

Minutes

OF A MEETING OF THE

Cabinet



Listening Learning Leading

**HELD ON THURSDAY 7 APRIL 2016 AT 6.30 PM
MEETING ROOM 1, 135 EASTERN AVENUE, MILTON PARK, MILTON,
OX14 4SB**

Present:

John Cotton (Chairman), Jane Murphy (Vice-Chairman), Anna Badcock, Elizabeth Gillespie, Will Hall, Tony Harbour, Lynn Lloyd, Jane Murphy and Robert Simister

Apologies: None

Officers: David Buckle, Charlotte Colver, Steve Culliford, John Dobson, Clare Kingston, Jeremy Lloyd, Margaret Reed, Anna Robinson, and Sally Truman

Also present: Joan Bland, Felix Bloomfield, Toby Newman, David Nimmo-Smith, David Turner and Ian White

53 Declaration of disclosable pecuniary interest

None

54 Minutes of the previous meeting

RESOLVED: to approve the minutes of the Cabinet meetings held on 28 January, including its appendix, and 4 February 2016 as correct records and agree that the chairman signs them as such.

55 Public participation

David Turner asked to address Cabinet on the corporate plan. This is recorded under minute 57 below.

56 Berinsfield improvement programme

Cabinet considered the strategic director's report, which suggested the council should produce a regeneration strategy for Berinsfield and a delivery plan to improve the village environment. Officers had identified several issues including: some poor quality open spaces, the main health, education and community buildings being in poor condition, a number of properties being in need of investment, the lower than average household incomes being insufficient to support home ownership or private rented accommodation, the need for more suitable social housing accommodation for

elderly residents, and limited access to employment opportunities. The parish council's draft Neighbourhood Plan had identified the same issues.

Substantial investment was required to address these. The report proposed the council should produce a regeneration strategy for a comprehensive, co-ordinated programme of improvements to create a better, more sustainable Berinsfield for current and future generations.

Policy CSEN2 of the South Oxfordshire Core Strategy provided that a review of the Green Belt could take place at Berinsfield. The policy set out exceptional circumstances justifying a review. This provided the planning context within which the council intended to produce a regeneration strategy. The main principle was that land would only be released from the Green Belt if development funded the entire cost of an approved regeneration programme for the village. Appended to the report was a planning statement of intent explaining that only development proposals that met the exceptional circumstances test would be considered.

Cabinet considered the options identified in the report and concluded that:

- doing nothing would not tackle the issues identified, and would disadvantage the community from benefitting from the economic growth and wellbeing in South Oxfordshire
- there was no public sector funding available to produce a regeneration strategy and delivery plan
- council leadership and front-funding of the regeneration strategy was the only way to proceed

The Cabinet member responsible for strategic policy proposed an extensive programme of work over the period to December 2017 to evaluate options, and consider promoting a proportionate release of the Green Belt, should the delivery plan prove viable. The cost of this programme of work was estimated at £1.5 million. This would allow for:

- the preparation of a sustainable social infrastructure plan including leisure, education and health provision
- community involvement in developing the plans, aligning plans with those of SOHA and other providers, leading to a long term governance model
- the production of masterplan, including planning strategy, a Green Belt review, design code for new housing, and technical studies; and
- the development of the financial model, land assembly strategy, procurement and delivery mechanism and public private sector funding agreements

Cabinet supported the proposal.

RECOMMENDED to Council to:

- (a) vire £1,500,000 from the Regeneration and Housing Initiatives in Science Vale and Didcot scheme in the provisional capital programme to the revenue budget for the purposes of preparing a comprehensive regeneration strategy and delivery plan for Berinsfield by December 2017;

RESOLVED (subject to Council approving (a) above) to:

- (b) authorise the strategic director, in consultation with the cabinet members for strategic policy (including the local plan) and development management and

housing, to utilise the funding to produce a comprehensive regeneration strategy and delivery plan in the most cost effective and expedient manner; and

- (c) endorse the planning statement of intent, appended to the strategic director's report, as the only basis on which the council will consider promoting proportionate release of the Green Belt at Berinsfield.

57 Corporate plan 2016 - 2020

Cabinet considered the head of corporate strategy's report, which proposed a new corporate plan to cover the period 2016 to 2020. This identified the council's strategic objectives and priorities, and would help guide decisions on the allocation of resources. The corporate plan, if adopted by Council, would replace the priorities set out in the corporate plan that ended in 2016.

David Turner addressed Cabinet, suggesting that the corporate plan could help with:

- providing more help to groups developing neighbourhood plans
- publishing an annual programme for the deep cleansing programme
- providing rural transport to the council's leisure centres
- protecting rural bus services

Mr Turner also welcomed the introduction of budgets for individual councillors and plans to encourage providers to improve mobile phone coverage in rural areas.

The Cabinet member responsible for the corporate plan tabled an updated version of the plan and described its main points. He believed the corporate plan would focus activity, guide policy and operational decisions, and inform the public of the council's aims. Many policy choices had been made during informal discussions on the draft plan. Cabinet was invited to make further amendments prior to recommending its adoption to the Council.

Cabinet supported the draft corporate plan but added 'increasing participation in activity and sport to improve health' under the heading of helping people to healthy and active.

The Cabinet member also thanked the officer for her assistance in developing the plan, and thanked Mr Turner for his suggestions. The Cabinet member agreed to consider these and any more suggestions recommended by the Scrutiny Committee before the corporate plan would be considered by the Council on 14 April.

RECOMMENDED: to Council to adopt the Corporate Plan 2016 – 2020 as tabled at the Cabinet meeting, plus the following on page 4:

- Increasing participation in activity and sport to improve health

58 Henley and Harpsden Neighbourhood Plan

Cabinet considered the head of planning's report, which recommended that the Henley and Harpsden Neighbourhood Plan was made part of the development plan for South Oxfordshire.

The Cabinet member for strategic policy (including the local plan) reported that Henley-on-Thames Town Council and Harpsden Parish Council had worked together with their local communities to prepare a joint neighbourhood plan. The plan was

then subject to public consultation and an examination in public. The examiner concluded that, subject to modifications, the plan met the basic conditions set out in legislation and could therefore be submitted for referendum. Modifications were then duly made to the plan. At the referendum on 10 March 2016, 81 per cent of those who voted were in favour of the plan. The officers had confirmed that, as the plan did not breach any European Union obligation or any of the Convention rights within the meaning of the Human Rights Act 1998, the council had a duty to make the plan part of the development plan for South Oxfordshire. Cabinet supported the neighbourhood plan and congratulated the working groups on their work.

RECOMMENDED: to Council to make the Henley and Harpsden Neighbourhood Plan, as set out at appendix 1 to the head of planning’s report, part of the development plan for South Oxfordshire.

The meeting closed at 6.55pm

Chairman

Date

South Oxfordshire District Council

Corporate Plan 2016 - 2020

Invest in the district's future

We will create the right conditions for economic growth, so that businesses, residents and workers can prosper, by:

- Directly addressing matters that fetter growth within our control, such as housing supply and provision of affordable housing. We will work with partners to seek to overcome infrastructure bottlenecks that impact adversely on business competitiveness
- Support **the creation of an environment that allows** enterprising small and medium sized businesses to grow
- **We will champion our SMEs in South Oxfordshire**
- We will seek to support nearby high tech job creators.
- Supporting the Thame Farmers Auction Mart to relocate to an alternative site within the district thereby freeing up the Thame cattle market site for redevelopment
- **We will seek to support the market towns as places to visit and places to live.**

We will seek to further improve Broadband and mobile phone coverage. We will:

- Aim for all businesses and residents to have access to superfast Broadband
- Encourage mobile phone providers to improve mobile phone reception, including use of council-owned sites to improve coverage

We will provide New Leisure facilities by:

- Building a new leisure centre at Didcot
- Planning for future leisure needs in the district

- Following adoption of the Local Plan and housing allocations, and agreement on facilities at the new Didcot leisure centre, considering the need for a new indoor leisure facility elsewhere in the district

We will secure our Financial Future

- While recognising the challenges of changing local government finance we will maintain our strong financial position through innovation, efficiency and careful management.

Unlock the potential of Didcot

Through the garden town initiative we will:

- Develop the Orchard Centre phase two to deliver excellent retail and leisure facilities and exemplar homes
- Regenerate the gateway to Didcot around the station to provide a landmark entrance to science vale
- Attract infrastructure funding that enables traffic to flow through and around the town
- Create welcoming green neighbourhoods throughout the residential and business quarters
- Master plan the wider town centre to develop a transformational change programme that meets garden town objectives
- Involve local residents in all aspects of the garden town initiative

Homes and jobs for everyone

Through an ambitious housing strategy we will:

- Deliver the right balance of types and tenure of new homes to meet housing need and support economic growth
- Develop starter home and low cost home ownership initiatives
- Ensure a good supply of affordable rented homes for those unable to buy

- Promote self-build and custom build initiatives, and ensure that land is made available for this purpose

We will facilitate sustainable communities by:

- Encouraging exemplar housing design through our planning policies
- Working with developers and other partners to develop a protocol that will ensure high quality, sympathetic design across our district
- Strongly supporting the development of neighbourhood plans for our towns and villages
- Undertaking comprehensive regeneration of Berinsfield
- Ensuring our environmental assets such as the green belt, the Chilterns AONB and Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSIs) are protected for future generations
- Directly undertaking development where we see market failure or a gap in provision, creating delivery vehicles as required

We will reduce homelessness by:

- Assisting households to remain in their homes through mediation and enforcement of their rights to occupy.
- Providing a holistic housing advice service, in partnership with other agencies, to maximise the housing options for all households
- Helping low income families to access affordable rented accommodation through deposit bonds, rent-in-advance loans and tenancy support

We will optimise employment opportunities by:

- Ensuring a good supply of appropriate employment land across the district
- Working with delivery partners to ensure a good supply of appropriate business premises for start-ups and small and medium enterprises
- Ensuring that the skills needs of our employers are identified and that training programmes are in place to provide a skilled labour force

- Encourage local apprenticeship and local workforce schemes that benefit our young people
- Supporting the Government's objective of achieving full employment

Build thriving communities

We will make communities clean and safe by:

- Delivering new and ambitious air quality action plans to improve air quality across the district and specifically tackle poor air quality in Henley, Wallingford and Watlington
- Working with partners as part of the Southern Oxfordshire CSP to deliver the CSP annual plan aimed at reducing crime, tackling antisocial behaviour and supporting vulnerable people
- Maintaining the number of people who say they feel safe during the day/at night
- Continuing the annual South Oxfordshire deep clean programme
- Increasing the recycling rate to 70 per cent and maintaining our position as one of the top 10 authorities for recycling

We will help people to be healthy and active by:

- Increasing the number of people using leisure centres
- Supporting the government drive to increase sport and activity in schools
- Working with Sustrans to improve provision of cycle routes in the district
- Piloting the introduction of a cycle hire scheme in one of our market towns
- Increasing participation in activity and sport to improve health

We will support communities to help themselves. We will:

- Introduce individual councillor budgets through which councillors can support small community projects in their area
- Consider the business case for introducing a local lottery scheme to fund community projects
- Provide additional support to voluntary and community groups to help them to find the volunteers they need, and provide vital services to residents, including a website to link potential volunteers with volunteering opportunities.
- Increase the number of people volunteering in the district
- Promote, create and support volunteer roles and opportunities for sports volunteering within the local community
- Support rural communities with maintaining their transport links by working with bus operators to look at options to continue some of the bus services previously supported directly by Oxfordshire County Council
- Investigate opportunities for increasing the role of parish councils in hyperlocal issues.

Services that reflect residents' needs

We will engage with residents and service users to ensure that services and facilities reflect their needs. We will:

- Maintain high levels of resident satisfaction with the Council and with key services such as waste and cleanliness
- Engage with residents on issues, services or projects which affect them, and consider their views in making decisions
- Maintain a close dialogue with town and parish councils in order to understand the issues they face and where possible work with them to find solutions
- Create two parish and town forums a year so that parishes can be a part of the District's work

- Hold a Parish Councils briefing before each Budget
- Work to broaden understanding of public opportunities to contribute to Council's meetings
- Support the democratic process through innovative IT solutions as part of the new IT Strategy.

Be tough on enforcement

We will take a proactive approach to planning enforcement by:

- Achieving an overall reduction in enforcement intervention through increased engagement with developers at all stages of the planning process
- Offering support and guidance to applicants throughout the planning process in order to mitigate breaches of planning control that might otherwise lead to enforcement action.

We will maintain high standards in food safety

- Through a risk based inspection and enforcement programme we will ensure that food businesses comply with food safety legislation
- 96 per cent of businesses will be broadly compliant by 2020

We will continue to take action on flytipping, dog fouling and litter.

We will:

- Achieve a year on year reduction in the number of fly tips in the district
- Clear 90 per cent of fly tips from high intensity areas within 12 hours
- Implement the issuing of FPNs for dog fouling and litter by the council's environmental wardens in Henley, Wallingford, Watlington, Thame and Didcot town centres

Additional text to be added at the end

In delivering on the commitments in this Corporate Plan we will:

- Provide value for money for residents and where relevant ensure that services pay for themselves
- Provide fair and accessible services and employment opportunities that meet the needs of everyone, and positively promote inclusion, in line with the Equality Act.

The Council's equality objectives are to:

- Continue to improve physical access to council owned or leased buildings or land
- Ensure new projects, policies or strategies, changes to services, and communication take account of the needs of all users
- Increase our understanding of the communities we serve, through consultation, engagement and using existing evidence (e.g. census data) to inform the decisions we make
- Continue to monitor the impact of our employment policies and practices to ensure all groups have access to employment opportunities
- Support communities to deliver better outcomes for disadvantaged groups and encourage community cohesion
- Seek to improve access to major new developments and town centres in South Oxfordshire and the Vale for people with disabilities, carers and older people