

Minutes

of a meeting of the

Council



Listening Learning Leading

held on Tuesday 15 May 2018 at 6.00 pm

The Auditorium, Cornerstone Arts Centre, 25 Station Road, Didcot, OX11 7NE

Present:

Jeannette Matelot (Chairman)

Anna Badcock, Joan Bland, Felix Bloomfield, Kevin Bulmer, Nigel Champken-Woods, John Cotton, Pat Dawe, David Dodds, Elizabeth Gillespie, Paul Harrison, Lorraine Hillier, Elaine Hornsby, Mocky Khan, Sue Lawson, Lynn Lloyd, Imran Lokhon, Jane Murphy, Toby Newman, David Nimmo-Smith, Robert Simister, Ian Snowdon, Alan Thompson, David Turner, John Walsh and Ian White

Apologies:

Charles Bailey, Steve Connel, Anthony Dearlove, Stefan Gawrysiak, Will Hall, Tony Harbour, Anthony Nash, Caroline Newton and Bill Service tendered apologies.

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

102 Declarations of disclosable pecuniary interest

None.

103 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.

104 Public participation

The chairman advised that a number of members of the public had registered to address Council. Council agreed to extend the public speaking time to allow each member of the public who had registered to speak three minutes to make their address. Council received addresses from eight members of the public.

Ian Goldsmith, Chairman of Cuxham with Easington Parish, addressed Council against the inclusion of the Chalgrove Airfield site in the local plan. He stated that the traffic from the new housing would adversely impact on the village. He urged Council to support option two: removing the Chalgrove Airfield housing allocation from the local plan and to put an end to the uncertainty.

Ann Pritchard, Chairman of Chalgrove Parish Council, addressed Council against the inclusion of Chalgrove Airfield as a strategic housing allocation site. Whilst welcoming Cabinet's revised recommendation she urged Council to remove the Chalgrove Airfield site from the local plan. She stated that more sustainable alternative sites existed closer to Oxford and Science Vale. She stated that it was not feasible to build on an active airfield site, that Martin Baker is the sole manufacturer of ejector seats and that the forced relocation of Martin Baker, a major employer, would result in job losses.

Caroline Baird spoke on behalf of Save Culham Green Belt. She welcomed Cabinet's recommendation to reassess sites capable of becoming site allocations and believed this was necessary before releasing Green Belt land for development. She urged Council to review the housing numbers now that the government required lower housing numbers. She stated that Culham is not a suitable strategic housing site. There were no exceptional circumstances to build on the Green Belt, the existing road and rail infrastructure was insufficient for the proposed development site, employment opportunities would not be available locally for the new residents and the development itself would lead to the merging of Culham with Abingdon and Didcot.

Steven Sensecall, from Carter Jonas representing UKAEA, urged Council to support option three (retain Chalgrove Airfield with an additional site). The anticipated growth at Culham Science Centre, Science Vale and the Didcot Garden Town project required improved highway infrastructure and housing. Any delay in the delivery of the local plan could impact on the economic potential of the district.

Michael Tyce, representing the Campaign to Protect Rural England, addressed Council. He stated that the housing numbers contained in the local plan are in excess of local need. A reduction in the numbers to reflect the government's revised housing numbers would allow for the removal of both the Chalgrove Airfield and Culham sites (the former being undeliverable) and remove the need to meet Oxford City's unmet housing need. In his view the Growth Deal is driving the housing numbers and sacrificing the Green Belt.

Paul Boone spoke on behalf of Chalgrove Airfield Action Group expressing cautious support for Cabinet's revised recommendations whilst supporting option two and the removal of the Chalgrove Airfield site. He stated that Martin Baker would oppose any attempt by Homes England to compulsorily purchase the site and as such the site is not deliverable.

Dr Peter Kirby, a resident of Culham, addressed Council regarding the site allocation at Culham. He questioned the long-term employment opportunities offered by Culham Science Centre which, in his view, does not provide a justification for housing and will not provide large scale employment opportunities in the future.

Sam Casey-Rerhaye, representing Culham Parish Council, addressed Council in support of Cabinet's recommendation to undertake a review of the local plan. She expressed the view that, in light of the government's published revised housing figures and the council's achievement of a five year land supply, the drivers for housing had gone. The local plan

must reflect the genuine housing needs of the district and the Green Belt must be protected.

The chairman thanked the speakers for their contribution.

105 South Oxfordshire Local Plan

At its special meeting on 27 March 2018, Council voted against submitting the Local Plan for independent examination in its current form and asked Cabinet to reconsider two of the options set out in the report of the head of planning to Cabinet on 20 March 2018 (Option 2 and Option 3) and report back to Council. Cabinet, at its meeting on 10 May 2018, considered a further report on the local plan. Copies of this report, the supplementary papers for Cabinet and Cabinet's recommendations, made at its meeting on 10 May 2018, were made available to all councillors prior to the Council meeting and published on the council's website.

The chairman reminded councillors that Council was not considering the merits of specific alternative sites at this meeting.

She advised that the decision taken at this meeting will be final and take effect immediately. If Council wished to discuss the confidential appendices, it would need to vote on the exclusion of the public.

Council considered Cabinet's recommendations, made at its meeting on 10 May 2018, on the local plan.

Councillor Felix Bloomfield, Cabinet member for planning, moved and Councillor Jane Murphy, Leader of the council, seconded Cabinet's recommendations as set out below:

1. subject to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government confirming that submission of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan in January 2020 would not significantly impact on the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal or the freedoms and flexibilities proposed as part of it, to ask officers to reassess all sites capable of forming a strategic allocation promoted through the local plan (to 2033) process up to the end of the Regulation 19 publication period (including all strategic sites proposed in the October 2017 Regulation 19 document) and to bring a draft Regulation 18/Regulation 19 document (as required) to Cabinet and Council to seek approval for publication for consultation; and
2. in the event that such confirmation from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government is not forthcoming to the satisfaction of the head of partnership and insight and the head of planning, in consultation with the leader of the council and the Cabinet members for planning and partnership and insight by no later than completion of the site filtering exercise (expected July 2018), to adopt option 3, set out in the head of planning's report to Cabinet on 10 May 2018, and to ask officers to bring the Regulation 19 (October 2017) document including proposed additional reserve site(s) to Cabinet and Council to seek approval for publication for consultation.

In moving the recommendations Councillor Bloomfield noted that the report submitted to Cabinet provided more detailed timetables for both options 2 and 3, further information

regarding the process for considering alternative or additional sites, and reflected the fact that the council could now demonstrate a five-year housing land supply.

He acknowledged that the council needed to progress the local plan to ensure a supply of housing land to meet the needs of its communities and help Oxford City Council. In addition, and despite a three-year land supply threshold for a limited period expected this summer as a consequence of signing the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal, the council needed a suitable supply of housing land in the longer term to sustain the government's requirement of a five-year housing land supply.

To achieve this Cabinet recommended a fourth option, to reassess sites for potential allocation for housing in the local plan, with the fall-back position of option 3 (to retain Chalgrove Airfield as a strategic housing allocation in the plan, but to add a reserve site or sites). This would enable the council to reconsider all sites and would provide an additional opportunity for officers to work with partners and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to mitigate against the potential loss of planning freedoms and flexibilities attached with the Growth Deal, should the local plan be submitted after March 2019. Cabinet recommended that the council should review all sites capable of forming a strategic housing or regeneration allocation promoted through the local plan process up to the end of the Regulation 19 publication period. This should include all the strategic sites proposed in the October 2017 Regulation 19 document and these sites should also be reassessed based on the latest evidence and information.

Given the uncertainty of not meeting the Growth Deal timelines, which was one of the risks attached to option 2, Cabinet recommended that the council should also seek confirmation from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government that submission of the local plan in January 2020 would not have a significant impact on the Growth Deal or the freedoms and flexibilities proposed as part of it. If this confirmation could not be provided, then the council should revert to option 3 as the preferred option to progress the local plan. This would ensure that the council was not adversely affected if the Growth Deal target could not be changed.

Councillor David Turner moved and Councillor Mocky Khan seconded an amendment in the following terms, with additional words shown in bold and deleted words struck through, which would delete the Chalgrove Airfield site as a strategic allocation site from the Local Plan.

1. subject to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government confirming that submission of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan in January 2020 would not significantly impact on the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal or the freedoms and flexibilities proposed as part of it, to ask officers to reassess all sites capable of forming a strategic allocation **(with the removal of Chalgrove Airfield)** promoted through the Local Plan (to 2033) process up to the end of the Regulation 19 publication period (including all strategic sites proposed in the October 2017 Regulation 19 document) **(not including Chalgrove Airfield)** and to bring a draft Regulation 18/Regulation 19 document (as required) to Cabinet and Council to seek approval for publication for consultation; and
2. in the event that such confirmation from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government is not forthcoming to the satisfaction of the head of partnership and insight and the head of planning, in consultation with the Leader of the council and the Cabinet members for planning and partnership and insight by no later than

completion of the site filtering exercise (expected July 2018), ~~to adopt Option 3, set out in the report of the Head of Planning to Cabinet on 10 May 2018, and to ask officers to bring the a Regulation 18/Regulation 19 (October 2017) document (as required) (not including Chalgrove Airfield) including proposed additional reserve site(s) to Cabinet and Council to seek approval for publication for consultation.~~

In moving the amendment Councillor Turner welcomed Cabinet’s proposal to undertake a fresh review of existing and new sites. However, he expressed the view that the Chalgrove Airfield site was not deliverable. Martin Baker needed the whole of the Chalgrove Airfield site to operate its business and the development of even part of the site would compromise its business and pose a risk to residents from its operation. Martin Baker had also confirmed that it will fight any Compulsory Purchase Order. In addition to local opposition, the development of this site was opposed by Oxfordshire County Council which has concerns about whether sufficient investment would be forthcoming to meet the transport infrastructure requirements for such a large scale development. He expressed the view that other partnership organisations in Oxfordshire did not support the inclusion of the site in the local plan. He urged Council to remove the Chalgrove site from the local plan.

The majority of councillors did not support the amendment either because they continued to believe that the Chalgrove Airfield site would represent a good re-use of land or because the site should be reassessed with other sites as part of the review recommended by Cabinet. On being put to the vote the amendment was declared lost.

The majority of councillors supported Cabinet’s recommendations to reassess sites for potential allocation for housing in the local plan, with the fall-back position of option 3 (to retain Chalgrove Airfield as a strategic housing allocation in the plan, but to add a reserve site or sites). This would address doubts regarding the previous process, facilitate a fresh collaborative look at all the site options with enhanced public and councillor engagement.

However, a number of councillors expressed the view that a delay in the submission of the local plan would create uncertainty and could give rise to further speculative planning applications as alternative sites are brought forward for consideration. Any delay could also risk being viewed as hesitation by the council to meet its housing targets. In response to a question, officers confirmed that no discussions had been held with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, and that, if Cabinet’s recommendations are approved, a letter would be despatched in the next few days and the response would be made available to councillors.

Some councillors also expressed concern regarding the allocation of housing sites in the Green Belt.

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 Cabinet recommendations, which was declared carried with the voting as follows:

FOR	AGAINST	ABSTAIN
Councillors	Councillors	Councillors
Anna Badcock	John Cotton	Imran Lokhan
Joan Bland	Elizabeth Gillespie	Jeannette Matelot
Felix Bloomfield	Elaine Hornsby	

FOR	AGAINST	ABSTAIN
Kevin Bulmer	Sue Lawson	
Nigel Champken-Woods	Robert Simister	
Pat Dawe		
David Dodds		
Paul Harrison		
Lorraine Hillier		
Mocky Khan		
Lynn Lloyd		
Jane Murphy		
Toby Newman		
David Nimmo-Smith		
Ian Snowdon		
Alan Thompson		
David Turner		
John Walsh		
Ian White		
19	5	2

RESOLVED:

1. subject to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government confirming that submission of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan in January 2020 would not significantly impact on the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal or the freedoms and flexibilities proposed as part of it, to ask officers to reassess all sites capable of forming a strategic allocation promoted through the local plan (to 2033) process up to the end of the Regulation 19 publication period (including all strategic sites proposed in the October 2017 Regulation 19 document) and to bring a draft Regulation 18/Regulation 19 document (as required) to Cabinet and Council to seek approval for publication for consultation; and
2. in the event that such confirmation from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government is not forthcoming to the satisfaction of the head of partnership and insight and the head of planning, in consultation with the leader of the council and the Cabinet members for planning and partnership and insight by no later than completion of the site filtering exercise (expected July 2018), to adopt option 3, set out in the head of planning's report to Cabinet on 10 May 2018, and to ask officers to bring the Regulation 19 (October 2017) document including proposed additional reserve site(s) to Cabinet and Council to seek approval for publication for consultation.

The meeting closed at 7.35pm

Chairman

Date