

Minutes



Listening Learning Leading

OF A MEETING OF THE

Community Governance and Electoral Issues Committee

HELD AT 6.00 PM ON MONDAY 28 FEBRUARY 2022

FIRST FLOOR MEETING SPACE, 135 EASTERN AVENUE, MILTON PARK,
OX14 4SB

Present in the meeting room

Committee Members: Councillors Lynn Lloyd (Chair), Ken Arlett, David Bartholomew, Maggie Filipova-Rivers, Mocky Khan, and David Turner

Officers: Susan Baker (Electoral Services Team Leader) and Steven Corrigan (Democratic Services Manager)

Guests: Councillor Sue Cooper

Remote attendance

Officers: Michael Flowers (Democratic Services Officer), Jeremy Lloyd (Broadcasting Officer), and Chris McMullin (Electoral Services Officer)

Guests: Councillor Pieter-Paul Barker

18 Apologies for absence

There were no apologies for absence.

19 Minutes

RESOLVED: to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 16 February 2021 as a correct record and agree that the chair signs them as such.

20 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

21 Urgent business and chair's announcements

The chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

22 Public participation

Councillor Sue Cooper had registered to address the committee.

23 Community Governance Review - terms of reference

Councillor Sue Cooper addressed the committee. She welcomed the decision of the committee taken in 2017 to undertake a community governance review every four years. However, she questioned why this review was only considering matters submitted by parishes. She expressed the view that the council should undertake reviews of areas where new housing developments were planned across parish boundaries which would result in people being in different parishes from their neighbours. This was particularly the case where developments occurred in smaller parishes adjacent to larger parishes or towns.

Committee members commented on how the Community Infrastructure Levy income was distributed between parishes where a new development straddled two or more boundaries. The response from the speaker, and expanded upon by the chair, was that the income was distributed to parishes based on the number of houses within its boundaries. The amount of money received was also dependent on whether a neighbourhood plan was implemented at the time.

The democratic services manager provided further context to the committee of the review process. The committee were informed that the committee had previously passed a resolution in October 2017 to undertake a community governance review every four years to address localised issues. A review of the whole district area was undertaken in 2014 and such a review would be undertaken following the 2023 elections – well within the good practice guidance for conducting such reviews every 10-15 years.

A councillor asked how the reviews the council conducted every four years compared to other local authorities across the country. The democratic services manager responded by explaining that while they did not have specific comparisons available, they were aware that a significant number of councils were not as proactive in undertaking community governance reviews. A further question sought clarification on the length of the consultation process, to which the officer confirmed it would last about six weeks.

Councillor Lynn Lloyd, Chair of the Committee, advised that the purpose of the meeting was to agree the terms of reference for the review and not to discuss the merits or otherwise of the items submitted for review or to make proposals on them. The committee would in due course be asked to agree draft proposals for consultation, at a meeting in May, following the initial period of engagement with relevant stakeholders.

Councillor Mocky Khan, a member of both the committee and Didcot Town Council, provided further clarification on the process the town council took to gather feedback. The committee was advised that the following recommendations from a town council working group would be considered by Didcot Town Council on 7 March:

- South Oxfordshire District Council to conduct the full boundary review based on population growth.
- The whole of Great Western Park to be within the Didcot boundaries and under the remit of Didcot Town Council.
- Aspiration to have an equal number of councillors to represent an equal number of residents on each town council ward.

The committee was advised that, in respect of the second bullet point, part of the area referred to was in Vale of White Horse District Council and therefore this was not feasible within this review. Changes to district boundaries were a matter for the Local Government Boundary Commission for England.

A committee member asked why a proposed date in March was not detailed in the table within the report for the start of the consultation process. The response was that officers had been waiting for comments from Didcot Town Council and for the terms of reference to be published before any consultation began. However, the officer also reiterated that they had already begun receiving comments from parishes and that these would be incorporated into the consultation feedback.

A motion moved and seconded, to support the officer's recommendations was declared carried on being put to the vote.

RESOLVED: to

1. agree the terms of reference for the review set out in Appendix 5 of the report of the head of legal and democratic to the Community Governance and Electoral Issues Committee on 28 February 2022;
2. authorise the democratic services manager, in consultation with the chair, to amend the terms of reference to include issues submitted for review by Didcot Town Council.

Following the completion of the item and before the close of the meeting, a request for a noted comment was made by a member of the committee. The comment expressed concern regarding the shortness of the meeting and the associated costs involved in terms of travel expenses and travel time. The member expressed a desire for alternative meeting arrangements for such issues.

The meeting closed at 6.24 pm

Chair

Date

--	--