



Listening Learning Leading



Minutes

of a meeting of the

Joint Scrutiny Committee

held on Thursday 16 January 2020 at 6.30 pm

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

Open to the public, including the press

Present:

Members:

South Oxfordshire District Councillors: Ian White (Chair for this meeting), Peter Dragonetti (In place of Sam Casey-Rerhaye), Stefan Gawrysiak, Alexandrine Kantor, and George Levy

Vale of White Horse District Councillors: Nathan Boyd (Vice-chair for this meeting), Andy Cooke, Amos Duveen, Hayleigh Gascoigne, David Grant

Officers: Steve Culliford, Andrew Down, Marybeth Harasz, Susan Harbour, and Adrianna Partridge

Also present: Councillor Sue Cooper (South Oxfordshire), Councillors Judy Roberts, Emily Smith and Richard Webber (Vale of White Horse)

Number of members of the public: 4

Sc.15 Apologies for absence

Councillor Sam Casey-Rerhaye had sent her apologies for absence and appointed Councillor Peter Dragonetti as her substitute.

Sc.16 Minutes

RESOLVED: to adopt as a correct record the minutes of the committee meeting held on 10 September 2019 and agree that the Chair signs them as such.

Sc.17 Declarations of interest

Councillors Andy Cooke, Peter Dragonetti and Hayleigh Gascoigne all declared personal interests in the Oxfordshire Growth Board agenda item as they were members of the Growth Board's Scrutiny Panel. Councillor Gascoigne also declared a personal interest in the Didcot Garden Town agenda item as she was a local resident and local ward member.

South Oxfordshire District Council and Vale of White Horse District Council – Joint Scrutiny Committee minutes

Sc.18 Urgent business and chairman's announcements

The chair announced details of the emergency evacuation procedure and asked all present to silence their mobile phones.

Sc.19 Public participation

Two members of the public had registered to speak at the meeting and made statements as follows.

- (1) Rita Atkinson of Sutton Courtenay Parish Council spoke in favour of allowing the parish council a place on the Didcot Garden Town Advisory Board.
- (2) Councillor Richard Webber, the Vale ward member for Sutton Courtenay, spoke in support of allowing the parish council a place on the Didcot Garden Town Advisory Board.

Sc.20 Governance of the Oxfordshire Growth Board

Councillors Andy Cooke, Peter Dragonetti and Hayleigh Gascoigne all declared personal interests in this item as they were members of the Growth Board's Scrutiny Panel.

The committee considered the head of partnership and insight's report on the organisation and governance of the Oxfordshire Growth Board. The report set out the scope and purpose of the Growth Board, the membership and resources, its decision-making, its role in the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal, and details of the Growth Board review currently taking place. The leaders of South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse district councils were present and answered the committee's questions.

The Growth Board was a joint committee consisting of six voting members, who were the leaders of Oxfordshire's six principal councils. There were also non-voting members invited to the table to take an active part at each meeting. The board meetings were well-attended by the public, many of which took up the opportunity to address the Growth Board during a public speaking session. The Growth Board also had a separate Scrutiny Panel and several sub-groups to concentrate on specific subjects.

The Growth Board had commenced a review of its operations and was due to publish a report on the outcome shortly. Committee members were urged to read this document and to come to the Growth Board meetings or those of its Scrutiny Panel. The committee noted that the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal was a deal between the government and the principal councils in Oxfordshire. This deal was part of the Growth Board's work but not its sole focus. The deal had previously been subject to scrutiny.

RESOLVED: to note the head of partnership and insight's report.

Sc.21 Didcot Garden Town

Councillor Hayleigh Gascoigne declared a personal interest in this item as she was a local resident and local ward member.

The committee considered the head of partnership and insight's report into the project delivery and governance arrangements of Didcot Garden Town. The report also updated on recent community engagement and the potential timeline for work programmes. The Vale's Cabinet member for partnership and insight and South Oxfordshire's Leader answered the committee's questions.

The Cabinet member reported that since the report was first considered by the Vale's Cabinet in July, the governance arrangements had been amended to take into account Cabinet's concerns. The governance structure proposed was now more inclusive and community-driven. There were three sounding boards, one for local residents, one for the business community, and one for parish councils to feed in their ideas to an advisory board. The advisory board would make recommendations to the representative organisations. In response to the request from Sutton Courtenay Parish Council, there was now a designated parish council representative on the advisory board.

The committee welcomed the changes to the governance arrangements but made two suggestions to improve the structure further:

- that the parish council representative on the Didcot Garden Town Advisory Board should be chosen from the five parish councils within the Didcot Garden Town boundary; and
- that the Didcot Garden Town Advisory Board be asked to consider adding a voting member to increase its environmental representation.

The committee's rationale behind these suggestions was that the most appropriate parishes to represent parish councils on the advisory board were the five parish councils nearest to Didcot and the parishes that fell within the Didcot Garden Town boundary. The outer lying parishes within the area of influence could feed in their ideas through the parish councils' sounding board. Also, the committee considered that adding an environmental representative was important to balance the other competing aims. However, it was recognised that finding an appropriate environmental representative was not an easy task. The committee considered that this representative should be independent of the other partners.

RESOLVED: to recommend the South and Vale Cabinets that they:

- (a) approve the operating guidelines, terms of reference and revised governance for the Didcot Garden Town Advisory Board and sounding boards, as set out in appendix 2 to the head of partnership and insight's report to the Joint Scrutiny Committee on 16 January 2020, with the following changes:
 - (i) the parish council representative on the Didcot Garden Town Advisory Board be chosen from the five parish councils within the Didcot Garden Town boundary;
 - (ii) recommend that the Didcot Garden Town Advisory Board considers adding a voting member to increase its environmental representation;
- (b) agree to name the nominated Didcot Garden Town Board as the 'Didcot Garden Town Advisory Board';
- (c) agree the Didcot Garden Town Delivery Plan project priorities; and

- (d) delegate authority to the relevant head of service to apply for future funding opportunities that directly align with the Didcot Garden Town Delivery Plan as appropriate.

Sc.22 Work schedule and dates for all South and Vale scrutiny meetings

The committee reviewed and updated its work programme, adding items as follows:

- A review of progress with the Didcot Garden Town project – November
- A report on progress with the Oxfordshire Growth Board governance review – in six to nine months

The meeting closed at 8.14 pm