

Minutes

OF A MEETING OF THE

Cabinet



Listening Learning Leading

HELD ON WEDNESDAY 10 JULY 2019 AT 6.00 PM

CORNERSTONE ARTS CENTRE, 25 STATION ROAD, DIDCOT, OX11 7NE

Present:

Cabinet members: Councillors Sue Cooper (Chair), David Turner, Pieter-Paul Barker, Robin Bennett, Maggie Filipova-Rivers, Andrea Powell and Leigh Rawlins

Officers: Emma Baker, Steve Culliford, Andrew Down, Adrian Duffield, Holly Jones, Ian Price and Cheryl Soppet

Apologies:

David Rouane tendered apologies.

9 Declaration of disclosable pecuniary interest

None

10 Urgent business and chairman's announcements

None

11 Public participation

Twelve members of the public addressed Cabinet on the emerging South Oxfordshire Local Plan:

1. Stuart Scott-Ely spoke on behalf of Berinsfield Parish Council, urging Cabinet to support either option 1 or 2 in the head of planning's report, to allow the emerging Local Plan to continue through its examination.
2. Michael Tyce spoke on behalf of the Campaign to Protect Rural England, urging Cabinet to scrap the previous council administration's local plan and to adopt option 4, to withdraw the emerging Local Plan from examination and restart the plan making process.
3. Roger Williams spoke on behalf of Planning Oxfordshire's Environment & Transport Sustainability. He believed the council should adopt an option that removed the

Chalgrove Airfield housing allocation from the local plan as this was an unsustainable location for new development.

4. Paul Boone spoke on behalf of Chalgrove Airfield Action Group, expressing concern at Chalgrove Airfield remaining in the Local Plan as a housing site as it would put the plan at risk.
5. Ann Pritchard spoke on behalf of Chalgrove Parish Council, urging Cabinet to support option 3 as it would allow the removal of the Chalgrove Airfield housing allocation from the Local Plan.
6. Caroline Baird spoke on behalf of Save Culham Green Belt, urging Cabinet to support option 4 to re-write the Local Plan, and remove the Culham housing allocation.
7. Ian Chapman spoke on behalf of the UK Atomic Energy Authority, reminding Cabinet that its Culham site would continue to grow and stressing the importance of retaining the Housing Infrastructure Funding.
8. Steven Sensecall spoke on behalf of CEG, which promoted land at Culham. He urged Cabinet to progress the Local Plan through option 1 and to retain the Housing Infrastructure Funding.
9. Adrian Townsend, a resident of Garsington and campaigning for a better South Oxfordshire, urged Cabinet to support option 4, and re-write the Local Plan.
10. Ian Goldsmith spoke on behalf of Cuxham with Easington Parish Meeting, opposing the housing allocation at Chalgrove Airfield as it would exacerbate the traffic problems, and urged Cabinet to support option 3.
11. Richard Harding spoke on behalf of Extinction Rebellion Wallingford, urging Cabinet to take quick action to re-write the Local Plan to respond to the climate emergency.
12. Vicky Fowler spoke on behalf of Martin Baker reminding Cabinet that the proposed housing allocation at Chalgrove Airfield was not available for redevelopment due to the current tenant having a long-term lease of the site.

The chair thanked all of the public speakers for their contributions.

12 Goring Neighbourhood Plan

Cabinet considered the head of planning's report on the Goring Neighbourhood Plan. The report sought Cabinet's recommendation to Council to make the plan part of the council's development plan.

Cabinet noted that the plan was compatible with the current European Union obligations and complied with the Habitats Regulation Assessment.

The referendum, held on 4 July 2019, had resulted in 62.7 per cent support for the plan. Therefore, the Cabinet member for planning recommended that Cabinet supported a recommendation to Council to make the plan part of the council's development plan. Cabinet welcomed the plan and supported the recommendation.

RECOMMENDED to Council to:

- (a) make the Goring Neighbourhood Development Plan so that it continues to be part of the council's development plan; and
- (a) authorise the head of planning, in agreement with the Qualifying Body, to correct any spelling, grammatical, typographical or factual errors together with any improvements from a presentational perspective.

13 South Oxfordshire Emerging Local Plan

Cabinet considered the head of planning's report, which set out the implications of changing the emerging Local Plan.

The Cabinet member for planning addressed Cabinet and thanked the members of the public and business community who had made representations to the meeting. He reported that following the local elections in May 2019 and the subsequent change in leadership, the new council administration had requested some time to look at key policies and projects under development; the Local Plan 2034 was one of these. To assist councillors, officers had prepared a report outlining the advantages and the risks of four different options on taking forward the Local Plan. The four options were:

- Option 1 suggested that the emerging Local Plan 2034 continued its progress through the Examination process. No changes would be recommended by the council. Any modifications made during the examination would be at the discretion of the Inspectors.
- Option 2 allowed the emerging Local Plan to continue through its examination, but the council might be able to recommend a series of main modifications to the plan. These changes would be at the discretion of the Inspectors. The plan could not be changed unless the Inspector found that part of the plan was unsound. There were no early conclusions from the Inspector about the soundness of aspects of the submitted Local Plan or if modifications were needed.
- Option 3 provided the opportunity to withdraw the Local Plan from examination. The council could make changes to the plan, then conduct a further Regulation 19 consultation. The extent of changes would need to fall within the remit of Regulation 19 consultation, i.e. not introduce new subject areas for the plan to cover. The council could then submit a revised plan for examination.
- Option 4 provided an opportunity to withdraw the Local Plan from examination and to restart the plan making process from scratch. This would allow the council to prepare a significantly different plan, subject to compliance with the law, national policies and guidance. The council would need to undertake at least two consultations (Regulations 18 and 19) before submitting the new plan for examination.

The Cabinet member for planning thanked the Scrutiny Committee for its input, and for its recommendation to Cabinet to progress with option 3.

The Cabinet member drew Cabinet's attention to a letter from the Planning Inspector in reply to the council's letter (set out in appendix 10 to the head of planning's report). With regard to option 2, the Inspector highlighted that any modifications would not have been subject to consultation. Also, the Inspector clarified that the inspectorate could only recommend main modifications where they were necessary to ensure the soundness or

legal compliance of the submitted plan. Any changes that the council considered desirable and would amount to main modifications but were not necessary to remedy the soundness or compliance of the submitted plan, would not be recommended by the Inspector as main modifications and could not be taken forward.

The Cabinet member expressed concern about a number of aspects in the Local Plan and did not support continuing with the emerging plan through the Examination process (option 1). He had concerns about:

- the Local Plan's environmental policies. Council had declared a climate change emergency. Therefore, the council needed to explore whether the plan's policies reflected this decision, and how the policies could be developed as the council considered its response to the declaration of this emergency. This aligned with the recommendation to Council on 18 July to establish a Climate Emergency Advisory Committee.
- housing need and Oxford City's unmet housing need, which was not yet determined. He believed that the housing need method advocated in national policy should be based on the standard methodology. The council might know more about Oxford City's unmet housing need after the Oxford Local Plan hearing sessions had taken place.
- with a reduction in housing need, the Local Plan was over-supplying. The plan supplied around 29,000 dwellings against a housing requirement of some 23,000 dwellings. If housing need was adjusted, the sites contributing towards the supply needed to be reviewed to meet the overall requirement. The plan also allocated sites that provided around 4,000 dwellings to be delivered after 2034.
- the proposed policy on strategic housing density was inflexible and did not take into account the local context and circumstances.

He believed that the council needed the opportunity to explore these concerns, whilst protecting the Housing Infrastructure Funds and understanding the impact on communities and the council's housing supply position. Accordingly, he moved a motion that Cabinet recommended Council to:

- (a) express its determination to maintain its housing land supply and avoid speculative housing development;
- (b) express its continued support for the Housing and Infrastructure Fund (HIF) funding and the proposed infrastructure projects that will be delivered by it;
- (c) ask officers to explore with Oxfordshire County Council, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and Homes England options for protecting the HIF funding whilst enabling the council to address concerns about the current emerging Local Plan 2034 including (but not limited to) climate change issues and Oxford City's unmet housing need, and to report back to Cabinet and Council;
- (d) recognising that the Climate Change Emergency is all too real and is recognised to be of key and statutory importance under the Climate Change Act 2008 and the associated objective of "zero carbon by 2050", express its wish to do all that it can to respond through the Local Plan process; and
- (e) agree that as soon as practicable, alongside satisfactory progress being made on resolving issues in the emerging Local Plan, work on a subsequent Local Plan shall commence, strengthening climate change considerations.

Cabinet noted that the Housing Infrastructure Funding included new road projects around Didcot and some funding for footpaths and cycleways. A list of the projects was appended to the head of planning's report.

Cabinet concurred that more time was needed to explore options to protect the essential Housing Infrastructure Funding, whilst enabling the council to address concerns about the current emerging Local Plan 2034, including climate change issues and Oxford City's unmet housing need. Cabinet supported the motion.

RECOMMENDED to Council to:

- (a) express its determination to maintain its housing land supply and avoid speculative housing development;
- (b) express its continued support for the Housing and Infrastructure Fund (HIF) funding and the proposed infrastructure projects that will be delivered by it;
- (c) ask officers to explore with Oxfordshire County Council, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and Homes England options for protecting the HIF funding whilst enabling the council to address concerns about the current emerging Local Plan 2034 including (but not limited to) climate change issues and Oxford City's unmet housing need, and to report back to Cabinet and Council;
- (d) recognising that the Climate Change Emergency is all too real and is recognised to be of key and statutory importance under the Climate Change Act 2008 and the associated objective of "zero carbon by 2050", express its wish to do all that it can to respond through the Local Plan process; and
- (e) agree that as soon as practicable, alongside satisfactory progress being made on resolving issues in the emerging Local Plan, work on a subsequent Local Plan shall commence, strengthening climate change considerations.

The meeting closed at 7.20 pm

Chairman

Date