

Tuesday 5 March 2024

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COUNCIL

You are summoned to a meeting of Council, which will be held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Woodgreen, Witney, Oxfordshire OX28 1NB on **Wednesday 13 March 2024 at 2.00pm**.



Giles Hughes
Chief Executive

To: Members of the Council:

Councillors: Andrew Coles (Chair), Elizabeth Poskitt (Vice-Chair), Joy Aitman, Alaa Al-Yousuf, Lidia Arciszewska, Thomas Ashby, Hugo Ashton, Andrew Beaney, Michael Brooker, David Cooper, Julian Cooper, Rachel Crouch, Colin Dingwall, Jane Doughty, Duncan Enright, Phil Godfrey, Andy Goodwin, Andy Graham, Jeff Haine, David Jackson, Edward James, Mark Johnson, Natalie King, Liz Leffman, Nick Leverton, Dan Levy, Andrew Lyon, Charlie Maynard, Martin McBride, Michele Mead, David Melvin, Lysette Nicholls, Mathew Parkinson, Rosie Pearson, Rizvana Poole, Andrew Prosser, Carl Rylett, Geoff Saul, Sandra Simpson, Alaric Smith, Ruth Smith, Harry St. John, Tim Sumner, Dean Temple, Liam Walker, Mark Walker, Adrian Walsh, Alex Wilson and Alistair Wray.

Recording of Proceedings – The law allows the public proceedings of Council, Executive, 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 Democratic Services officers know prior to the start of the meeting.

AGENDA

1. **Apologies for Absence**
To receive any apologies for absence from Members of the Council.
2. **Declarations of Interest**
To receive any declarations of interest from Members of the Council on any items to be considered at the meeting.
3. **Minutes of Previous Meeting (Pages 7 - 28)**
To approve the minutes of the previous meeting, held on Wednesday 28 February 2024.
4. **Receipt of Announcements**
To receive any announcements from the Chair, Leader of the Council, Members of the Executive, the Chief Executive Officer, the Director of Governance and the Director of Finance.
5. **Participation of the Public**
There were no submissions for public participation received by Democratic Services before the deadline of 12.00pm on Monday 4 March 2024.
6. **Questions by Members**
The following questions have been submitted by Members of Council to Members of the Executive, in accordance with the Council Procedure Rules (Constitution Part 5A, Rule 12). Oral responses will be provided at the meeting. Following receipt of the answer to their question, Members are entitled to ask one supplementary question at the meeting. The Questions and Answers will be detailed in the minutes of the meeting.
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Q1. Councillor Liam Walker to Councillor Andy Graham, Leader of the Council:
Can you please update Council on the Motion passed for improving mobile signal in West Oxfordshire?
Q2. Councillor Liam Walker to Councillor Andy Graham, Leader of the Council:
Can you please update Council as to the letter sent to the Cabinet Member for Highways and any further response received about junction safety improvements at Barnard Gate after the Motion to full Council was passed?
Q3. Councillor Michele Mead to Councillor Andy Graham, Leader of the Council:
Can you tell us please how many bookings have been received for the hire of the newly refurbished Council Chamber?
Q4. Councillor Alex Wilson to Councillor Andy Graham, Leader of the Council:
The Swift Brick Motion was brought to the Council months ago, and it was put to be scrutinised, however this has not gone to Scrutiny and has not returned to this chamber. Please could the Executive clarify why this has not gone further and if there are any other motions that have been brought to this Council and not actioned?
7. **Recommendations from the Executive**
There are no recommendations to Council from the Executive.

8. Polling District and Places Review (Pages 29 - 46)

Purpose:

To update Members on the requirement to conduct a review of the Parliamentary Polling Districts and Polling Places within West Oxfordshire, to put in hand the necessary initial steps, and to note the suggested timetable for the review.

Recommendations:

That Council Resolves to:

1. Carry out the statutorily required review of the Parliamentary Polling Districts and Polling Places within West Oxfordshire;
2. Agree that, in accordance with the statute, the Acting Returning Officer for the Parliamentary Constituency of Witney; be requested to submit his representations on the review, to include information as to the location of polling stations (both existing and proposed) within Polling Places (both existing and proposed);
3. Agree that the information in this report as to the processes and the timetable for the review be noted; and
4. Agree that consultation responses and representations be considered at the meeting of Council to be held 25 September 2024/or 27 November 2024.

9. Recommendations of the Constitution Working Group (Pages 47 - 74)

Purpose:

To present recommendations from the Constitution Working Group arising from a meeting held on 13 February 2024.

Recommendations:

That Council Resolves to:

1. Approve the changes to the Constitution Working Group Terms of Reference to include responsibility for oversight of electoral matters (Annex A);
2. Adopt the Draft Webcasting Protocol for inclusion in the Constitution as the new Part 6N (Annex B);
3. Agree an amendment to Article 5 of the Constitution to include at 2E.2 that committees will appoint a Vice-Chair at their first meeting following Annual Council (Annex C);
4. Agree an amendment to Part 5A Rule 17.2 to remove the requirement for the Chair to have cast a deliberative vote in order to use a casting vote (Annex D);
5. Agree to amend Part 5A Rule 3.2 to add Member questions to the business for ordinary Council meetings (after public questions) (Annex E);
6. Agree to amend the Public Participation Rules to clarify the rules for speaking at Development Control Committee and Area Planning Sub-Committee meetings (Annex F);
7. Note the progress the Constitution Working Group has made in during 2023/24 and the items to be carried forward into next year, as set out in Annex G.

10. **Motion A: Supporting Our Farmers in West Oxfordshire – Proposed by Councillor Liam Walker, Seconded by Councillor Alex Wilson.**

West Oxfordshire District Council is committed to supporting local farmers and food producers across our district. Britain has some of the highest animal welfare standards in the world, and WODC should engage and work in partnership with our poultry, arable and livestock farmers, to ensure they can continue to enhance our countryside, and contribute to our nation's food security.

Council Resolves to:

1. Work to support local farmers by being sympathetic to diversification opportunities and by promoting local produce during the Back British Farming campaign week;
2. Be vocal in opposing attempts to diminish the role our meat, dairy, and arable farmers play in our rural way of life;
3. Provide food at Council events, where practical, which is sourced from local suppliers, including meat, fish, dairy, fruit, and vegetables;
4. Work to raise awareness of the importance of shopping locally, wherever possible, taking advantage of home-grown, affordable, and nutritious food, especially through our farm shops, reducing the "food miles" on our plates and supporting our producers.

11. **Motion B: Local Authority Mental Health Challenge – Proposed by Councillor Alex Wilson, Seconded by Councillor Michele Mead.**

One in four people experience a mental health problem of some kind each year. One in six report experiencing common mental health problems in any given week in England. To put this into context, on the last census in 2021 there was a population of 114,200 in West Oxfordshire, meaning that 19,033 people are going through this on a weekly basis. What is being done here and at County isn't enough.

We can play a crucial role in improving the mental health of every member of our community, and to tackle some of the widest and most entrenched inequalities in health, as well as the misconceptions that are applied with these. This administration and others must make this a priority across all local authority areas of responsibility, as the current level of support locally is not good enough for those who are in need.

We ask the administration to appoint a Member as "Mental Health Champion" (MHC).

The MHC will advocate for mental health issues in council meetings and policy development, will reach out to the local community to raise awareness of mental health issues and challenge stigma, and will listen to people with personal experience of mental health and get their perspective on local needs and priorities.

The MHC will scrutinise areas that have an impact on people's mental health such as Housing needs, developments, and other areas, will look at fostering local partnerships between agencies to support people with mental health problems more effectively, and will identify at least one priority each year for focused work.

The MHC will respond to occasional requests from the challenge coordinator for updates on activities undertaken in the role of member champion, and will have access

to advice and support from the mental health challenge national partners, to resources on the challenge website, and an annual meeting with other member champions to share information, experience, and ideas.

We also ask the Council to Identify an existing officer to function as lead officer for mental health.

The officer would:

- Advise the member Champion on current issues and priorities;
- Support strategies initiated by the member champion;
- Raise awareness among council staff about mental health issues;
- Seek external support for activities led by the council to promote mental health and wellbeing;
- Provide information to the member champion to support their work;
- Liaise with mental health challenge national partners to secure information and advice.

The lead officer will also have access to the benefits described above for member champion, will support positive mental health in all areas of our community, work with local partners to offer effective support for people with mental health needs, tackle discrimination on the grounds of mental health in our local community, and proactively listen to people of all ages and backgrounds about their needs for better mental health.

Council Resolves to request the Leader of the Council to:

1. Sign the Local Authority Mental Health Challenge;
2. Appoint a member as “Mental Health Champion” (MHC);
3. Identify an existing officer to function as lead officer for mental health.

(END)