

Minutes

of a meeting of the

Council



held on Wednesday 15 July 2015 at 7.00 pm
at the The Ridgeway, The Beacon, Portway, Wantage, OX12 9BY

Open to the public, including the press

Present:

Members: Councillors Mike Badcock (Chairman), Reg Waite (Vice-Chairman), Alice Badcock, Matthew Barber, Eric Batts, Ed Blagrove, Roger Cox, Margaret Crick, Stuart Davenport, Charlotte Dickson, St John Dickson, Gervase Duffield, Katie Finch, Debby Hallett, Robert Hall, Jenny Hannaby, Anthony Hayward, Dudley Hoddinott, Simon Howell, Vicky Jenkins, Bob Johnston, Mohinder Kainth, Monica Lovatt, Sandy Lovatt, Ben Mabbett, Chris McCarthy, Mike Murray, Chris Palmer, Helen Pighills, Judy Roberts, Robert Sharp, Emily Smith, Henry Spencer, Elaine Ware and Catherine Webber

Officers: David Buckle, Steven Corrigan, Nicola Meurer and Margaret Reed

Number of members of the public: 0

Co.13 Apologies for absence

Councillors Yvonne Constance, Julia Reynolds and Janet Shelley sent their apologies for absence.

Co.14 Minutes

RESOLVED: to adopt as a correct record the minutes of the annual meeting held on 20 May 2015 and agree that the chairman signs them.

Co.15 Declarations of interest

None.

Co.16 Chairman's announcements

The chairman advised that his annual dinner would take place on Friday 20 November at Dalton Barracks Abingdon.

Co.17 Statements, petitions and questions from the public relating to matters affecting council.

None.

Co.18 Urgent business

The chairman reported that he had agreed to accept an additional motion as a matter of urgency on the grounds that any delay until the next Council meeting in October could prejudice the council's position. The motion would be considered under item 11 later in the meeting.

Co.19 Petitions under standing order 13

None.

Co.20 Questions under standing order 12

1. Question from Councillor Debby Hallett to Councillor Charlotte Dickson, Cabinet member for leisure and arts.

"In June 2013, after completion of the Leisure and Sports Facility Study, the Cabinet member for leisure told Council there was to be a 'follow up piece of work' that would include surveys of community or village halls. In December 2014, the Cabinet member told us the report on this survey would be available in the summer of 2015. When can we expect this report to be published"?

Answer

"The surveys of community and village halls form part of the survey work that consultants have carried out on the council's behalf for the joint playing pitch strategy and associated work. The consultants sent their draft findings to various parties for review and comments. The report on the strategy and associated work was expected this summer; however, for a number of reasons, including capacity of the relevant national governing bodies of sport to respond to the draft findings, this piece of work is now expected to be finalised by the end of 2015".

2. Question from Councillor Catherine Webber to Councillor Mike Murray, Cabinet member for planning policy.

"What policies are in place regarding housing development in or adjacent to our air quality management areas (AQMAs)"?

Answer

"Development management colleagues consider each application on its own merits, and in the light of national and local policy context. Councillor Webber may be aware that there is new best practice Institute for Air Quality Management / EPUK guidance to assess significant development impacts on human health receptors and no doubt this will assist case officers in the future. At a local level detailed policies are those as saved under the old local plan, but there will be an opportunity to revisit these under LPP2. Councillor Webber will also know from her careful study of the submitted LPP1 that some areas have particular core policy references to air quality, in particular Core Policy 11 (v), relating to the Botley Central Area. She may also be aware of a recent case where Mid Sussex Council refused consent for development in the Designated Local Gap between Hassocks and Hurstpierpoint, and where air quality was one of three reasons for dismissal of the appeal. This will also no doubt assist case officers in assessing development proposals in the Vale".

Supplementary question

In response to a supplementary question regarding the need for pollution mitigation policies in the three AQMAs in the Vale, Councillor Murray stated that such policies already existing in the current and emerging planning policies and that each planning proposal was considered on its merit having regard to local environmental criteria, national policies and guided by planning decisions such as the Mid Sussex Council decision referred to in his response to the main question.

3. Question from Councillor Bob Johnston to Councillor Matthew Barber, Leader of the council.

“Why was the north east area committee disbanded and merged with Abingdon, making that committee twice the size of the other area committees”?

Councillor Barber responded that the implementation of the district ward boundary changes at the May 2015 elections necessitated a change to the area committees. The changes agreed by Council at its annual meeting in May focussed three area committees on the market towns of Abingdon, Faringdon and Wantage.

Supplementary question

In response to a supplementary question Councillor Barber stated that he did not accept that this change represented gerrymandering.

4. Question from Councillor Debby Hallett to Councillor Mike Murray, Cabinet member for planning policy.

“The loss of the last petrol station in Botley is an environmental concern when it means thousands of extra cars must travel on the already over-capacity A34 to Peartree, Heyford Hill or Abingdon in order to fill the tank. What policy changes could the Vale consider to address this environmental sustainability issue”?

Answer

“We will all be very aware of the great strides forward in technology that the car manufacturing industry has taken in the past few years. In particular they have focussed on increasing fuel efficiency and reducing emissions. This, coupled with competition between suppliers and increased taxation on fuel to encourage reduced consumption, has resulted in greatly reduced margins and market capacity for roadside retailers. As such we have seen a considerable consolidation of the sector. However, the improvement in vehicle range on a tank of fuel has very much reduced the need for local fuel provision. Whilst the BP garage at Seacourt Tower remains open for business, there is no certainty that this, or any other fuel, or other retail, or other commercial use for any building in the Vale, will continue to trade in the long term in the face of changing market conditions, and it does not appear immediately obvious why increasingly scarce council resources should be deployed to developing a fuel retailer policy specifically for Botley as a priority over other more pressing Vale wide matters”.

Supplementary question

In response to a supplementary question regarding the need for a joined up planning approach to planning in Botley Councillor Murray stated that views were sought during the consultation on the draft local plan. There would be a further opportunity to submit views/ideas during the Botley supplementary planning document consultation process.

Co.21 Recommendations from Cabinet, individual Cabinet members, and committees

Council considered the recommendations of Councillor Mike Murray, Cabinet member for planning policy, made on 7 July 2015 to make the Drayton and Great Coxwell neighbourhood plans part of the Development Plan for Vale of White Horse.

RESOLVED: to

1. make the Drayton Neighbourhood Plan part of the Development Plan for Vale of White Horse;
2. make the Great Coxwell Neighbourhood Plan part of the Development Plan for Vale of White Horse.

Co.22 Report of the leader of the council

The leader of the council reported that he had appointed Councillor Sandy Lovatt, Cabinet member for community safety, to the South and Vale Community Safety Partnership and the Oxfordshire Safer Communities Partnership Board.

He reported that the official opening of the temporary council offices at 135 Milton Park was held on 14 July and thanked officers again for their positive approach during the period since the fire. He reported that the council had recently held a successful town and parish forum and that the next forum was scheduled to take place in November at The Beacon in Wantage.

He reported that public examination of the council's local plan would start in September.

The council would discuss opportunities offered by the government's devolution plans with neighbouring authorities.

Co.23 Notices of motion under standing order 11

Council considered the following motions under Standing Order 11.

(1) Motion proposed by Councillor Duffield, seconded by Councillor Monica Lovatt:

"This Council requests that the Environment Agency commission an independent review into the implications of the proposed Oxford Flood Alleviation Scheme, especially relating to possible flood risks in areas of the Vale downstream of Abingdon".

In supporting the motion a number of councillors, whilst supporting the various alleviation measures proposed, expressed concern that these could have a negative impact on areas south of Abingdon, both within the Vale and further afield, by transferring flood water elsewhere.

Council requested a general briefing from the Environment Agency on flooding issues in the Vale and the proposed alleviation measures.

RESOLVED:

That Council request that the Environment Agency commission an independent review into the implications of the proposed Oxford Flood Alleviation Scheme, especially relating to possible flood risks in areas of the Vale downstream of Abingdon.

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(2) Motion proposed by Councillor Duffield, seconded by Councillor Cox:

“That this Council thanks the staff for their hard work during the recent round of elections in the Vale. The complexity of the elections this year is noted given the combination of parliamentary, district and parish council elections all being held on one day meant that well over 1,300 nomination papers had to be checked and well in excess of 130,000 ballot papers were counted over the three days of the count. The efforts of the electoral staff and others throughout the Council and beyond is recognised and appreciated.

Council also welcomes the consultation and Interim Report published by the Returning Officer into the conduct of the elections. Council notes that the Community Governance and Electoral Issues Committee will review the above report and a further report covering the cost of the district and parish elections and make any further recommendations to Council in due course”.

Council requested that the chief executive inform staff of Council’s thanks.

RESOLVED:

That Council thanks the staff for their hard work during the recent round of elections in the Vale. The complexity of the elections this year is noted given the combination of parliamentary, district and parish council elections all being held on one day meant that well over 1,300 nomination papers had to be checked and well in excess of 130,000 ballot papers were counted over the three days of the count. The efforts of the electoral staff and others throughout the Council and beyond is recognised and appreciated.

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(3) Motion proposed by Councillor Sharp, seconded by Councillor Blagrove:

“Council recognises that following the issue of the Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment in 2014, and its identification of Oxford City’s Objectively Assessed Need (OAN) for new housing, it is likely that Oxford City will be unable to meet its OAN in full, and so will look to its neighbouring authorities, including the Vale, to assist. Council considers that Oxford City’s existing local plan from 2011 and its development policies contain many constraints on development and hinder the City’s ability to meet its own OAN. Council therefore calls upon Oxford City to immediately carry out a full review of its local plan in order to meet as much of its own OAN as is sustainably possible. Council notes the recent Inspector’s report following Examination in Public of the Cherwell District Council Local Plan, and his comment:

“I am satisfied that it is appropriate for this plan to proceed on that basis [meeting its own full district OAN], provided that there is a firm commitment from the Council to play its part in addressing the needs of Oxford city through that joint process [to fully address the OANs of the whole county] in the near future, once those needs have been fully clarified/confirmed.”

Council confirms its intention to meet its appropriate share of Oxford's Unmet Need and supports the Cabinet in its work to help identify and assess how Oxford's Unmet Need could be accommodated. The Council will continue to work within the Oxfordshire Growth Board to strengthen the joint working across the county to identify and accommodate the unmet need in Oxfordshire. Council recognises that this work is underpinned by the following principles:

- The district Local Plans are sovereign and all work should feed into Local Plans for them to determine the spatial future of the districts;
- A recognition however that the work must be collaborative and joined up to provide a county wide spatial picture and strategy;
- A recognition therefore that joint work on future spatial options, transport infrastructure and green belt will be required to feed into Local Plans;
- Recognition that the City cannot fully meet its housing needs and there is a need to agree on the level of unmet need. However work on determining spatial options in Local Plans can commence alongside this;
- A wish that the timescale for completing the Review is 12 – 18 months and that this should not hold up Local Plan timescales.

As a means to progressing these objectives Council endorses Cabinet's intention to consider and consult on strategic options to provide evidence for the Growth Board which will be robust in providing a sound proposal for Oxfordshire. Council is committed to the resolution of unmet housing need in Oxfordshire, the adoption of Local Plan Part 1 and the development and adoption of Local Plan Part 2 on the earliest possible timetable that is compatible with good governance and public consultation”.

A number of councillors expressed concern regarding the late circulation of the wording of the urgent motion and the lack of clarity regarding the role of the Growth Board. Others expressed disappointment that Oxford City Council had not addressed its housing shortage by making land available for development. In supporting the motion councillors expressed the view that Cabinet should actively engage with Oxford City and that, whilst Council's support for the approach was not required, support of the motion would provide a powerful mandate for proactive negotiations with Oxford City to address its housing requirement.

The leader of the council reported that this issue would be the subject of a report to Cabinet on 7 August and Scrutiny Committee on 20 August.

The chairman called for a recorded vote on motion which was carried with the voting recorded as follows:

For	Against	Abstentions
Councillors	Councillors	Councillors
Alice Badcock		Margaret Crick
Mike Badcock		Debby Hallett
Matthew Barber		Jenny Hannaby
Eric Batts		Dudley Hoddinott
Edward Blagrove		Bob Johnston
Roger Cox		Helen Pighills
Stuart Davenport		Judy Roberts
Charlotte Dickson		Emily Smith
St John Dickson		Catherine Webber
Gervase Duffield		

For	Against	Abstentions
Katie Finch		
Robert Hall		
Anthony Hayward		
Simon Howell		
Vicky Jenkins		
Mohinder Kainth		
Monica Lovatt		
Sandy Lovatt		
Ben Mabbett		
Chris McCarthy		
Mike Murray		
Chris Palmer		
Robert Sharp		
Henry Spencer		
Reg Waite		
Elaine Ware		
Totals: 26	Totals: 0	Totals: 9

RESOLVED:

That Council recognises that following the issue of the Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment in 2014, and its identification of Oxford City's Objectively Assessed Need (OAN) for new housing, it is likely that Oxford City will be unable to meet its OAN in full, and so will look to its neighbouring authorities, including the Vale, to assist. Council considers that Oxford City's existing local plan from 2011 and its development policies contain many constraints on development and hinder the City's ability to meet its own OAN. Council therefore calls upon Oxford City to immediately carry out a full review of its local plan in order to meet as much of its own OAN as is sustainably possible. Council notes the recent Inspector's report following Examination in Public of the Cherwell District Council Local Plan, and his comment:

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The meeting closed at 7:55pm