

Minutes

OF A MEETING OF THE

Scrutiny Committee

HELD ON TUESDAY 4 APRIL 2017 AT 6.30 PM

MEETING ROOM 1, 135 MILTON PARK

Present:

Richard Pullen (Chairman)

Elaine Hornsby, Sue Lawson, Jeannette Matelot, Toby Newman, David Turner, John Walsh and Ian White

Apologies:

Paul Harrison tendered apologies.

Officers:

Jayne Bolton, Holly Jones, Ron Schrieber and Shona Ware

Also present:

Councillors John Cotton and Elizabeth Gillespie

47 Minutes

The minutes of the meetings held on 9 February, 2 and 9 March 2017 were agreed as an accurate record and were signed by the Chairman, subject to the following amendment:

9 February, Minute 39: Budget 2017/18

In eighth paragraph insert “for police community safety officers” after “Thames Valley Police”.

48 Declarations of interest

None.

49 Urgent business and chairman's announcements

None.



Listening Learning Leading

50 Public participation

None.

51 Proposed new individual councillor grant scheme

The committee considered the report of the head of corporate strategy on the draft policy for the new individual councillor grant scheme. The committee's views were requested prior to the submission of the scheme to Cabinet for approval.

Councillor Elizabeth Gillespie, Cabinet member for grants introduced this item. Also present to answer questions were Shona Ware, communications and grants manager and Jayne Bolton, grants team leader.

In response to questions and issues raised by the committee, it was reported that:

- Subject to Cabinet approval, it was anticipated that the scheme would be launched in June or July.
- Training would be offered to councillors before the scheme went live.
- Each councillor would have a budget of £5,000. If two or more councillors wished to pool some of their budgets to fund a project then that would require separate applications to each councillor.

Following further discussion members suggested that community festivals and events should not be included in the list of projects/services which would not be funded.

A member suggested that a deadline or a number of deadlines should be built into the scheme to reduce the likelihood of applications for deserving projects submitted towards the end of the year being disadvantaged if all funding had already been allocated. However, others expressed the view that any deadline might be to the detriment of applicants who required funding urgently.

RESOLVED to:

- a) Welcome the proposed new individual councillor grants scheme; and
- b) Request Cabinet to:
 - i) amend the policy by deleting "Community festivals and events" from the list of projects/services which will not be funded.
 - ii) consider whether a deadline or a number of deadlines for submitting applications should be built into the scheme.

52 Local Plan - Second Preferred Options

The committee considered the head of planning's report which summarised the key issues within the emerging Local Plan for South Oxfordshire. Public consultation on the Local Plan was underway and the committee was requested to provide comments.

Councillor John Cotton, Leader and Cabinet member for strategic policy (including the local plan), introduced this item. Also present to answer questions was Holly Jones, planning policy manager.

In response to questions and issues raised by the committee, it was reported that:

- The Local Plan proposed to ensure the delivery of 17,050 new homes to meet the housing needs of the district and a further 3,750 new homes to help Oxford City meet some of their unmet housing need.
- To help address this need, the Local Plan proposed the supply of 23,468 new homes within the period 2011-2033.
- There were new strategic allocations at Chalgrove Airfield, land adjacent to Culham Science Centre and Oxford Brookes University, Wheatley and a housing allocation at Berinsfield.
- The Local Plan also included site allocations at Crowmarsh Gifford and Nettlebed where there was not a Neighbourhood Development Plan in preparation.
- Changes to the Green Belt were proposed to accommodate two of the larger sites identified. It was also proposed to inset land from the Green Belt at Wheatley to support the Neighbourhood Development Plan process.
- It was proposed to safeguard land for infrastructure that might be required during the lifetime of the Local Plan.
- There was a balance to be struck between preserving the rural nature of South Oxfordshire and providing the level of housing required. The Local Plan sought to allocate development to places where people wanted to live. By demonstrating a five year housing land supply, the local planning authority would be able to discourage speculative development.
- With regard to the provision of affordable housing, the 40% requirement was a starting point for negotiations with developers.
- There was, as yet, no agreed route for the proposed Oxford to Cambridge expressway.
- With regard to the proposed development at Chalgrove Airfield and other allocation sites, the infrastructure delivery plan would be updated and would then enable further detailed information on infrastructure requirements to be included in the next version of the Plan.
- Where possible, statements of common ground would be agreed with neighbouring authorities which would take into account cross boundary issues and developments on South Oxfordshire's borders with Buckinghamshire and Reading.

Councillor Cotton emphasised that the Local Plan was a consultative document putting forward proposals and that strategic allocations, changes to the Green Belt etc. were not agreed policies and might be amended. Whilst it would be in South Oxfordshire's interest to have the Local Plan adopted as soon as possible, the timetable would be set by the Planning Inspector.

Councillors discussed the site selection process and those sites which had not made it into the Second Preferred Options version of the Local Plan.

Members suggested the following amendments to the consultation document:

- Clarification of second bullet point on page 48, regarding Thame's strengths; and

- Updating of second bullet point on page 50, regarding the former Waitrose store in Wallingford.

RESOLVED: To request the Leader and Cabinet member for the Local Plan to take the committee's comments into account as part of the consultation on the Local Plan 2033 Second Preferred Options.

53 Work schedule and dates for scrutiny meetings

The committee was advised that a report on the community infrastructure levy had been scheduled for the next meeting on 23 May.

A member requested that a report on the Didcot Garden Town project be submitted to this meeting. This matter was due to be considered by the joint scrutiny committee in September but the view was expressed that there should be greater member involvement in this project at an earlier date. The chairman undertook to consult officers on the best course of action.

The meeting closed at 8.30 pm

Chairman

Date