

Tuesday, 19 November 2024

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COUNCIL

You are summoned to a meeting of the Council which will be held in Council Chamber, Council Offices, Woodgreen, Witney, Oxfordshire OX28 1NB on **Wednesday, 27 November 2024 at 2.00 pm.**



Giles Hughes
Chief Executive

To: Members of the Council

Councillors: Elizabeth Poskitt (Chair), Andrew Coles (Vice-Chair), Joy Aitman, Lidia Arciszewska, Thomas Ashby, Hugo Ashton, Mike Baggaley, Andrew Beaney, Michael Brooker, Adam Clements, David Cooper, Julian Cooper, Steve Cosier, Rachel Crouch, Jane Doughty, Genny Early, Duncan Enright, Roger Faulkner, Phil Godfrey, Andy Goodwin, Andy Graham, David Jackson, Edward James, Natalie King, Liz Leffman, Nick Leverton, Dan Levy, Andrew Lyon, Paul Marsh, Charlie Maynard, Martin McBride, Stuart McCarroll, Michele Mead, David Melvin, Rosie Pearson, Andrew Prosser, Nigel Ridpath, Carl Rylett, Geoff Saul, Sandra Simpson, Alaric Smith, Ruth Smith, Tim Sumner, Sarah Veasey, 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. The quorum for full Council is 13 Members.
2. **Declarations of Interest**
To receive any declarations from Members of Council on any items to be considered at the meeting
3. **Minutes of Previous Meeting (Pages 9 - 22)**
To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 25 September 2024.
4. **Receipt of Announcements**
To receive any announcements from the Chair, Leader, Members of the Executive or the Chief Executive.
5. **Participation of the Public**
A member of the public, who is a registered elector in the District, may ask questions of the Chair of Council, any Member of the Executive or the Chair of any Committee, on any matter in relation to which the Council has powers or duties or which affects the District.

A member of the public is limited to asking one such question at any meeting of the Council, other than Annual Council. No more than one question can be asked on behalf of any organisation or body at any Council meeting.

Notice that the question is to be asked, together with a written copy of the question, must be provided to the Director of Governance, via email to democratic.services@westoxon.gov.uk, and is to be received no later than noon on the seventh working day before the day of the meeting.

The deadline for submissions for public participation to be received by Democratic Services was 12.00pm on Monday 18 November 2024.

No questions from the public will be allowed where the requisite notice has not been given.

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).

Written responses will be circulated to Members and published on the Council's website at least one working day prior to the meeting. A Member submitting a question is entitled to ask one supplementary question at the meeting which must arise directly from the question or the response to it.

The supplementary questions and answers will be detailed in the minutes of the meeting.

Question 1: Councillor Michele Mead to Councillor Andy Graham, Leader of the Council

How many bookings have you received to hire the Chamber?

Question 2: Councillor Michele Mead to Councillor Duncan Enright, Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Economic Development

As yet another shop closes in Marriots walk please can we have a update on what the Executive are doing to fill these empty units?

Question 3: Councillor Ruth Smith to Councillor Rachel Crouch, Executive Member for Stronger Healthy Communities

What are the latest developments in the Council's work towards becoming a Local Authority of Sanctuary and what are the Council's next steps on this?

Question 4: Councillor Alex Wilson to Councillor Andy Graham, Leader of the Council

Please could you confirm when a mental health champion will be in position?

Question 5: Councillor Jane Doughty to Councillor Geoff Saul, Executive Member for Housing and Social Care

How many homeless people is the Council aware of in West Oxfordshire and more specifically Witney?

Question 6: Councillor Jane Doughty to Councillor Geoff Saul, Executive Member for Housing and Social Care

Following on from that when was the last time the Council's Housing Policy in relation to homeless people was reviewed and how frequently is this done?

Question 7: Councillor Thomas Ashby to Councillor Lidia Arciszewska, Executive Member for Environment

Given that West Oxfordshire District Council is recording a deficit in regard to Green Waste, will the Executive Member consider reducing the Green Waste Fee from the current £50 ahead of the 25/26 budget?

Question 8: Councillor Thomas Ashby to Councillor Lidia Arciszewska, Executive Member for Environment

There have been a number of complaints regarding trees. There have been many claims of subsidence over the past few years within my ward, therefore there is a real need for the Tree Management Policy to be reviewed urgently.

Not only are there cases of subsidence, but many elderly residents are unable to afford Tree Surgeons to maintain Council owned shrubs, bushes and trees that are affecting their homes. Please can the Executive Member start the review on the Tree Management Policy in January 2025, as this is a Policy which is now out of date.

Question 9: Councillor Thomas Ashby to Councillor Lidia Arciszewska, Executive Member for Environment

How many fly-tipping incidents have been reported? How many that have been reported have had action taken against them?

Please can the Executive Member review the Policy to ensure that all housing estates are covered by this policy?

Recommendations from the Executive and the Council's Committees

7. Recommendations from the Executive (Pages 23 - 28)

Purpose:

To receive and consider recommendations made by the Executive since the previous meeting of Council.

Recommendation:

Subject to the resolutions of the [Executive on 20 November 2024](#), the Executive recommends that Council resolves to:

1. Agree from 01 April 2025 to levy the maximum level of premium for Empty Homes as set out in the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023:
 - i) Premium of 100% for dwellings which are unoccupied and substantially unfurnished (Empty Homes Premium) after 1 year up to 5 years of becoming empty;
 - ii) Premium of 200% for dwellings which are unoccupied and substantially unfurnished (Empty Homes Premium) between 5 years and 10 years;
 - iii) Premium of 300% for dwellings which are unoccupied and substantially unfurnished (Empty Homes Premium) for 10 years or more;
2. Agree from 1 April 2025 to the implementation of a premium (Second Homes Premium) of 100% for dwellings that are no one's sole or main residence and which are substantially furnished;
3. Note that where premiums are to be applied, the Council is mindful of the outcome of the government consultation which recommends exceptions in certain circumstances outlined within the report may be amended, and as such guidance may change
4. Agree that any amendments to the guidance which may change the criteria for Premiums be delegated to the Chief Finance Officer in consultation with the Executive Member for Finance.

8. Gambling Act 2005 Statement of Principles (Policy) Review 2024 (Pages 29 - 68)

Purpose:

The report details the proposed revisions to the Council's Statement of Principles (Gambling Act 2005), based on legislative requirements, statutory guidance and any amendments following public consultation.

Recommendation:

The [Licensing Committee on 19 November 2024](#) agreed to recommend to Council to:

1. Approve the Statement of Principles; and,
2. Agree that the Council continues to adopt a "no-casino resolution" for inclusions in the published Gambling Act 2005 Licensing Policy Statement.

9. Review of standards arrangements (Pages 69 - 114)

Purpose:

To consider the Council's Member Code of Conduct Complaint Handling Arrangements and the Standards Sub-Committee Procedure Rules following a review by officers.

Recommendation:

The [Audit and Governance Committee on 26 September 2024](#) agreed to recommend that Council resolves to:

1. Adopt the revised Member Code of Conduct Complaint Handling Arrangements (Annex A2).
2. Adopt the revised Standards Sub-Committee Procedure Rules (Annex B2) following a review undertaken by officers and the three Independent Persons.

Reports from Officers

10. **Review of political proportionalities (Pages 115 - 120)**

Purpose:

To review the political proportionalities on committees following receipt of a notice that a member has joined a group.

Recommendation:

That Council resolves to:

1. Agree the political proportionalities as set out in Annex A.
2. Appoint to any vacant seats on committees in accordance with the wishes of the political group to which the seat has been allocated, as expressed at the meeting.
3. Note that any remaining vacancies on committees shall be appointed to by the Monitoring Officer in accordance with the wishes of the political group to which the vacant seat has been allocated and that Council will be asked to ratify and note any such appointments at the next ordinary Council meeting.

11. **Council Size Proposal (Phase I of the Electoral Review of West Oxfordshire District) (Pages 121 - 180)**

Purpose:

To consider the submission of a Council Size Proposal to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England as part of the electoral review of West Oxfordshire, and any associated change to the electoral cycle for the district council and town and parish councils within the West Oxfordshire district area.

Recommendation:

That Council resolves to:

1. Approve the Draft Council Size Proposal (Annex A) for submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England.
2. Delegate authority to the Head of Democratic and Electoral Services, in consultation with the Chair of the Constitution Working Group, to make any minor amendments required to finalise the document to reflect the discussion at full Council, correct typographical errors or otherwise strengthen and improve the proposal document.
3. Note that whole-Council elections will be held on new ward boundaries in May 2027 in any scenario.
4. Agree in principle to move to whole-Council elections every four years from May 2027.
5. Agree to convene a special meeting of full Council on 29 January 2025 at 4.00pm for the purpose of formally deciding whether to change the electoral cycle to whole-Council elections every four years from May 2027 (which will require a

2/3 majority at the specially convened meeting).

6. Authorise the Chief Executive Officer to seek the views of town and parish councils on whether to harmonise ordinary elections of all town and parish councils within the district area with district council elections from May 2027, in the event that the District Council does decide to move to whole-Council elections from May 2027.

12. **Polling District and Places Review (Pages 181 - 206)**

Purpose:

To update Members on the review of the Parliamentary Polling Districts and Polling Places within West Oxfordshire, following the public consultation which was in place from 24 September to 4 November 2024.

Recommendation:

That Council resolves to:

1. Note the consultation feedback as set out in Annex A.
2. Approve the recommended changes to polling districts and polling places as set out in Annex A.
3. Approve the full schedule of polling districts and polling places set out in Annex B.
4. Note that the Council will undertake a further review of polling districts and polling places following the Local Government Boundary Commission for England's electoral review of West Oxfordshire District Council.

13. **Results of Member Survey on Meeting Start Times (Pages 207 - 214)**

Purpose:

To report to Council the results of the Member Survey on Council start times which Council agreed to undertake following a trial of a 4.00pm start time for the 25 September full Council meeting.

Recommendation:

That Council resolves to:

1. Note the report.
2. Consider any proposal to change the start time of future Council meetings from the default start time of 2.00pm.

Motions on Notice

14. **Motion A: Suicide Prevention (Proposer: Cllr Alex Wilson, Cllr Michele Mead)**

We as a Council can and should be calling for further support for those who struggle with their mental health and the thoughts that may come from this. The motion below is a further step forward in the correct direction in supporting the many people who struggle and to assist our officers and Mental Health Champion, once chosen, to increase the support available.

Council resolves to:

1. Join the Zero Suicide Alliance network.
2. Promote existing safeguarding and suicide prevention training and resources to all council workers and signpost to the council's wellbeing pages and Mental Health First Aiders.
3. Include appropriate signposting to suicide prevention and/or mental health support in cost-of-living material, on the online community hub, and in arrears

letters.

4. For the Council Leader to write to local MPs informing them of the situation and calling for them to lobby for the increased awareness and for an increase in support of the national suicide prevention strategy put forward under the Conservative Government in September 2023.

15. **Matters exempt from publication**

If Council wishes to exclude the press and public from the meeting during its consideration of the item on the exempt from publication part of the agenda, it will be necessary for Council to pass a resolution in accordance with the provisions of Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 specifying the grounds on which their presence could involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1 and 3 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

Council may maintain the exemption if and so long as, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

16. **Salaries and Terms and Conditions of Chief Officers (Pages 215 - 252)**

Purpose:

Following formal Job Evaluation under the LGA Senior Management Evaluation Scheme (undertaken by South West Councils), to consider the salary for the Chief Executive Officer, Director of Finance and Director of Governance and Regulatory Services, to ensure that additional duties and Line Management responsibilities are reflected in salary and that salaries are consistent with that of the newly recruited Director of Place.

Initial agreement has been sought from the Leader and a recommendation was passed by Performance and Appointments Committee (13.11.24).

In addition, as per the WODC Constitution to move the Chief Executive. and Directors to the terms and conditions of Joint National Committee (JNC), from National Joint Council (NJC) which was also recommended to Council by the Performance and Appointments Committee (13.11.24).

Recommendation:

The [Performance and Appointments Committee on 13 November 2024](#) agreed to recommend that Council resolves to:

1. Approve the appropriate salary for the post of Chief Executive Officer, Director of Finance, and Director of Governance effective from 1 November 2024 and the movement to Joint National Committee (JNC) Terms and Conditions.

(END)