

Minutes

of a meeting of the

Scrutiny Committee

held on Thursday, 26 October 2017 at 7.00 pm

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



Open to the public, including the press

Present:

Members: Councillors Debby Hallett (Chairman), Alice Badcock (Vice-Chairman), Mike Badcock, Ed Blagrove, Mohinder Kainth, Sandy Lovatt, Chris Palmer, Judy Roberts and Robert Hall (In place of Vicky Jenkins)

Officers: Adrian Duffield, Dylan Evans, Ian Matten, Ron Schrieber and Mark Stone

Also in attendance: Councillor Matthew Barber

Sc.27 Apologies for absence

Councillor Vicky Jenkins (substituted by Robert Hall) submitted apologies.

Councillor Charlotte Dickson, Cabinet member for leisure, also submitted apologies.

Sc.28 Minutes

The minutes of the meetings held on 20 and 28 September 2017 were agreed as an accurate record and were signed by the Chairman.

Sc.29 Declarations of interest

None.

Sc.30 Urgent business and chairman's announcements

None.

Sc.31 Public participation

None.

Sc.32 New leisure centre for Wantage and Grove area

The committee considered the report of the interim head of waste, leisure and environmental health on the results of the recent public consultation on proposals for a new leisure centre for the Wantage and Grove area. In addition to the public consultation summary, the report contained a summary of online survey results and feedback received from stakeholders including towns and parishes, Swim England and other national governing bodies on the proposals.

Ian Matten, interim head of waste, leisure and environmental health, introduced the report. Also present to answer questions were Councillor Matthew Barber, Leader of the council and Dylan Evans, leisure manager, together with consultants involved in the project, Jenny Beilby, David Chong-Ping and Nathan Swift.

David Chong-Ping gave a presentation on the background to the consultation, the methodology and the outcome. 624 people had responded to the survey, of which 57% strongly agreed and a further 24% agreed with the proposal to build a new leisure centre.

In response to members' questions, it was reported that:

- The proposed facility mix was based on a needs analysis and consultation.
- There had been a good response to the consultation from young people. However, it was not possible to conclude to what extent this was a result of the use of social media and how much it was due to the subject.
- Concerns expressed included that the money could be better spent on other facilities, the potential impact on the health centre, increased traffic and road congestion and the absence of a 50 metre pool/provision for particular sports/other activities.
- The council's response to the consultation would be published and would include an explanation of the reasons for not providing a 50m pool as well as detailing the next steps for the project.
- Respondents to the consultation would be asked if they wished to sign up for future updates.

The committee requested information on the types of leisure centre membership available under the existing leisure centre management contract with GLL and, specifically, the ability for GLL members to use all leisure centres across the South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse districts.

RESOLVED: to

1. Congratulate the officers and consultants on the consultation exercise;
2. Support the proposed facility mix for the new leisure centre for the Wantage and Grove area; and
3. Request officers to explore all possible sources of grant funding for the new leisure centre.

Sc.33 Oxford to Cambridge Expressway: Vale options

The committee considered the report of the head of planning services which gave details of the National Infrastructure Commission's (NIC) proposals for an Oxford to Cambridge Expressway (O2C) and which requested the committee for its views on the emerging potential routes in Oxfordshire to help inform any further officer discussion with the NIC or Highways England.

Councillor Matthew Barber, Leader of the council, introduced the report. Also present to answer questions were Adrian Duffield, head of planning services and Mark Stone, chief executive.

The report summarised the development of proposals for the O2C over the last three years and indicative plans drawn by officers showing five potential routes south and west of Oxford. These plans also illustrated some environmental constraints and planned/potential development sites. Each of the routes was costed by the NIC at approximately £3 to £3.5 billion for delivery. The NIC had suggested that, within the O2C corridor, up to 1 million additional homes and 700,000 additional jobs could be delivered by 2050.

Attached, as an appendix to the report, was a letter from the Leader to Lord Adonis, Chairman of the NIC, in August 2017 in which the Leader stated that he did not support any routes to the west of Oxford, or upgrades to the A34 in this location. In response to a member's question about the implications of Councillor Barber's views conflicting with those submitted by the leader of South Oxfordshire District Council, Councillor Barber reported that he did not believe that this was a problem as, at this stage, no decisions were being made and both leaders were expressing their personal opinions.

The committee considered the five potential routes, noting that these routes were the officers' interpretation of potential options rather than firm proposals. It was also noted that this was a major project that would have economic, transport and environmental implications for much of the south-east of England.

The committee noted that most of the five potential routes under consideration would decimate the green belt. It therefore urged the Cabinet member and officers to request Government to consider ways in which the green belt and green open space might be preserved.

Whilst none of the potential routes was ideal, the committee took the view that, on balance, indicative Route 2 would be the least damaging as there were already strategic housing sites and an employment site allocated along this route.

RESOLVED: to

1. Advise the leader of the council and officers that the committee considers Indicative Route 2 merits further attention insofar as, in the committee's view, it is the least damaging potential option and has strategic housing and employment sites allocated along the route; and

2. Urges the Cabinet member and officers to request Government to consider ways in which the green belt and green open space might be preserved if and when a proposed route is identified.

Sc.34 Appointment of task group

RESOLVED: to appoint a task group comprising Chris Palmer (Chairman), Mike Badcock, Ed Blagrove, Debby Hallett and Judy Roberts to gain greater awareness of the budget process and make recommendations for future improvements.

Sc.35 Work schedule and dates for all South and Vale scrutiny meetings

The committee considered its work programme and agreed to defer consideration of housing build rates until the meeting on 14 December.

The meeting closed at 9.10 pm