

WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the Council

Held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Woodgreen, Witney, Oxfordshire OX28 1NB
at 2.01 pm on **Wednesday, 29 January 2025**

PRESENT

Councillors: Elizabeth Poskitt (Chair), Andrew Coles (Vice-Chair), Joy Aitman, Lidia Arciszewska, Hugo Ashton, Mike Baggaley, Andrew Beaney, Michael Brooker, Adam Clements, Julian Cooper, Steve Cosier, Rachel Crouch, Jane Doughty, Genny Early, Duncan Enright, Roger Faulkner, Phil Godfrey, Andy Goodwin, Andy Graham, David Jackson, Natalie King, Liz Leffman, Nick Leverton, Dan Levy, Andrew Lyon, Paul Marsh, Charlie Maynard, Stuart McCarroll, Michele Mead, David Melvin, Rosie Pearson, Andrew Prosser, Nigel Ridpath, Geoff Saul, Sandra Simpson, Alaric Smith, Ruth Smith, Tim Sumner, Sarah Veasey, Liam Walker, Mark Walker, Adrian Walsh, Alex Wilson and Alistair Wray

Officers: Giles Hughes (Chief Executive Officer), Andrew Brown (Head of Democratic and Electoral Services), Madhu Richards (Director of Finance), Andrea McCaskie (Director of Governance), Frank Wilson (Group Finance Director - Publica), Jon Dearing (Interim Executive Director), Anne Learmonth (Democratic Services Officer), Maria Harper (Democratic Services Assistant), Ana Prelici (Senior Democratic Services Officer) and Mathew Taylor (Democratic Services Officer)

CL.225 Apologies for Absence

Apologies had been received from Councillors Thomas Ashby, Edward James, Martin McBride and Carl Rylett.

CL.226 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

CL.227 Participation of the Public

There was no participation of the public.

CL.228 Frequency of Elections in West Oxfordshire

The purpose of the item was to invite Council to take a formal decision to change the electoral cycle to whole-Council elections every four years from May 2027 (which would require a 2/3 majority at the specially convened meeting), following the in-principle decision taken unanimously at the 27 November 2024 full Council meeting.

Councillor Alaric Smith, the Chair of the Constitution Working Group, proposed accepting the recommendations. The Executive Member explained that the Council had agreed to retain the size of 49 members, which required the Council to amend its electoral cycle to all out elections every four years. Councillor Smith explained that the recommendation was being amended in response to the English Devolution White Paper, which included plans to replace district and county councils in two-tier areas with new unitary authorities. The

Council

29/January2025

recommendation would now be subject to the electoral review of West Oxfordshire going ahead.

Councillor Andy Graham seconded the recommendations.

In discussing the item, it was raised that the Council may cease to exist by 2027, which would make the resolutions unnecessary. The resolutions were being considered on the basis that the Boundary Commission had advised the Council to submit its proposals regardless of the English Devolution White paper.

The recommendation was put to a vote and was agreed unanimously by Council, satisfying the requirement for a 2/3 majority.

Resolved that Council:

- I. Agree to change the cycle for electing councillors to West Oxfordshire District Council from elections by thirds to whole-Council elections, to commence in May 2027, if the Local Government Boundary Commission's Electoral Review of West Oxfordshire goes ahead.

Voting record – For 44, against 0, abstentions 0, did not vote 0

The Meeting closed at 4.44 pm

CHAIR