

# Minutes

OF A SPECIAL MEETING OF THE

# Council

HELD ON TUESDAY 27 MARCH 2018 AT 7.00 PM

THE FOUNTAIN CONFERENCE CENTRE, HOWBERY PARK, CROWMARSH  
GIFFORD

## Present:

Jeannette Matelot (Chairman)

Anna Badcock, Joan Bland, Felix Bloomfield, Kevin Bulmer, Nigel Champken-Woods, Steve Connel, John Cotton, Pat Dawe, David Dodds, Stefan Gawrysiak, Elizabeth Gillespie, Will Hall, Tony Harbour, Paul Harrison, Lorraine Hillier, Elaine Hornsby, Mocky Khan, Sue Lawson, Lynn Lloyd, Imran Lokhon, Jane Murphy, Toby Newman, Caroline Newton, David Nimmo-Smith, Richard Pullen, Bill Service, David Turner, John Walsh and Ian White

## Apologies:

Charles Bailey, Anthony Nash, Robert Simister, Ian Snowdon and Alan Thompson tendered apologies.

**Officers:** Steven Corrigan, Adrian Duffield, Holly Jones, Margaret Reed and Mark Stone

## 87 Declarations of disclosable pecuniary interest

None.

## 88 Urgent business and chairman's announcements

There were no urgent items.

The chairman agreed, in accordance with provisions in council procedure rule 44, to allow councillors to speak for longer than five minutes. Council agreed to suspend council procedure rule 45 insofar as it limits councillors to speaking once.

On behalf of Council the chairman welcomed John Walsh to the Cabinet as deputy leader of the council and Cabinet member for finance.

She thanked those who had attended her recent dinner, at which £2,700 was raised for Oxfordshire Homeless Pathways.

## **89 Public participation**

The chairman advised that a number of members of the public had registered to address Council. She extended the public speaking time to allow each member of the public who had registered to speak three minutes to make their address.

## **90 South Oxfordshire Local Plan**

During the course of debate on this item, Council agreed, prior to the expiry of two and a half hours, in accordance with council procedure rule 12, to extend the duration of the meeting by half an hour.

Toby PejkoVIC addressed Council regarding the site allocation at Culham. He referred to the new Objectively Assessed Need figures (OAN) which could reduce the number of houses required in South Oxfordshire and allow for the removal of both the Chalgrove and Culham sites from the Local Plan. He suggested that new housing should be located in towns rather than villages.

Ann Pritchard, Chairman of Chalgrove Parish Council, addressed Council regarding the site allocation at Chalgrove airfield. She stated that the proposed development represented the least sustainable of all the options in the Local Plan and is not deliverable because there is no agreement to sell the site and the airfield is used by the RAF for training purposes and as an emergency airstrip.

Caroline Baird, representing Culham Parish Council addressed Council regarding the site allocation at Culham. She stated that the site, within the Green Belt, should be retained as open space to protect against urban sprawl. The site is unsustainable and is only included as a means to fund a river crossing. In her view, the Local Plan would be found unsound by a planning inspector and the council should delay submission until the revised OAN figures are known.

Professor Richard Harding, representing the Campaign to Protect Rural England, addressed Council. He stated that the current plan is undeliverable. The population growth rate in Oxfordshire is not sufficient to justify the proposed level of house building. He suggested that the council should revisit the plan in light of the government's revised housing numbers, which could reduce both South Oxfordshire's housing need figures and Oxford City's unmet housing need figures and reduce the need to build in the Green Belt.

Ken Glendinning, representing Homes England, addressed Council on their commitment to the delivery of the Chalgrove airfield site for the delivery of housing with the required infrastructure, the provision of a school and a healthcare facility. Homes England remain hopeful of an agreement with Martin-Baker but would consider the use of a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO).

Ann Voss, representing Cuxham with Easington Parish, addressed Council regarding the site allocation at Chalgrove airfield. She urged Council to support Option Two as set out in the report of the head of planning. The Chalgrove development would negatively impact on Cuxham, particularly due to the increase in traffic. This impact is recognised by Homes England but the mitigation measures proposed would damage the environment and setting

of the village. She questioned the deliverability of the site, the use of CPO powers and the assertion that the housing would address Oxford City's housing need.

Christian Leigh, representing residents of the Rofford and Little Milton, addressed Council regarding the site allocation at Chalgrove airfield. He questioned the sustainability of the site and the council's faith in Homes England's ability to acquire the site. Martin-Baker had stated it had no intention of agreeing to a termination of their lease on part of Chalgrove Airfield. Any attempt to compulsorily purchase any part of their lease would be opposed. In addition, the airfield is a recognised defence industry site.

Graham Bell, representing Chalgrove Airfield Action Group, addressed Council regarding the site allocation at Chalgrove. He endorsed Oxfordshire County Council's view that the site does not represent a viable and deliverable solution as a strategic allocation and questioned the positive statements from Homes England. He supported the recommendation of officers to seek alternative sites and stated that support for Option One did not offer any contingency.

Sue Roberts addressed Council on the Local Plan. She questioned the need for the level of housing proposed and suggested that this was being used to fund infrastructure improvements. However, she questioned whether the proposed infrastructure would even address the current shortfall. She called for a reduction in the number of houses required in the Local Plan.

Ian Hill, Chairman of Watlington Parish Council, addressed Council on the site allocation at Chalgrove. He noted that the identified infrastructure money from the site would fund a Watlington bypass to mitigate against the increase in traffic. However, he stressed that the provision of a bypass should not be dependent on the Chalgrove development. The current traffic congestion in Watlington and poor air quality needed addressing.

Council considered Cabinet's recommendations, made at its meeting on 20 March 2018, on the Local Plan. Copies of the report considered by Cabinet and the supplementary papers for both Cabinet and Council meetings were made available to councillors and published on the council's website. The chairman advised that if Council wished to discuss the confidential appendix, it would need to vote on the exclusion of the public. In accordance with the council's budget and policy framework procedure rules, if Council objected to the proposals Cabinet would be required to reconsider in light of the objections. Cabinet could then submit revised proposals to Council, together with the reason for any amendments or inform Council of any disagreement it has with its objections. Council would then reconsider the matter. The decision taken at that meeting would be final and take effect immediately.

John Cotton moved and John Walsh seconded the recommendations of Cabinet to:

1. retain Chalgrove airfield as a proposed allocation in the South Oxfordshire Local Plan;
2. adopt Option One, set out in the report of the head of planning to Cabinet on 20 March 2018, and to proceed to the formal submission of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan for independent examination; and
3. authorise the head of planning, in consultation with the Cabinet member for the Local Plan, to make any necessary minor amendments and corrections; including the identification of any saved policies as considered appropriate prior to the

submission of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan to the Secretary of State, for the purpose of independent examination and leading up to and during the examination.

Those councillors who supported Cabinet's recommendations expressed the view that Option One would allow the council to proceed to the formal submission of the Local Plan. Any further delay in the submission of the Local Plan would create further uncertainty and could give rise to further speculative planning applications. The redevelopment of the Chalgrove airfield site for housing would represent a good re-use of land. Homes England (HE) is committed to the delivery of the site and funding the necessary infrastructure improvements to facilitate the development which would also benefit existing communities in the area. Whilst acknowledging that there are risks associated with the deliverability of the site councillors expressed the view that Options Two and Three would delay the production of the Local Plan, undo the good progress made and potentially lead to greater threats to the countryside. Proceeding with Option One would avoid delays to the submission of the Local Plan, reduce the uncertainty about how the Housing Delivery Test and Objectively Assessed Need might impact upon the housing land supply for South Oxfordshire, and reduce speculative planning applications.

However, other councillors expressed the view that Option One is too reliant on the ability of HE to acquire the Chalgrove airfield site for housing. The site is not deliverable. Since the Council meeting in September Martin-Baker had, in letters dated 5 December 2017 and 22 March 2018, confirmed that negotiations with HE had finished without agreement, that their operational requirements for the site were not going to change, that there is no prospect of a negotiated settlement and that they had no intention of continuing discussions with HE. If HE decides to use compulsory purchase order powers (CPO) to obtain the Chalgrove Airfield site, this could cause further delay to the delivery of housing on the site and would be vigorously resisted by Martin-Baker. This introduces a significant risk because an inspector may conclude that reliance on CPO powers to secure the land for development would not meet the requirement for available and deliverable sites. This potential delay to securing the land could render the Local Plan unsound.

A number of councillors raised concern that HE had not provided assurances that the required infrastructure funding would be provided to mitigate the impact of the development of the Chalgrove airfield site on the surrounding area. Reference was made to Oxfordshire County Council's concerns regarding this funding gap.

Other councillors expressed the view that the use of the site for housing would impact on its use by RAF Benson. Any loss of the airfield could also have a detrimental impact on both the national interest and the viability of a strategic defence supplier.

Some councillors also expressed concern regarding the inclusion of sites in the Green Belt, notably Culham. Alternative sites should be investigated.

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 67, which provides for a recorded vote if three members request one, the chairman called for a recorded vote on the motion, which was declared lost with the voting as follows:

<b>FOR</b>	<b>AGAINST</b>	<b>ABSTAIN</b>
John Cotton	Anna Badcock	Felix Bloomfield
Pat Dawe	Joan Bland	Sue Lawson
Elizabeth Gillespie	Kevin Bulmer	Bill Service
Will Hall	Nigel Champken-Woods	

<b>FOR</b>	<b>AGAINST</b>	<b>ABSTAIN</b>
Tony Harbour	Steve Connel	
Elaine Hornsby	David Dodds	
Imran Lokhon	Stefan Gawrysiak	
Jeannette Matelot	Paul Harrison	
Richard Pullen	Lorraine Hillier	
John Walsh	Mocky Khan	
	Lynn Lloyd	
	Jane Murphy	
	Toby Newman	
	Caroline Newton	
	David Nimmo-Smith	
	David Turner	
	Ian White	
<b>10</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>3</b>

Whilst acknowledging that there are risks with pursuing Options Two and Three, as set out in the report of the head of planning to Cabinet on 20 March, the majority of councillors expressed the view that this required further consideration.

David Turner moved and Paul Harrison seconded a motion to refer the matter back to Cabinet to consider Options Two and Three set out in the head of planning's report to Cabinet on 20 March 2018 and submit recommendations to Council for consideration.

**RESOLVED:** to refer the matter back to Cabinet to re-consider Options Two and Three in the head of planning's report to cabinet on 20 March 2018 and bring recommendations to Council to progress the South Oxfordshire Local Plan.

The meeting closed at 9.40pm

Chairman

Date