

Didcot Town Council

Extraordinary Council Meeting

Monday 7th August 2023 at 8.00pm

Main Hall, Didcot Civic Hall



Minutes

Note: These minutes are subject to approval as a true and correct record by the next meeting of the Council.

PRESENT

Councillors:

A Macdonald (Mayor)	C Jennings (Leader)
A Jones (Deputy Mayor)	J Loder
J Broadbent	D Macdonald
S Cole	H Macdonald
D Guerra Aragao	K Morrison (Deputy Leader)
O Glover	G Roberts
N Hards	D Rouane
L Hislop	G Ryall
A Hudson	T Worgan
M Khan	Vacant seat

Officer: Janet Wheeler - Town Clerk

17 members of the public were present.

The Leader, Cllr Chris Jennings, addressed the meeting on his views regarding the new dual carriageway planned for the A4130 into Didcot. He hoped that a solution could be found that works for everyone.

It was proposed by Cllr A Macdonald and seconded by Cllr D Macdonald and **RESOLVED** to suspend standing orders to allow for members of the public to address the Council.

Public Participation

Members of the public were invited to air their views. Comments were taken from the following:

Mr John Salmons
Cllr Cath Convery
Mr David Tannahill
Cllr Iain Duff
Cllr Sally Povolotsky

Standing orders were reinstated.

Before the meeting began, the Council were asked to grant a special dispensation to newly elected Cllr Sarah Victoria Nohre. She was currently away and unable to sign her Declaration of Acceptance of Office until 14th August 2023. It was proposed by Cllr T Worgan and seconded by Cllr C Jennings and RESOLVED to grant the dispensation. The vote was unanimous.

37. To receive apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr Z Mohammed.

38. To receive declarations of interests

Cllr K Morrison declared an interest due to her employment at a science centre. Cllr D Rouane declared an interest as the Leader of South Oxfordshire District Council and a member of the Oxfordshire County Council's Planning & Regulation Committee. Neither Councillor left the meeting and Cllr D Rouane took part in the debate.

39. To discuss the recent decision by Oxfordshire County Council's Planning & Regulation Committee to REFUSE the planning application for the project named as HIF1. To agree a formal response (if any) and to agree any follow-up action as required.

Project Summary (taken from the meeting of the Didcot Garden Town Delivery Plan – update 17 July 2023)

Project summary – Four linked Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF1) Highways schemes to improve connectivity, unlock delivery of new homes and jobs and improve cycling and pedestrian provision. Completion due by mid-2026 but may be delayed by land acquisition and planning challenges.

Four projects:

- 1. Science Bridge*
- 2. A4130 capacity improvements*
- 3. Clifton Hampden Bypass*
- 4. New River Thames crossing at Culham*

Cllr M Khan thanked the members of the public for attending this Extra-Ordinary Council meeting and for giving their views on the planning refusal. Cllr M Khan read out the motion that he wished to propose to the Council. This motion was seconded by Cllr C Jennings:

“Didcot Town Council deplores the decision of Oxfordshire County Council’s Planning and Regulation Committee to refuse the Planning Application for the Didcot Garden Town HIF1 Scheme, the cost of this refusal being the loss of £240million of funding towards the scheme from Homes England. Didcot and the surrounding area needs this grant towards the cost of providing infrastructure to support the building of over 15,000 new homes in and around Didcot.

Didcot Town Council resolves to write to South Oxfordshire District Council, Oxfordshire County Council and the Secretary of State for Levelling up, Housing and Communities reiterating our support for the Didcot Garden Town HIF 1 scheme. This Council also asks that the Secretary of State not only grants planning permission as submitted but issues a direction that an improved HIF 1 is delivered.”

Cllr M Khan spoke about the reasons why HIF1 was so important to Didcot. The members joined the debate to discuss aspects of the refusal and what it would mean not only to Didcot but to the Garden Town and surrounding parishes. The actual HIF 1 plan was also discussed and critical judgement was made by some.

A recorded vote was requested for support of the written motion:

	For	Against	Abstention
Cllr J Broadbent	x		
Cllr S Cole	x		
Cllr O Glover	x		
Cllr D Guerra Aragao	x		
Cllr N Hards	x		
Cllr L Hislop	x		
Cllr A Hudson	x		
Cllr C Jennings	x		
Cllr A Jones	x		
Cllr M Khan	x		
Cllr J Loder	x		
Cllr A Macdonald	x		
Cllr D Macdonald	x		
Cllr H Macdonald		x	

Cllr Z Mohammed	-	-	-
Cllr K Morrison	x		
Cllr G Roberts	x		
Cllr D Rouane	x		
Cllr G Ryall	x		
Cllr T Worgan	x		
Vacant seat	-	-	-

The vote was unanimous – in favour.

The meeting closed at 9.06pm.

Signed:

(Mayor)

Date: