the Council's future spending priorities.

Councillor Haine introduced the report and advised that it was a requirement by law that the IFS be published. He drew attention to key issues including the Section 106 funds secured in 2019-20 and the key local priorities identified by the Chief Finance Officer.

Councillor Davies seconded the recommendations and was confident that this was the starting point for future transparency regarding S106 and CIL contributions.

In response to a query from Councillor St John regarding a detailed schedule of works, inadequate cycle ways and works on the A4095, Councillor Haine advised that he would respond outside of the meeting.

Councillor Cooper listed a number of queries that he wanted responding to including; the potential for highways improvements for Woodstock; whether the reference to 4G on page 61 should read 5G; and air quality management in Woodstock. Councillor Haine agreed to look into the queries and respond after the meeting.

Members were advised that the IFS would be published on the Council websites, under the Planning pages and would be clearly signposted.

Councillor Poskitt queried if the cycleway could be looked out at Bladon, asked for clarification on the timescales listed for Woodstock Primary School and the costings for the upgrading of supply boosters by Thames Water.

Councillor Cotterill referred to the potential provision of additional off street parking on page 50 of the report and asked if any project management had been identified. In response, Councillor Haine explained that the details were still being collated but the need had been identified.

Having considered the report, the Cabinet approved the recommendations.

DECISION: That the Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS) attached at Annex A to the report be approved and published on the Council's website by 31 December 2020 in accordance with legislative requirements.

REASONS: To provide greater clarity on future infrastructure requirements in West Oxfordshire and the Council's spending priorities moving forward. The IFS would help to support and deliver many of the aims and objectives of the Council Plan (2020 – 2024).

OPTIONS: Cabinet could choose to make comment or approve an amended version.

81. PARKING IN WOODSTOCK: PUBLIC CONSULTATION

The Cabinet received and considered the report of the Parking Manager, which informed Cabinet of the responses to the public consultation on parking in Woodstock.

The District Council adopted a Parking Strategy in 2016 which identified two key areas at that time; a growing demand for additional parking capacity and a need for changes to parking regulations on-street in a few key locations.

Woodstock was the second parking review to be carried out by the Council and the results from the review were attached as Annex A to the report. In 2010, the Council took on the responsibility of on-street enforcement, taking over from the Police and Traffic Wardens. Council Enforcement Officers have always had to take a relaxed approach, (in agreement with the County Council), in this town due to the deluge of complaints and issues.

Public consultation was carried out November 2019, and the results have been analysed so that some conclusions can be drawn. An online questionnaire was advertised on the District and Woodstock Town Council websites and paper copies were made available via the Town Council. The survey received 1,166 responses via on line survey and 155 paper responses.

Councillor MacRae outlined the report and clarified the responsibilities that the District Council had for parking. He explained the difficulties that had arisen during the consultation and whilst collating the data and assured Councillors that the Cabinet was very mindful of the frustrations felt by residents of Woodstock.

As a result of the concerns raised by so many, Councillor MacRae advised that a meeting had been arranged for 18 January 2021 with Council officers, representatives of Blenheim Palace and the County Council to investigate views on redeveloping various sites and to help move work forwards. It had also been agreed to invite the Woodstock Town Clerk to the meeting.

Councillor MacRae went on to explain that the Council would continue to enforce parking as agreed with OCC and as requested by the Town Council and, following requests, would seek to increase enforcement patrols in the New Year. Various other solutions were supported including the introduction of a one way system, a park and ride shuttle system with Blenheim Palace and the banning of coaches from the town centre.

The proposal was seconded by Councillor Mead who assured the meeting that Cabinet were taking the matter seriously and were keen to help identify solutions.

Councillor Cooper raised a number of concerns with the report and queried if the relevant parties would be involved in discussions. Councillor MacRae advised that representatives from Blenheim Estate had been invited to the January meeting, which was a starting point for stakeholders.

Some Members felt that the recommendation did not demonstrate a strong enough resolve by the Council to address the problems and instead appeared to pass the responsibility to the County Council. Having asked Members what they would like the recommendation to state, Councillor MacRae agreed to amend the wording to include reference to the meeting in January 2021.

Having considered the report, Cabinet agreed to approve the recommendations subject to the additional wording "We will forward the data to the County Council as the appropriate authority however in determining a way forward, we will facilitate a meeting with officers on 18 January 2021 to enable progress."

DECISION: That the data be forwarded to the County Council as the appropriate authority however in determining a way forward, the Council will facilitate a meeting with officers on 18 January 2021 to enable progress.

REASONS: To address the concerns raised by residents and try to find a solution with interested parties.

OPTIONS: Cabinet could choose to amend the wording or agree an alternative resolution.

## 82. LITTER BIN PLACEMENT AND RENEWAL PROGRAMME

The Cabinet received and considered the report of the Business Manager Waste, which updated Members on the issues being experienced with litter and dog bins in West Oxfordshire and sought approval for a renewal programme to be delivered over the following five years.

Under the Environmental Protection Act, West Oxfordshire District Council was a 'Litter Authority' and responsible for cleansing of the adopted highway within its district boundary, in addition the Council could provide and maintain in any street or public place receptacles for refuse or litter - referred to as litter bins.

There was a duty to arrange for regular emptying and cleansing of any litter bins provided or maintained and the regular emptying must be sufficiently frequent. Having conducted a recent evaluation of the bin portfolio, the Council had approximately 700 litter and 500 dog waste bins (total 1,200) in place, in varying conditions and with differing levels of usage. In many cases there were multiple bins in the same location and in some cases were seldom used.

A significant number of bins had also come to the end of their usable life at the same point in time and so officers felt it was appropriate to undertake a review, introduce a set of principles to ensure that the coverage was suitable for the district, and introduce an annual replacement programme to avoid this occurring in the future.

This report was considered by the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting in December 2020 and their views were detailed in the minutes of the meeting. A number of officers and Cabinet Members were also present at the scrutiny committee to answer questions and take on board the comments made. Following a robust discussion, the scrutiny committee supported the recommendations in the report.

Councillor MacRae introduced the report and thanked the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee for their thorough consideration and discussion of the report. He outlined the reason for undertaking a review and assured Members that officers would be introducing "guidelines, not tram lines". The process that the work



would follow was explained and Councillor MacRae announced the introduction of new technology for SMART bins. He assured Members that their comments had been taken on board and would be used to rationalise the placement of bins and hopefully address a number of the concerns raised.

Councillor Enright made reference to the first recycling bins installed in Witney and asked officers to be mindful that the type of rubbish being recycled had changed over the years.

Councillor Mills advised that he had attended the scrutiny committee along with Councillors MacRae and Morris, all of whom had benefitted from partaking in the discussion and hearing the comments made. He felt that the views of the Parish and Town Councils were key with regards to positioning and thanked officers, Bill Oddy and Scott Williams for their work on this project.

Having considered the report, Cabinet agreed that the recommendations be approved.

#### DECISIONS:

- (a) That the risks and financial implications relating to the provision and servicing of the current litter and dog waste bins be noted;
- (b) That the introduction of the set of principles for the placement of litter and dog waste bins going forward be approved, as set out in the report;
- (c) That the proposal to complete a rationalisation exercise of the existing litter and dog waste bins to ensure that the coverage is suitable for the district and that bins are located in the most appropriate places and in line with the agreed set of principles referenced in (b) above be approved;
- (d) That Council be recommended to increase the annual capital budget by £13k per annum over the next five years, to give an annual total of £25k for bin purchases and fitting; and
- (e) That Officers work with Ubico to identify the revenue savings arising from this rationalisation and, by agreement, seek to reduce the contract value accordingly.

REASONS: The proposal contained within this report supports the Council priority:

Climate Action - Leading the way in protecting and enhancing the environment by taking action locally on climate change and biodiversity.

OPTIONS: The alternatives to implementing a litter/dog waste bin siting and replacement strategy would be to:

- Retain the current approach with the large number of bins, accepting that they are not all in the correct locations and Ubico will likely be wasting time and fuel in having to visit them;
- Accept that Ubico will likely not be able to manage collecting from all of the bins and so additional resources would be required sooner than if the bin estate is managed by way of the replacement programme;
- Accept that without an agreed set of principles, the location of litter bins is likely to be decided upon with little evidence to support their effectiveness.

83. CONSIDERATION OF THE APPROACH TO COMMUNITY RECYCLING (BRING SITES) IN WEST OXFORDSHIRE

Cabinet noted that this item had been included on the agenda to enable its consideration in the event of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee support a request for Cabinet to be asked to reconsider the decisions it had taken at its meeting held 18 November 2020.

Councillor Mead addressed Members and explained that the item relating to bring sites was included on the agenda as a "holding item" to enable Cabinet to look at the matter again in the event of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee requesting us to do so, arising from its meeting on 10 December.

However, the Committee had not supported the request, meaning that the item did not require further consideration and that the decisions taken at the previous meeting could now be implemented.

84. DRAFT STRATEGIC VISION FOR OXFORDSHIRE

The Cabinet received and considered the report of the Chief Executive, which introduced the first draft of a Strategic Vision for Oxfordshire, attached as Appendix 1 to the report. The documents explained the purpose of this unique approach, the scope and content of the Vision, and the timeline for the current engagement and

finalising the Vision. The Draft Vision was presented for discussion and comments to help inform revisions prior to future Growth Board endorsement.

The Oxfordshire Growth Board ('the Board') was established in 2014 as a Joint Committee of the six councils of Oxfordshire, together with key strategic partners. Establishing a clear and coherent vision for Oxfordshire setting out what the partners were seeking to achieve and their strategic priorities, played an important role in helping manage some of the risks to the Oxfordshire Plan at Examination.

The draft Strategic Vision was considered by the Economic and Social Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 19 November and the draft minute from that meeting was included as Appendix 2 to the report.

Councillor Mead introduced the report and thanked the Economic & Social Overview and Scrutiny Committee for their consideration of the report. Following that meeting, a statement had been compiled outlining Members' views, as detailed below:

*"We welcome the development of a Strategic Vision for Oxfordshire, this will be a valuable document supporting the Oxfordshire Plan, and helping focus the activities of the Oxfordshire Growth Board and its Members.*

*The Strategic Vision can play an important role in helping articulate the vision of the Growth Board partners to local communities, residents and businesses.*

*We support in principle the ambitions set out in the document, it's important that the strength of these ambitions is retained or enhanced through any redrafting, while accepting that the balance between them is important.*

*These outcomes, definition of good growth and guiding principles are important elements.*

*The document supports the work that West Oxfordshire has taken in declaring a climate and ecological emergency and in developing a Climate Action Plan.*

*It must include more references to Oxfordshire's educational assets such as its World Class universities and the schools in the County, as well as the importance of supporting learning, including lifelong learning, so that no one in our communities is left behind.*

*As Oxfordshire is the most rural county in the South-East Region, it would be helpful to emphasise the challenge this provides in terms of our rural population's accessibility to services and facilities.*

*The importance of the agricultural sector to rural communities in Oxfordshire should be noted, as should the role that this sector can play in helping deliver our biodiversity and climate ambitions.*

*It should also include reference to effective social care being vital to help support Oxfordshire's ageing population and to reduce inequalities.*

*The document needs to add reference to social inclusion and diversity, to reflect the diverse communities within Oxfordshire and the need to address feelings of marginalisation.*

*Any redrafting should look to make the document a bit more punchy and shorter if possible to help sharpen the narrative."*

Councillor Coul seconded the proposal.

Councillor Harvey applauded the inclusion of reference to the importance of Climate Change and Biodiversity.

Councillor Graham thanked the Leader and felt that the input and comments made by the Economic & Social Overview and Scrutiny Committee had been invaluable.

Having considered the report, Cabinet agreed that the statement read out should be the basis of the Council's response on the draft Strategic Vision.

DECISIONS: That following the engagement exercise, the statement delivered at the meeting, as outlined above, reflected the views expressed at this meeting and should be the basis of the Council's response to the draft Strategic Vision for Oxfordshire.

REASONS: The Strategic Vision is relevant to the Council's vision in relation to climate action, a vibrant district economy, strong local communities, and meeting the housing needs of our changing population.

OPTIONS: The Cabinet could amend the submission on the draft Strategic Vision or choose not to submit one.

85. FINANCIAL AND SERVICE PERFORMANCE 2020/21 QUARTER TWO

The Cabinet received and considered the report of the Chief Executive which provided details of the Council's operational and financial performance at the end of 2020-21 Quarter two (Q2), and enabled Councillors to assess financial and operational performance and gain assurance on progress towards achieving the Council's priorities.

Each quarter, the Council monitored its progress towards achieving its aim and priorities, service delivery and financial performance and this was reported to Members for noting and comment.

The report was separated into different areas including, Financial Reporting; Revenue and Capital, Performance reporting, the Council Priority Report and Service Performance report. Details on the Revenue Outturn, Capital Programme, Council priority report and performance indicator reports were attached as Annexes A to D of the report.

Councillor Morris outlined the report and noted that performance had been better than originally forecast with areas faring well considering the circumstances of the past nine months. He also highlighted a piece of work that had been identified around Age Debt and he was pleased that the Council had still managed to deliver on Affordable Housing and Climate Change measures.

Councillor Harvey seconded the proposal and the officers were thanked for their work in very trying times.

Councillor Graham requested some narrative relating to the Home Improvement Scheme and the Green Waste Service underspend. Councillor Morris advised that he would respond outside of the meeting.

Councillor St John took the opportunity to thank the Housing Team for their continued dedication and ability to hit target whilst working amidst a pandemic.

Having considered the report, Cabinet agreed that the report be noted.

DECISION: That the 2020-21 Quarter Two financial and service performance be noted.

REASONS: To ensure the Council was meeting it's priorities in relation to Climate Action, Healthy Towns and Villages, A Vibrant District Economy, Strong Local

Communities, Meeting the Housing Needs of our Changing Population, Modern Council Services and Sustainable Finance.

OPTIONS: There were no alternative options.

86. UPDATE ON THE UNICORN, GREAT ROLLRIGHT

The Cabinet received and considered the report of the Business Manager, Assets, which asked Members to consider a moratorium period under which the Council would not take action on enforced sale or compulsory purchase of the Unicorn Public House at Great Rollright.

The Unicorn Public House was a grade two Listed Building which had been closed and unoccupied for circa 30 years. A repairs notice was served on the owners of the property in August 2017 requiring essential repairs for the protection of the Listed Building to be carried out.

The Council had previously agreed to progress a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) should the necessary repairs fail to be carried out to protect the Listed Building. However, a CPO was a last resort and the Council must engage with the owner to seek to negotiate an outcome which delivered the end result.

Over the last 18 months the legal ownership of the property had changed and the owners had employed new Agents to progress work at the site. Officers have been communicating with the Agents to seek to move the repairs at the site forward. Earlier this year the owners' agents submitted a pre-application planning advice request as part of progressing the necessary requirements to deliver on the repairs work.

More recently, the Council had been approached and asked to agree to a period of time during which it would not progress either an enforced sale application to the Courts or an application for CPO (moratorium period) in consideration of the owner progressing specific work and achieving agreed milestones.

Councillor Morris introduced the report and outlined the reasons for the recommendations. He reminded the meeting that proceeding with a CPO at this stage was possible but was likely to be unsuccessful because the Council would have failed to demonstrate that they had been willing to negotiate with the owners, who

had put forward a detailed list of works for the first time. Progress of the agreed works would be monitored and reported back to Cabinet.

Authority to waive the call in rights on this decision had been given from the Chairman of the Finance and Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee. This meant that the transaction could be completed without delay and the temporary roof works could be carried out as soon as possible.

Councillor Morris proposed an additional recommendation as follows:

The Local Ward Members will be updated on progress and any decisions or actions that have been taken.

This was seconded by Councillor Haine.

Councillor Beaney expressed his disagreement with the proposal as he felt that the heritage asset should be protected under the NPPF and the owners to date had failed to do that. He also queried why the Finance and Management Committee should be considering the item as he felt it fell into the remit of Economic and Social.

In response, Councillor Morris acknowledge his frustrations and advised that there were financial implications involved in entering into a CPO and it would cost the Council a lot of money.

Having considered the report the Cabinet agreed the recommendations subject to the addition of recommendation (d) below.

#### DECISIONS:

- (a) That approval be given to enter into a legal agreement for a moratorium period during which time the Council will not take action subject to the owner satisfying the terms of the agreement and progressing the agreed work, as set out in the report;
- (b) That the Chief Executive be authorised to approve the final terms of the agreement, to monitor the agreement, and to take necessary action and decisions required under the agreement, all in consultation with the Head of Legal Services, the Chief Finance Officer and the Cabinet Members for Resources and Strategic Planning;

- (c) That for the reasons explained in paragraph 2.12 of the report, and in accordance with the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules and with the consent of the Chair of the Finance and Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the foregoing decisions be implemented immediately; and
- (d) The Local Ward Members will be updated on progress and any decisions or actions that have been taken.

REASONS: None listed.

OPTIONS: Cabinet could decide not to grant the moratorium period but the owners have indicated that they would therefore not be able to fund the necessary repair works.

87. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED: That, in view of the likely disclosure of exempt information, as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, (information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person), the public be excluded from the meeting for the remaining item of business.

88. LEASE PROPOSAL FOR INVESTMENT PROPERTY

The Cabinet received and considered the report of the Assets Manager, Assets, which outlined a proposal to serve notice to break the existing lease of a property which the Council owned the freehold of.

The report detailed the reasons for the proposal which included the impact that Coronavirus had had on the commercial tenants business and how the company had entered into a Company Voluntary Arrangement at the end of September. The Council had to decide whether to continue with the tenancy or exercise the break clause with a view to re-letting the property.

The report contained details of two potential new tenants and the preferred direction that officers felt would give greater security and income than the current lease.

The Chair of the Finance and Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Councillor Cotterill, had been approached and asked to consider waiving the need for 'Call In' of this decision, to meet the strict time limit for the receipt of the break



notice by 24 December 2020. It was confirmed at the meeting that consent had been received from Councillor Cotterill.

Councillor Morris proposed the recommendations as set out and this was seconded by Councillor Coul.

DECISIONS:

- (a) That the detailed recommendations relating to the lease set out in the report be approved; and
- (b) That for the reasons explained in the report, and in accordance with the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules and with the consent of the Chair of the Finance and Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the foregoing decisions be implemented immediately.

REASONS: To provide efficient and value for money services, whilst delivering quality front line services.

OPTIONS: Cabinet could decide not to serve the break notice and the property would remain under the existing lease and the Council would receive the rent detailed in the CVA, at 2.1 of the report.

The meeting closed at 3:50 pm

Leader of the Council

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## WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

### CABINET

Record of decisions taken at the meeting of the Cabinet held  
via video conferencing on Wednesday 13 January, 2021 at 2.00pm.

### PRESENT

Councillors: Michele Mead (Leader); Toby Morris (Deputy Leader); Suzi Coul, Merilyn Davies, Jeff Haine, David Harvey and Norman MacRae MBE.

Also in Attendance: Councillors Joy Aitman, Alaa Al-Yousuf, Richard Bishop, Jill Bull, Julian Cooper, Derek Cotterill, Harry Eaglestone, Duncan Enright, Hilary Fenton, Ted Fenton, Andy Graham, Gill Hill, Dan Levy, Martin McBride, Alex Postan, Carl Rylett and Harry St John.

Officers: Giles Hughes (Chief Executive); Elizabeth Griffiths (Chief Finance Officer); Frank Wilson (Executive Director, Finance); Astrid Harvey (Community Planning Officer); Chris Hargraves (Planning Policy Manager); Ciaran O'Kane (Senior Procurement Business Partner); Jasmine McWilliams (Assets Manager); Keith Butler (Head of Democratic Services) and Amy Bridgewater-Carnall (Senior Strategic Support Officer).

#### 89. NOTICE OF DECISIONS

RESOLVED: That the record of the decisions taken at the meeting held on 16 December 2020, copies of which had been circulated, be approved and signed as a correct record.

#### 90. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mike Cahill and Steve Good.

#### 91. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

92. PARTICIPATION OF THE PUBLIC

No submissions were received from the public in accordance with the Council's Rules of Procedure.

93. RECEIPT OF ANNOUNCEMENTS

93.1 Flooding on Christmas Eve

Councillor MacRae addressed Members and advised that many properties, people and businesses had fallen victim to flooding over the Christmas weekend. He paid tribute to everyone who had responded on Christmas Eve, in particular, local residents, Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service, Councillor Morris and all Councillors as well as the public who rallied round.

In particular, Councillor MacRae thanked WODC Officers Frank Wilson; Bill Oddy; Laurence King; Phil Martin; Phil Shaw, Karen Rushworth; Andrew Smith, Chelsea Hopkins, Louise Oddy, Mandy Fathers, Michelle Clifford and Bob Lightfoot from Ubico along with his team. He described the extensive assistance that was provided from the provision of sandbags to emergency accommodation and again thanked farmers, residents and RAF officers for stepping in when needed.

Following the emergency, Councillor MacRae contacted the Chief Executive with a view to looking at any lessons that could be learned, and whether the flood prevention strategy needed reviewing. Work had now begun on this and, as a reflection of the importance of the work, the Leader, Councillor Mead, would be assuming the role of Responsible Cabinet Member for this item. Finally, Councillor MacRae requested that any observations and experiences of flooding issues over Christmas be reported to Laurence King as the single point of contact.

Councillor Enright asked a question relating to the potential for residents to request specialist waste collections in light of the flood damage caused to their properties. Councillor MacRae advised that he would speak to officers and provide an answer outside of the meeting but was wary in case this had implications on insurance claims for individuals.

93.2 Waste Collections

Councillor MacRae thanked colleagues from Ubico for maintaining the refuse and recycling collection service during the pandemic and recent severe weather. Customer satisfaction rates were high, with over 24,000 bins collected every week and accuracy hitting 99.92%, meaning that the level of missed bins was low. Councillor MacRae reminded Members that the new strain of Coronavirus was particularly aggressive and could result in crews being reduced in numbers temporarily. He asked that everyone be patient and understanding should this happen.

93.3 Covid Winter Funding

Councillor Coul announced that the Covid Winter Funding scheme was being facilitated by colleagues at the Citizens Advice Team in Witney. She encouraged anyone who knew of a resident in need to signpost them to the service.

93.4 Clinically and Extremely Vulnerable Residents

Councillor Coul advised that since the announcement of the latest lockdown and the news of the latest strain of Coronavirus, all residents classed as clinically and/or extremely vulnerable had once again been contacted and offered assistance and support, should they need it.

94. DESIGNATION OF ASCOTT UNDER WYCHWOOD NEIGHBOURHOOD AREA

The Cabinet received and considered the report of the Chief Executive, which requested the determination of the Ascott under Wychwood Neighbourhood Area, which was proposed to encompass the entire Parish of Ascott under Wychwood and also to include an area of land with five properties within the Parish of Shipton under Wychwood as detailed in Annex A to the report.

In the application submitted, Ascott under Wychwood Parish Council noted that the five properties located within Shipton under Wychwood Parish 'straddle, sit on or are very close to the border with Ascott under Wychwood but are up to two miles from the nearest Shipton properties. They have always been treated as part of Ascott Parish; homeowners have traditionally regarded themselves as Ascott residents and have participated in the life of Ascott community'.

Shipton under Wychwood Parish Council resolved on 15 October 2020 to support the Ascott under Wychwood Neighbourhood Area as proposed and Oxfordshire County Council confirmed that it had no objections.

The Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning, Councillor Haine introduced the report and advised that this was a relatively straight forward matter but would allow Ascott under Wychwood to proceed with the development of their Neighbourhood Plan.

Having considered the report, and having heard from officers and Members present, Cabinet resolved that the application be approved.

DECISION: That the application for Neighbourhood Area Designation by Ascott under Wychwood Parish Council be approved, as explained in the report and the Annex to the report.

REASONS: To enable the pursuit of the Ascott under Wychwood neighbourhood plan and contribute to the achievement of the following corporate priorities: Climate action, Healthy towns and villages, a vibrant district economy, building strong local communities and meeting the housing needs of our changing population.

OPTIONS: The Council could choose not to support the Neighbourhood Area which includes land outside the Ascott under Wychwood parish boundary. Ascott under Wychwood Parish Council would, however, be able to produce a Neighbourhood Plan for a Neighbourhood Area which follows the Ascott under Wychwood Parish Boundary.

95. REVISED DRAFT AFFORDABLE HOUSING SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT

The Cabinet received and considered the report of the Planning Policy Manager, which sought approval for the publication of a revised draft Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), for the purposes of a six-week public consultation.

Policy H3 of the Local Plan sought to boost the supply of new affordable homes in a number of ways including on-site as a proportion of larger market housing schemes of eleven or more units, through financial contributions from smaller market housing schemes of six to ten units and through the provision of rural exception sites (RES).

To provide further detail on the operation of Policy H3, the Council was in the process of preparing an Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) which, if adopted, would replace the previous version published in 2007.

An initial draft was published for a six-week period of public consultation from 10 July until 21 August 2020 and responses were received from eight organisations, detailed at 1.4 of the report. A full schedule of comments was attached at Annex A and the revised draft was attached at Annex B to the report.

The Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning, Councillor Haine introduced the report and proposed that the revised draft be published for a further six week consultation period. He expressed his frustration that the measures relating to Climate Change were not stronger at this stage but noted that this would not be possible until legislation changed at Central Government. He had been advised by Mr Parnes of Woodstock Town Council that there was a mistake at section 9.1 of the document and assured Members that this would be amended to read 'This model has been successfully implemented in Long Hanborough and will also be offered on their other sites for development at Woodstock', removing the reference to East Woodstock.

Councillor Davies seconded the proposal and recognised the frustration felt regarding the Climate Change measures but was satisfied that the SPD went as far as it could at this stage.

Councillor Cooper requested clarification on section 2.5 of the report which read "Greater clarity on the Council's affordable housing tenure preferences including increased reference to low cost affordable home ownership options". He asked if Government went ahead with this, it would appear to undermine what Blenheim Estates are offering the Council, therefore had any work been done to see what that would mean for the Council.

Councillor Haine advised that he would enquire and get back to him.

Councillor Postan felt this was an interesting paper as the definition of affordable was often confusing. However, he asked if the details relating to modern building techniques could be enhanced and suggested incentivising developers to be more forward thinking with modern methods of construction. Councillor Haine stated that

modern building techniques were referenced in the report and the issue was being taken forwards.

Councillor Graham asked for clarification on the dates and methods of consultation and queried the lack of reference to infrastructure in the document. In response, Councillor Haine advised that consultation was due to commence shortly and would be conducted via the Council's website and other usual avenues. The document did not contain references to infrastructure as this was not part of the work being looked at.

Having considered the report, and having heard from officers and Members present, Cabinet resolved that the recommendation be approved.

DECISION: That the revised draft Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) attached at Annex B to the report be published for a six-week period of public consultation.

REASONS: To enable the Council to secure the provision of high quality affordable homes, as outlined as a key aspect of the West Oxfordshire Council Plan (2020 – 2024) and the West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031.

OPTIONS: Members could request amendments to the draft, choose not to publish it for consultation or amend the consultation period.

#### 96. PROPOSED CHANGES TO CONTRACT PROCEDURE RULES

The Cabinet received and considered the report of the Senior Procurement Business Partner, which sought a recommendation to Council to simplify the procurement process for low value procurements, change the thresholds outlined in the current Contract Procedure Rules (CPRs) and align them with other Publica Councils. The proposed changes would enable officers to self-serve under £25,000.

The proposed new Contract Procedure Rules document was attached as Annex A to the report.

The report was considered by the Finance and Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee at the meeting on 9 December 2020 and the Committee was supportive of the changes.



The last review of the Contract Procedure Rules was carried out in 2012 and since then the Procurement Department had introduced improvements such as an eProcurement portal which provided improved contract management in response to recent audit reports.

Whilst undertaking the review of the CPRs, the necessary changes had also been made to terminology in preparation for the UK's transition out of the EU on 31 December 2021. These changes were minimal and had no legal implications.

The Cabinet Member for Resources, Councillor Morris introduced the report and advised that this would bring the procedure rules in line with the partner councils, enabling officers to work with the same guidelines across the Publica group. He assured Members that the Procurement Team would retain the responsibility of authorising spend over £10,000 and the update also took into account changes following the exit from the EU and the ability to use electronic signatures.

This was seconded by Councillor MacRae and Cabinet resolved that the recommendations be approved.

DECISION: That Council be recommended to adopt the proposed revised Contract Procedure Rules appended to this report, with immediate effect.

REASONS: To enable the Council to continue to provide modern services and ensure sustainable finance.

OPTIONS: Cabinet could choose to amend the document or not adopt it, however, this would not bring West Oxfordshire in line with the other partner councils.

97. 2021/2022 BUDGET

The Cabinet received and considered the report of the Chief Finance Officer, which sought consideration of (i) the initial draft base budgets for 2021/22; (ii) Fees and charges for 2021/22; (iii) the adoption of the Council Tax Base for 2021/22; and (iv) the submission of the required business rates return.

The initial draft budget was presented to the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committees with no specific issues raised and Scrutiny Members were reassured that all possible steps had been taken to reduce costs and increase income where possible. This report asked Cabinet to make initial recommendations to Council on 13 January 2021 whilst final budget matters for 2021/22 would be resolved by Council on 24 February 2021.

A summary of the draft base revenue budget for 2021/22 was attached at Annex A together with detailed revenue budget breakdowns at Annex B to the report.

Since the budget was presented to the Scrutiny Committees, officers had received not only the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement but were closer to calculating the expected Rates income through the NNDR1. The impact of both of these was substantial and the report advised of the affect on the MTFS and stated that an updated version would be presented along with the final budget proposal.

The report also provided substantial information relating to the Business Rates Retention Scheme, the National Funding Position, Growth and Budget pressures, the Capital Programme and draft Fees and Charges. Annexes C and D to the report detailed the Budget pressures and the proposed Fees and Charges for 2021/22. Section 2.14 of the report outlined the details of the current Investment Interest budget followed by the Council Tax Base (attached as Annex E to the report) Parish Precepts and the Local Council Tax Support Scheme.

A number of changes had been made to the budget since it was reviewed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committees and a summary was provided at 2.20 of the report.

The Cabinet Member for Resources, Councillor Morris introduced the report and provided an oversight of the current financial position of the Council. He recognised the work that officers had put in up to this point and in particular thanked the Chief Finance Officer and Services Managers for their input.

Councillor Coul echoed Councillor Morris comments and was pleased that the Council had produced a robust budget in such a challenging year.

In response to a query from Councillor Cotterill, Councillor Morris advised that he did not expect officers to be in a position to submit a revised report to the Finance and

Management Overview and Scrutiny meeting in February and directed him to the summary of changes detailed in the report. However, officers agreed to respond to Councillor Cotterill outside of the meeting once the Committee's work programme had been taken into account.

Councillor Graham highlighted the financial strain that the pandemic had placed on many families and asked if enough had been done to increase savings through digitalisation of services. He also asked for clarification on the consultation methods to be used.

In response, Councillor Morris explained that there was a savings programme built into the budget with Publica delivering on their savings targets. He reiterated that the Council's usual consultation methods would be undertaken, including on line consultation which had always resulted in a good response.

Councillor Postan queried if the report from the Council's Financial Advisors, Arlingclose, would be submitted to the February Finance & Management Overview and Scrutiny meeting and was advised that the Committee Officer would investigate.

In response to a query from Councillor Al-Yousuf regarding the figures in Annex A relating to a change of approximately £4,000,000, Councillor Morris confirmed that this was as a consequence of the one off pension contributions.

Having considered the report, and having heard from officers and Members present, Cabinet resolved that the recommendations be approved.

#### DECISIONS:

- (a) That the draft base budgets for 2021/22 be approved, as set out in Annex A to the report;
- (b) That the fees and charges for 2021/22 be approved for inclusion as part of the Budget recommendations to Council on 24 February 2021, as set out in Annex D to the report;
- (c) That Council be recommended to approve:
  - (i) The Council Tax Base shown in Annex E, calculated as £44,917.91 for the year 2021/22;

- (ii) Authorising the Chief Finance Officer to submit the National Non-Domestic Rates Return 1 (NNDR1) to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government by the submission date of 31 January 2021; and
- (iii) Authorising the Chief Finance Officer to approve the annual uprating of allowances and non-dependant deductions in the Local Council Tax Support Scheme in line with national regulations.

REASONS: To ensure the Council maintains its commitment to deliver excellent modern services whilst ensuring financial sustainability. The budget supports all other Council priorities.

OPTIONS: Members could request an amendment to the budget papers or choose not to recommend them to Council.

98. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED: That, in view of the likely disclosure of exempt information, as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, (information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person), the public be excluded from the meeting for the remaining item of business.

99. OPTIONS FOR THE FUTURE USE OF THE GUILDHALL, CHIPPING NORTON

The Cabinet received and considered the report of the Assets Manager, Assets, which asked Members to consider options for the future use of the Guildhall, Chipping Norton.

The report explained that the Council currently owned the freehold of the listed building and detailed various external and structural repairs, along with the relevant costs, which had been undertaken in 2014/15.

The current occupants of the building were Chipping Norton Town Council who had a right to occupy after the 1974 Local Government Reorganisation, whilst contributing a percentage towards utility and repair costs.

Following the cessation of the ground floor and first floor offices by tenants, an options appraisal was prepared by the Valuer and Estates Surveyor.

The report outlined four options for the future use of the Guildhall, along with the relevant financial implications associated with them and asked Members to consider which solution to undertake. A recommendation to authorise the Group Manager for Commissioning to approve the final details under whichever option was chosen, was also included. This would be in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Resources, the Chief Finance Officer and the Monitoring Officer.

In response to a query from Councillor Cooper, Councillor Morris agreed to confirm which piece of legislation and Act Of Parliament restricted the District Council from levying the full commercial rent on the Town Council.

Having considered the report and having heard from the officers present, Cabinet resolved that Option 2 was the preferred option at this time.

DECISIONS:

- (a) That Option 2 of the report be progressed and discussions with Chipping Norton Town Council be initiated; and
- (b) That the Group Manager for Commissioning be authorised, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Resources, the Chief Finance Officer and the Monitoring Officer, to approve the final detailed heads of terms under the option chosen.

The meeting closed at 2.43 pm

Leader of the Council

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 <b>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</b>	<b>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</b>
Name and date of Committee	<b>Council – Wednesday 20 January 2021</b>
Report Number	<b>Agenda Item No. 8</b>
Subject	<b>Programme of Meetings for 2021/22</b>
Wards affected	All
Accountable member	Councillor Michele Mead, Leader of the Council Email: <a href="mailto:michele.mead@westoxon.gov.uk">michele.mead@westoxon.gov.uk</a>
Accountable officer	Keith Butler Head of Democratic Services Tel: 01993 861521 Email: <a href="mailto:keith.butler@westoxon.gov.uk">keith.butler@westoxon.gov.uk</a>
Summary/Purpose	To consider and agree a programme of meetings for the civic year 2021/2022.
Annexes	<a href="#">Annex I</a> – Suggested programme of meetings for 2021/2022.
Recommendations	<p>(a) That the Calendar of Meetings for 2021/2022 set out in <a href="#">Annex I</a> to this report be approved; and</p> <p>(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 <a href="#">Annex I</a>, but that each Committee be invited to consider the timing of its subsequent meetings during the year.</p>
Corporate priorities	N/A
Key Decision	N/A
Exempt	No
Consultees/ Consultation	None

## **1. BACKGROUND**

For obvious reasons, the programme of meetings needs to be planned and scheduled in advance, and it is usually the case that Council approves a programme each January, to be effective for one year from the following May.

## **2. MAIN POINTS**

### **General Comment**

- 2.1. [Annex I](#) to this report sets out the suggested dates for 2021/2022. The programme reflects the constitution of the Council and the fact that, as in previous years, it is not anticipated that the Development Control, Licensing and Urgency Committees will meet with any regularity, meaning that dates have not been scheduled for meetings of those Committees.

### **Cabinet**

- 2.2. As in previous years, Cabinet meetings have been scheduled monthly.
- 2.3. It should be clarified that although Cabinet meetings are included in the attached programme for ease of reference, it is entirely a matter for the Leader as to the dates and timings of its meetings. The requirement of the Constitution is that it shall meet at least 12 times a year.

### **Licensing**

- 2.4. No meetings of either the Miscellaneous Licensing Sub-Committee or the Licensing Panel have been scheduled because the need for meetings is uncertain and, in each case, meetings will continue to be arranged as necessary. This continues what has been the established practice. The experience has been that it has not been difficult to arrange Sub-Committees and Panels when needed and therefore no change in this approach has been proposed.
- 2.5. As mentioned above, meetings of the Licensing Committee have again not been scheduled. Accordingly should a meeting be necessary then the Chairman will be asked to agree a date, just as currently happens with the Development Control and Urgency Committees.

### **Times of Council and Overview and Scrutiny Committee Meetings**

- 2.6. The programme in [Annex I](#) reflects the previous “normal” start times for meetings. Council is, however, aware that the start time for Council and Finance and Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings is 12:30 pm for the remainder of the period prior to the elections in May. It is of course open to Council to consider start times as it sees fit.
- 2.7. In relation to all three of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees it has in any event been the practice for those Committees to consider their start time for the remainder of the civic year at their first meeting after the annual meeting of the Council.

### **Area Planning Sub-Committees**

- 2.8. Following consultation with each of the Area Planning Sub-Committees, the Programme in [Annex I](#) attempts to schedule the meetings at intervals of four weeks rather than once in every calendar month. This improves the ability to determine applications within the required timescales. It is also worth noting that both of the Sub-Committees acknowledged that some recent agendas/meetings have been very short, and were content that if there was no business for a particular meeting which could not await a future meeting, the Chair could agree to its cancellation.



- 2.9. Although a four weekly cycle is the objective, as always the impact of Bank Holidays, elections, Christmas, Easter and the annual meeting of the Council mean that this has to be varied on occasion.

**Audit and General Purposes Committee**

- 2.10. Council is advised that the meetings of the Committee shown for 24 June and 23 September could be subject to change depending on the eventual timetable for the submission of the draft statement of accounts, subsequent audit, and the final approval following audit. Should either or both of those dates need to be reconsidered, the Chair and Vice Chair will be consulted, and we will use best endeavours to give as much notice as possible.

**3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1. There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

**4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1. None

**5. ALTERNATIVES/OPTIONS**

- 5.1. The Council may choose to vary any of the recommended dates shown in [Annex I](#), with the exception of those for Cabinet.

**6. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 6.1. None

## West Oxfordshire District Council: Programme of Meetings 2021/2022

(see notes at end of document)



### May 2021

Wed 19/05/2021 14:00	Council
Mon 24/05/2021 14:00	Lowlands
Wed 26/05/2021 14:00	Cabinet
Thu 27/05/2021 18:30	Economic & Social O&S

### June 2021

Tue 01/06/2021 14:00	Uplands
Wed 02/06/2021 14:00	Finance & Management O&S
Thu 10/06/2021 14:00	Environment O&S
Wed 16/06/2021 14:00	Cabinet
Mon 21/06/2021 14:00	Lowlands
Wed 23/06/2021 14:00	Council
Thu 24/06/2021 18:00	Audit & General Purposes
Mon 28/06/2021 14:00	Uplands

### July 2021

Thu 08/07/2021 18:30	Economic & Social O&S
Wed 14/07/2021 14:00	Finance & Management O&S
Thu 15/07/2021 14:00	Environment O&S
Mon 19/07/2021 14:00	Lowlands
Wed 21/07/2021 14:00	Cabinet
Mon 26/07/2021 14:00	Uplands
Wed 28/07/2021 14:00	Council

### August 2021

Mon 16/08/2021 14:00	Lowlands
Wed 18/08/2021 14:00	Cabinet
Mon 23/08/2021 14:00	Uplands

### September 2021

Mon 13/09/2021 14:00	Lowlands
Wed 15/09/2021 14:00	Cabinet
Thu 16/09/2021 18:30	Economic & Social O&S
Mon 20/09/2021 14:00	Uplands
Thu 23/09/2021 18:00	Audit & General Purposes
Thu 30/09/2021 14:00	Environment O&S

### October 2021

Wed 06/10/2021 14:00	Finance & Management O&S
Mon 11/10/2021 14:00	Lowlands
Wed 13/10/2021 14:00	Cabinet
Mon 18/10/2021 14:00	Uplands
Wed 27/10/2021 14:00	Council

### November 2021

Mon 08/11/2021 14:00	Lowlands
Wed 10/11/2021 14:00	Cabinet
Mon 15/11/2021 14:00	Uplands
Thu 25/11/2021 18:30	Economic & Social O&S

### December 2021

Wed 01/12/2021 14:00	Finance & Management O&S
Thu 02/12/2021 14:00	Environment O&S
Mon 06/12/2021 14:00	Lowlands
Mon 13/12/2021 14:00	Uplands
Wed 15/12/2021 14:00	Cabinet

**January 2022**

Wed 05/01/2022 14:00	Lowlands
Mon 10/01/2022 14:00	Uplands
Wed 19/01/2022 14:00	Cabinet
Thu 20/01/2022 18:00	Audit & General Purposes
Wed 26/01/2022 14:00	Council
Thu 27/01/2022 18:30	Economic & Social O&S
Mon 31/01/2022 14:00	Lowlands

**February 2022**

Thu 03/02/2022 14:00	Environment O&S
Mon 07/02/2022 14:00	Uplands
Wed 09/02/2022 14:00	Finance & Management O&S
Wed 16/02/2022 14:00	Cabinet
Wed 23/02/2022 14:00	Council
Mon 28/02/2022 14:00	Lowlands

**March 2022**

Mon 07/03/2022 14:00	Uplands
Wed 16/03/2022 14:00	Cabinet
Mon 28/03/2022 14:00	Lowlands
Thu 31/03/2022 18:30	Economic & Social O&S

**April 2022**


Mon 04/04/2022 14:00	Uplands
Thu 07/04/2022 14:00	Environment O&S
Wed 13/04/2022 14:00	Finance & Management O&S
Tue 19/04/2022 14:00	Lowlands
Wed 20/04/2022 14:00	Cabinet
Thu 21/04/2022 18:00	Audit & General Purposes
Mon 25/04/2022 14:00	Uplands
Wed 27/04/2022 14:00	Council

**May 2022**

Wed 18/05/2022 14:00	Council
Mon 23/05/2022 14:00	Lowlands
Wed 25/05/2022 14:00	Cabinet
Tue 31/05/2022 14:00	Uplands

**Notes:** (1) Until further notice meetings will be held via video conferencing, with online access. Members of the public may view via [Facebook Live](#), and do not need a Facebook account to do so; (2) Otherwise, meetings are held at the Council Offices, Woodgreen, Witney; (3) Programme subject to change - for further information contact Committee Services: Tel: 01993 861523; EMail: [democratic.services@westoxon.gov.uk](mailto:democratic.services@westoxon.gov.uk); (4) O&S = Overview & Scrutiny Committee; (5) the start times for O&S Committee meetings from July 2021 onwards are to be confirmed; (6) the Leader of the Council may call additional Cabinet meetings if required; and (7) to view agendas, reports and minutes, see: [www.westoxon.gov.uk/meetings](http://www.westoxon.gov.uk/meetings)

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 <p><b>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</b></p>	<p><b>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</b></p>
<p>Name and date of Committee</p>	<p><b>Council – Wednesday 20 January 2021</b></p>
<p>Report Number</p>	<p><b>Agenda Item No. 9</b></p>
<p>Subject</p>	<p><b>Scheme of Members’ Allowances for 2021 to 2022</b></p>
<p>Wards affected</p>	<p>All</p>
<p>Accountable member</p>	<p>Councillor Michele Mead, Leader of the Council Email: <a href="mailto:michele.mead@westoxon.gov.uk">michele.mead@westoxon.gov.uk</a></p>
<p>Accountable officer</p>	<p>Keith Butler Head of Democratic Services Tel: 01993 861521 Email: <a href="mailto:keith.butler@westoxon.gov.uk">keith.butler@westoxon.gov.uk</a></p>
<p>Summary/Purpose</p>	<p>To consider the report and recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel for the allowances to be applicable for the financial year 2021/2022.</p>
<p>Annexes</p>	<p><a href="#">Annex 1</a> – Report and recommendations from the Independent Remuneration Panel for 2021/2022</p>
<p>Recommendations</p>	<p>(a) That the Council considers the report and recommendations from the Independent Remuneration Panel as set out in <a href="#">Annex 1</a> to this report, and specified in paragraph 2.3 below;</p> <p>(b) That, in the event of the Council approving the recommendations from the Panel and of any pay award for staff not being in place at the start of the financial year 2021/2022, the increases for Councillors be backdated to 1 April 2021; and</p> <p>(c) That, in the event of any changes arising to the scheme of allowances, the section 151 officer be authorised to amend the scheme as formally set out in Part 6 of the Council’s Constitution to reflect those changes.</p>
<p>Corporate priorities</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>Key Decision</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>Exempt</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Consultees/ Consultation</p>	<p>None</p>

## **1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1. The report of the Independent Remuneration Panel is attached as [Annex I](#) to this report. It is anticipated that Members of the Panel will be in attendance at the Council meeting, and that its Chair will be able to answer questions on any points of clarification required.

## **2. MAIN POINTS**

- 2.1. As required by the legislation, public notice of the report and its main recommendations has been given, and the report is available for inspection by members of the public both at the Council's Offices and via the Council's website. Copies may be provided on payment of the charge previously agreed by the Council (£1.75 plus VAT).
- 2.2. The scheme has to apply with effect from the beginning of the financial year 2021/2022.
- 2.3. The recommendations from the Panel are that:
- (i) There should be an increase in the basic and special allowances for 2021/2022 to match the main staff pay award;
  - (ii) Subsistence allowances should continue to be payable at the same rate as for Council/Publica staff and may therefore be increased with effect from April or otherwise during the financial year; and
  - (iii) No other changes are recommended to be made to allowances scheme for 2021/2022.
- 2.4. It is expected that only lower paid staff will receive a pay award form 1 April 2021. Thus the Panel has recommended that Councillors receive the same as the "main" staff award, in the knowledge that that may be zero.

## **3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1. Assuming no changes, the total projected cost of Members' allowances in 2021/2022 is £378,560 based on a Cabinet comprising the Leader, Deputy Leader and five others. This figure also assumes that all SRAs will be payable, which will not be the case if any Cabinet Member holds more than one position which attracts an SRA.
- 3.2. In bottom line terms, the Members Allowances of £378,560 plus the projected overhead costs of National Insurance (£11,100) gives a total budget requirement of £389,660. The change will result in budget growth of £6,760 above resources proposed in the draft 2021/22 budget. The shortfall will be built-into the 2021/22 budget papers, should Council accept the recommendations in this report.

## **4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1. None.

## **5. ALTERNATIVES/OPTIONS**

- 5.1. The Council has to take the recommendations of the Independent Panel into account in determining a scheme, but it can make different decisions as it sees fit, subject to any detailed requirements of the Allowances Regulations.

## **6. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 6.1. None

## **The Recommendations of West Oxfordshire District Council's Independent Remuneration Panel of Members' Allowances for the Financial Year 2021/22**

### **Introduction**

West Oxfordshire District Council is required under *The Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 (SI 1021)* to appoint and maintain a Panel to advise on an annual basis the level of allowances payable to District Councillors. This Panel is independent of the Council and representative of the communities within the area that the local authority serves. The Council, before the beginning of each financial year must publish a scheme for the payment of a basic allowance for councillors and shall also make provision for a special responsibility allowance, dependants' carers' allowance, travelling and subsistence, and payments to co-opted members. This scheme of Allowances was designed to ensure that the allowances were set at levels that fairly reflected the responsibilities and workload that members were required to undertake. Before the Council makes or amends the scheme, it shall have regard to the recommendations made in relation to it by the Independent Remuneration Panel.

The Panel, first commissioned in 2001, is currently made up of four members, Susan Corrigan, Janet Eustace, Margaret Watts and Michael Ryan (Chair). The Panel is grateful for the assistance given by Keith Butler, Head of Democratic Services in enabling the undertaking of this review.

A number of previous Panel reports and other information can be found at <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/about-the-council/councillors-and-committees/allowances-for-district-councillors/>

Due to the Coronavirus constraints three members of the Panel, Margaret Watts, Janet Eustace and Michael Ryan, conducted an audio meeting by telephone together with Keith Butler on the 1 December 2020. Their proposed recommendations were forwarded to the Leader of the District Council, Councillor Michele Mead, for any observations she might wish to make.

### **Preface to the Review Findings.**

This year, due to the global pandemic of the Corona virus, has been an inordinately difficult year to follow the well-worn practices of our structured way of life in almost every sphere, and equally so for the Allowances Panel with our meeting being much later than normal.

One unexpected advantage of the later meeting was that the Panel met the week following the Spending Review when the Chancellor announced a pay pause for public sector workers.

In recent years the Panel, after a time when the general structure and a fair level of payments had been established, has tended to follow the lead of Central Government by recommending the increasing of allowances in line with staff pay awards; and so in the current year an expected 2.5% increase for 2020/21 used to set the allowances was adjusted to 2.75% when the pay award was finalised.

This year, contrary to previous years, we were unable to invite the views of Councillors prior to our meeting, due to the time constraints caused by the pandemic, but we trust the Panel will return to a more normal procedure and time frame in 2021.

### **Review Considerations and Recommendations for 2021/22**

#### **Basic Allowance and Special Responsibility Allowances**

The Panel recommends that (i) in the event of there being no pay award for staff paid above the threshold referenced by the Chancellor, there should be no increases in Basic or Special Responsibility Allowances in line with the pay pause announced by the Chancellor; but (ii) in the event of there being a main pay award, all allowances should be increased by the same percentage, subject to minor rounding, and to be effective from 1 April 2021.

A no change situation will result in the following:

<b>POSITION</b>	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2021/22</b>
Basic Allowance (all members)	£4,932	£4,932
Leader of Council	£22,194	£22,194
Deputy Leader	£14,796	£14,796
Cabinet Member	£12,330	£12,330
Chairman of Council	£4,932	£4,932
Chairmen of Overview and Scrutiny Committees	£4,932	£4,932
Chairmen of Area Planning Sub-Committees	£6,165	£6,165
Chairman of Development Control Committee	£1,233	£1,233
Chairman of Licensing Committee	£1,233	£1,233
Chairman of Audit & GP Committee	£1,233	£1,233
Chairman of Misc. Licensing Committee	£616.50	£616.50
Opposition Group Leaders	£2,466	£2,466

### **Travel, Subsistence and other Expenses**

The Panel continues to recommend in relation to travel that the mileage rate is that as set by the Inland Revenue's non-profit making rate that continues to be set at 45p/mile. All other allowable travel claims to remain as currently set.

Claims for subsistence should remain as applicable to Local Authority staff.

### **Dependant Carers' Allowance.**

The Panel continues to believe they are in line with similar allowances in other Councils and recommends no change for the coming year.

### **Co-opted Members' Allowances.**

The Panel is of the opinion that there should be no changes to their level of allowance or payments.

### **In Conclusion**

The Panel trusts the Council will find favour with these recommendations when the scheme is considered at its meeting in January 2021.

M. Ryan  
Panel Chair  
December 2020



 <b>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</b>	<b>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</b>
Name and date of Committee	<b>Council: Wednesday 20 January 2021</b>
Report Number	<b>Agenda Item No. 10</b>
Subject	<b>Motion: Policing in West Oxfordshire</b>
Wards affected	All
Accountable member	Councillor Marilyn Davies, Cabinet Member for Communities and Housing, Email: <a href="mailto:merilyn.davies@westoxon.gov.uk">merilyn.davies@westoxon.gov.uk</a>
Accountable officer	Keith Butler Head of Democratic Services Tel: 01993 861521 Email: <a href="mailto:keith.butler@westoxon.gov.uk">keith.butler@westoxon.gov.uk</a>
Summary/Purpose	To consider the motion originally proposed and seconded at Council on 26 February 2020, in the context of the discussion at the meeting of the Economic and Social Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 19 November 2020.
Annex	<a href="#">Annex 1</a> : Draft minute from that meeting
Recommendation	That the Council considers and determines the motion in the light of the discussion at the meeting of the Economic and Social Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
Corporate priorities	Not applicable.
Key Decision	N/A
Exempt	No
Consultees/ Consultation	None

## **1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1. At the meeting of the Council held on 26 February 2020, the following Motion was proposed and seconded by Councillors Laetisia Carter and Duncan Enright respectively:-
- “Despite remaining a low crime area residents of West Oxfordshire are rightly concerned about the increase in crime, particularly involving vulnerable people/young people and antisocial behaviour across the district. Our Community Safety Plan is reaching its end in 2021. Policing is under increasing financial pressure. West Oxfordshire District Council would like to work in closer partnership with Thames Valley Police to increase capacity to police our towns and villages. As a response to growing complex crime the Council resolves to negotiate with Thames Valley Police to put more police officers on patrol in West Oxfordshire, including the possibility of jointly funded posts”.*
- 1.2. The motion having been duly proposed and seconded stood referred without discussion to the Economic and Social Overview and Scrutiny Committee for comment and advice.

## **2. MAIN POINTS**

- 2.1. [Annex I](#) to this report comprises the draft minute detailing the consideration of the matter by the Committee on 19 November 2020.
- 2.2. Council will see that the Committee has not made a recommendation on this matter, and requested that the minute from its meeting be presented as an overview of Members’ opinions.
- 2.3. Council is invited to consider and determine the motion, in the context of the Committee’s comments and any further proposed amendments to the motion which may arise.

## **3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1. This report does not, in itself, have any financial implications.
- 3.2. However, any decision of the Council to progress “jointly funded posts” would have a currently unknown financial impact which would need to be considered when the Council approves its budget for 2021/22.

## **4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1. None

## **5. RISK ASSESSMENT**

- 5.1. Not applicable

## **6. ALTERNATIVES/OPTIONS**

- 6.1. It is for the Council to approve, reject or amend the motion.

## **7. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 7.1. None

**EXTRACT FROM THE DRAFT MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE  
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE ON  
THURSDAY 19 NOVEMBER 2020**

**22. MOTION: POLICING IN WEST OXFORDSHIRE**

The Committee gave consideration to the following motion proposed by Councillor Laetisia Carter and seconded by Councillor Duncan Enright at the meeting of the Council held 26 February 2020 and referred to this Committee for consideration and comment:-

*“Despite remaining a low crime area residents of West Oxfordshire are rightly concerned about the increase in crime, particularly involving vulnerable people/young people and antisocial behaviour across the district. Our Community Safety Plan is reaching its end in 2021. Policing is under increasing financial pressure. West Oxfordshire District Council would like to work in closer partnership with Thames Valley Police to increase capacity to police our towns and villages. As a response to growing complex crime the Council resolves to negotiate with Thames Valley Police to put more police officers on patrol in West Oxfordshire, including the possibility of jointly funded posts.”*

Councillor Carter addressed Members and outlined her reasons for believing the motion should go forwards. She explained some of the problems being faced by residents and felt that the Council should mirror the example put forward by Carterton Town Council, which had helped to fund a PCSO post. Councillor Carter did not feel that it was fair that some towns could afford to bolster their policing and wanted the District Council to do so.

This was seconded by Councillor Enright who reiterated the importance of the Community Safety Plan.

The Committee agreed that this was an important issue and recognised the difficulties that communities experiencing anti-social behaviour had to deal with.

The Chairman reminded Members of the previously discussed Budget item and asked the proposer if she wished to include a sum of money in the motion, to help guide officers. Councillor Carter felt that should be left blank so as not to restrict the work in priority areas. The Cabinet Member for Finance also felt it would be helpful to have an idea of the amount of funding and where Councillors would like this to come from.

The Cabinet Member for Communities addressed the Committee and reiterated the level of work that the Council was already involved in with the Police, including weekly updates from the Community Officers, the focus on recognising and reducing instances of Domestic Violence and the previously discussed funding for improved CCTV systems.

Councillor Bull advised that Carterton Town Council had part funded the PCSO post independently of the District Council and suggested that Town and Parish Councils be approached to consider similar actions. She therefore proposed that the response to the motion be that Council should encourage Town and Parish Councils to support or part fund PCSOs in their own towns.

This was seconded by Councillor Leverton. On being put to the vote the result was tied and the Chairman chose not to exercise his casting vote.


Councillor Enright suggested a compromise whereby the Council would look at proceeding with the Community Safety Plan with a view to employing more police officers and encourage Town and Parish Councils to look at the Carterton model.

Councillor Carter did not want to dictate to town and parish councils, without the District Council looking at the principle of bolstering TVP funding first and this was seconded by Councillor Cooper.

On being put to the vote, the result was again tied and the Chairman felt that the committee was not able to make a decision based on the information available.

In conclusion, the Committee was generally supportive of community initiatives but was concerned that the responsibility for funding should not fall to the District Council alone, especially in the current financial climate. It was recognised that discussions with town and parish councils should be supported with a view to advising how they could jointly fund PCSO posts if they wished.

The Chairman proposed that Council be advised that the Committee was unable to reach a decision and requested that the minutes from this meeting be presented as an overview of Members' opinions.

 <b>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</b>	<b>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</b>
Name and date of Committee	<b>Council: Wednesday 20 January 2021</b>
Report Number	<b>Agenda Item No. 11</b>
Subject	<b>Motion: CCTV in Witney</b>
Wards affected	All Witney Wards
Accountable member	Councillor Marilyn Davies, Cabinet Member for Communities and Housing, Email: <a href="mailto:merilyn.davies@westoxon.gov.uk">merilyn.davies@westoxon.gov.uk</a>
Accountable officer	Keith Butler Head of Democratic Services Tel: 01993 861521 Email: <a href="mailto:keith.butler@westoxon.gov.uk">keith.butler@westoxon.gov.uk</a>
Summary/Purpose	To consider the motion originally proposed and seconded at Council on 26 February 2020, in the context of the comments and recommendation of the Economic and Social Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
Annex	<a href="#">Annex 1</a> : Report considered by the Economic and Social Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting held 19 November 2020 <a href="#">Annex 2</a> : Draft minute from that meeting
Recommendation	That the Council considers the matter in the context of its consideration by the Economic and Social Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and any further comments from the proposer and seconder.
Corporate priorities	Not applicable.
Key Decision	N/A
Exempt	No
Consultees/ Consultation	None

## **1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1. At the meeting of the Council held on 26 February 2020, the following Motion was proposed and seconded by Councillors Duncan Enright and Laetisia Carter respectively:-  
*“Witney's CCTV system is nearly two decades old, and despite finances being identified by West Oxfordshire District Council and Witney Town Council, only slow progress is being made in replacing it effectively. The Council therefore resolves to call a meeting with stakeholders at the earliest opportunity, and to seek to expedite the replacement of the system with a target date for completion by the end of Summer 2020”.*
- 1.2. The motion having been duly proposed and seconded stood referred without discussion to the Economic and Social Overview and Scrutiny Committee for comment and advice.

## **2. MAIN POINTS**

- 2.1. [Annex 1](#) to this report is the report considered by the Committee on 19 November 2020.
- 2.2. Also included, at [Annex 2](#), is the draft minute from that meeting.
- 2.3. As will be seen, after full and detailed consideration, the Committee was appreciative of the report and welcomed the proposed next steps, and did not make any recommendation to Council.
- 2.4. It is understood that, in these circumstances, the proposer and seconder may not wish to pursue the motion.
- 2.5. Council is invited to consider the matter in the context of its consideration by the Economic and Social Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and any further comments from the proposer and seconder.

## **3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1. As set out in [Annex 1](#).

## **4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1. None

## **5. RISK ASSESSMENT**


- 5.1. Not applicable

## **6. ALTERNATIVES/OPTIONS**

- 6.1. None applicable.

## **7. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 7.1. None

 <b>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</b>	<b>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</b>
<b>Name and date of Committee</b>	<b>Economic and Social Overview and Scrutiny Committee Thursday 19 November 2020</b>
<b>Report Number</b>	<b>Agenda Item No. 8</b>
<b>Subject</b>	<b>Public open space CCTV provision and monitoring arrangements</b>
<b>Wards affected</b>	All Carterton wards, Witney Central and Witney South
<b>Accountable member</b>	Councillor Merilyn Davies, Cabinet Member for Communities and Housing Email: <a href="mailto:merilyn.davies@westoxon.gov.uk">merilyn.davies@westoxon.gov.uk</a>
<b>Accountable officer</b>	Andy Barge, Group Manager – Strategic Support Tel: 01594 812290; Email: <a href="mailto:andy.barge@publicagroup.uk">andy.barge@publicagroup.uk</a>
<b>Summary</b>	To provide a progress update on upgrading the public open space CCTV cameras covering areas of Carterton and Witney and associated monitoring control room arrangements.
<b>Annexes</b>	None
<b>Recommendation</b>	That the Committee notes the report and the proposed next steps towards upgrading the public open space CCTV provision and provides observations and comments to the Cabinet.
<b>Corporate priorities</b>	Strong Local Communities: Supporting and building prosperous and inclusive local communities  Modern Council Services and Sustainable Finance: Delivering excellent modern services whilst ensuring the financial sustainability of the Council
<b>Key Decision</b>	No
<b>Exempt</b>	No
<b>Consultation</b>	Engagement with Thames Valley Police and the other Oxfordshire Districts. Further consultation will take place with the Carterton and Witney town councils as the upgrade progresses.

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1. The motion below was put to Council in February 2020 by Councillors Duncan Enright and Laetisia Carter and was referred to the Economic and Social Overview and Scrutiny Committee for comment and advice:

*“Witney's CCTV system is nearly two decades old, and despite finances being identified by West Oxfordshire District Council and Witney Town Council, only slow progress is being made in replacing it effectively. The Council therefore resolves to call a meeting with stakeholders at the earliest opportunity, and to seek to expedite the replacement of the system with a target date for completion by the end of Summer 2020.”*

## **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1. West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC) owns and operates a public open space Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) system in the district, consisting of 61 cameras - 57 in Witney and four in Carterton. The town centre public space CCTV scheme was introduced in the town in 2002 after the council successfully obtained a Home Office grant. The scheme was expanded to cover Carterton town centre in 2008; and the scheme was upgraded (digitised) and expanded to include Marriotts Walk in 2009.
- 2.2. Monitoring of West Oxfordshire's cameras takes place at Witney Police station, with the staff employed by Thames Valley Police (TVP) and a service level agreement in place with the Council. Within Oxfordshire, monitoring control rooms are also located in Oxford City, Banbury and Abingdon.
- 2.3. In late autumn 2018, WODC commissioned CDC Technical Services to undertake an independent review of the public space CCTV systems in Witney and Carterton town centres. This review concluded that:
  - i. In general, the WODC CCTV scheme provides good coverage of the areas being monitored with overlapping camera coverage;
  - ii. But, the current system control room and recording technology is old and, in the main, obsolete and there is a significant amount of repeated camera maintenance issues to be addressed;
  - iii. The implementation of a digital transmission network utilising the existing private fibre network within Witney town centre is relatively straightforward, cost effective and most importantly can be done on a camera-by-camera basis as required;
  - iv. Upgrading or replacing one part of the system will have a knock-on effect to other parts of the system that need to be upgraded as well.
- 2.4. In setting the 2019/20 budget, Council approved £300,000 capital for investment in CCTV, subject to business case.

## **3. WHY THE SLOW PROGRESS?**

- 3.1. The catalyst or starting point for replacing the public open space CCTV system needs to be the monitoring control room. This is because there needs to be certainty that any new camera equipment is compatible with the control room equipment; and there needs to be certainty over the location of the control room.
- 3.2. Since 2016 there has been a desire for a shared Oxfordshire hub control room, as this will improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the monitoring – with more ‘real time’ monitoring, less lone working, capital investment from Thames Valley Police (TVP) and resilience from fail over to other TVP hubs with the same monitoring equipment. The disadvantages of a shared monitoring hub are potential loss of local knowledge and a small loss of local employment, depending where the hub is located.



- 3.3. This desire for a shared solution has hampered progress for a number of reasons:
  - i. Design and implementation of a TVP shared hub in Buckinghamshire ahead of Oxfordshire;
  - ii. Where in Oxfordshire a shared hub could be located, with each of the existing control rooms having a degree of uncertainty over longevity, or not being suitable to host a hub;
  - iii. Which Districts wanted to be part of a shared hub, with some having made more recent investment in new equipment.
- 3.4. At meeting between TVP, West Oxfordshire, South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils and Oxford City Council in late January 2020 (Cherwell invited but not able to attend), it was made clear that we needed to agree a partnership route by the end of March 2020, or West Oxfordshire would progress a standalone solution.
- 3.5. This picked up the impetus for a shared monitoring control room and by early March:
  - i. Oxford City volunteered to act as project lead, on the basis that they were in the process of engaging project management support for reviewing their other internal and housing schemes CCTV provisions;
  - ii. TVP had agreed to share the technical specifications and partnership agreements used for the Buckinghamshire hub, based in Aylesbury, with Oxford City. The tender specification and procurement route used for the Aylesbury hub effectively allows us to draw down on the same technologies for an Oxfordshire hub. This brings two advantages if we agree to sign up for the shared solution – it will expedite any tender process; and having common technologies with another hub provides a robust business continuity solution.
- 3.6. Since late March, the onset of Covid-19 has regrettably meant little progress has been made as all of the community services based resource has been directed at to the Council's response to Covid-19. A check was made in early July and Oxford City has appointed a project manager and a potential solution for the Oxfordshire hub location been found.

#### **4. WHERE ARE WE TODAY?**

- 4.1. A partnership agreement for the Oxfordshire hub has been drafted (yet to be received) and it is proposed to enter in to a memorandum of understanding to commit partners to the shared solution – subject to business case and Cabinet approval.
- 4.2. A report is being taken to the Chief Constable this month for strategic sign off from TVP.
- 4.3. A draft outline business case indicates a capital investment of between £350,000 and £550,000 for a shared monitoring hub, depending on the operating model used. The initial design principles for the Oxfordshire hub are based on TVP funding 50% of these capital costs, with the remainder split across the participating districts on an agreed basis e.g. number of cameras.
- 4.4. Other design principles for the shared hub are a seven year agreement, at which point a technology review would take place; revenue costs split on a formula based on population and crime data; and the ability to remotely access images from a review suite in a local police station with the potential to stream it to a police officer's phone, so it can be played to suspects at interview and increase the number of guilty pleas.

#### **5. WHAT ARE THE PROPOSED NEXT STEPS?**

- 5.1. As described at 3.1, knowing what technology will be used in the monitoring control hub can inform compatible camera technology to use as part of the upgrade to our systems.
- 5.2. Before replacing all of the existing cameras, in their existing locations, a rationalisation exercise is proposed, for four reasons:
  - i. The surveillance camera commissioner requires all local authorities to look at their systems, the camera locations and reasons why the cameras are where they are to be revisited, to see if there is still a valid need for them to be at that particular location – supported by privacy impact assessments;
  - ii. Reported crimes have been mapped and overlaid with existing camera locations. The use of these crime ‘heat maps’ can inform the future camera placement;
  - iii. Technology and subsequent image quality has advanced significantly, meaning fewer cameras may be needed. This could reduce the ongoing maintenance and monitoring costs and therefore reduce the revenue budget requirement, without compromising public safety.
  - iv. A reduced number of fixed location cameras could be supported by a number of deployable wireless CCTV cameras.
- 5.3. The current revenue budget for CCTV is £122,400. The bulk of the expenditure is the contract with Thames Valley Police for control room staffing, the annual maintenance contract for the cameras and control room equipment, and the fibre network to carry the images from each camera back to the control room. Contributions from Carterton and Witney town councils and Marriots Walk shopping centre totalling approximately £45,000 help offset these costs. It is anticipated that a shared monitoring hub, together with a rationalisation of the number of cameras will achieve a saving of £40,000 - £60,000 per annum.
- 5.4. The next steps are summarised as:
  - i. Present the outline business case to Cabinet for a decision on the shared monitoring control hub, once it has been completed;
  - ii. Confirm the control room technology that will be used;
  - iii. Review and rationalisation of the number of cameras and their locations – supported by crime hot spot mapping and ensuring surveillance camera code of practice compliance;
  - iv. Procure new cameras;
  - v. Agree the future funding and operating model.

## **6. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 6.1. A range of alternative options could include:
  - i. The Council could choose to cease CCTV provision;
  - ii. Pursue a standalone monitoring control room solution, but with no TVP contribution and therefore at a significantly higher cost;
  - iii. Explore the model used in many other districts – including Cotswold and Forest of Dean – of handing operational responsibility for an upgraded CCTV solution to the relevant town councils.

## **7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1. No specific implications arising from this update report.

## **8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

8.1. No specific implications arising from this update report.

## **9. RISK ASSESSMENT**

9.1. No specific risks have been identified in respect of this report.

## **10. EQUALITIES IMPACT**

10.1. The report raises no specific implications for any particular group or individual. Any future changes to camera locations will be subject to the appropriate privacy impact assessments.

## **11. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATIONS**

11.1. There are no specific implications arising directly from this report.

## **12. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

12.1. No background papers have been identified.

**Extract from the draft Minutes of the meeting of the Economic and Social Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Thursday 19 November 2020**

**21. PUBLIC OPEN SPACE CCTV PROVISION AND MONITORING ARRANGEMENTS**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Group Manager, Strategic Support, which provided a progress update on upgrading the public open space CCTV cameras covering areas of Carterton and Witney and associated monitoring control room arrangements.

The report advised that West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC) owned and operated a public open space Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) system in the district, consisting of 61 cameras - 57 in Witney and four in Carterton. The town centre public space CCTV scheme was introduced in the town in 2002 and expanded to cover Carterton town centre in 2008; and the scheme was upgraded (digitised) and expanded to include Marriotts Walk in 2009.

Monitoring of West Oxfordshire's cameras took place at Witney Police station, with the staff employed by Thames Valley Police (TVP) and a service level agreement in place with the Council. Within Oxfordshire, monitoring control rooms were also located in Oxford City, Banbury and Abingdon.

In late autumn 2018, WODC commissioned CDC Technical Services to undertake an independent review of the public space CCTV systems in Witney and Carterton town centres.

In addition to this work, a motion was put to Council in February 2020 by Councillors Duncan Enright and Laetisia Carter and was referred to this Committee for comment and advice, asking that "The Council therefore resolves to call a meeting with stakeholders at the earliest opportunity, and to seek to expedite the replacement of the system with a target date for completion by the end of Summer 2020."

The report explained the restrictions and difficulties that had resulted in slow progress being made, however, further steps had been made following a meeting in January 2020 and a number of decisions were in place by March 2020. Unfortunately, Covid-19 had regrettably slowed progress once more.

Mr Barge outlined the report and summarised the key points, including the proposal for the Districts to enter into a memorandum of understanding as detailed at section 4.1 of the report.


In response to a query from Councillor Beaney, Mr Barge explained that there would be less capacity and a higher cost involved if West Oxfordshire chose to work independently.

As the proposer of the motion, Councillor Enright thanked officers for the report and hoped that this would have given Cabinet the impetus to move work forwards more swiftly. He welcomed the report and requested that Members be kept up to date as more news was available.

Mr Barge then answered various queries from Members including the potential to use wireless re-deployable cameras, the benefits of primary monitoring at a central location and future technologies involving mobile phones.

The issue of funding was discussed and it was felt that part of the funding model should be based on the number of cameras an area had as well as the level of crime in that area. It was noted that some town councils paid a contribution for the equipment and it was hoped a decision making paper would be forthcoming in the new year.

**RESOLVED:** The update and reasons for the delays are noted and Members welcome the proposed next steps towards upgrading the public open space CCTV provision.

 <b>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</b>	<b>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</b>
Name and date of Committee	<b>Council: Wednesday 20 January 2021</b>
Report Number	<b>Agenda Item No. 12</b>
Subject	<b>Motion: Tenants Forum</b>
Wards affected	All
Accountable member	Councillor Marilyn Davies, Cabinet Member for Communities and Housing, Email: <a href="mailto:merilyn.davies@westoxon.gov.uk">merilyn.davies@westoxon.gov.uk</a>
Accountable officer	Keith Butler Head of Democratic Services Tel: 01993 861521 Email: <a href="mailto:keith.butler@westoxon.gov.uk">keith.butler@westoxon.gov.uk</a>
Summary/Purpose	To consider the motion originally proposed and seconded at Council on 26 February 2020, in the context of the comments and recommendation of the Economic and Social Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
Annexes	<a href="#">Annex 1</a> : Minute from the meeting of the Economic and Social Overview and Scrutiny Committee held 17 September 2020 <a href="#">Annex 2</a> : Report to the Committee at its meeting on 19 November 2020 <a href="#">Annex 3</a> : Draft minute from the meeting of the Committee held 19 November 2020
Recommendation	That the Council considers and determines the motion in the light of the recommendations of the Economic and Social Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
Corporate priorities	Not applicable.
Key Decision	N/A
Exempt	No
Consultees/ Consultation	None

## **1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1. At the meeting of the Council held on 26 February 2020, the following Motion was proposed and seconded by Councillors Geoff Saul and Duncan Enright respectively:-

*“The Council welcomes the private landlords forum. To better understand and support this sector, the Council resolves to establish a private tenants forum to hear the voice of residents and understand their concerns and perspective”.*

- 1.2. The motion having been duly proposed and seconded stood referred without discussion to the Economic and Social Overview and Scrutiny Committee for comment and advice.

## **2. MAIN POINTS**

- 2.1. Following the break in meetings of the Committee consequent on the pandemic, the motion was considered by the Committee at its meeting on 17 September, and the minute of that meeting is reproduced in [Annex 1](#).
- 2.2. The report subsequently considered at the next meeting of the Committee is reproduced at [Annex 2](#), and the draft minute from that meeting is included at [Annex 3](#).
- 2.3. After a full and detailed discussion, the Committee’s recommendations to Council are as set out in [Annex 3](#), i.e. to –
- Create a webpage specifically for the private rent sector. This would be an informative area for customers giving advice, guidance and signposting to other organisations, such as CAWO and Shelter. Through our Customer Satisfaction Web Survey, we could then establish what other needs these tenants have.
  - Conduct a Needs Survey with Private Rented Sector tenants; directly where we have the contact details (e.g. Housing Benefit recipients) or on the Council’s Website front page. This survey could be conducted in parallel with the above data collection process.
- 2.4. Council is invited to consider the recommendations made by the Committee, and is of course free to decide the matter as it sees fit.

## **3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1. The options put forward by the Economic and Social Overview and Scrutiny Committee do not have significant financial implications.

## **4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1. None

## **5. RISK ASSESSMENT**

- 5.1. Not applicable

## **6. ALTERNATIVES/OPTIONS**

- 6.1. None applicable.

## **7. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 7.1. None

**EXTRACT FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE  
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
HELD ON 17 SEPTEMBER 2020**

**9. MOTION: TENANTS FORUM**

The Committee gave consideration to the following motion, which had been proposed by Councillor Geoff Saul and seconded by Councillor Duncan Enright at the meeting of the Council held 26 February 2020, and referred to this Committee for consideration and comment:-

*“The Council welcomes the private landlords forum. To better understand and support this sector, the Council resolves to establish a private tenants forum to hear the voice of residents and understand their concerns and perspective.”*


Councillor Saul attended Committee to speak to the Motion. Since it had been proposed in February 2020, due to the pandemic, private sector tenants were in a vulnerable position with rent arrears and evictions. District Councillors and staff had done a good job in reaching out to the community, although the District Council should be a hub at the centre of the Community, and a voice for under-represented tenants. A forum could share experiences and the Council could have a dedicated web-page with advice and awareness, and an individual local private renter's charter. The District Council should be at the heart of the community.

The Business Manager Operational Services would report back to Committee on the resource and any legal implications.

During discussion the following points were made:

- It was considered that this would be setting up a separate body and the CAWO could achieve the results that the motion was proposing.
- Councillor Carter commented that she was often contacted by residents who were renting, whose landlords/landladies were intrusive, it was not easy to afford rent in the district. This was distinct work which would be something that the CAWO could be involved in.
- Councillor Ashbourne commented that private renting created huge issues for many residents and it would be a benefit to hear from these residents to effect change and promote better ways of working.
- Councillor Graham commented that the concept being proposed was laudable and would be effective for many tenants.
- The District Council had responsibility for standards, to ensure that landlords/landladies complied with private renting charters and should not give advice to tenants, this was a role for the CAWO.

**RESOLVED:** That a report on the implications of establishing a Tenants Forum be submitted for consideration by the Committee at its meeting on 19 November 2020, following which the Committee would submit comments for the Council to take into account.

 <p>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</p>	<b>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</b>
Name and date of Committee	<b>Economic and Social Overview and Scrutiny Committee: Thursday 19 November 2020</b>
Report Number	<b>Agenda Item 10</b>
Subject	<b>Private Tenants Forum</b>
Wards affected	ALL
Accountable member	Cllr Andrew Beaney Chairman Economic and Social Overview and Scrutiny Committee Email: <a href="mailto:andrew.beaney@westoxon.gov.uk">andrew.beaney@westoxon.gov.uk</a>
Accountable officer  Author	Jon Dearing – Group Manager for Resident Services Tel: 01993 861221 Email: <a href="mailto:jon.dearing@publicagroup.uk">jon.dearing@publicagroup.uk</a> Mandy Fathers – Business Manager for Operational Support and Enabling Tel: 01993 861232 Email: <a href="mailto:mandy.fathers@pubicagroup.uk">mandy.fathers@pubicagroup.uk</a>
Summary/Purpose	To consider the purpose, benefits and outcomes of forming a Private Rented Sector Tenant's Forum.
Annexes	None
Recommendation/s	That the Committee considers the data gathering options set out in section 2.
Corporate priorities	Delivering excellent modern services whilst ensuring the financial sustainability of the Council.  Supporting and building prosperous and inclusive local communities.  Facilitating healthy lifestyles and better wellbeing for everyone.
Key Decision	NO
Exempt	NO
Consultees/ Consultation	



## **I. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1. A motion was proposed during the Economic and Social Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 17 September 2020 for a paper to be submitted to the Environmental Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider the benefits and implications of establishing a Private Tenant's Forum.

## **2. MAIN POINTS**

- 2.1. The private rented sector has grown considerably over the last two decades. Nationally, it houses 19 per cent of households compared to 11 per cent in 2001. It has therefore become an integral part of the housing market.
- 2.2. West Oxfordshire currently has approximately 50,521 domestic properties; of which 17 per cent (8,588) are rented out by private individuals.
- 2.3. The Council has statutory duties under the Housing Act 2004, as amended to ensure:
- Properties are fit for human habitation;
  - Houses of multiple occupation are licenced;
  - Pest control is addressed;
  - Neighbour complaints such as excessive noise, anti-social behaviour or illegal activity are dealt with;
  - Rogue landlord concerns are addressed; and,
  - Homelessness is prevented or addressed.
- 2.4. During the 2019/2020 financial year, and the first two quarters on 2020/2021, the Council, under its statutory duties have administered the following:

	<b>April 2019 to March 2020</b>	<b>April 2020 to Sept 2020</b>	<b>Comment</b>
How many complaints we have received in respect of landlords	112	34	It is not possible to distinguish between complaints about landlords and complaints about the property. Usually the complaint is about both – poor condition because the landlord has not acted.
How many complaints about the property (ie. Damp etc)			These figures relate to complaints about tenanted properties. They may not include complaints made about a property during the HMO licensing process – these would be dealt with under the HMO licence application.
How many neighbour/noise issues	116	192	These are all noise complaints about neighbours whether rental or owner occupied. They exclude complaints about/or from commercial premises.
How many illegal evictions	5	4	These figures may not include cases of landlord harassment - – it depends on how the complaint was originally recorded by customer services

- 2.5. The Council already commission services from Citizens Advice, West Oxfordshire (CAWO) to support its core service and help meet its statutory functions whilst contributing to the Council's priorities. Part of the commissioning contract is in respect of 'Housing Advice' of which private rented sector issues fall in to. During the first two quarters of 2020/2021, CAWO have supported the following clients in respect of private sector rental issues:

No:	Issue Type	No. of cases
1	Repairs/Maintenance	32
2	Rents and other charges	26
3	Tenancy Deposit Protection	24
4	Possession action (not arrears)	20
5	Fitness for human habitation	19
6	Problems with Letting Agents	13
7	Cost of deposits/rent in advance	11
8	Quality of Service	10
9	Letting Agent charges	4

- 2.6. It is therefore clear that there are already formal routes for Private Rented Sector tenants to receive advice and make complaints regarding their landlords; through the Council's existing regulatory services and (Council commissioned) CAWO service. This could be improved by adding a specific page/s to the Council's website, as in Option 1 (paragraph 3.1).

- 2.7. A Private Tenant Forum would not be an appropriate place to raise/discuss individual complaints. The purpose of such a forum therefore needs careful consideration, as suggested in Option 2 (paragraph 3.1).

### **3. OPTIONS**

- 3.1. There are potentially three options to consider:

- 1) Create a webpage specifically for the private rent sector. This would be an informative area for customers giving advice, guidance and signposting to other organisations, such as CAWO and Shelter. Through our Customer Satisfaction Web Survey, we could then establish what other needs these tenants have.
- 2) Conduct a Needs Survey with Private Rented Sector tenants; directly where we have the contact details (e.g. Housing Benefit recipients) or on the Council's Website front page. This survey could be conducted in parallel with the above data collection process.

### **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1. Neither of the above options have any significant financial implications.

### **5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1. There are no known legal implications in respect of this report

**6. RISK ASSESSMENT**

- 6.1. There is a risk that such a forum would become an opportunity for individuals to raise complaints, which they should do through existing processes, rather than improving the private rental experience more widely.
- 6.2. Members would need to consider what the main aim of a Forum is and what its 'core objectives' would be to ensure its purpose.

**7. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 7.1. Members may consider other options that have not been listed.

**8. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 8.1. None

**EXTRACT FROM THE DRAFT MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE  
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
HELD ON 19 NOVEMBER 2020**

**18     PRIVATE TENANTS FORUM**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Group Manager, Resident Services, which asked Members to consider the purpose, benefits and outcomes of forming a Private Rented Sector Tenant's Forum, further to the consideration of the matter at the meeting of the Committee held 17 September relating to the motion proposed at the Council meeting on 26 February 2020.

The report outlined the current level of properties privately rented in West Oxfordshire and clarified the statutory duties for which the Council was responsible. A table at section 2.4 of the report highlighted the number and type of complaints that the Council had administered during 2019 and 2020. The report recognised that there were already formal routes for Private Rented Sector tenants to receive advice and make complaints regarding their landlords; through the Council's existing regulatory services and (Council commissioned) CAWO service.

Officers also felt that a Private Tenant Forum would not be an appropriate place to raise/discuss individual complaints, however two options were proposed for Councillors to consider:

- 1) Create a webpage specifically for the private rent sector. This would be an informative area for customers giving advice, guidance and signposting to other organisations, such as CAWO and Shelter. Through our Customer Satisfaction Web Survey, we could then establish what other needs these tenants have.
- 2) Conduct a Needs Survey with Private Rented Sector tenants; directly where we have the contact details (e.g. Housing Benefit recipients) or on the Council's Website front page. This survey could be conducted in parallel with the above data collection process.

The proposer of the motion, Councillor Saul addressed Members and he thanked officers for the report. He felt that it was important to make it clear that the forum would not be the place to put forward individual complaints but that it should be used to ensure that residents were aware of their rights.

He felt that the two options in the report were viable and it was worth considering a dedicated web page similar to Redbridge London Borough Council.

Councillor Leverton agreed with the comments made and hoped a forum would help to maintain a good relationship between renter, tenants and letting agents. He suggested that the Council could provide information for individuals and link with the Citizens Advice Bureau to offer further assistance if needed.


The Cabinet Member for Communities and Housing, Councillor Davies assured the meeting that this was something that Cabinet felt passionate about and wanted to protect private renters. It was noted that engaging with landlords was key but Members needed to be mindful of how much influence the Council had in private matters.

Members were supportive of both options in general and requested that these be put back to Council for consideration as a good starting point.

**RESOLVED:** That Council be recommended to agree to:

- 1) Create a webpage specifically for the private rent sector. This would be an informative area for customers giving advice, guidance and signposting to other organisations, such as CAWO and Shelter. Through our Customer Satisfaction Web Survey, we could then establish what other needs these tenants have.
- 2) Conduct a Needs Survey with Private Rented Sector tenants; directly where we have the contact details (e.g. Housing Benefit recipients) or on the Council's Website front page. This survey could be conducted in parallel with the above data collection process.

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 <b>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</b>	<b>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</b>
Name and date of Committee	<b>Council – Wednesday 20 January 2021</b>
Report Number	<b>Agenda Item No. 16</b>
Subject	<b>Emergency/Urgency Delegations Decisions</b>
Wards affected	All
Accountable member	Councillor Michele Mead, Leader of the Council Email: <a href="mailto:michele.mead@westoxon.gov.uk">michele.mead@westoxon.gov.uk</a>
Accountable officer	Keith Butler Head of Democratic Services Tel: 01993 861521 Email: <a href="mailto:keith.butler@westoxon.gov.uk">keith.butler@westoxon.gov.uk</a>
Summary/Purpose	To note decisions taken under the emergency and urgency delegation arrangements approved by Council on 13 May 2020.
Appendices	<a href="#">Appendix A</a> – report, decisions and Policy on Discretionary Additional Restrictions Grants <a href="#">Appendix B</a> – report, decisions and Policy on Local Restrictions Support Grants
Recommendation	That the report be noted.
Corporate priorities	N/A
Key Decision	N/A
Exempt	No
Consultees/ Consultation	None

## **I. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1. At its meeting on 13 May 2020, the Council approved Emergency and Urgency delegations to the Chief Executive to enable decisions to be taken which were either an emergency, or where there was urgency such that the matter could not reasonably await the next meeting of whichever body would otherwise take that decision.
- 1.2. The report on the matter included the statement that: *“Any decision under the above provisions shall be recorded and published, and reported to Council, Cabinet or the appropriate Committee or Sub-Committee, such report to include the reasons that the powers needed to be used”*.
- 1.3. This report specifies two decisions taken under those powers.

## **2. ADDITIONAL RESTRICTIONS GRANTS POLICY (DISCRETIONARY)**

- 2.1. The Government announced a further round of additional restriction (discretionary) support related to Business Grants on 31 October 2020 under the national and Local Covid Alert Level 3 restrictions. The purpose of the urgent decision which was sought was to formally agree the eligibility criteria, timescales, application approach, authorisation protocols and delegations and to confirm the process.
- 2.2. The report prepared to enable the Chief Executive to consult on and then make the decisions specified in the report is attached at [Appendix A](#), and the approved Policy is set out in [Annex A](#) to that Appendix.

## **3. LOCAL RESTRICTIONS SUPPORT GRANTS**

- 3.1. The Government announced a further round of Local Restrictions Support Grants related to Business Grants on 22 October 2020 under the national and Local Covid Alert Level 2 and 3 restrictions. The purpose of the decisions sought was to formally agree the eligibility criteria, timescales, application approach, authorisation protocols and delegations and to confirm the process.
- 3.2. The report prepared to enable the Chief Executive to consult on and then make the decisions specified in the report is attached at [Appendix B](#), and the approved Policy is set out in [Annex A](#) to that Appendix.

## **4. REASONS FOR USE OF URGENCY POWERS**

- 4.1. In each case, if the required decisions had awaited a meeting of the Cabinet, there would have been delay in implementation, to the detriment of those the grants are intended to support.

## **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1. This report has no financial implications.

## **6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1. This report has no financial implications.


## **7. ALTERNATIVES/OPTIONS**

- 7.1. Not applicable.

## **8. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 8.1. None



 <p><b>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</b></p>	<p><b>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</b></p>
<p>Name and date of Committee</p>	<p><b>Decision under Urgency Delegation</b></p>
<p>Subject</p>	<p><b>Additional Restrictions Grants (Discretionary)</b></p>
<p>Wards affected</p>	<p>ALL</p>
<p>Accountable member</p>	<p>Councillor Toby Morris – Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Resources Email: <a href="mailto:toby.morris@westoxon.gov.uk">toby.morris@westoxon.gov.uk</a></p>
<p>Accountable Officers</p>	<p>Jon Dearing – Group Manager for Resident Services Tel: 01993 861221 Email: <a href="mailto:jon.dearing@publicagroup.uk">jon.dearing@publicagroup.uk</a>  Mandy Fathers – Business Manager for Operational Support and Enabling Tel: 01993 861232 Email: <a href="mailto:mandy.fathers@pubicagroup.uk">mandy.fathers@pubicagroup.uk</a></p>
<p>Summary/Purpose</p>	<p>The Government announced a further round of additional restriction (discretionary) support related to Business Grants on 31 October 2020 under the national and Local Covid Alert Level 3 restrictions. The purpose of this report is to formally agree the eligibility criteria, timescales, application approach, authorisation protocols and delegations and to confirm the process.</p>
<p>Annex</p>	<p><a href="#">Annex A</a>: Additional Restrictions Grant Policy</p>
<p>Recommendation</p>	<p>a) That the eligibility criteria be approved, as set out in <a href="#">Annex A</a>; b) That the business-type priorities be approved, as set out in <a href="#">Annex A</a>; c) That the allocation of grant funding be approved, as set out in paragraphs <a href="#">2.5</a> and <a href="#">3.2</a>; d) That the process and application window proposals be approved, as set out in paragraph <a href="#">2.8</a>; and, e) That the Group Manager for Resident Services be authorised to determine individual grant awards, in accordance with the approved Policy.</p>
<p>Corporate priorities</p>	<p>Delivering excellent modern services whilst ensuring the financial sustainability of the Council</p>
<p>Key Decision</p>	<p>YES</p>
<p>Exempt</p>	<p>NO</p>
<p>Consultees/ Consultation</p>	<p>Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Resources, S151 Officer, Chief Executive, Group Manager for Resident Services</p>

## **I. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1. On 3 October 2020, the Government announced the introduction of additional support for local authorities under the National and Local Covid Alert Level 3 Restrictions.
- 1.2. The purpose of this support is to enable Local Authorities to support its local economy and businesses that have been adversely impacted by the recent national restrictions and any future restrictions.
- 1.3. This support will take the form of a funding scheme in the financial year 2020/2021 and can be used across the following financial year (2021/2022). The scheme is called the Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) and is to be administered by Business Rate Billing Authorities in England.

## **2. MAIN POINTS**

- 2.1. The Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS) have given Local Authorities discretion to determine which businesses to support and how much funding to provide. However, BEIS are encouraging Local Authorities to support businesses that have been severely impacted by the restrictions, and may not qualify for support under the mandatory Local Restrictions Support Grant scheme, which is an additional scheme separate to the ARG.
- 2.2. The ARG is therefore aimed at businesses that are not necessarily liable for Business Rates; similar to the Discretionary (Covid) Business Grants scheme Local Authorities administered during the first national lockdown period in June 2020. However, a dispensation has been given to those businesses that are liable for Business Rates, have not been forced to close, but have been severely impacted as a supplier to the retail, leisure, hospitality or events sector.
- 2.3. The Policy set out in Annex A sets out the eligibility criteria as follows:
  - 1) Businesses must have been trading on 4 November 2020,
  - 2) Businesses do not have their own business rate assessment unless they fall into those detailed in 2.2 above, and
  - 3) Businesses must have high fixed property costs and/or be severely impacted by the restrictions.
- 2.4. In addition the Council will prioritise the following types of businesses:
  - a) Regular market traders with fixed building costs, such as rent,
  - b) Bed and Breakfast establishments which pay Council Tax rather than Business Rates,
  - c) Charity properties that do not have their own Business Rate assessment,
  - d) Businesses that supply goods or services to the retail, hospitality, leisure and events sectors, that do not have their own Business Rate assessment or, where permitted to continue to trade, the business has been severely impacted by the closure of the retail, hospitality, leisure and event sectors and may or may not have a Business Rate assessment,
  - e) Travel companies or those transport providers who have been severely impacted by restrictions,
  - f) Small businesses in shared office or other flexible workspaces who do not have their own Business Rate assessment and have been severely impacted,

- g) Those working from home who are not eligible for the Self-Employed Income Support Scheme (SEISS), or Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) and have high fixed business costs such as rent, lease, hire purchase costs or franchise payments or other costs that would not be saved by not trading.

2.5. Grant awards will be aligned to grant payments made under the mandatory Local Restrictions Support Grant scheme as follows:

- Businesses whose annual rent or financial impact is exactly £15,000 or below will receive £1,334 per 28-day qualifying restriction,
- Businesses whose annual rent or financial impact is between £15,001 to £50,999 will receive a payment of £2,000 per 28-day qualifying restriction period, and
- Businesses whose annual rent or financial impact is exactly £51,000 or above will receive a payment of £3,000 per 28-day qualifying restriction period.

2.6. Businesses who meet the eligibility criteria will make their application for the grant through the Council's website; linking through to the existing Salesforce platform. This will allow automated email acknowledgement to be used and a high level of auto-population of back office systems. The application will be a 'flow and filter' form. This means that it will ask key qualification questions first, so that those who do not fall within the key criteria are not prompted to complete the form in its entirety before being told that they do not qualify. This will also minimise the assessment process, and therefore timescales, as only fully completed applications will be eligible.

2.7. There will be a one week application window. This is to ensure, where possible, that the majority of grant payments will be made before the Christmas close-down period.

2.8. The proposed timetable is therefore:

- 1) During the end of week commencing 23 November: Announce that the application window will open on Monday 30 November 2020;
- 2) Monday 30 November 2020: Application window opens;
- 3) Sunday 6 December 2020: Application window closes;
- 4) Week commencing 7 December 2020: Assessment period;
- 5) 14 December to 16 December 2020: Verification of assessment;
- 6) 16 December 2020: Members to approve payments;
- 7) 17 December 2020: Prepare payment files for Accounts Payable;
- 8) 18 December 2020: Payments released.

2.9. The timescales for the delivery of this scheme are set outside those of Council meetings therefore emergency delegation is being sort from the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council.

### **3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

3.1. BEIS will be allocating grant funding to Local Billing Authorities to cover the scheme. The allocation for West Oxfordshire District Council is £2,212,860; however this funding is to support any future restrictions during 2020/21 and 2021/22 or to provide additional support to larger local businesses which are important to the local economy, on top of the funding provided to those businesses via the Local Restrictions Support Grant scheme.

3.2. To ensure there is sufficient surplus funds to support further 'unknown' local restrictions as well as additional support the Council may want to consider in supporting its local

economy it is being recommended that 33.33% of the total grant allocation (£737,546) be allocated for the ARG.

**4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1. There are no specific legal implications associated with these recommendations.

**5. RISK ASSESSMENT**

- 5.1. There is a risk of fraud within the scheme. However, Internal Audit and the Corporate Fraud Unit officers are involved in the process design and we will be utilising Government software to assist in fraud detection.

**6. EQUALITIES IMPACT**

- 6.1. None

**7. CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1. None

**8. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 8.1. There is discretion within the scheme, so Cabinet could decide to assist businesses not referred to within the Policy.



## **Additional Restrictions Grant Policy**

### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 On 3 October 2020, the Government announced the introduction of additional support for local authorities under the National and Local Covid Alert Level 3 Restrictions.
- 1.2 This support will take the form of a funding scheme in the financial year 2020/2021 and can be used across the following financial year 2021/2022. The scheme is called the Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) and is to be administered by business rate billing authorities in England.
- 1.3 Businesses that are required to close, but do not pay business rates may be eligible for funding at the discretion of the local authority and may also include businesses not required to close but which are severely impacted.
- 1.4 This Policy is specifically intended to address those businesses which have been forced to close under the national lockdown or are severely impacted for the four week period of 5 November to 2 December 2020; or should the national lockdown period be extended, for any additional period following that. It will also address any future periods of national lockdowns, or Tier 3 restrictions, if imposed on the local district.

### **2. Eligibility**

- 2.1 The grant funding is for those businesses that were trading on 5 November 2020. Businesses must have high fixed property costs and/or have been severely impacted. In addition the council will prioritise the following types of businesses:
  - Regular market traders with fixed building costs, such as rent and who do not have their own business rate assessment
  - Bed and Breakfast establishments which pay council tax instead of business rates
  - Charity properties who do not have their own business rate assessment
  - Businesses that supply goods or services to the retail, hospitality, leisure and events sector who do not have their own business rate assessment, or where permitted to continue to trade the business has been severely impacted by

the closure of the retail, hospitality, leisure and event sectors. (These will include those businesses with or without a business rate assessment).

- Travel companies or those transport providers who have been severely impacted by restrictions
- Small businesses in shared office or other flexible workspaces who do not have their own business rate assessment and have been severely impacted
- Those working from home who are not eligible for the self-employed income support scheme (SEISS), or coronavirus job retention scheme (CJRS) and have high fixed business costs such as rent, lease, hire purchase costs or franchise payments or other costs that would not be saved by not trading

### **3. Exclusions**

3.1 The following businesses are those not considered eligible for the ARG payments:

- Businesses that are able to continue to trade because they do not depend on providing direct in-person services from premises and can operate their services effectively remotely; such as accountants and solicitors
- Businesses that have chosen to close, but not required to
- Businesses which has already received grant payments that equal the maximum levels of state aid permitted under the De Minimis and the Covid-19 Temporary State Aid framework
- Businesses that are in administration, are insolvent or where a striking off notice has been made
- Businesses that were not trading on 4 November 2020
- Businesses which are able to continue to trade on-line
- Businesses not severely impacted by recent national lock-down, or Tier 3 restrictions
- Businesses that are eligible for a mandatory Local Restrictions Support Grant (LRSG)

### **4. Application Process**

4.1 Applications, along with supporting documentation will be accepted electronically through the council website.

4.2 For each period of national lockdown or tier 3 restrictions an 'application window' will be given in which the council will accept applications. Application windows will be communicated through various media platforms to ensure maximum take-up for those eligible businesses to apply.

### **5. Grant Allocations**

5.1 The ARG payment will be in-line with the grant payments made under the LRSG as follows:

- a) Businesses whose annual rent or financial impact is exactly £15,000 or below will receive £1,334 per 28-day qualifying restriction period
- b) Businesses whose annual rent or financial impact is between £15,001 to £50,999 will receive a payment of £2,000 per 28-day qualifying restriction period

- c) Businesses who annual rent or financial impact is exactly £51,000 or above will receive a payment of £3,000 per 28-day qualifying restriction period

5.2 Successful grant payments will be made electronically to the businesses bank account provided at the time of application.

## **6. State Aid**

6.1 The United Kingdom left the EU on 31 January 2020, nonetheless under the Withdrawal Agreement the State aid rules continue to apply during a transition period, subject to regulation by the EU Commission. The council must be satisfied that all State aid requirements have been fully met and complied with when making grant payments. Where it is anticipated that the trading entity may exceed the De Minimis threshold, a state aid declaration will be required prior to the issue of any payment.


6.2 Payments made can be provided under the existing De Minimis rules, to any one organisation over a three fiscal year period, providing doing so does not exceed the €200,000 threshold. Payments made where the De Minimis threshold has been reached should be paid under the Covid-19 Temporary Framework for UK Authorities, providing that it does not exceed the €800,000 threshold.

## **7. Appeals**

7.1 The Council will not be required to provide a right of appeal against any decision not to award an ARG. Businesses will not be eligible if they do not meet the criteria.

## **8. Fraud**

8.1 The Council will not accept deliberate manipulation and fraud. Any business caught falsifying their records to gain an ARG may face prosecution. The Local Authority will seek recovery of any grant paid as a result of fraud or payments made in error.

 <p>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</p>	<p><b>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</b></p>
Name and date of Committee	<b>Decisions under Urgency Delegation</b>
Subject	<b>Local Restrictions Support Grants (Open)</b>
Wards affected	ALL
Accountable member	Cllr Toby Morris –Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance Email: toby.morris@westoxon.gov.uk
Accountable officer  Author	Jon Dearing – Group Manager for Resident Services Tel: 01993 861221 Email: <a href="mailto:jon.dearing@publicagroup.uk">jon.dearing@publicagroup.uk</a>  Mandy Fathers – Business Manager for Operational Support and Enabling Tel: 01993 861232 Email: <a href="mailto:mandy.fathers@publicagroup.uk">mandy.fathers@publicagroup.uk</a>
Summary/Purpose	The Government announced a further round of Local Restrictions Support Grants related to Business Grants on 22 October 2020 under the national and Local Covid Alert Level 2 and 3 restrictions. The purpose of this report is to formally agree the eligibility criteria, timescales, application approach, authorisation protocols and delegations and to confirm the process.
Annexes	<a href="#">Annex A</a> : Local Restrictions Support Grant (Open) Policy
Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) That the eligibility criteria set out in Annex A be approved;</li> <li>b) That the business-type priorities set out in Annex A be approved;</li> <li>c) That the allocation of grant funding as set out in paragraph 2.9 below be approved;</li> <li>d) That the process and application window proposals set out in paragraph 2.11 below be approved; and,</li> <li>e) That the Group Manager for Resident Services be authorised to determine individual grant awards</li> </ul>
Corporate priorities	Delivering excellent modern services whilst ensuring the financial sustainability of the Council
Key Decision	YES
Exempt	NO
Consultees/ Consultation	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Chief Finance Officer, Chief Executive, Group Manager for Resident Services, Monitoring Officer.



## **I. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1. On 22 October 2020, the Government announced the introduction of additional support for local authorities under the National and Local Covid Alert Level 2 and 3 Restrictions.
- 1.2. The purpose of this support is to enable Local Authorities to support its local economy and businesses that remain open but that have been adversely impacted by local restrictions and any future restrictions throughout 2020/2021.
- 1.3. This support will take the form of a funding scheme in the financial year 2020/2021. The scheme is called the Local Restrictions Support Grant (Open) (LRSO Open) and is to be administered by Business Rate Billing Authorities in England.

## **2. MAIN POINTS**

- 2.1. This support is for businesses that are not legally required to close but which are severely impacted by the localised restrictions on socialising put in place to manage coronavirus and save lives.
- 2.2. Localised restrictions are legally binding restrictions imposed on specific Local Authority areas or multiple Local Authority areas, where the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care uses powers in Part 2A of the Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1984 in response to the threat posed by coronavirus and commonly as part of a wider set of measure.
- 2.3. This support will take the form of a grant funding scheme in the financial year 2020/2021.
- 2.4. West Oxfordshire District area has been under Local Covid Alert Level 'High' (LCAL 2) since 2 December 2020 and will receive grant funding to support businesses in their local economies that have been severely impacted from that date.
- 2.5. In the event of a renewed widespread national 'lockdown' restrictions being imposed, the LRSO (Open) will cease to apply, as relevant businesses will receive funding from the Local Restrictions Support Grant (Closed) scheme.
- 2.6. Local Authorities have the freedom to determine the precise eligibility criteria for these grants; however, Government expect the funding to be targeted at hospitality, hotel, bed and breakfast and leisure businesses,
- 2.7. Businesses that were established prior to the introductions of LCAL 2-type restrictions within the West Oxfordshire District area are eligible. The business must have been trading the day before the restrictions came into force.
- 2.8. Businesses established after the introduction of LCAL High or LCAL Very High (if the District should move into the highest tier) are not eligible to receive grant funding.
- 2.9. Grant awards will be for a 14 day period cycle as follows:
  - Businesses whose annual rent or financial impact is exactly £15,000 or below will receive £467 per 14-day qualifying restriction,
  - Businesses whose annual rent or financial impact is between £15,001 to £50,999 will receive a payment of £700 per 14-day qualifying restriction period, and
  - Businesses whose annual rent or financial impact is exactly £51,000 or above will receive a payment of £1,050 per 14-day qualifying restriction period.
- 2.10. Businesses who meet the eligibility criteria will make their application for the grant through the Council's website; linking through to the existing Salesforce platform. This will allow automated email acknowledgement to be used and a high level of auto-population of back office systems. The application will be a 'flow and filter' form. This means that it will ask key qualification questions first, so that those who do not fall within the key criteria are not prompted to complete the form in its entirety, before being told that they do not qualify. This will also minimise the assessment process, and therefore timescales, as only fully completed applications will be eligible.

- 2.11. The application window will remain open for as long as the Council remains in Tier 2 or Tier 3 local restrictions. This is to ensure, where possible, those eligible businesses will obtain the support needed.
- 2.12. The proposed timetable is therefore:
- 1) During the week commencing 14 December: Approve policy and commence build of the application process within Salesforce and announce that the application window will open on Monday 4 January 2021,
  - 2) Monday 21 December: Start testing application process,
  - 3) Week commencing 4 January 2021: Application window opens,
  - 4) Week commencing 11 January 2021: Fortnightly payment cycle begins and any back payments from 2 December also awarded within first fortnightly payment.
- 2.13. The timescales for the delivery of this scheme do not enable a report to first be considered by Cabinet, so a decision under the urgency delegations is being sought, with the Chief Executive to make the decisions following consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Member for Resources.
- 3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**
- 3.1. BEIS will be allocating grant funding to Local Billing Authorities to cover the scheme. The allocation for West Oxfordshire District Council is still to be announced by Government. In the event of demand for grants under the Open scheme exceeding the funding provided by BEIS, the Council may use some of the funding awarded under the Additional Restrictions Grant. Cabinet will consider any such proposal at a Cabinet meeting.
- 4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**
- 4.1. There are no specific legal implications associated with these recommendations.
- 5. RISK ASSESSMENT**
- 5.1. There is a risk of fraud within the scheme. However, Internal Audit and the Corporate Fraud Unit officers are involved in the process design and we will be utilising Government software to assist in fraud detection.
- 6. EQUALITIES IMPACT**
- 6.1. None
- 7. CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**
- 7.1. None
- 8. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**
- 8.1. There is discretion within the scheme, so the Council could assist businesses not referred to within this draft Policy.



## **Local Restrictions Support Grants (Open)**

### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1. On 22 October 2020, the Government announced the introduction of additional support for local authorities under the Local Covid Alert Level 'High' (LCAL 2) or 'Very High' (LCAL 3).
- 1.2. This Policy is specifically intended to address those businesses within the Hospitality, Leisure and Accommodation sectors, which are still open, but severely impacted by local restrictions introduced by Government from 2 December 2020.
- 1.3. This scheme will be available from 2 December 2020 to 31 March 2021, unless the Government instruct the scheme to close at an earlier or later date.

### **2. Eligibility**

- 2.1. The grant funding is for those businesses that remain open and were trading on 1 December 2020. Businesses must have high fixed property costs; must not have their substantive business available on-line and be severely financially impacted by local restrictions levels in either LCAL 2 or LCAL 3. In addition the Council will prioritise the following types of businesses:
  - Businesses within the Hospitality, Leisure and Accommodations sectors;
  - Businesses that supply goods or services to the hospitality, leisure, accommodation and event sectors;
  - Regular market traders with fixed building costs, such as rent;
  - Bed and Breakfast establishments;
  - Charity properties;
  - Travel companies or transport providers.

### **3. Exclusions**

- 3.1. The following businesses are those not considered eligible for the LCAL 2 or LCAL3 payments:
  - Businesses not trading on 1 December 2020 (where businesses were closed due to the national lockdown measure, it is accepted that those businesses are still trading),
  - Businesses which have already received grant payments that equal the maximum levels of state aid permitted under the De Minimis and the Covid-19 Temporary State Aid framework,
  - Businesses that are in administration, are insolvent or where a striking off notice has been made,

- Businesses that do not meet the eligibility criteria.

#### **4. Application Process**

- 4.1. Applications, along with supporting documentation, will be accepted electronically through the council website. This will be our preferred option but, where this is not possible; we will make alternative application arrangements.

#### **5. Grant Allocations**

- 5.1. Payments made under the Local Restrictions Support Grants (Open) scheme will be as follows:
  - a. Businesses whose annual rent or financial impact is exactly £15,000 or below will receive £467 per 14-day qualifying restriction;
  - b. Businesses whose annual rent or financial impact is between £15,001 to £50,999 will receive a payment of £700 per 14-day qualifying restriction period; and
  - c. Businesses whose annual rent or financial impact is exactly £51,000 or above will receive a payment of £1,050 per 14-day qualifying restriction period.
- 5.2. Successful grant application payments will be made electronically to the business bank account provided at the time of application.
- 5.3. Allocations will be made in cycles of 14 day payment periods; except where there has been a change that makes the business no longer eligible.
- 5.4. Businesses will need to notify the Council promptly if they no longer meet the eligibility criteria for additional grants at any point in each 14-day grant cycle period. This will be stipulated within the notification of the outcome of their grant application.

#### **6. State Aid**

- 6.1. The United Kingdom left the EU on 31 January 2020, nonetheless under the Withdrawal Agreement the State aid rules continue to apply during a transition period, subject to regulation by the EU Commission. The council must be satisfied that all State aid requirements have been fully met and complied with when making grant payments. Where it is anticipated that the trading entity may exceed the De Minimis threshold, a state aid declaration will be required prior to the issue of any payment.
- 6.2. Payments made can be provided under the existing De Minimis rules, to any one organisation over a three fiscal year period, providing doing so does not exceed the €200,000 threshold. Payments made where the De Minimis threshold has been reached should be paid under the Covid-19 Temporary Framework for UK Authorities, providing that it does not exceed the €800,000 threshold.

#### **7. Appeals**

- 7.1. The Council will not be required to provide a right of appeal against any decision not to award an LCAL 2 or LCAL 3 grant payment. Businesses will not be eligible if they do not meet the criteria.

#### **8. Fraud**

- 8.1. The Council will not accept deliberate manipulation and fraud. Any business caught falsifying their records to gain a local Restriction Support Grant (Open) may face prosecution. The Local Authority will seek recovery of any grant paid as a result of fraud or payments made in error.

### **WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL:** **WEDNESDAY 20 JANUARY 2021**

Schedule of documents sealed out of meeting by the Chairman and the Head of Democratic Services, since the last meeting of the Council.

<b><u>Registration Number</u></b>	<b><u>Description of documents</u></b>	<b><u>Parties in addition to the Council</u></b>
I1843	Form DSI – Cancellation of Entries Relating to a Registered Charge – 49 Burwell Drive, Witney, Oxon	
I1844	Legal Mortgage over Property – Land at Manor Farm, Fawler Road, Charlbury	Southill Solar Ltd (1)
I1844A	Duplicate	
I1845	Facility Agreement – Land at Manor Farm, Fawler Road, Charlbury	Southill Solar Ltd (1)
I1845A	Duplicate	
I1856	Section 106 Agreement – No 2 and land at The Paddocks, Weald Street, Bampton plus plan	Felix Duran (2)
I1856A	Duplicate	
I1847	Temporary Road Closure – Woodstock (Sunday 8 November 2020) plus plan	Woodstock Town Council (1)
I1848	Temporary Road Closure – Chipping Norton (Wednesday 11 November 2020) plus plan	Michael Dixon – Royal British Legion (1)
I1849	Discharge Agreement – Land at Manor Farm, Fawler Road, Charlbury	Southill Community Energy Ltd (2) Southill Solar Ltd (3)
I1849A	Duplicate	
I1850	Deed of Release of from LSVT Clawback Agreement – 42 Banbury Road, Woodstock plus plan	Cottsway Housing Association Ltd (2)
I1851	Deed of Release of from LSVT Clawback Agreement – Land Adjacent Hughes Close, Charlbury plus plan	Cottsway Housing Association (2)
I1852	Rent Arrears and Rent Reduction Agreement – The Gables, Elmfield, New Yatt Road, Witney OX28 1PB	Hexagon Business Centres Ltd (2)
I1852A	Duplicate	
I1853	Variation of Section 106 Agreement – 2,4,6,10, 12, 14 and 5-15 (odd) and 27-33 (odd)- The Paddocks Enstone	Oxfordshire County Council (2) Sovereign Housing Association Ltd (3)
I1853A	Duplicate	
I1853B	Triplicate	
I1854	Contract for Cleaning and Maintenance of Public Conveniences in West Oxfordshire District – public conveniences at Bampton, Burford, Carterton, Charlbury, Chipping Norton, Eynsham, Witney and Woodstock	Danfo (UK) Ltd (2)
I1854A	Duplicate	
I1855	Counterpart Lease – Land at Langdale Hall, Langdale Gate, Market Square, Witney plus plan	Witney Town Council (1)

<b><u>Registration Number</u></b>	<b><u>Description of documents</u></b>	<b><u>Parties in addition to the Council</u></b>
11856	Planning Obligation Deed under Section 106 – Land North of Gas Lane and Ascott Road, Shipton under Wychwood plus plan	Vince Barry O’Brien (1)
11856A	Duplicate	
11857	Deed of Variation of S106 Agreement – Land South of North Leigh, Witney plus plan	Bewley Homes Ltd (2)
11858	Lease – Garage 14, Union Street, Woodstock plus plan	Gael Falk (2)
11859	Legal Charge – 20, 22, 27 and 29 Ashwell Bank Lane, Tackey - 1-7 (odd), 2 and 10-18 even) Catsham Mill Close, Tackey and 1-12 (inc) Letchmere Close, Tackley	Cottsway 2 (1)