

Notes

OF AN INFORMAL MEETING OF



Listening Learning Leading

Scrutiny Committee Members

**HELD ON TUESDAY 26 JULY 2022 AT 6.00 PM
VIRTUAL MEETING**

The meeting was live streamed. The recording can be watched here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ud7ZZByV2p0>

In attendance:

Councillors: Mocky Khan (Chair), Anna Badcock, Stefan Gawrysiak, George Levy, David Turner, David Bartholomew, Victoria Haval

Officers: Harry Barrington-Mountford (Head of Policy and Programmes), Emma Baker (Planning Policy Team Leader), Jayne Bolton (Infrastructure and Development Manager), Adrian Duffield (Head of Planning), Paula Fox (Planning Development Manager – larger sites), Candida Mckelvey (Democratic Services Officer), Adrianna Partridge (Deputy Chief Executive –Transformation and Operations)

55 Urgent business and chair's announcements

No announcements, but chair ran through housekeeping matters.

56 Apologies for absence

Councillor Khan chaired the meeting, as Councillor White sent apologies. Apologies also received from Councillors Kantor and Robb, and Councillor Haval was present as a substitute member of the committee in place of Councillor Kantor.

57 Minutes

The notes from the meeting on 27 June were noted by committee.

58 Declaration of interests

None.

59 Public participation

None.

60 Work schedule and dates for all South and Joint scrutiny meetings

Committee noted the work schedule.

61 Didcot Garden Town: Project update

Cabinet member for Didcot Garden Town introduced the report, which included appendices showing the previous 2017 delivery plan and the newly updated delivery plan. It was felt that there was inheritance of a large list of projects, and the new delivery plan was much more deliverable and streamlined.

Committee scrutinised the report, and the following main discussion points were raised:

- Members were keen to see measures of success in reporting – especially for members who are not close to the projects or the wards involved. Target dates, RAG ratings were suggested.
- Involvement of ward members seen as vital to success of projects and to aid engagement with residents. The Didcot Garden Town Advisory Board was key to consultation.
- A member questioned district influence over delivery of items that are the responsibility of others, such as County Council. Who was accountable for ensuring targets were met and money was spent? Cabinet member responded that the DGTAB was responsible for holding partners to account. It was a partnership project.
- Head of Policy and Programmes added that there was much information, and officers would look at how to present this to scrutiny in future, particularly regarding project delivery and timescales as they emerge.

Committee noted the report and appendices and looked forward to further scrutiny as the projects progress.

62 Planning enforcement update

Cabinet member for planning introduced the report, which provided a 6-month update since implementation of a new planning enforcement triage process that previously came to scrutiny committee. It was a good news story regarding relieving the backlog of cases. Officers were now working towards achieving the response deadlines set in the planning enforcement statement as the backlog had been cleared.

The main discussion points were as follows:

- A member questioned whether the new system was a success for officers and residents alike. Cabinet member explained the new system was the best use of resources and this was beneficial to residents.
- Officer explained that further detail was now added to letters to residents to explain the reasoning behind decisions at various stages, to educate and inform what enforcement was about, and to help residents to understand what counts as evidence and what was required.
- Officer explained that the team was adequately resourced, and the enforcement team were focussing on what was planning harm. The new process showed efficiency improvements that would allow officers to focus on dealing with the most harmful cases.
- Cabinet member responded to member comment that planning enforcement was a discretionary service but was viewed as important by the council.

- Head of Planning clarified in response to a member's query regarding the graph under paragraph 13. Complex cases were in the system, and some items had to go through due process, court etc, and therefore still in the system. It was not the case that triage was not working to clear those cases.
- A member expressed a view that the new process was encouraging compared to historical process. The planning enforcement team were congratulated for their progress.

Committee noted the report, with Cabinet member taking note of the comments raised. Cabinet member was thanked, and officers were thanked and congratulated on their work so far.

The meeting closed at 7.31 pm

Chair

Date

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