

Minutes

of a meeting of the

Cabinet

held on Monday 18 January 2016 at 9.30 am

in the Meeting Room 1, 135 Eastern Avenue, Milton Park, Milton, OX14 4SB



Open to the public, including the press

Present:

Members: Councillors Sandy Lovatt (in the chair), Charlotte Dickson, Mohinder Kainth, Sandy Lovatt and Mike Murray

Officers: Steve Culliford, Sophie Horsley, Ian Price, Margaret Reed and Anna Robinson

Also present: Councillor Debby Hallett

Number of members of the public: 7

Ca.27 Apologies for absence

Councillors Matthew Barber, Eric Batts, Roger Cox, and Elaine Ware had all sent their apologies for absence.

Due to the Leader and Deputy Leader both being absent, Councillor Sandy Lovatt took the chair for this meeting.

Ca.28 Minutes

RESOLVED: to adopt the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 4 December 2015 as a correct record and agree that the chairman signs them as such.

Ca.29 Declarations of interest

The four Cabinet members present each made statements declaring that they had not been involved in any negotiations or corporate property dealings with developers Doric or Mace on the Botley Centre site. Councillor Lovatt declared that he had been present at the Planning Committee meeting in December 2014 that considered a planning application on that site and had voted against the application. Councillor Murray also declared that in the course of his own business, he had had dealings with Savills. However, he had not had any involvement or dealings with Mr Neil Rowley of Savills (who had registered to speak at this Cabinet meeting) or his office, over the developer's scheme.

Ca.30 Urgent business and chairman's announcements

None

Ca.31 Statements, petitions, and questions relating to matters affecting the Cabinet

Four members of the public had registered to address Cabinet as follows:

- 1 Dr Les Clyne has asked Democratic Services to read the following statement regarding the Grove airfield development:

“At the Council meeting on December 16th 2015, in response to a question from me to the meeting, Councillor Barber agreed to provide me with some written information. As the draft minutes state:

'In response Matthew Barber thanked Dr Clyne for his question and continued interest in this matter. He confirmed that the council had requested updates and every deadline had been missed. He confirmed that he would provide Dr Clyne with an update when further responses were received and provide a written response of this answer with additional information about responses received to date.'

I have asked again for the 'additional information about responses received to date.' since the deadline for getting this information after the Council meeting has passed, but to date (13 January 2016) I have received nothing. Please could the Leader keep his promise and send me the information about the developers' responses to date concerning the latest delays to the Section 106 agreement for the Grove airfield development, otherwise I will have to request it via the Freedom of Information route which takes another 20 working days.”

The Democratic Services Officer read the following reply from Councillor Matthew Barber that was sent to Dr Clyne on 13 January 2016:

“The developers of Grove airfield are continuing to negotiate with several land owners to reach agreement on land acquisitions. Once we receive confirmation of a successful outcome we will work speedily towards completion of the section 106 planning agreement. At this time we don't have any reliable information on timescales and we'd rather not speculate as we aren't in control of the negotiations. We are very frustrated by the delay.”

- 2 Dr Stephen Parkinson made a statement urging Cabinet not to adopt the Botley Centre supplementary planning document. He questioned what had happened to the stated aim of the document, why consultation responses had been ignored, and why no protection had been given to Field House. He questioned why the revised document used a changed terminology from development 'site' to 'study area'. He concluded this by-passed criticism and conflicted with community needs.
- 3 Mary Gill asked why the council intended to adopt the Botley Centre supplementary planning document? She believed that the document was an area action plan, not a supplementary planning document, as it was based on Doric's failed planning application and prepared in the light of Mace's intentions. Instead it should consider reasonable alternatives. She questioned the justification for the policies in the

document, such as an eight-storey element to a corner building on the site. She believed that the council had not maintained a separation between the council's property and planning functions.

- 4 Neil Rowley on behalf of Savills made a statement in support of the supplementary planning document. While his client did not support every aspect of the document, he believed it provided a reasonable framework within which to work.

Ca.32 Botley Centre supplementary planning document

Cabinet considered the head of planning's report which recommended adoption of a supplementary planning document for Botley Centre.

Cabinet recalled that the supplementary planning document had come forward as an officer proposal, under Cabinet's guidance. Since Cabinet had deferred consideration of the draft supplementary planning document at its meeting on 30 October 2015, officers had sought advice on the lawfulness of the document. Officers had made some clarification changes to the draft supplementary planning document and sustainability assessment and re-consulted on these. The outcome of the consultation was set out in the appendix to the head of planning's report. Counsel had confirmed that the revised draft supplementary planning document met the legal requirements of the planning regulations and the head of legal and democratic services confirmed that it could be adopted by Cabinet.

One of the aims of the Local Plan 2011 was to ensure that Botley was an attractive place for living, working and pursuing leisure interests. To achieve this, the council sought to safeguard and promote the vitality and viability of Botley as a local service centre. While the Local Plan set out many policies that applied to Botley, it did not set out how this development could take place. Also, feedback from local people showed that they wanted a greater say in setting the policy context for any future planning application. In deciding the appropriate planning policy framework for the regeneration of Botley Centre the following options were considered:

- relying on adopted and emerging local plan policies
- preparing a development brief
- preparing a supplementary planning document

Cabinet concluded that relying on the local plan policies would not provide enough detail to cover the development of the Botley Centre site. A development brief did not require formal consultation or a sustainability appraisal, and therefore carried less weight in the determination of planning applications compared to a supplementary planning document. Cabinet preferred a supplementary planning document as the best method to provide a planning framework for the site. It would provide a flexible strategy to guide development that supported the existing and future local community. Planning applications for development at this site would be assessed against the supplementary planning document.

The Cabinet member for planning policy reported that the supplementary planning document had to be based on evidence. Technical work on the evidence base had been carried out by consultant DTZ. The supplementary planning document was not based on any planning application, nor was it intended to reflect any forthcoming planning application.

From the public consultation, there was some opposition to the supplementary planning document but the majority of respondents supported its adoption, as had the council's Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 14 January 2016. Cabinet refuted the claim that the local community had not been consulted.

Cabinet asked what major issues arose from the consultation that had not been reflected in changes to the draft supplementary planning document. Officers reported that some respondents had asked for greater detail, for example on the quantum of land uses. However, this level of detail was too great for a supplementary planning document; its role was to provide more detailed guidance on local plan policies to assist the planning application process.

Cabinet was advised that its ability to adopt the supplementary planning document was not inhibited by the council being a landowner of the site. In adopting a supplementary planning document, the council was acting as the local planning authority.

Cabinet supported the adoption of the supplementary planning document for Botley Centre.

RESOLVED: to adopt the Botley Centre Supplementary Planning Document to the saved planning policies of the adopted Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2011.

The meeting closed at 10.20 am