

# Minutes

OF A MEETING OF THE

## Scrutiny Committee

HELD ON THURSDAY 13 DECEMBER 2018 AT 6.30 PM

THE FOUNTAIN CONFERENCE CENTRE, HOWBERY PARK, CROWMARSH  
GIFFORD

### Present:

David Turner (Chairman)

Will Hall, Jeannette Matelot, David Nimmo-Smith, Ian Snowdon, John Walsh, Ian White, Steve Connel (as substitute for Anthony Dearlove) and John Cotton (as substitute for Elaine Hornsby)

### Apologies:

Anthony Dearlove and Elaine Hornsby tendered apologies.

### Officers:

Emma Baker, Adrian Duffield, James Gagg, Holly Jones and Ron Schrieber

### Also present:

Councillors Felix Bloomfield and Sue Cooper

## 28 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 2 October 2018 were agreed as an accurate record and were signed by the Chairman.

## 29 Declarations of interest

Councillor David Turner declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda item 6, Local Plan Publication Version (2034) as he was a member of Culham Local Liaison Committee.

## 30 Urgent business and chairman's announcements

None.

## 31 Public participation

The list showing the members of the public who had registered to speak was tabled at the meeting.



Listening Learning Leading

## 32 Local Plan Publication Version (2034)

The committee considered the head of planning's report on the South Oxfordshire Local Plan Publication Version (2034).

The report outlined the contents of the latest version of the Local Plan and associated documents and sought the committee's comments to Cabinet. Subject to Council's approval, the plan would be subject to Regulation 19 consultation from 7 January 2019 for six weeks, and subsequently submitted for examination.

Councillor Felix Bloomfield, Cabinet member for planning, introduced the report. Also present to answer questions were Adrian Duffield, head of planning, Holly Jones, planning policy manager, Emma Baker, planning policy team leader, and James Gagg, planning infrastructure team leader.

The committee was informed that there had been a thorough assessment of all possible housing site allocations. Some new sites had been added, some removed. The site selection background paper would be published in January. The Plan had been prepared to accord with the new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the duty to co-operate with neighbouring councils. It planned for housing, employment, retail and infrastructure. Any significant amendments to the plan as proposed would impact on the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal as the March deadline to submit this plan would be missed.

The committee heard registered speakers as follows.

- Roger Kirkham expressed the view that a number of emerging policies relying on national guidance did not meet the aspirations set out in the Local Plan relating to local circumstances.
- Ian Ashley, representing Garsington residents, stated that there was no evidence that Oxford City's unmet housing need could not be met within the City, that the Objectively Assessed Need (OAN) in the Local Plan was incorrect and that the Plan did not adequately address environmental challenges.
- Michael Tyce, on behalf of the Campaign to Protect Rural England, stated that none of the strategic housing sites were required in the Local Plan as the current plan provided adequate housing numbers.
- Gill Bindoff, representing South Oxfordshire Sustainability, requested that the Local Plan give a higher priority to tackling climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and requiring carbon neutral buildings and schemes to provide low carbon renewable energy.
- Robin Bennett, representing South Oxfordshire Green Party, stated that there was no unmet housing need and that the proposed developments were not sustainable.
- Councillor Sue Cooper requested that action be taken to mitigate the effects of climate change and expressed the view that not all of the proposed strategic sites were required.
- Ann Pritchard, representing Chalgrove Parish Council, and Paul Boone, representing Chalgrove Airfield Action Group, requested that Chalgrove Airfield be removed from the list of housing allocation sites in the Local Plan as the land was not available.
- Vicky Fowler spoke on behalf of Martin-Baker Aircraft Company Limited, which held a business tenancy at Chalgrove Airfield, and stated that Martin Baker was not prepared to relinquish its lease.

- Caroline Baird, on behalf of Save Culham Green Belt, and Samantha Casey-Rehaye, representing Culham Parish Council, requested that Culham be removed from the list of housing allocation sites in the Local Plan.
- Peter Kirby, a Culham resident, expressed the view that the importance of Culham to Science Vale had been overstated to justify its inclusion in the list of housing allocation sites
- Steven Sensecall spoke on behalf of the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority (UKAEA) and the Commercial Estates Group (CEG) to support the Local Plan proposals, including those to allocate land for housing at Culham.
- Alan East, representing Holton Parish Council, spoke in support of the housing allocation site at Oxford Brookes University's Wheatley Campus but objected to the site's removal from the Green Belt. He stated that the new homes should be on the eastern part of the site.
- Eugenie Buchan, representing Elsfeld Village Meeting, expressed concern about the risk of flooding should land north of Bayswater Brook be developed.
- Ann Henman, a Beckley and Stowood resident, objected to the council allocating sites to meet Oxford City's unmet housing needs and expressed concerns about the risk of flooding and increased traffic arising from development in the locality.
- Ginette Camps-Walsh, representing Beckley and Stowood Parish, expressed concerns about the legality of the Local Plan adoption process and objected to the proposed development on the Green Belt.

In response to issues raised by speakers and to questions from committee members, the Cabinet member and officers reported that:

- The total housing allocations proposed exceeded the requirements, but it was important to ensure that the Local Plan continued to deliver a five-year housing land supply.
- The council had previously challenged Oxford City on its capacity calculation and would continue to keep it under review.
- Legal advice regarding Oxford City's unmet housing need would be provided to councillors on a confidential basis.
- With regard to environmental issues, advancements in new technology could be reflected in supplementary planning documents. It was also anticipated that requirements for electric charging points etc. would be introduced by the Government via changes to building regulations.
- The revised NPPF allows for the review of Green Belt boundaries taking into account potential harm and exceptional circumstances. A new study of the Green Belt had been undertaken to support the assessment of strategic allocation sites.
- The Oxfordshire Growth Deal requires the production of a Joint Statutory Spatial Plan which may lead to future Green Belt studies.
- South Oxfordshire's more urban areas could accommodate higher density housing.
- Reading Borough Council had not asked South Oxfordshire to help meet its unmet housing need.
- No land in South Oxfordshire had been safeguarded for a third Reading bridge.
- The Local Plan policies and Infrastructure Delivery Plan update would set out infrastructure requirements for strategic sites in more detail.

Following further discussion, a motion to recommend the removal of all strategic sites within the Green Belt from the Local Plan, was moved and seconded. On being put to the vote, the motion was lost.

A motion to express grave concerns about the Chalgrove Airfield strategic site, based on the representations from Martin Baker, was moved and seconded. On being put to the vote, the motion was lost.

A motion to recommend Cabinet that:

- i) the Wheatley Oxford Brookes University site remain in the Green Belt; and
  - ii) the requirement for "at least 300 homes" be amended to "300 homes" on this site
- was moved and seconded. On being put to the vote, the motion was carried.

A motion to request officers to amend the text in Chapter 5 of the draft Local Plan regarding Land at Chalgrove Airfield to more accurately reflect:

- i) the activities on the airfield; and
  - ii) Martin Bakers Ltd's unwillingness to negotiate with Homes England
- was moved and seconded. On being put to the vote, the motion was carried.

A motion to remove Land North of Bayswater Brook, Grenoble Road and Northfield from the list of strategic sites in the Local Plan was moved and seconded. On being put to the vote, the motion was lost.

A motion to delete all references to Oxford City's unmet housing need from the Local Plan and replace with references to the Oxfordshire Growth Deal was moved and seconded. On being put to the vote, the motion was lost.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1) To recommend Cabinet that:
  - i) the Wheatley Oxford Brookes University site remain in the Green Belt; and
  - ii) the requirement for "at least 300 homes" be amended to "300 homes" on this site.
- 2) To request officers to amend the text in Chapter 5 of the draft Local Plan regarding Land at Chalgrove Airfield to more accurately reflect:
  - i) the activities on the airfield; and
  - ii) Martin Bakers Ltd's unwillingness to negotiate with Homes England.

[Just before the meeting guillotine of 9:00pm, part way through consideration of this application, committee members took a vote to continue with this item only, in accordance with the council's Constitution. Therefore, the remaining item on the agenda was deferred to the next meeting.]

**33 Work schedule and dates for all South and Vale scrutiny meetings**

This item was deferred due to the meeting guillotine having been reached before its consideration.

The meeting closed at 9.28 pm

Chairman

Date