

Minutes

OF A MEETING OF THE

Cabinet



Listening Learning Leading

**HELD ON THURSDAY 10 MAY 2018 AT 4.00 PM
MEETING ROOM 1, 135 EASTERN AVENUE, MILTON PARK, OX14 4SB**

Present:

Cabinet members: Councillors Jane Murphy (Chairman), Felix Bloomfield (Vice-Chairman), Kevin Bulmer, David Dodds, Paul Harrison, Lynn Lloyd, Caroline Newton and Bill Service

Officers: Steve Culliford, Andrew Down, Adrian Duffield, Holly Jones, Ian Price, Margaret Reed, and Christopher Wheeler

Other district councillors: David Turner and Ian White

85 Declaration of disclosable pecuniary interest

None

86 Apologies for absence

Councillor Anna Badcock had submitted an apology for absence.

87 Urgent business and chairman's announcements

None

88 Public participation

Cabinet received addresses from nine members of the public.

- (1) Paul Boone spoke on behalf of Chalgrove Airfield Action Group expressing disappointment that the airfield had not been removed from the housing site options under consideration. He reported that Martin Baker, a business tenant at the site, and the Chalgrove Airfield Action Group would oppose any attempt by Homes England to compulsorily purchase the site. Legal advice suggested that planning permission was a pre-requisite of compulsory purchase and he believed this proposal was likely to fail. The development would also cost more than estimated. He urged Cabinet to support option 2: removing the Chalgrove Airfield housing allocation from the local plan.

- (2) Ian Goldsmith, the chairman of Cuxham and Easington parish, spoke against the inclusion of the Chalgrove Airfield site in the local plan as the traffic from the new housing would adversely impact on his village. He urged Cabinet to support option 2: removing the Chalgrove Airfield housing allocation from the local plan.
- (3) Caroline Baird spoke on behalf of Save Culham Green Belt, reminding Cabinet that the council had a five-year housing land supply, and the government now required lower housing numbers. She urged Cabinet to review the local plan and remove the Culham strategic housing site. There were no exceptional circumstances to build on the Green Belt and the existing road and rail infrastructure was insufficient for the proposed development site.
- (4) Ken Glendinning spoke on behalf of Homes England, in support of retaining the Chalgrove Airfield site as a strategic housing allocation in the local plan. Homes England was continuing to negotiate with Martin Baker over relocation of its business and land for a new runway. If agreement could not be reached, the last resort would be compulsory purchase of the airfield site to allow the housing development to proceed. Homes England had been allocated funds to provide new infrastructure in the first phase of the development.
- (5) Richard Turner, spoke on behalf of Taylor Wimpey, supporting the inclusion of its site at East Hagbourne in the local plan as a strategic housing allocation. This was a sustainable location for housing. Also, it was not in the Green Belt, which should only be developed in exceptional circumstances. He believed that currently the local plan was unsound and urged Cabinet to approve option 3: retaining Chalgrove Airfield but adding another strategic housing site, such as Hagbourne Fields, and sites on the edges of existing settlements at Thame and Wallingford.
- (6) Gill Bindoff, a Watlington resident, urged Cabinet to review its local plan and make it sound as it was damaging neighbourhood development plans.
- (7) Christian Leigh, on behalf of the residents of Little Milton, spoke opposing the inclusion of Chalgrove Airfield as a local plan strategic housing site. He believed that Martin Baker needed the whole airfield to run its business and it would not agree with Homes England's proposals. He queried the variation in legal advice on this matter and urged Cabinet to remove Chalgrove Airfield housing allocation site from the local plan.
- (8) Graham Bell, a Chalgrove resident, applauded the Council's decision to reject Cabinet's previous proposals. He believed that the evidence was still against including Chalgrove Airfield in the local plan. There was inadequate evidence that the impact of such a development would be mitigated. He believed that Martin Baker would not surrender its lease of the site. Pursuing this site as a strategic housing allocation was risking the local plan being found unsound, which would put the whole district at risk of development. He urged Cabinet to remove Chalgrove Airfield from the local plan.
- (9) Ann Pritchard, a Chalgrove parish councillor, spoke against the inclusion of Chalgrove Airfield as a strategic housing allocation site. She believed that Martin Baker would no longer engage with Homes England and would contest the compulsory purchase of the airfield site. She did not believe that houses should be close to runways. There would be no community benefit from this development

unless new infrastructure was built. She urged Cabinet to remove the Chalgrove Airfield site.

The chairman thanked the speakers for their contribution.

89 South Oxfordshire Local Plan

David Turner, the local ward councillor for Chalgrove, addressed Cabinet. He reported that Martin Baker needed the whole of the Chalgrove Airfield site to operate it business. To develop even part of the site would compromise its business. Apart from local opposition, the development of this site was opposed by the county council and other partnerships in Oxfordshire. The infrastructure funding offered by Homes England was disappointing at £90 million. He urged Cabinet to remove the Chalgrove site from the local plan.

Cabinet then considered the head of planning's report on the South Oxfordshire Local Plan. The Cabinet member for planning introduced the report. He reminded Cabinet that when it considered a report on 20 March 2018, there were three options:

1. to submit the plan without change;
2. to remove Chalgrove Airfield as a strategic housing allocation and replace it with a site or sites;
3. to retain Chalgrove Airfield as a strategic housing allocation in the plan, but to add a reserve site or sites.

Cabinet had recommended option 1 to Council on 27 March 2018 but Council had rejected this, referring the matter back to Cabinet to reconsider options 2 and 3 and bring recommendations back to Council.

The report now before Cabinet had been updated since 20 March to provide more detailed timetables for both options 2 and 3, to provide further information regarding the process for considering alternative or additional sites and to reflect that the council could now demonstrate a five-year housing land supply.

The Cabinet member for planning believed the council needed to progress the local plan to ensure a supply of housing land to meet the needs of its communities and help its neighbouring 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.

The Cabinet member for planning considered that option 1 was too high a risk to secure a sound local plan. However, he proposed a fourth option, which would enable the council to reconsider all sites and would provide officers additional opportunity 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. He suggested 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 that 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, he suggested that the council should also seek confirmation from the Ministry 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.

The Cabinet member for planning clarified that there were 15 sites which would need to be assessed under this fourth option. These included the previously proposed strategic or regeneration allocations of Culham, Wheatley, Berinsfield and Chalgrove. It also included those sites previously considered but not taken forward of Thornhill, Wick Farm, Lower Elsfeld, Grenoble Road, Northfields, land at Great Western Park Didcot, and Harrington. It also included sites submitted late in the local plan process, being land at Emmer Green Reading, Reading Golf Club, Play Hatch Reading, and land off Thame Road, North Weston.

Cabinet supported the fourth option, to reassess the 15 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), and recommended this to Council for consideration at a special meeting on 15 May 2018.

RECOMMENDED to Council:

- (a) 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
- (b) 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 4.55 pm

Chairman

Date