



**Summary of the Decisions Taken at the Meeting
of Council held on 18 December 2023**

Agenda Item No.	Agenda Item	Decision
8	<p>Appointment of Chief Executive, Head of Paid Service, Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer</p> <p>Report of Assistant Director Human Resources</p> <p>Recommendations</p> <p>The meeting is recommended:</p> <p>1.1 To agree the recommendation of the Personnel Committee that Gordon Stewart be appointed Chief Executive from 8 January 2024.</p> <p>1.2 To agree the recommendation of the Personnel Committee that Gordon Stewart be appointed the Council's Head of Paid Service for the purposes of Section 4 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 with effect from 8 January 2024.</p> <p>1.3 To agree that, in accordance with Section 8 of the Representation of the People Act 1983 and all related legislation, Gordon Stewart be appointed as Electoral Registration Officer for Cherwell District Council from 8 January 2024.</p> <p>1.4 To agree that, in accordance with Section 35 of the Representation of the People</p>	<p>Resolved</p> <p>(1) That the recommendation of the Personnel Committee that Gordon Stewart be appointed Chief Executive from 8 January 2024 be agreed.</p> <p>(2) That the recommendation of the Personnel Committee that Gordon Stewart be appointed the Council's Head of Paid Service for the purposes of Section 4 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 with effect from 8 January 2024 be agreed.</p> <p>(3) That, in accordance with Section 8 of the Representation of the People Act 1983 and all related legislation, Gordon Stewart be appointed as Electoral Registration Officer for Cherwell District Council from 8 January 2024.</p> <p>(4) That, in accordance with Section 35 of the Representation of the People Act 1983 and all related legislation Gordon Stewart be appointed as Returning Officer for Cherwell District Council with authority to act in that capacity for elections to the District Council and all parish and town councils within the area of the Cherwell district from 8 January 2024.</p>

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	<p>Act 1983 and all related legislation Gordon Stewart be appointed as Returning Officer for Cherwell District Council with authority to act in that capacity for elections to the District Council and all parish and town councils within the area of the Cherwell district from 8 January 2024.</p>	<p>(5) That Gordon Stewart also be appointed or authorised to act in respect of all related electoral, polling or referendum duties, including in relation to County Council elections, and for national and regional polls or referendums and be authorised to exercise all delegated powers of the Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer as set out in the Constitution from 8 January 2024.</p>
1.5	<p>To agree that Gordon Stewart also be appointed or authorised to act in respect of all related electoral, polling or referendum duties, including in relation to County Council elections, and for national and regional polls or referendums and be authorised to exercise all delegated powers of the Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer as set out in the Constitution from 8 January 2024.</p>	<p>(6) That, in relation to the duties of Returning Officer or any other electoral, referendum or polling duties arising from such appointment, it be agreed that the Returning Officer shall be entitled to be remunerated in accordance with the scale of fees approved by Council for local elections, or the relevant scale of fees prescribed by a Fees Order in respect of national or regional elections, polls or referendums.</p>
1.6	<p>To agree that, in relation to the duties of Returning Officer or any other electoral, referendum or polling duties arising from such appointment, the Returning Officer shall be entitled to be remunerated in accordance with the scale of fees approved by Council for local elections, or the relevant scale of fees prescribed by a Fees Order in respect of national or regional elections, polls or referendums.</p>	<p>(7) That it be agreed that in all cases where it is a legal requirement or normal practice to do so, the Returning Officer may elect for such fees to be superannuable, and the Council shall pay the appropriate employer's contribution to the superannuation fund, recovering such employer's contributions from central government or other local authorities or agencies where this can be done.</p>
1.7	<p>To agree that in all cases where it is a legal requirement or normal practice to do so, the Returning Officer may elect for such fees to be superannuable, and the Council shall pay the appropriate employer's contribution to the superannuation fund,</p>	<p>(8) That, in relation to the conduct of local authority elections and polls, and elections to the United Kingdom Parliament,</p>

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	<p>recovering such employer's contributions from central government or other local authorities or agencies where this can be done.</p> <p>1.8 To agree that, in relation to the conduct of local authority elections and polls, and elections to the United Kingdom Parliament, and all other electoral duties where the Councils are entitled by law to do so, they shall take out and maintain in force insurance indemnifying the Councils, the Electoral Registration Officer and the Returning Officer against legal expenses reasonably incurred in connection with the defence of any proceedings brought against the Council, Electoral Registration Officer or the Returning Officer and/or the cost of holding another election in the event of the original election being declared invalid (provided that such proceedings or invalidation are the result of the inadvertent contravention of the Representation of the People Acts or other legislation governing the electoral process, and provided that, in the case of the Electoral Registration Officer and the Returning Officer, such proceedings or invalidation arise from an act or omission which the Officer reasonably believes is within the Officer's powers).</p> <p>1.9 To agree that, in the event of such insurance carrying an 'excess' clause by which an initial portion of risk is not insured, the Councils, through</p>	<p>and all other electoral duties where the Council is entitled by law to do so, it be agreed that the Council shall take out and maintain in force insurance indemnifying the Council, the Electoral Registration Officer and the Returning Officer against legal expenses reasonably incurred in connection with the defence of any proceedings brought against the Council, Electoral Registration Officer or the Returning Officer and/or the cost of holding another election in the event of the original election being declared invalid (provided that such proceedings or invalidation are the result of the inadvertent contravention of the Representation of the People Acts or other legislation governing the electoral process, and provided that, in the case of the Electoral Registration Officer and the Returning Officer, such proceedings or invalidation arise from an act or omission which the Officer reasonably believes is within the Officer's powers).</p> <p>(9) That, in the event of such insurance carrying an 'excess' clause by which an initial portion of risk is not insured, it be agreed that the Council, through its internal insurance fund or otherwise, will indemnify the Electoral Registration Officer and Returning Officer up to the value of such excess.</p> <p>(10) That the Council notes its duty to provide support to the Electoral Registration Officer</p>

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	<p>their internal insurance fund or otherwise, will indemnify the Electoral Registration Officer and Returning Officer up to the value of such excess.</p> <p>1.10 To agree that the Council notes its duty to provide support to the Electoral Registration Officer and Returning Officer.</p>	<p>and Returning Officer.</p>
<p>9</p>	<p>Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2024/2024</p> <p>Report of Assistant Director of Finance</p> <p>Recommendations</p> <p>The meeting is recommended:</p> <p>1.1 To note the contents of this report and the financial implications for the council.</p> <p>1.2 To approve</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The option of no change to the Council Tax Reduction Income Banded Scheme for Working Age Customers for 2024-2025 • To amend Working Age Regulations in line with annual uprating and to amend the Council Tax Regulations for pensioner in line with uprating announced by Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities 	<p>Resolved</p> <p>(1) That report and the financial implications for the council be noted.</p> <p>(2) That the option of no change to the Council Tax Reduction Income Banded Scheme for Working Age Customers for 2024-2025 be approved and it be agreed to amend Working Age Regulations in line with annual uprating and to amend the Council Tax Regulations for pensioners in line with uprating announced by Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities.</p>
<p>10</p>	<p>Treasury Management Mid-Year Review Report 2023/24</p> <p>Report of Assistant Director of Finance</p> <p>Recommendations</p>	<p>Resolved</p> <p>(1) That the Treasury Management Mid-Year Review Report be noted.</p>

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	<p>The meeting is recommended:</p> <p>1.1 To note the contents of this Treasury Management Mid-Year Review Report.</p>	
11	<p>Dispensation from Attending Meetings</p> <p>Report of Monitoring Officer</p> <p>Recommendations</p> <p>The meeting is recommended:</p> <p>1.1 to approve a dispensation for Councillor Maurice Billington from the statutory requirement to attend a meeting of the Council within a six-month period from the last noted attendance.</p> <p>1.2 to approve that the dispensation last up to and including 6 May 2024.</p>	<p>Resolved</p> <p>(1) That a dispensation for Councillor Maurice Billington from the statutory requirement to attend a meeting of the Council within a six-month period from the last noted attendance be approved.</p> <p>(2) That it be approved that the dispensation last up to and including 6 May 2024.</p>
12	<p>Amendment to Committee Membership</p> <p>The Progressive Oxfordshire Group Leader, Councillor Hingley, notified the Proper Officer of the following amendment to Progressive Oxfordshire Group committee membership.</p> <p>Recommendations</p> <p>The meeting is recommended:</p> <p>1.1 To note the Progressive Oxfordshire Group committee membership amendment.</p>	<p>Resolved</p> <p>(1) That the following Progressive Oxfordshire Group committee membership amendment be noted;</p> <p>Appeals Panel Remove – Councillor Rob Pattenden Add – Councillor Julian Nedelcu</p>
15	Relocation of CDC administrative	Recommendation agreed as set out in

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	<p>headquarters from Bodicote House to Castle Quay</p> <p>Exempt report of Corporate Director Resources</p>	<p>the exempt report</p>
<p>17</p>	<p>Motions</p> <p>To debate the following motions which have been submitted with advance notice, in accordance with the Constitution (to be debated in the order submitted).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solar Energy Strategy proposed by Councillor Dorothy Walker • Right to Grow proposed by Councillor Ian Middleton • Period Poverty proposed by Councillor Rebecca Biegel • Section 21 Notice proposed by Councillor Sean Woodcock • Service Hubs proposed by Councillor Chris Pruden 	<p>Resolved</p> <p>(1) That the following motion be adopted:</p> <p>“Increasing our renewable energy production by wind or solar is vital – yet there is an inconsistency of approach in Cherwell. While wind projects and their suitability for Cherwell’s environment and community needs was independently researched in 2019 for the Local Plan Review, no equivalent independent research was undertaken for solar projects. -</p> <p>The pathway to the increase in solar generation is unclear. Requirements for solar panels on new domestic and commercial buildings are limited and there is no programme for the widespread retrofitting of photovoltaics on public, commercial and domestic properties, nor is there a comprehensive solar power plan integrating all means of solar power generation, only an apparent reliance on the emergence of commercial solar farm proposals. There has been a proliferation of solar farm projects in the district, and we currently face the potential construction (mainly in West Oxfordshire and partially in Cherwell) of the largest solar farm in Europe - and one of the largest in the world.</p>

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		<p>We ask the Executive to consider commissioning a robust, research-based strategy for solar electricity production in Cherwell, in order to achieve the optimum balance of power generation by solar farms, by roof panels on new commercial and residential developments, and, crucially, their retrofitting on existing public, business and domestic buildings. Two key criteria underpinning this solar power strategy should be environmental impacts and domestic food production needs.”</p> <p>(2) That the following motion be adopted:</p> <p>We have seen the cost of living crisis leave many of our residents with unacceptable choices between heating or eating.</p> <p>However, the cost of living crisis has caused highlighted another crucial issue: period poverty. Many women and girls do not have access to sanitary products due to the rising cost of other essentials such as food and energy, which are necessarily being prioritised.</p> <p>A poll by Action Aid in May 2023 showed that more than 21% or 1 in 5 women and people who menstruate are experiencing period poverty. Furthermore, the percentage of those affected has risen from 12% to 21% in just one year.</p> <p>Being unable to comfortably</p>

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		<p>leave home for several days every month due to lack of sanitary products is unbearable for the individuals and missing work or school has further financial or educational implications.</p> <p>There are also serious health risks: 41% of respondents used sanitary products for much longer than recommended and 8% resorted to re-using disposal products. In addition to the physical dangers, the impact of shame and anxiety on mental health is significant.</p> <p>I hope members will agree this situation is unacceptable in society and in our district.</p> <p>To combat period poverty, this Council asks the Executive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) to investigate and report back on the number of accessible locations across the Council's estate where free sanitary products can feasibly and sensitively be provided. b) to consider the report and the recommendations therein to make a decision on implementation." <p>(3) That the following motion be adopted:</p> <p>"This council is experiencing unprecedented levels of people presenting as homeless. A key driver of this is landlords serving Section 21, so-called 'no fault', eviction notices on their tenants.</p> <p>Since 2019, the Conservative</p>

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		<p>government has promised to abolish Section 21 notices and included this as part of its Private Renters Reform Bill.</p> <p>This has now been indefinitely delayed.</p> <p>Only a year ago, this council overwhelmingly voted in favour of the government enacting the Private Renters Reform Bill; with the Lead Member for Housing mandated to write to the government to that effect.</p> <p>This council condemns the decision to delay the ban on Section 21 notices and calls on the Leader of the Council to communicate this to our Members of Parliament and the government in the strongest possible terms."</p> <p>(4) That the following motion be adopted:</p> <p>"This Council notes that over the last few years, in-person access to essential services has been greatly reduced, from banking services to our own council services, while residents are required to travel further or use online services, which in some cases is difficult or not suitable for the most vulnerable who need these services most. Banks alone have closed over 200 branches in the UK this year, with Banbury, Bicester, and Kidlington having already lost branches and/or the provision of counter service.</p> <p>This Council believes it should do what it can to help maintain easy access to these vital</p>

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		<p>services. Banking hubs have already been set up elsewhere and been proven to work. We could not only take a lesson from these, but seek to improve the hub concept by including access to services CDC itself provides, noting the closure of CDC counters.</p> <p>This motion therefore calls on the Executive to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Investigate the feasibility of creating service hubs within our localities and what they can usefully provide, including considering best practice from other local authorities. 2. Develop a strategy that facilitates the use of service hubs to better provide access and support to our communities within our powers.” <p>(For information: The “Right to Grow” motion was deferred to the February Council meeting)</p>