

Minutes

of a meeting of the

Council



held on Wednesday 15 October 2014 at 7.00 pm
at The Ridgeway, The Beacon, , Portway, Wantage, OX12 9BY

Open to the public, including the press

Present:

Members: Councillors Mike Badcock (Chairman), Eric Batts (Vice-Chairman), John Amys, Marilyn Badcock, Matthew Barber, Yvonne Constance, Roger Cox, Margaret Crick, Charlotte Dickson, St John Dickson, Gervase Duffield, Jason Fiddaman, Debby Hallett, Jeanette Halliday, Jim Halliday, Jenny Hannaby, Anthony Hayward, Dudley Hoddinott, Simon Howell, Bob Johnston, Bill Jones, Mohinder Kainth, Angela Lawrence, Pat Lonergan, Sandy Lovatt, Ron Mansfield, Sue Marchant, Julie Mayhew-Archer, Aidan Melville, Elizabeth Miles, Gill Morgan, Mike Murray, Jerry Patterson, Helen Pighills, Julia Reynolds, Judy Roberts, Fiona Roper, Robert Sharp, Val Shaw, Janet Shelley, Andrew Skinner, Alison Thomson, Melinda Tilley, Margaret Turner, Tony de Vere, Reg Waite, Elaine Ware, Catherine Webber, Richard Webber and John Woodford

Officers: David Buckle, Steven Corrigan, Adrian Duffield, Sophie Horsley, Margaret Reed and Anna Robinson

Number of members of the public: 40

Co.31 Apologies for absence

None.

Co.32 Minutes

RESOLVED: to adopt as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 16 July 2014 and agree that the chairman sign them.

Co.33 Declarations of interest

None.

Co.34 Chairman's announcements

Mr Badcock, Chairman of Council, informed Council that a Thanksgiving Service for the life of Mrs Ann Ducker, MBE, former Leader of South Oxfordshire District Council, would take place on Thursday 6 November at Dorchester Abbey followed by refreshments at Little Stoke Manor. The family had requested no flowers and no black with any donations made to Sue Ryder.

The Chairman provided a reminder that the deadline for tickets to his charity dinner in aid of the Royal British Legion and the National Eczema Society was 24 October. The dinner would be held at Dalton Barracks, Abingdon.

He reported that on 11 October at the annual community awards 58 of the 71 nominees attended to receive certificates of appreciation. He thanked those councillors who made nominations and hosted tables.

On 1 August representatives of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community had visited him and the vice-chairman. The community worked to promote understanding, respect and peace between all people. As part of their centenary celebrations the community had raised half a million pounds for British charities including the Poppy Appeal, carried out a national blood donation drive to save lives, embarked on a feed the homeless programme to provide 20,000 meals this year and initiated a national environmental campaign to plant 50,000 trees. The community had donated £500 for one of his charities, the Thames Valley and Chilterns Air Ambulance Trust. Complimentary copies of 'Life of Muhammad' and 'World Crisis and Pathway to Peace' books were available for interested councillors.

The Chairman advised that for the benefit of the public the Local Plan item would be considered following the public questions.

Co.35 Statements, petitions and questions from the public relating to matters affecting council.

The chairman reported details of those members of the public who had submitted questions, registered to make statements or given notice to present a petition to the meeting.

In accordance with Standing Order 32(7) the chairman agreed to allow up to 30 minutes for questions and to prioritise those questions from members of the public attending the meeting. He also agreed that those questions submitted by members of the public who were unable to attend the meeting would be included in the minutes with a written response to follow. This process would allow all members present at the meeting to ask and receive a response to their question within the 30 minute period. The written responses to questions not read out at the meeting, whilst not appearing in the minutes, would appear on the council's website with the minutes.

A. Questions asked at the meeting:

i. Dr Peter Collins, representative from the Campaign for the Protection of Rural England, asked the following question

"In view of

- the damage to the highly prized Vale countryside which will result from adoption of the District Council's draft Local Plan to 2031 Part 1, in particular in the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and the Green Belt;
- the adoption by the Vale of the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) figures without proper scrutiny then or since, or paying due heed to the most expert advice cogently making the case that the aspirational figures, full of identifiable flaws, produced to justify the SHMA figures, could not give rise to sustainable development and hence comply with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF);

- no change having been made in deriving house-building targets in respect of social, economic and environmental constraints, as is the Vale Council's responsibility and indicated as required in the SHMA report, where clearly such constraints exist;
 - the lack of a 'Plan B' which could take into account a failure to meet targets during the planning period or any indication of how the year-by-year progress towards targets will be managed;
 - the likelihood that using the SHMA figures will result in the Vale never approaching its 5-year housing land supply target;
 - the whole process of arriving at the SHMA figures not having involved proper consultation of local people and leaving a 'democratic deficit' calling out for repair;
 - the lack of any possibility of producing the necessary infrastructure to accompany the proposed development, in respect of schools and especially roads and transport;
- would the Council agree that the SHMA figures, and indeed the whole growth strategy, require a fuller justification before the draft Local Plan goes for public consultation, and say when it will be testing the SHMA figures in an open public forum, using independent experts to question all aspects of the methodology and its consequences?"

Councillor Mike Murray, Cabinet member for planning policy, responded as follows:

"The suspended Cherwell Local Plan Inspector's letter represents the best available guidance for the most appropriate target for our housing numbers, and leads us to believe that we should use the Objectively Assessed Need figures for the Vale identified in the Oxfordshire SHMA in order for our plan to progress to Examination. In accordance with government guidance the most appropriate open public forum for the SHMA figures to be tested is at Examination of the Local Plan, and this is precisely the route that we are proposing".

ii. Mr Henderson, representative of Radley Parish Council, asked the following question

"The Cambridge Econometrics SQW document that provides the employment forecasts for the SHMA splits many of its predictions into 10 year chunks. If in 2021 it becomes clear that their predictions were wildly optimistic will there be flexibility in the plan to reduce overall housing numbers at that point?"

Councillor Mike Murray, Cabinet member for planning policy, responded as follows:

"The government encourages local plans to respond to changing evidence, via periodic review. It is likely that we will be required to review our local plan in the short to medium term in light of our duty to cooperate with neighbouring authorities in meeting any unmet need in our housing areas."

iii. Mr David Marsh, Chairman of Harwell Parish Council, asked the following question.

"Does the Council think that it is important to preserve the rural nature of the Vale and its historic villages, and is it aware there is nothing in the plan to provide any protection to the village of Harwell which will prevent its eventual coalescence with Didcot. Is that the wish of the Council?"

Councillor Mike Murray, Cabinet member for planning policy, responded as follows:
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“The draft local plan, through its Core Policy 3 identifies Harwell as a larger village where “unallocated development will be limited to providing for local needs and to support employment, services and facilities within local communities”. It is by getting the local plan in place that we can stop “planning by appeal” and regain control of planning in the Vale, and resist unallocated development.

Our published Local Development Scheme further proposes a timetable for the production of an Area Action Plan for Science Vale, including Harwell that will provide an opportunity for masterplanning of strategic development. This together with our shortly to be published Vale Design Guide will greatly enhance the opportunity for the development management process to protect the amenity of residents of the Vale, including Harwell.”

iv. Dr Pamela Dohie, representative of Save Chilton AONB, asked the following question:

“Given that the Council have stated, in their Draft Local Plan to 2031 document (page 17 paragraph 69), that “It is a fact that we have sufficient land available to physically meet our housing needs”, do you agree that the council has failed in its obligation to find suitable alternative sites for the 1,400 houses currently allocated to the North Wessex Downs AONB?”

Councillor Mike Murray, Cabinet member for planning policy, responded as follows:

“No. We do physically have enough land to meet our needs, the difficult decisions revolve around the package of sites that will deliver the houses that we need in the plan period in a sustainable viable and deliverable manner, and in particular meeting our requirement to provide a five year housing land supply.”

v. Mr Dumbleton, representative of Chilton Parish Council, asked the following question

“Have members read the letter from the North Wessex Downs AONB's Planning Advisor regarding the proposed housing allocation of 1,400 dwellings to the East and North of Harwell Campus, and can they comment on the request that the proposed greenfield housing allocations within the nationally protected landscape are deleted from the Local Plan?”

Councillor Mike Murray, Cabinet member for planning policy, responded as follows:

“Views of all stakeholders, including those representing those from the AONB management board have been fully considered in the preparation of the local plan. There are many differing views regarding where housing should (or rather all to often less helpfully where it should not) be built. We have in particular responded to the representations from statutory consultees through the revisions to the Harwell Campus site following extensive additional work on landscape impact from specialist consultants”.

vi. Mr Kirk asked the following question.

“With reference to the strategic site proposed for development in East Hanney- a site which is immediate to Letcombe Brook. Is the council aware of the flooding risk in East Hanney, and has consideration been given to the risk of flooding on the existing community from developing on this site? The site is upstream of the main community and therefore any run off arising as a result of the development into the Brook will add to the existing exposure for flood.

Has there been a full hydrological assessment consultation with the Environment agency and with the Rivers authority? Has the potential cost of flooding defences for the protection of East Hanney been taken into consideration?

It is noted from the supporting papers that the site is unlikely to be able to support anticipated water and waste water demand”.

Councillor Mike Murray, Cabinet member for planning policy, responded as follows:

“The proposed allocation of land south of East Hanney is identified on p39 of Appendix A of the Local Plan, together with constraints identified as a result of consultation with statutory undertakers, and stakeholders. More detailed analysis of the constraints relating to the site will be addressed at the development management at the time that a planning application is submitted.”

vii. Alderman Mrs Joyce Hutchison, on behalf of the Wantage and Grove Campaign Group, asked the following question

“OLEP will be receiving a large sum of money over a period of three years

- 1) We request a complete list of all expenditure this partnership has transacted.
- 2) Is there a business person from the West of the Vale on OLEP Board? If not how do we get one? What is the appointment procedure?
- 3) Money has gone to Oxford Universities – I will remind you we have two Universities in the West of the Vale located at the Defence Academy, Cranfield and Kings College, London”.

Councillor Matthew Barber, Leader of the council, responded that the Vale was not directly accountable for OxLEP spending, and enquiries should be made direct to them.

viii. Mr Carolan, a Chilton resident, asked the following question

“Following recent advice from Eric Pickles MP and Brandon Lewis MP, would the council not agree that passing this development of 1400 new dwellings on and around the so called East Harwell Campus would be ignoring the most recent government recommendations to safeguard such environments and that it must be wrong to prioritise greenfield sites such as this especially in the North Wessex Downs AONB. Over the years Harwell or Atomic Energy Research Establishment (AERE) as we still call it has supported many more employees than it does today but even at those levels a very small percentage of employees ever lived in Chilton and I am sure very few people would want to live squeezed between their workplace and the A34. Your comments would be appreciated?”

Mr Mike Murray, Cabinet member for planning policy, responded as follows:

“Thank you for your observation. You will have noted that there has been no recent changes to the NPPF, but that the revised NPPG Para 44 released last week says that the NPPF should be read as a whole and reiterates that Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) should restrict development in a wide range of designated locations, including AONB. It does not say that development should be prevented in these locations.

The great majority of the Vale is Greenfield – we have very little brownfield land, especially of a size and location that is suitable for sustainable development.

With regard to your final point, we need to plan for the whole of the plan period to 2031, in a context of increasing population volumes, and car use. As such one of the key strategic objectives that have run throughout our consultation, to wide general support is to direct growth to the most sustainable locations in the district. In particular it makes sense to build homes in locations related to likely locations of future employment where infrastructure can successfully be provided, and in particular travel to work by means other than the private car can be encouraged. It surely would not make sense to provide homes that will be needed by virtue of employment growth in Harwell Campus in for example Shrivenham or Cumnor?"

ix. Patrick Moseley, a Chilton resident, asked the following question

"Given that an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is an area of high scenic quality which has statutory protection in order to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of its landscape, and that the plan for 1,400 houses at East Harwell Campus not only desecrates an AONB but also, since the site is elevated with respect to the Vale of the White Horse, ensures that it would create maximum visual impact, does the Council agree that the plan conflicts with the very concept of an AONB?"

Mr Mike Murray, Cabinet member for planning policy, responded as follows:

"No as already outlined in response to previous questions, the proposed allocations have been revised in this submission version of the local plan to respond to the landscape setting of the site in the AONB."

x. Dr Alastair Clark, a Chilton resident, asked the following question

"Does the council agree that the statement "*the scale of development proposed in the AONB has been significantly reduced*" as published in your Consultation Document, Oct 2014, Page 11, is both misleading and factual incorrect as the total number of houses allocated to the AONB still remains at 1400?"

Mr Mike Murray, Cabinet member for planning policy responded as follows:

"No, as can be seen from the revised site allocations the scale of development has been significantly reduced."

xi. Mrs Moseley, a Chilton resident, asked the following question

"Why is the council prepared to build houses on an AONB hence losing a beautiful area for ever when there are other options available? It seems to me that the flat land between Steventon, Drayton and East Hanney which has previously been recommended for development, and is not designated in any way, would be much more suitable and less damaging to the environment?"

Mr Mike Murray, Cabinet member for planning policy, responded as follows:

"Thank you for your question. The land in question has indeed been promoted for housing, however it is heavily constrained by virtue of much of its area being designated in flood zone 2 or 3. The remaining land is heavily constrained by virtue of lack of access, and any proposals to introduce new accesses to the A34 or the railway are at a very early stage. This does not make the site suitable for sustainable development, the "Golden thread" running through the Governments NPPF

Further we are required to plan sites for housing that are likely to come forward in the plan period to 2031. The highly experienced national housebuilder who has liaised with the

Council over this site has confirmed in writing that it is highly unlikely that the site would be able to contribute meaningfully to our need for houses within the plan period.

In contrast, the Harwell Campus site adjoins an interchange to the strategic network that has a funded proposal to be improved into an all ways junction. It adjoins Harwell Campus with its identified job growth over the plan period, and its existing and future facilities and services.”

xii. Mr Broad, Chairman of Chilton Parish Council, asked the following question

“A vast number of new houses are planned within a 20 mile radius of the Harwell Oxford Campus (Didcot, Abingdon, Reading and Newbury). Given that such development has been justified, at least in part, by the ability to sustain job creation at Harwell Oxford Campus, with good public transport links promised, can the council please clarify what it considers as the “exceptional circumstances” that can justify the further allocation of 1,400 houses to the North Wessex Downs AONB? “

Mr Mike Murray, Cabinet member for planning policy, responded as follows:

“The proposed site allocation sits within the Housing Supply Ring Fence identified within the Local Plan’s Core Policy 5. This area is to be treated as a separate sub area with a housing requirement of 11,850 homes in support of 15,850 jobs.”

xiii. Caroline Potter, asked the following question

“In answer to my question at the Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 25 September, I was directed to the objectively assessed retail needs of the 2013 Retail and Town Center Study by Nathaniel Litchfield and Partners, which is the main evidence base for retail development strategy in the emerging Local Plan.

I had already consulted this study in detail, but as I was not given an opportunity to respond at the time I will now clarify what this study says in terms of Botley Central area.

Given that the existing land of the West Way Shopping Centre could easily accommodate the objectively assessed future needs for Botley, I ask again:

Is there any reason why this western residential land has been included in the development area for Core Policy 11, other than to support a specific planning application put forward by commercial developers?”

Mr Mike Murray, Cabinet member for planning policy, responded as follows:

“Thank you for your question which as you say I answered at Scrutiny. The proposed revised allocation has come forward in response to consultation from stakeholders. The wording is clear and explicit in that it sets the location in its context. We can not pretend Botley is not next to Oxford, and so the responsible approach that we have taken to this wording is to address it”.

xiv. Mr Price, an East Hanney resident, asked the following question

“I have heard that the plan for 200 new houses to be built on the east side of the A338 has been removed and replaced with a new proposal to build to the south of East Hanney. Regarding this latter site, please could I request that the following points be considered and at the Council meeting this evening in Wantage.

1. Risk of Flooding, ridge and furrow land, run off into pinch point of Letcombe Brook
2. Ancient orchard, adjacent listed properties
3. Ecology, protected species (e.g. great crested newt), cowslip meadows opposite
4. Road access on to A338.”

In response Councillor Murray, Cabinet member for planning policy, referred Mr Price to the response given to Mr Kirk’s question

B. Questions to receive a written response

i Question from Mary Gill

“My question relates to Core Policy 11 and the definition of ‘Botley central area’ Figure 5.3 on page 574, and the preferred Option discussed on page 93.

I do support improvement or redevelopment of the existing Botley centre (West Way Shopping Centre and redundant office blocks). However, the preferred approach (Option B) which ‘will facilitate the comprehensive redevelopment of a wider area’ (para 27.1.5), supports the inclusion of existing privately owned residential property within the definition. I, and a large majority of the residents of Botley, object to this expansion of the area included.

No supporting evidence has been provided for a development of this size.

There is no justification for the loss of private housing, and especially that for elderly residents.

We know that the idea for a development of this scale arose directly from discussions with a developer interested in this site, but also that the Vale has financial interests in the development.

Will the Council reject this extended definition, and submit a local plan which is consistent and unambiguous

- to confirm the role and function of Botley as a local service centre, to meet the day-to-day needs of the local area – not a wider area drawing from other suburbs of Oxford City or Abingdon;
- to delete the meaningless statement ‘equivalent to a district centre in the Oxford City context’;
- to replace figure 5.3 with the figure shown Appendix 5b in the earlier Core Strategy – preferred options document of 2009?”

ii Question from Mr Groves

“Does the Council agree that it is failing in its duty to co-operate with statutory consultees by ignoring the advice of the North Wessex Downs AONB Management Board, English Heritage and Natural England and proceeding with the allocation of 1,400 houses in the North Wessex Downs AONB around the Harwell Oxford Campus?”

iii Question from Mr Paul Turner-Smith, a Chilton resident

“Details of the 275 houses built this year at Chilton Field, south of the Harwell Oxford Campus, and of the 195 houses that already have outline planning permission at North Drive, north of the Harwell Oxford Campus (both brown-field sites) have been omitted from Local

Plan literature and maps. Does the council agree that these omissions are likely to mislead the public as to the full extent of both the housing stock at the Harwell Oxford Campus and the urban sprawl and encroachment that the allocation of 1,400 further houses would make into the nationally-protected North Wessex Downs AONB?"

iv Question from Mr Goodall, a Chilton resident

"Given the preferences of many people to live in cities or towns rather than villages , and the Chilton demographic that indicates that only 12 % of Chilton residents currently work at Harwell Oxford Campus , what evidence does the Council have that future employees of the Harwell Oxford Campus will choose to live on or adjacent to the Campus ?"

v Question from Ms Lindsay Lennen

"What infrastructure is proposed as part of the proposed development (schools etc) and how will the council deal with the transport impact?"

C. Statements and petitions

i Mr Marsh, Chairman of Harwell Parish Council, made the following statement:

"Noting firstly that Harwell village currently has developer led applications for 200 houses (which is already a 20 per cent expansion in the size of the village), and noting secondly that the plan proposes 3,350 houses in Valley Park, and noting thirdly that the developer's public consultation proposed 4,300 houses for Valley Park, please will the Council put forward an amendment to the Local Plan to remove the Harwell Campus AONB site (800 houses) and the Harwell Village West site (200 houses), and increase the numbers proposed for Valley Park by an equivalent amount."

ii Julie Mabberley made the following statement:

"What infrastructure is proposed as part of the proposed development (schools etc) and how will the council deal with the transport impact?"

We believe that the employment figures are unsound (probably worthy of Alice in Wonderland) and should be rejected.

For example:

- The employment figures on which the Local Plan is based state that employment in agriculture will increase by 200 in Wantage and Grove and 1800 in the Vale. This despite the national trend for the numbers in agriculture to fall year on year and despite the number of solar farm applications approved by the Vale. We have asked but got no response as to how the Council could justify expectations totally against the national trend.
- Local employers state that the figures quoted by the Vale bear no resemblance to any figures for employment growth they might recognise.
- We believe that employment forecasts well beyond the reasoned projections of the owners/developers have been used in the major employment centres in the east of the Vale and have evidence to prove it.

Further we believe that the district council has made no attempt to reflect the need for timely infrastructure or time to allow local communities to assimilate the huge housing increase which they wish to impose on their residents. They have simply accepted the

overly optimistic growth projections in the SHMA without question. As one councillor stated “this was a piece of work by an external contractor whose report had been accepted by the Council and whose final invoice paid”.

It appears that the councillors are not representing their constituents but attempting to impose top-down government policies on the Vale without any regard for localism.

We, together with a number of other local groups and parish councils in the Vale wish to express our concern with the way that many comments and objections submitted in the public consultations associated with the Local Plan have been brushed aside.

The Local Plan is worthy of a communist regime where the “Party” imposes its will on the people and not of a rural district in the South East of England where the Government espouses “Localism”.

iii Emily Smith made the following statement in support of a petition which she submitted at the meeting.

“I am here this evening on behalf of my neighbours in Botley to present the District Council, and specifically the Cabinet, with a petition asking you to pull out of the deal with Doric Properties.

The petition was initiated by [the Liberal Democrat Parliamentary Candidate] Layla Moran three weeks ago and has already been signed by 650 people.

As you will be aware from the one thousand plus objections to the planning application, Doric’s proposal for the demolition and replacement of the west way shopping area is incredibly unpopular. It is now clear that the overwhelming view of the local community is strong opposition to the size, scale and design of the current plan.

For the past two years residents of Botley and the surrounding villages have had this planning application hanging over their heads. The stress, uncertainty and anxiety this has caused has been immense.

From our elderly neighbours at Field House who live in fear of losing their homes, to the local businesses that risk losing their livelihoods and letting their staff go. From families worried about the health, safety and practicality of their children getting to school in the mornings, to professionals wondering whether they should move away from the area before congestion on the Botley Road and A34 becomes unbearable.

The primary responsibility of elected members should be to work for and with local residents to ensure that local communities develop with full public support and involvement.

Yet in this case the Vale and Doric have failed to listen to or act upon any of the substantive concerns of local residents - leaving people feeling ignored.

But you, councillors, have the power to put an end to all this anxiety right now.

You can chose to listen to the people who have signed this petition and withdraw from the deal with Doric before their application even gets to planning committee.

And yes, I understand (even without having seen the contract you have signed) that there may be a heavy financial penalty if you decide to pull out.

But you have to ask yourselves what would be the cost of letting the Doric proposal go ahead?

If the development were to bring in the additional consumers required and managed to be financially viable, it would clearly lead to massive congestion, addition pollution and the disintegration of a safe and well-functioning community.

That would be bad enough, but there is also a very real risk that Doric's scheme could prove to be a huge white elephant - resulting in a loss of local services and great financial cost to the Vale, and therefore the tax payer.

It is not easy to admit that you have got something wrong but I urge you to think about the devastating impact this scheme will have on our community and ask you to withdraw from the deal with Doric before it is too late.

Members of the Council, it is time to pull out of the land deal with Doric and start working with local people to provide a new shopping area that is both economically viable and meets the needs of our growing community."

iv Mr Neil Fawcett presented a petition entitled "Don't Build on the Green Belt" and made a supporting statement opposing proposals in the Local Plan to build on the Green Belt and the data supporting the level of housing.

v Alderman Mrs Joyce Hutchinson made the following statement:

Houses should be built in areas with good employment opportunities and services. Wantage is deficient in most of these. It has a poor road network, no train service, a limited bus service, it lacks basic facilities such as ambulance station, magistrate's court. It has limited police facilities, very few employment opportunities and the schools and health centre are near to capacity. Imposition of forced growth with the prior provision of facilities will cause a serious degradation of the quality of life for the present residents. Capital investment must precede growth."

Co.36 Draft Local Plan to 2031

Cabinet, at its meeting on 3 October 2014, considered the report of the head of planning on the draft Local Plan 2031 and the views aired at the Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 25 September 2014. The report set out an overview of the main changes to the draft plan. Cabinet resolved to recommend the Council to agree the draft Local Plan 2031 Part 1: Strategic Sites and Policies for publication for the purposes of pre-submission (Regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) Regulations 2012) public consultation, and thereafter for submission to the Secretary of State for independent examination, together with supporting evidence base studies, topic papers and summaries of the consultation responses received (Regulation 22).

Councillor Matthew Barber moved and Councillor Mike Murray seconded a motion to approve Cabinet's recommendation subject to an amendment to the classification of Botley to ensure Oxford City Council's policies on district centres as defined in their Local Plan would not apply to Botley as set out below:

To remove the phrases

- *"Botley also functions as a district centre in the context of Oxford City", and,*
- *equivalent to a district centre in the Oxford City context"*

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Co.11

from policy boxes 3 and 11 respectively, and placing the wording that indicates Botley is equivalent to a district centre in the Oxford city context within the clarification text in paragraphs 5.28 to 5.31.

RECOMMENDATION to Council:

1. that the Pre-submission draft Local Plan 2031 Part 1: Strategic Sites and Policies, associated documents (submission Policies Map, Sustainability Appraisal, Appropriate Assessment, Infrastructure Delivery Plan, Consultation Statements) and supporting evidence base studies and topic papers, be published for Pre-Submission public consultation for a period of six weeks under Regulations 19 and 22 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) Regulations 2012, and thereafter;
2. to authorise the head of planning in consultation with the Cabinet member for planning policy to submit the Submission Local Plan 2031 and all associated documents together with the summarised Pre-Submission public consultation responses to the Secretary of State for independent examination under Regulation 20 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) Regulations 2012; and
3. to authorise the head of planning in consultation with the Cabinet member for planning policy, to make minor changes and corrections to the Local Plan prior to both the publication for consultation and submission.

Councillor Jerry Patterson moved and Councillor Richard Webber seconded the following amendment:

To refer the matter back to the Cabinet for reconsideration and to request the Cabinet to make the following amendments:

1. On page 67 "The Oxford Green Belt", amend paragraph 5.39 to read "The purpose of the Oxford Green Belt is to prevent urban sprawl around Oxford, to prevent coalescence of settlements, to preserve the setting of Oxford, to safeguard the countryside, and to assist urban regeneration by encouraging development of brownfield and urban land."
2. On page 67 "The Oxford Green Belt", delete paragraphs 5.40, 5.41 & 5.42.
3. On page 69, in Core Policy 13, first paragraph, delete the words "as amended following local Green Belt Review".
4. Remove the four Strategic Site Allocations in the Green belt as follows:
 - North West Abingdon on Thames 200 dwellings
 - North Abingdon on Thames 800 dwellings
 - South Kennington 270 dwellings
 - North West Radley 240 dwellings
5. Remove all references to the "local Green Belt Review".
6. Commit to a full and proper review of the entirety of the Oxford Green Belt, in conjunction with Cherwell District Council, Oxford City Council, South Oxfordshire District Council, West Oxfordshire District Council and Oxfordshire County Council.

7. Reinstate to Green Belt designation all sites suggested for removal from the Oxford Green Belt in the Council's 28 February 2014 Housing Supply Consultation document (ref illustration on page 68).

and to submit revised proposals to Council.

Those councillors in support of the amendment expressed the view that the Local Plan as proposed offered no protection to the Green Belt and would encourage developers to favour development in the more profitable Green Belt rather than less profitable sites. They called for a comprehensive review of the Green Belt to avoid its perceived piecemeal erosion and the destruction of green parcels of land between settlements. They questioned the basis for the need to provide the level of houses referred to in the SHMA which assumed sustained levels of economic growth and employment. Much of the anticipated increase in employment would be in publicly funded research posts and the agricultural sector and as such these workers might not be able to afford the house prices.

Those opposing the amendment expressed the view that whilst rejecting housing proposals in the Green Belt it offered no alternatives. Without a Local Plan speculative development could continue resulting in unsustainable developments in areas which could not support additional housing.

The chairman called for a recorded vote on the amendment.

For	Against	Abstentions
Councillors:	Councillors:	
Margaret Crick	John Amys	Angela Lawrence
Tony de Vere	Marilyn Badcock	
Debby Hallett	Mike Badcock	
Jeanette Halliday	Matthew Barber	
Jim Halliday	Eric Batts	
Jenny Hannaby	Yvonne Constance	
Dudley Hoddinott	Roger Cox	
Bob Johnston	Charlotte Dickson	
Pat Lonergan	St John Dickson	
Ron Mansfield	Gervase Duffield	
Sue Marchant	Jason Fiddaman	
Julie Mayhew-Archer	Anthony Hayward	
Elizabeth Miles	Simon Howell	
Jerry Patterson	Bill Jones	
Helen Pighills	Mohinder Kainth	
Judy Roberts	Sandy Lovatt	
Val Shaw	Aidan Melville	
Andrew Skinner	Gill Morgan	
Catherine Webber	Mike Murray	
Richard Webber	Julia Reynolds	
John Woodford	Fiona Roper	
	Robert Sharp	
	Janet Shelley	
	Alison Thomson	
	Melinda Tilley	

	Margaret Turner	
	Reg Waite	
	Elaine Ware	
Totals: 21	28	1

The chairman declared the amendment lost.

A number of councillors welcomed the clarification of the status of Botley included in the motion following discussions between councillors Hallett, Roberts and Barber.

Those opposing the original motion questioned the economic forecasts used to support the need for increased housing. The economic forecasts were unrealistic, house building targets could not be achieved. The existing infrastructure was inadequate and improvements in infrastructure would be targeted in the urban areas at the expense of rural communities. The council should question the SHMA figures and not simply accept them as justification for increased house building.

Those supporting the motion welcomed the Local Plan which would address the risk from the expansion of Oxford, allow the council to gain control of developments, put an end to speculative development and meet the council's obligation to have such a plan in place.

The chairman called for a recorded vote on the original motion.

For	Against	Abstentions
Councillors:	Councillors:	
John Amys	Margaret Crick	
Marilyn Badcock	Tony de Vere	
Mike Badcock	Debby Hallett	
Matthew Barber	Jeanette Halliday	
Eric Batts	Jim Halliday	
Yvonne Constance	Jenny Hannaby	
Roger Cox	Dudley Hoddinott	
Charlotte Dickson	Bob Johnston	
St John Dickson	Pat Lonergan	
Gervase Duffield	Ron Mansfield	
Jason Fiddaman	Sue Marchant	
Anthony Hayward	Julie Mayhew-Archer	
Simon Howell	Elizabeth Miles	
Bill Jones	Jerry Patterson	
Mohinder Kainth	Helen Pighills	
Angela Lawrence	Judy Roberts	
Sandy Lovatt	Val Shaw	
Aidan Melville	Andrew Skinner	
Gill Morgan	Catherine Webber	
Mike Murray	Richard Webber	
Julia Reynolds	John Woodford	
Fiona Roper		
Robert Sharp		

Janet Shelley		
Alison Thomson		
Melinda Tilley		
Margaret Turner		
Reg Waite		
Elaine Ware		
Totals:		
29	21	0

The chairman declared the motion carried.

RESOLVED:to

1. publish for Pre-Submission public consultation for a period of six weeks under Regulations 19 and 22 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) Regulations 2012 the Pre-submission draft Local Plan 2031 Part 1: Strategic Sites and Policies, associated documents (submission Policies Map, Sustainability Appraisal, Appropriate Assessment, Infrastructure Delivery Plan, Consultation Statements) and supporting evidence base studies and topic papers subject to the removal of the following phrases from policy boxes 3 and 11 respectively, and placing the wording that indicates Botley is equivalent to a district centre in the Oxford city context within the clarification text in paragraphs 5.28 to 5.31:

- Botley also functions as a district centre in the context of Oxford City, and,
- equivalent to a district centre in the Oxford City context

and thereafter;

2. to authorise the head of planning in consultation with the Cabinet member for planning policy to submit the Submission Local Plan 2031 and all associated documents together with the summarised Pre-Submission public consultation responses to the Secretary of State for independent examination under Regulation 20 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) Regulations 2012; and
3. to authorise the head of planning in consultation with the Cabinet member for planning policy, to make minor changes and corrections to the Local Plan prior to both the publication for consultation and submission.

Co.37 Urgent business

The chairman advised that he had permitted an urgent question from Councillor Jim Halliday to Councillor Matthew Barber, Leader of the council, because it related to an issue that arose since the deadline for submission of questions and a delay to the next scheduled meeting would prejudice the council's ability to oppose the decision (see minute 39(9)).

Co.38 Petitions under standing order 13

None.

Co.39 Questions under standing order 12

1. Question from Councillor Patrick Lonergan to the Leader of the Council, Councillor Matthew Barber

‘Could the Leader please give a detailed financial breakdown of the planned upgrade to the Lodge Hill junction – including a) its total cost, b) the hoped-for contribution from the CIL, Section 106 contributions, grants, and any other sources of funding, and also state the number of homes that will be needed to be built to deliver the required CIL and Section 106 contributions?’

In response Councillor Barber stated that the total scheme cost of the option currently promoted is estimated at £13.3 million. This scheme design requires approval by the Highways Agency, due to the impact on the A34 Trunk Road. Other options would cost more.

Around £4million will be available from the CIL and section 106 contributions. He would respond in writing on the number of houses required to deliver the funding.

In response to a supplementary question Councillor Barber responded that the Local Enterprise Partnership had not formally agreed funding for the project but had commissioned assessment work.

In accordance with standing order 27, the chairman asked Council whether it wished to continue the meeting for a further thirty minutes to complete the remaining business or finish the meeting at this point. Council, by assent, agreed to continue for a further thirty minutes.

2. Question from Councillor Jenny Hannaby to the Leader of the Council, Councillor Matthew Barber

‘Could the Leader please give a detailed financial breakdown of the plans to deliver the NE Wantage link road - including a) its total cost, b) the hoped-for contribution from the CIL, Section 106 contributions, grants, and any other sources of funding, and also state the number of homes that will be needed to be built to deliver the required CIL and Section 106 contributions?’

Councillor Barber responded that the total cost of the Wantage Eastern Link road that passes through the Crab Hill area is estimated at £15 million. Expected funding for the road will come from s106 contributions as the two major contributing schemes, Grove airfield and Crab Hill predate CIL. Contributions to the value of just over £12 million have been agreed to date with £4.5 million Local Transport Board funding to help fund the middle section of the link road early. The two end sections are being provided by the Crab Hill developers as they’re required to give access to their site.

In response to a supplementary question Councillor Barber undertook to provide written details of the source of funding for the balance of the middle section of the link road.

3. Question from Councillor Richard Webber to Councillor Mike Murray, Cabinet member for planning policy

‘Please could he tell the Council how many Vale communities have to date formally embarked on Neighbourhood Planning by submitting an application for designation?’

Councillor Murray responded that as of 9 October 2014 10 communities had submitted applications for designation.

In response to a supplementary question Councillor Murray confirmed that he was hopeful that more communities would embark on the process. The simplification of the process would facilitate this.

4. Question from Councillor Judy Roberts to Councillor Mike Murray, Cabinet member for planning policy

'In its proposed Local Plan, the administration places much hope on the Planning Inspector's acceptance of the Liverpool approach. Does the Cabinet member agree this is a risky policy?'

Councillor Murray responded that the council had commissioned an independent assessment into how it could meet the housing need for the district as identified in the up-to-date Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA). The study concluded that by pursuing an allocation strategy bringing forward a wide range of sites in a range of locations, the council will be maximising the likelihood of delivery.

Output would also be supported in the short to medium term by the quantum and range of small to medium sites already in the planning pipeline. However, it will still take some time for the increased delivery rate to build up'. On this basis, the study suggests that 'delivery in the first five years of the Plan would be between 6,700 and 6,900 units, assuming market conditions remain broadly favourable and developers are not unduly cautious'.

The council has prepared a balanced and sustainable strategy that does everything possible to increase housing delivery with a range of sites and to meet in full the objectively assessed need for housing. Housing sites are identified that range in terms of size, type and geographical location, whilst still being consistent with proposed employment growth and infrastructure delivery.

In response to a supplementary question Councillor Murray confirmed that both the Liverpool and Sedgefield approach were appropriate and that he had received assurance that the council's approach was credible.

5. Question from Councillor Jerry Patterson to Councillor Mike Murray, Cabinet member for planning policy

'Does he agree that the Council should affirm the importance of the Green Belt protection and ensure robust safeguards are not undermined when assessing unmet housing needs?'

Councillor Murray responded that the emerging Local Plan 2031 does include robust safeguards to protect the Oxford Green Belt, either from development proposals or through any future exercise to address unmet need for Oxfordshire. Core Policy 13 (The Oxford Green Belt) clearly sets out how the Green Belt will be protected against inappropriate development in accordance with the NPPF and Core Policy 2 (Cooperation on unmet Housing Need for Oxfordshire) makes it clear that the council will first seek to meet its own needs in full to help ensure that the needs of both the district and the housing market area as a whole are met as quickly as possible and that the process to address any unmet need will include all reasonable spatial options, including for example, a full strategic review of the whole Oxford Green Belt.

In response to a supplementary question Councillor Murray confirmed that he did not find it difficult to make speeches.

6. Question from Councillor Julie Mayhew-Archer to Councillor Elaine Ware, Cabinet member for economy, leisure and property

'Can you provide an update to Council on progress towards a trial of automatic number plate recognition in the Charter multi-storey car park in Abingdon?'

Councillor Ware responded that the council would not be conducting a trial of an automatic number plate recognition system at The Charter because it would require the purchase of a complete system estimated to cost £65,000 excluding running and ancillary costs.

In response to a supplementary question Councillor Ware acknowledged that the use of the RingGo payment phone system was not suitable for everyone. However, the system is relatively inexpensive, cost effective and efficient.

7. Question from Councillor Sandy Lovatt to Councillor Jim Halliday, Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee

'In light of the Inspector's letter at Cherwell District Council's Examination in Public does Councillor Halliday agree that the Council should use the Vale's Objectively Assessed Need (OAN) from the Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) as the District's Housing Target for the Vale Local Plan 2031?'

Councillor Halliday responded that he did not.

In response to a supplementary question regarding the Councillor Halliday responded that he had given his views on the use of the SHMA figures during the debate on the Local Plan.

8. Question from Councillor Yvonne Constance to Councillor Jim Halliday, Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee

'For the benefit of the Council can Councillor Halliday please detail any specific alternative proposals or amendments to the plan which would be acceptable to a Local Plan Inspector which have been proposed via the Scrutiny Committee or from his own political group?'

Councillor Halliday undertook to provide a written response.

9. Urgent question from Councillor Jim Halliday to the Leader of the Council, Councillor Matthew Barber

'As the Leader is aware last Thursday Oxfordshire County Councillor Nimmo-Smith inexplicably reversed his previous decision, and stated that he was minded to approve the creation of two new pedestrian crossings in Marcham Road and Ock Street Abingdon. As soon as the formal reasons for this complete change of mind are published, will the Leader seek legal opinion about the validity of the latest decision, and keep all Vale Councillors informed of the advice he is given?'

In response Councillor Barber stated that he had instructed officers to take legal advice on the options available to the council to challenge the decision

He encouraged those councillors who spoke against the scheme at the meeting or who were present at the meeting when this matter was considered and a decision made to send any observations to officers. He confirmed that councillors would be kept informed.

Co.40 Recommendations from Cabinet, individual Cabinet members, and committees

Treasury management outturn 2013/14

Council considered the Cabinet's recommendation, made at its meeting on 3 October 2014, on the outturn performance of the treasury management function for the financial year 2013/14 and the approval of the actual 2013/14 prudential indicators in accordance with the requirements of the CIPFA Treasury Management Code of Practice and Treasury Management Practice 6.

RESOLVED: to

1. approve the treasury management outturn report for 2013/14;
2. approve the actual 2013/14 prudential indicators within the report of the head of finance to Cabinet on 3 October 2014.

Co.41 Report of the leader of the council

The Leader of the council referred to the Drayton Road issue which was the subject of an urgent question earlier in the meeting

Co.42 Notices of motion under standing order 11

Council considered the following motion submitted under standing order 11.

(1) Motion proposed by Councillor Bob Johnston and seconded by Councillor Jenny Hannaby

Council calls on officers to report on how the Vale could make and support the business case for a new express train service from Bristol to Bedford, stopping at Wantage/Grove, Didcot, Oxford, Bicester and Milton Keynes.

RESOLVED:

To call on officers to report on how the Vale could make and support the business case for a new express train service from Bristol to Bedford, stopping at Wantage/Grove, Didcot, Oxford, Bicester and Milton Keynes.

(2) With the consent of Council the following motion was withdrawn.

This Council believes that the Green Belt Review as undertaken in support of the latest iteration of the Local Plan is only a partial review and until the County as a whole undertakes a whole Green Belt Review, the proposed "nibbling at the Green Belt" delivers relatively few houses but sets a dangerous precedent for the future.

The meeting closed at 21.45 pm