

Minutes

OF A MEETING OF THE

Council



Listening Learning Leading

HELD ON THURSDAY 10 DECEMBER 2020 AT 6.00 PM

AS A VIRTUAL MEETING

Present:

David Bretherton (Chairman)

Ken Arlett, Anna Badcock, Pieter-Paul Barker, David Bartholomew, Robin Bennett, Sam Casey-Rerhaye, Sue Cooper, Peter Dragonetti, Maggie Filipova-Rivers, Stefan Gawrysiak, Elizabeth Gillespie, Sarah Gray, Kate Gregory, Victoria Haval, Alexandrine Kantor, Mocky Khan, George Levy, Lynn Lloyd, Axel Macdonald, Jane Murphy, Caroline Newton, Andrea Powell, Leigh Rawlins, Jo Robb, Sue Roberts, David Rouane, Anne-Marie Simpson, Ian Snowdon, Alan Thompson, David Turner, Ian White and Celia Wilson

Apologies:

Lorraine Hillier and Kellie Hinton tendered apologies.

Officers: Emma Baker, Steven Corrigan, Steve Culliford, Adrian Duffield, Simon Hewings, Suzanne Malcolm, Lucy Murfett, Mark Stone and Margaret Reed

Also present: James Goudie QC and Robert Walton QC

112 Minutes

RESOLVED: to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 8 October 2020 as a correct record and agree that the Chairman sign them as such.

113 Declarations of disclosable pecuniary interest

There were no declarations of disclosable pecuniary interest, but Councillor Kantor made a statement that she is employed at UKAEA Culham and Councillor David Turner made a statement that he is a member of the Culham Local Liaison Committee – a potential housing site in the Local Plan.

114 Urgent business and chairman's announcements

The Chairman noted that today marked International Human Rights Day. It was an opportunity to remember those who do not live in free and democratic societies and those who continue to suffer from atrocities committed around the world.

The Chairman advised councillors of general procedures to be followed in virtual meetings.

With the agreement of Council, the Chairman changed the order of business to consider agenda item 8, Council Tax Base 2021/22, prior to agenda item 7, South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035 adoption. Any delay in making a decision at the meeting could impact on the precept setting arrangements for parish councils.

115 Public participation

The Chairman advised that a number of members of the public had registered to address Council. Council agreed to extend the public speaking time to allow each member of the public who had registered to speak for three minutes to make their address.

116 Petitions

None.

117 Council Tax Base 2021/22

Council considered Cabinet's recommendations, made at its meeting on 3 December 2020, on the council tax base for 2021/22.

RESOLVED to:

- (a) approve the interim head of finance's report to Cabinet on 3 December 2020 for the calculation of the council's tax base and the calculation of the tax base for each parish area for 2021/22;
- (b) agree that, in accordance with The Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012, the amount calculated by South Oxfordshire District Council as its council tax base for the year 2021/22 be 59,171.2; and
- (c) agree that, in accordance with The Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012, the amount calculated by South Oxfordshire District Council as the council tax base for the year 2021/22 for each parish be the amount shown against the name of that parish in Appendix 1 of the interim head of finance's report to Cabinet on 3 December 2020.

118 South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035 adoption

- (1) Ann Pritchard, Chairman of Chalgrove Parish Council, addressed Council. against the adoption of the local plan, in particular the inclusion of the strategic housing allocation at Chalgrove Airfield which was neither viable nor sustainable.

- (2) Eugenie Buchan addressed Council and urged councillors not to abstain from the vote.
- (3) Andrew Waite-Brown, Chairman of Forest Hill with Shotover Parish Council, addressed Council and urged those councillors who had stood on a platform at the May 2019 elections against the local plan to reject it and produce a greener local plan. He urged councillors not to abstain from the vote.
- (4) Ginette Camps-Walsh, Chairman Beckley and Stowood Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee and representing Stanton St. John Parish Council, addressed Council. She urged Council to reject the plan in accordance with electoral promises and develop a greener local plan.
- (5) David Adams, a Risinghurst and Sandhills Parish Councillor, addressed Council urging the rejection of the local plan which over stated the number of houses required, would destroy the Oxford Green Belt and result in no biodiversity gain.
- (6) Angela Dickinson addressed Council on behalf of Beautiful Barton and Friends of Bayswater Brook, opposing the local plan which would destroy the green belt, impact on the biodiversity of the area and result in increased pressure on the already congested road network.
- (7) John Walsh addressed Council, a local resident, urged Council to vote against adoption of the local plan and to protect the green belt. Alternative sites were available outside the green belt which offered more suitable locations for strategic housing allocations.
- (8) Anne-Marie Sweeney addressed Council against the adoption of the local plan which would be disastrous for the environment, biodiversity and local communities, and urged Council to reject the plan, protect Bayswater Brook and the green belt.
- (9) Richard Harding, Chair of CPRE Southern Oxfordshire District, addressed Council against the adoption of the “flawed” local plan. The plan is based on housing numbers that exceed the needs of the current and future population of the district. The plan will have a detrimental impact on the Green Belt whilst alternative strategic housing sites exist, result in urban sprawl and makes unrealistic assumptions on the provision of infrastructure. The few environmental concessions will not offset the damage caused and impact on the delivery of environmental targets.
- (10) Paul Boone, Chair of Chalgrove Airfield Action Group, addressed Council against the inclusion of Chalgrove Airfield as a strategic housing development which was unsound and unsustainable. The proposed bus service will not be viable, the development will become a car-based settlement with inadequate roads and the current housing will have an inadequate buffer from the runway/testing facility.
- (11) Caroline Baird, representing Save Culham Green Belt, addressed Council against the local plan and the inclusion of a strategic housing allocation at Culham. This is in the green belt, which should be protected, and will result in the loss of agricultural land and put pressure on existing congested roads.
- (12) Ian Ashley addressed Council against the local plan. The additional houses will lead to the loss of the Green Belt around Oxford.

- (13) Geofrey Henman addressed Council against the local plan. The proposed public transport and infrastructure proposals would be inadequate to address issues north of Bayswater Brook. The plan will damage the countryside and not address the need to address climate change and build a green economy.
- (14) Adrian Townsend addressed Council against the local plan which in his view would turn villages into suburbs of Oxford and generate environmental harm.
- (15) Andy Bowery addressed Council against the local plan which would lead to the loss of Green Belt. He spoke against the proposed site at Grenoble Road the future residents of which would be impacted by the existing sewage works nearby.
- (16) Alice Bragg addressed Council against the local plan. She regretted the proposed loss of Green Belt land to facilitate economic growth and address Oxford City's unmet housing need.

The Chairman thanked the speakers for their contributions.

During the course of debate on this item, and prior to the expiry of two and a half hours, Council agreed, in accordance with council procedure rule 12, to extend the meeting by half an hour and then, in accordance with council procedure rule 82, to suspend council procedure rule 12, which restricts the duration of a meeting, to allow Council to complete the consideration of this item of business.

Councillor Anne-Marie Simpson, Cabinet member for planning, moved and Councillor David Rouane, Cabinet member for housing and environment, and Didcot Garden Town, seconded Cabinet's proposals as follows:

“That Council:

1. adopts the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035, as set out in Appendix A to the report of the Head of Planning to Cabinet on 8 December 2020, and modified by the Schedule of Main Modifications in Appendix B and the Schedule of Minor Modifications in Appendix C, and the updated Policies Map in Appendix D;
2. delegates authority to the Head of Planning, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning, to make any necessary further minor modifications prior to publication of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035, and any further updates to the Policies Map.”

In moving the recommendations, the Cabinet member for planning stated that the plan presented to Council, with the main modifications, has been found sound by the independent inspector. She drew attention to modifications in the plan which impact on climate change, carbon reduction, biodiversity net gain, affordable homes, and a variable approach to density to reflect and enhance local character. She concluded by stating that Council had a binary choice between adopting the plan, which has been found sound by the independent inspector, or not.

A number of councillors expressed concern regarding the process and the intervention of the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, Robert Jenrick, which had prevented Council considering other options and subsequently requiring, through a direction, the council to progress the plan through examination to adoption.

Some expressed concern regarding what they considered was an attack on local democracy.

A number of councillors spoke against the plan which, in their view, would have a detrimental impact on the Green Belt and the environment, increase congestion on the existing road infrastructure, lead to the urbanisation of parts of the district around Oxford, fail to address the need for low cost and smaller houses and provide for an oversupply of houses in the district which would lead to population increase and put further pressure on existing services. Others welcomed the plan which would ensure much needed funding for infrastructure improvements across the district, and around Didcot in particular, and address a shortage of houses providing homes for local residents. Some expressed concern at the delay in progressing the plan which had opened the district to speculative development and delayed infrastructure improvements.

A number of councillors expressed the view that it was important to consider the plan as presented to Council, with the main modifications, which had been found sound by the independent inspector. They welcomed the improvements to the plan which addressed the climate emergency and better reflected the local housing market. Whilst not a plan of their choosing, a number of councillors expressed the view that the adoption of the plan would be in the interests of the council, residents and businesses by providing certainty and clarity.

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 67, which provides for a recorded vote if three members request one, the Chairman called for a recorded vote on the motion which was declared carried with the voting as follows:

For	Against	Abstain
Councillors	Councillors	Councillors
Ken Arlett	Pieter-Paul Barker	Robin Bennett
Anna Badcock	Sue Cooper	Sam Casey-Rerhaye
David Bartholomew	Elizabeth Gillespie	Peter Dragonetti
David Bretherton	Sarah Gray	Maggie Filipova-Rivers
Stefan Gawrysiak	Leigh Rawlins	Kate Gregory
Victoria Haval	Sue Roberts	Alexandrine Kantor
Mocky Khan	David Turner	George Levy
Lynn Lloyd		Andrea Powell
Axel Macdonald		Jo Robb
Jane Murphy		
Caroline Newton		
David Rouane		

For	Against	Abstain
Anne-Marie Simpson		
Ian Snowdon		
Alan Thompson		
Ian White		
Celia Wilson		
17	7	9

RESOLVED: to

1. adopt the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035, as set out in Appendix A to the report of the Head of Planning to Cabinet on 8 December 2020, and modified by the Schedule of Main Modifications in Appendix B and the Schedule of Minor Modifications in Appendix C, and the updated Policies Map in Appendix D;
2. authorise the Head of Planning, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning, to make any necessary further minor modifications prior to publication of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035, and any further updates to the Policies Map.

119 Close of meeting - agenda items deferred

Council agreed to defer consideration of the remaining items of business to an extraordinary meeting of Council to be held on 22 December 2020.

The meeting closed at 9:40pm

Chairman

Date