

Minutes of a meeting of the Council



held on Wednesday 24 March 2021 at 7.00 pm
as a virtual meeting

Open to the public, including the press

Present:

Members: Councillors Margaret Crick (Chair), Jerry Avery, Matthew Barber, Paul Barrow, Ron Batstone, Eric Batts, Nathan Boyd, Cheryl Briggs, Andy Cooke, Andrew Crawford, Eric de la Harpe, Amos Duveen, Neil Fawcett, Andy Foulsham, Hayleigh Gascoigne, David Grant, Debby Hallett, Jenny Hannaby, Simon Howell, Alison Jenner, Bob Johnston, Diana Lugova, Robert Maddison, Sarah Medley, Patrick O'Leary, Helen Pighills, Mike Pighills, Judy Roberts, Val Shaw, Janet Shelley, Emily Smith, Bethia Thomas, Max Thompson, Elaine Ware, Catherine Webber and Richard Webber

Officers: Pat Connell, Steven Corrigan, Adrian Duffield, Simon Hewings, Suzanne Malcolm, Lucy Murfett, Margaret Reed, Melanie Smans and Mark Stone

Also present: David Hutton, the council's legal adviser from Bevan Brittan for agenda item 14 - Covid-19 leisure support package

Co.155 Apologies for absence

An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of Councillor Bowring.

Co.156 Minutes

RESOLVED: to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 10 February 2021 as a correct record and agree that the chair sign them as such.

Co.157 Declarations of disclosable pecuniary interest

Councillor Roberts declared a personal interest in agenda item 15 on funding the Oxfordshire Community Land Trust (minute 169 refers).

Co.158 Urgent business and chair's announcements

The chair provided general housekeeping information. There were no items of urgent business.

Co.159 Public participation

A. Question from Gordon Lundie to Councillor Bethia Thomas, Cabinet member for community engagement

Bearing in mind that it has been reported by two locally elected members on social media that the Valley Park application will be delayed, and I quote “ due to Purdah,...the application for Valley Park will not come back to planning committee until May at the earliest,” and that badgers have been reported on the site surely requiring a wildlife assessment, can the Cabinet member confirm whether this delay is true and if so what impact this will have on the councils five year land supply and the HIF bid, and how is this delay consistent with the Local Government Guidance that planning application decisions should not be delayed due to purdah, even where controversial?”

Answer

Following the deferral of the Valley Park outline planning application at the Planning Committee 16 February, officers are in negotiations with the developer regarding highway improvements and health care provision. If we receive amended plans following our discussions with the developer, it is likely we will undertake further public engagement, which is our normal practice. Oxfordshire County Council, as the highway authority, will provide their views where appropriate on any amended plans or proposals. The need for this further work is the main reason why this application is not in a position to return yet to the planning committee.

Any slippage in determining this application is likely to impact on the developer's ability to deliver housing in line with the council's housing delivery trajectory published in our annual housing statement and the ability to demonstrate our five year housing land supply. I understand that the preparatory works to deliver Didcot's road infrastructure funded by the HIF is on track.

Regarding badgers, the location of the outlier setts will be buffered within proposed open space. Suggested planning conditions would include resurveying the area as part of an Ecological Construction Management Plan, prior to site clearance/commencement of development.

B. Dr Nathan Ley addressed Council in support of Motion A at agenda item 12 to improve access to healthcare facilities for residents of new housing developments.

C. Bob Colenutt, Chair of the Oxfordshire Community Land Trust (OCLT), addressed Council in support of grant funding for the Dean Court affordable housing project. He stated that OCLT is a Community Benefit Society regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority with charitable status and had been working on the Dean Court project with the district council since 2014. Dean Court will provide eight co-operatively run, rented, permanently affordable housing units for those in housing need in the district. The scheme is at an advanced stage with land acquired, a fully designed scheme, a development loan in place with a selected contractor in place. OCLT have applied for Registered Provider status from the regulator for Social Housing and anticipate that their application will be significantly strengthened with the Council's approval for grant funding. The project supports the council's aim of supporting community led housing and meets the needs identified in the Cumnor Neighbourhood Plan for smaller units

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for local people. If granted, OCLT will be able to deliver much needed permanently affordable housing for the district by 2022.

C. Robin Tucker, Chair of the Oxfordshire Cycling Network, addressed Council in support of Motion B at agenda item 12 to improve the safety of roundabouts for cyclists.

E. Question from Dr Christopher Palmer to Councillor Andrew Crawford, Cabinet member for finance and corporate assets

Like many Abingdon residents and users of the town centre I am delighted that the sale of Old Abbey House has finally gone through and look forward to seeing it develop into a boutique hotel to attract more visitors to the town. I am concerned however about comments made by the cabinet member for finance that the councils MTFP is unsustainable for its duration including the current financial year. What assurances can the leader of the council and cabinet member for finance give to concerned residents that the proceeds from this sale will be used to fund capital projects which in turn generate revenue and not just to fill the ever increasing black hole in the Vale finances. Will the proceeds be spent for the benefit of abingdonians and what is the transparent process for the use of these capital receipts that is expressed in the latest corporate plan?

I look forward to your reply during the meeting or within 5 days”

Answer

I too am delighted that after years of decline and decay under the previous administration, we have finally secured a bright future for one of Abingdon’s historic buildings.

The question asks whether the sale proceeds of Old Abbey House will be used to fund the future, projected deficit of the Vale’s revenue position. My clear answer to this is simply no. Not just because we don’t wish to but importantly because regulations simply do not allow for capital balances to be spent to support revenue expenditure.

I am also delighted to note that we are budgeting to use less reserves in 2021/22 than predicted in the last budget put forward by the Conservative administration in 2019 – this is in spite of the global pandemic playing havoc with our finances. Moreover that last Conservative budget saw this Council effectively running out of non-earmarked revenue reserves to fund its services from 2023/24 and I am pleased to report that through sound financial management this administration have successfully managed to push back this situation a further two years to 2025/26. To set the record straight, the council’s Section 151 officer, in the budget report, confirmed that the budget for 2021/22 was both prudent and robust, and the level of reserves is adequate for 2021/22. Building stable finances that are sustainable over the medium term is central to our corporate plan – it has had to be, given the position of the council’s finances that we inherited from the previous administration. Reference is also made to a “black hole” in this Council’s Finances and I should like to clarify that it is in fact a Blue Hole, dug by Conservative spades over the eight years to 2019. Poor and unsustainable financial decisions made by the previous administration of this Council aided and abetted by Conservative Governments reducing their financial support to this and other Councils not least of all through significant changes to the New Homes Bonus scheme.

Our budget shows how the council's capital receipts will be used to fund capital schemes. In 2020/21 and 2021/22, we will be spending over £400,000 of our own capital receipts on our assets in Abingdon including projects at Rye Farm, the Charter Complex and White Horse Leisure and Tennis Centre. It is possible, if indeed not highly likely, that further capital schemes will come forward in Abingdon over the coming years. Capital receipts will continue to be used to maintain and improve our assets across the Vale, and to help rebuild our financial position.

Finally, the question also calls for transparency over the use of capital receipts and I am very happy to agree that transparency is core to this Liberal Democrat administration's values. Our capital budget is published as part of the budget setting papers and is available for all residents to see and comment upon. Material changes to the capital budget, should they occur, are subject to approvals which are fully documented and likewise available to all.

F. Question from Cath Convery to Councillor Emily Smith, Leader of the council

I am a resident of Harwell village and a business owner on Harwell campus, on the border between the two districts – VOWH and SODC. I am speaking on behalf of some local residents who have just heard about the proposals being brought before you today for a Joint Local Plan.

We are appalled to have heard this by chance.

For a Council that is supposed to take seriously the need to be transparent and engage with local communities, the fact this is being voted on tonight with a complete lack of communication and consultation is shocking to say the least. Why on earth should our local residents be allowing councillors from another District Council make strategic planning decisions about areas that they have no knowledge or interest in.

The Vale of White Horse has a local plan which has been in place for a number of years now, and I believe you have already publicised a call for sites and embarked on refreshing this plan. What is the status of that process?

Why should the Vale Council risk everything by slowing down for another Council who has only just approved its own plan, after much fighting and debate that is still going on with a Judicial Review backed by members of that very Council.

Every Vale resident should be concerned about what is happening here, putting at risk control over local planning, allowing speculative proposals to come forward all in the name of what appears to be a political vanity project and a small cost saving in 3 years that may never materialise.

In conclusion, could I ask the leader or the appropriate Cabinet member to please let me know the status of the call for sites and what the communication, consultation and engagement model will be for the residents of the Vale in the event that you proceed with this plan?

Answer

Thank you for your question.

The proposal this evening is to agree the preparation and production of a Joint Local Plan with South Oxfordshire District Council and does not deal with the detail or content of the plan at this stage.

The advantages and disadvantages of a joint local plan are set out in the officer report. Whether a joint plan progresses is also dependent on South Oxfordshire District Council considering this matter at their Council meeting tomorrow.

I am reluctant to go into too much detail about the pros and cons of producing a joint local plan as this will be debated later-on this evening.

In terms of communication, the council put an article on our website on 2 March. This was shared on our social media channels and emailed to residents who have signed up to receive email alerts from the council. The Herald Series newspaper covered the story on 4 March. This was ahead of both the Scrutiny Committee meeting on 9 March and the Cabinet meeting on 17 March where the matter was discussed in public. And of course, Council will be discussing the proposal this evening in public as well.

The Local Development Scheme set out in Appendix 1 of the joint local plan officer report shows the planned dates for formal public engagement and for the key democratic decisions during the joint plan making process. This shows that the number of opportunities for residents to have their say will be the same for a Vale only or Joint Local Plan and cabinet and scrutiny were reassured that the time frame to complete a joint plan would be no different from a Vale only plan.

I thank you for raising your concerns and speaking to us this evening. I am sure the points you raise will also be discussed later as part of the debate.

Co.160 Petitions

None.

Co.161 A Joint Local Plan

Council considered Cabinet's recommendation, made at its meeting on 17 March 2021, on the case for preparing a Joint Local Plan, instead of separate local plans for South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse district councils.

In introducing Cabinet's recommendation Councillor Hallett, Cabinet member for corporate services and transformation, stated that the proposal is for Vale of White Horse District Council's next Local Plan to be a Joint Local Plan with South Oxfordshire District Council. This would be instead of a new Vale of White Horse Local Plan and a new South Oxfordshire Local Plan. If agreed, a Joint Local Plan would be prepared over the next four years. In the meantime, the existing adopted Vale of White Local Plan Parts 1 and 2 would continue to be in force, before being replaced by the new Joint Local Plan.

Any new Joint Plan would cover the period from adoption (expected in 2024) until 2041. As the Vale's adopted local plan already contained land allocations for development up to 2031, and some beyond this date, the allocations in a new plan would be focussed on the long term and neighbourhood plans would continue to be a strong aspect in the development plan to provide the opportunity for communities to guide development in their areas.

She drew attention to the officer report which set out the advantages and disadvantages of a joint plan covering both the planning and practical reasons and included a proposed timetable for a joint local plan.

She explained that legislation allowed the councils to prepare a joint plan:

- Section 28 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 allowed two or more local planning authorities (district councils) to prepare a joint local plan. The county council in two-tier areas, such as Oxfordshire, could be part of the plan-preparation process but could not be part of the formal decision-making as this remained the responsibility of the district councils. Under Section 28, the final, formal decisions at key local plan stages (consultations, publication, submission, adoption) were made either separately by each council or via a voluntary joint committee.
- Section 29 of the 2004 Act enabled county councils to continue to have a strategic planning role working with district councils. This allowed for the decision-making on a joint local plan to be conferred on a joint committee. Under section 29, the county council would be a formal partner in the joint committee and therefore would have equal membership on a committee.

Cabinet recommended that the process should be undertaken under Section 28 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

The majority of councillors supported the proposal for the following reasons:

- A joint local plan would provide the opportunity to plan comprehensively across the district boundary in one plan for Didcot Garden Town and Science Vale.
- Vale and South share many geographical similarities and have common challenges and pressures.
- The councils' ambitions are similar, with a great deal of consensus between the Vale and South Corporate Plans
- With existing shared working arrangements, the councils' systems are well set up for joint work.
- With both councils having a recently adopted local plan, this is a good moment to consider working together on the next plan.
- A Joint Local Plan would bring significant savings - initial savings on the evidence base with joint studies and holding one set of public consultations not two and at the end of the process with reduced examination costs (one Inspector, one programme officer and one QC).

In supporting the proposal, it was noted that, if necessary, local policies could be included in the joint plan to reflect local needs and that the final decision on a joint local plan would be made separately by each council.

Whilst the majority of councillors supported the proposal, a number spoke against. They expressed concern that a joint local plan would be less local due to the wider geographical area covered. There could be a loss of democratic accountability with councillors making decisions on areas outside their district. Some expressed concern that a joint local plan could be a vehicle to provide for additional houses in the Vale. Some also questioned the anticipated level of savings from a joint local plan.

RESOLVED: to

1. agree, subject to the agreement of South Oxfordshire District Council, the preparation and production of a Joint Local Plan with South Oxfordshire District Council;
2. approve the Joint Local Development Scheme (March 2021), attached at appendix 1 to the head of planning's report to Cabinet on 17 March 2021, and authorise the head of planning in consultation with the Cabinet member for corporate services and transformation, to make any updates; and
3. agree the principle of governance to prepare and produce a Joint Local Plan under Section 28 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, and to authorise the head of legal and democratic, in consultation with the head of planning and the Cabinet members for corporate services and transformation and democratic services, to agree the detailed arrangements.

Co.162 Further extension of term of office of independent persons for code of conduct matters

Council considered the report of the head of legal and democratic and monitoring officer on further extending the term of office of two independent persons to advise on code of conduct issues.

RESOLVED: to

1. authorise the Monitoring Officer to extend the terms of office of Chris Smith and Martin Wright, the council's independent persons for code of conduct matters until 31 May 2022;
2. authorise the Monitoring Officer to carry out a recruitment exercise for new independent persons and bring recommendations on appointments to Council prior to that date.

Co.163 Report of the leader of the council

Councillor Emily Smith, Leader of the council, provided an update on a number of matters. The text of her address is available on the council's [website](#).

Co.164 Update on Oxfordshire Growth Board

Council received a written update report on the Oxfordshire Growth Board from Councillor Neil Fawcett, Cabinet member for strategic partnerships and place.

Co.165 Questions on notice

A. Question from Councillor Gascoigne to Councillor Helen Pighills, Cabinet member for healthy communities

In light of the disappearance and tragic death of Sarah Everard, women have taken to social media to share their experiences and talk about the many ways in which they have all felt unsafe when just trying to go about their lives. What assurances can the council give that it is doing what it can to protect women and vulnerable people in the district to go about their lives?

Written Answer

There has been a lot in the media over recent days about the safety of women. Figures from the latest annual crime figures show that violent crime in Oxfordshire is much lower than the national average. The recorded rates of violent crime per 1000 population are 13.7 for South Oxfordshire and 13.4 in Vale of White Horse. Nationally this figure is 76 per 1000 population and our districts remain some of the safest places to live in the UK.

The community safety team work in partnership with other organisations on issues including violence and domestic abuse. This includes the promotion of a number of national schemes:

- The Ask for Angela scheme allows anyone to discreetly ask for help if they do not feel safe. We have promoted this scheme to licenced premises across Vale of White Horse and currently have 38 licenced premises signed up.
- The Safe Places scheme helps vulnerable people if they feel scared or at risk while they are out and about in the community and need support right away. We have 26 businesses registered on this scheme which are recognisable by a sign in the window.
- Ask for Ani is a new scheme launched in January to assist victims of domestic abuse in seeking support. Pharmacies can sign up to the scheme and customers can ask for assistance from trained staff who can signpost them to support. The community safety team will be promoting this scheme later this year.

We will continue to promote all of these schemes when businesses reopen as the current lockdown restrictions are eased and expand their coverage.

We are also working in partnership with The Training Effect who are delivering online training for parents of secondary school children aimed at supporting parents at helping to keep their children safe. The current online courses have been over-subscribed so we are planning to run additional events.

In addition, one of our key priorities is tackling domestic abuse, we provide funding to the Oxfordshire Domestic Abuse Service who deliver outreach support to victims of domestic abuse in our area. We also provide a sanctuary scheme to enable victims of abuse to feel safe in their own homes. Both the domestic abuse service and the sanctuary scheme are available to both male and female victims.

From April we plan to host the Building Respectful Families programme within the districts. This programme aims to reduce or stop child on parent violence by helping young people manage their frustrations, help parents increase their sense of well-being, reduce their isolation, to clarify clear boundaries for unacceptable and acceptable behaviour, examine and build strategies for the future.

All taxi drivers that the council licences are subject to safety checks so that residents can feel safe taking a taxi home at any time of the day or night. All of our licenced taxis that can be hailed in the street are identifiable by a roof sign displaying the council logo and the driver will be wearing an identification badge.

In addition, the district councils operate a public space CCTV service in all of our main towns. Operators monitor the cameras during peak periods including evenings and weekends and have a direct link to the police should they see anything that raises concerns. When the cameras are not being monitored, they record footage that can be used at a later time if required.

Supplementary question

In response to a supplementary question regarding the provision of suitable pedestrian street lighting, the Cabinet member responded that, whilst this was primarily a function of Oxfordshire County Council, officers were proactively working with the county council and developers on the design of developments to ensure walkways were safe for residents.

B. Question from Councillor Medley to Councillor Roberts, Cabinet member for development and infrastructure

Councillor Gascoigne and I can confirm first-hand that during the past year of the pandemic and the various lockdowns, having access to green open spaces on the Great Western Park (GWP) development has been a lifeline for many residents. With the hope of lockdown restrictions lifting in the coming months, it would be fantastic if residents of GWP are able to finally access and use the full range of community facilities this summer. Please can the Cabinet member provide an update on the following key items of infrastructure on Great Western Park:

1. District Community Centre: when will this be open to the public and available for bookings, how will it be run and will the GWP Community Support Group be able to run their Community larder from there?
2. The Skate Park, Tennis Courts, Multi-Use Games Area and Healthcare Site: when will these be transferred to the Vale?

Written Answer

From 12 April, and in line with the government's roadmap, a phased approach to opening the District Community Centre will commence. We are only allowed to hire the facilities for very limited uses in the first instance such as to support groups, supervised activities for children, parent-and-child groups (with up to 15 attending plus under-fives) including dance classes, musical activities, cubs, scouts, brownies and parent and toddler groups and also for communal worship, wedding reception's or commemorative events like a wake (numbers are limited to 15 people). Other activities such as art classes, clubs, craft groups, adult exercise classes are not yet permitted. The GWP Community Support Group falls under this first tranche of uses and officers will discuss the detailed booking arrangements with them shortly.

A new team of officers will initially be responsible for running the District Community Centre together with the other two centres at Great Western Park. Detailed information about how to book and the hire charges will be available on our website shortly.

Final amendments to the transfer documents for the healthcare site are now with Taylor Wimpey and we are expecting the transfer of land and commuted sum imminently.

The complex legal processes for transferring the tennis courts and multi-use games area to the council and leasing them to Boundary Park Sports Association are in the final stages and it is hoped that transfer will take place in the next few weeks.

Unfortunately, there are matters concerning the skate park, where following legal advice, we are unable to issue practical certification for the area until Taylor Wimpey has resolved the issue of who is to adopt piped surface water drainage crossing the area. Discussions are ongoing and Taylor Wimpey are in contact with Leep Utilities who have adopted drainage elsewhere at Great Western Park to try and resolve the

situation. Officers are working closely with Taylor Wimpey to push for swift resolution so that the skate park transfer can take place as soon as possible.

Co.166 Motions on notice

A. Councillor Gascoigne moved, and Councillor Medley seconded, the motion as set out in the agenda at agenda item 12

Amendment

Councillor Ware moved, and Councillor Boyd seconded an amendment with additional words in bold and deleted words shown by a strikethrough to reflect the fact that the Vale is covered by Clinical Commissioning Groups other than Oxfordshire.

Council notes:

- As specified in the Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031: Part 2, the district council has committed to provide 22,760 new homes in the period 2011-2031.
- Residents across the Vale regularly contact members about the existing pressure on local health services and concerns about additional homes increasing demand.
- ~~The Oxfordshire~~ Clinical Commissioning Groups ~~is~~ **are** responsible for ensuring health provision for our growing population is provided.
- If section 106 contributions from developers agreed by the District Council are not used by the CCGs within a set time, the money can be paid back to the developer, which would result in an under-provision of health care in our communities.
- Despite significant effort by council officers and local health professionals, the current system is preventing us from providing the health services that local people need and deserve.
- Our planning service and planning committee are therefore under pressure to approve new housing without plans for healthcare in place.

Council believes:

- This council has an important role in improving the health and wellbeing of our residents.
- Primary health provision should be planned based on population growth and vision for health care provision in the district.
- That sufficient infrastructure such as transport, health and education should be provided alongside, and preferably ahead of new housing development.
- The current national system for ensuring health infrastructure is provided, through Clinical Commissioning Groups, is not working.

Council requests:

1. Officers continue to work with ~~Oxfordshire~~ Clinical Commissioning Groups ~~contacts~~ to ensure sufficient provision is made for primary care services for key

strategic housing sites such as Valley Park, Great Western Park and North Abingdon.

2. ~~The leader of the council write to Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (OCCG) requesting a meeting to discuss;~~ **recognising that there are a number of CCGs involved in the provision of health care services, write to the CCGs to arrange meetings to discuss:**

- ~~Developing B~~ **Developing** better working relationship between the ~~O~~C~~C~~Gs and the District Council. ~~two organisations.~~
- Ensuring ~~O~~C~~C~~Gs take a more pro-active approach to our planning process and respond to planning application consultations in a timely and ongoing basis to support the work of our planning department and our Infrastructure and development team.
- How the ~~O~~C~~C~~Gs can engage more proactively with the planning authority to better plan healthcare for strategic sites-housing sites in the Vale linked to the council's corporate plan theme of "building healthy communities".
- To understand how ~~O~~C~~C~~Gs uses population forecasts to plan primary healthcare. ~~and what its plans are for Oxfordshire~~
- To discuss particular case studies where there is a potential for section 106 monies to be lost

3. The Council Leader write to the Ministers for Health and MHCLG to:

- explain the difficulties local planning authorities have to obtain information and commitment to deliver health services from ~~O~~C~~C~~Gs.
- provide specific case studies about where health provision negotiated as part of section 106 is at risk of being lost.
- press the need for whatever structure replaces Clinical Commissioning groups as part of the health reform has working with local planning authorities and its heart.
- ask what government are doing to increase the number of GPs and other health staff and funding to keep up with number of homes.

With the agreement of Council, the mover and seconder of the original motion accepted the amendment.

After debate and on being put to the vote the motion was agreed.

RESOLVED: That Council notes:

- As specified in the Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031: Part 2, the district council has committed to provide 22,760 new homes in the period 2011-2031.
- Residents across the Vale regularly contact members about the existing pressure on local health services and concerns about additional homes increasing demand.
- Clinical Commissioning Groups are responsible for ensuring health provision for our growing population is provided.
- If section 106 contributions from developers agreed by the District Council are not used by the CCGs within a set time, the money can be paid back to the developer, which would result in an under-provision of health care in our communities.

- Despite significant effort by council officers and local health professionals, the current system is preventing us from providing the health services that local people need and deserve.
- Our planning service and planning committee are therefore under pressure to approve new housing without plans for healthcare in place.

Council believes:

- This council has an important role in improving the health and wellbeing of our residents.
- Primary health provision should be planned based on population growth and vision for health care provision in the district.
- That sufficient infrastructure such as transport, health and education should be provided alongside, and preferably ahead of new housing development.
- The current national system for ensuring health infrastructure is provided, through Clinical Commissioning Groups, is not working.

Council requests:

1. Officers continue to work with Clinical Commissioning Groups to ensure sufficient provision is made for primary care services for key strategic housing sites such as Valley Park, Great Western Park and North Abingdon.
2. The leader, recognising that there are a number of CCGs involved in the provision of health care services, write to the CCGs to arrange meetings to discuss:
 - Developing better working relationship between the CCGs and the District Council.
 - Ensuring CCGs take a more pro-active approach to our planning process and respond to planning application consultations in a timely and ongoing basis to support the work of our planning department and our Infrastructure and development team.
 - How the CCGs can engage more proactively with the planning authority to better plan healthcare for strategic housing sites in the Vale linked to the council's corporate plan theme of "building healthy communities".
 - To understand how CCGs uses population forecasts to plan primary healthcare.
 - To discuss particular case studies where there is a potential for section 106 monies to be lost
3. The Council Leader write to the Ministers for Health and MHCLG to:
 - explain the difficulties local planning authorities have to obtain information and commitment to deliver health services from CCGs.
 - provide specific case studies about where health provision negotiated as part of section 106 is at risk of being lost.
 - press the need for whatever structure replaces Clinical Commissioning groups as part of the health reform has working with local planning authorities and its heart.
 - ask what government are doing to increase the number of GPs and other health staff and funding to keep up with number of homes.

B. Councillor de la Harpe moved, and Councillor Fawcett seconded the motion as set out in the agenda at agenda item 12

After debate and on being put to the vote the motion was agreed.

RESOLVED: That Council notes that:

Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) has a Cycling Design Standards document which provides best practice for roundabout junction design.

- It states in the introduction “We need to ensure we create the right conditions for everyone to choose to cycle, whether they are young or old, male or female, or disabled. We want to make cycling a preferred choice for everyone.”
- And in section 3.3.5 “Roundabouts can be particularly daunting for some cycle users, especially large multi-lane roundabouts. Approaches, exits and the geometry of roundabouts should aim to cause traffic to slow down to use the roundabout and therefore reduce the risk to cycle users - roundabout entry should be radial, not tangential, in order to slow traffic.”

A recent Oxford Brookes survey of Abingdon workplaces that was commissioned by Abingdon Liveable Streets showed that most residents who could walk to work do so but a significant proportion of residents who would like to cycle to work are put off by safety fears.

Roundabouts are particularly hazardous for cyclists and there have been several accidents involving cyclists on roundabouts in the Vale.

Council notes, with regret, that in the Vale of White Horse and on routes where bicycles are not segregated from the traffic, new roundabouts designs, and the layout of refurbished ones continue to include tangential entries, also known as high speed or flared geometry designs.

Council believes that:

- the aims of the Oxfordshire Cycling Design Standards document are good and should be treated as central to planning new settlements well.
- we are moving towards a society where use of a personal vehicle for every journey (both local and longer distance) will be less common, and people will want to have the opportunity to cycle and walk to more local destinations where appropriate.
- Encouraging active travel is part of this council’s corporate plan as it has many benefits. For the person themselves, they are likely to feel the physical and mental benefits. And for the environment, there is less traffic on the roads, and therefore less air pollution.
- Having declared a climate emergency, it is the duty of this Council to do what it can and working with partners, to make it easier for residents to choose to cycle for leisure, to school and to work (this applies especially on routes to the larger employment centres in and around our District such as Culham, Harwell Campus and Milton Park).

Council requests that the leader of the council write a letter to the OCC Cabinet Member for the Environment calling on her to:

1. Ensure that the OCC Cycling Design Standards are adhered to and, in

- particular, for all new roundabout designs and refurbishments in the Vale of White Horse to be based on those Design Standards.
2. Ensure that the Vale of White Horse Design Guide Principle DG31 for streets as social spaces is considered when reviewing junction design. i.e. “Streets should be designed as social spaces with the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users put above the needs of the motorist.”
 3. Ensure that When developers consult planning and highways officers on potential road design, officers are proactive in promoting the priorities of local councils and are encouraged to design accordingly.
 4. Create a culture of pro-actively striving for the best possible street and junction design when highways officers are advising developers about what is expected locally, ensuring that people walking, cycling and using public transport are prioritised.
 5. Note that when highway design proposals are put forward that fall below the County Council’s Design Standards, and/or do not further the County Council’s policy objectives, we would expect the County Council as technical consultee on highways to oppose them.

References:

Oxfordshire County Council Cycling Standards:

<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/file/roads-and-transport-policies-and-plans/cyclingstandards.pdf>

Oxford Brookes Study of Abingdon Workplaces

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/12YfdQeZO_FmltChpUGa9fQLxIS0C2qKAtNu9ndPrZcQ/

Map of accidents involving cyclists

<https://www.crashmap.co.uk/Search>

Co.167 Exclusion of the public

RESOLVED: to exclude members of the press and public from the meeting for the following items of business under Part 1 of Schedule 12A Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 and as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006 on the grounds that:

- (i) they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 3 and 5 Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act, and
- (ii) the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

Co.168 Covid-19 leisure support package

Prior to consideration of this item, and prior to the expiry of two and a half hours, Council agreed, in accordance with council procedure rule 12, to extend the meeting by half an hour if required.

Council considered Cabinet’s recommendations, made at its meeting on 17 March 2021 on the impact of Covid-19 on leisure facilities in the district.

Council agreed to offer a financial support package to GLL, the leisure contractor that manages leisure facilities across South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse, subject to formal agreements being entered into.

Council supported the package which would ensure residents have access to facilities and the opportunities to stay healthy.

Co.169 Oxfordshire Community Land Trust: affordable housing funding

Councillor Judy Roberts declared a personal interest in this item, as she had been involved with it since 2007, and left the meeting during its consideration.

Council considered Cabinet's recommendation, made at its meeting on 17 March 2021, on a proposal for funding through the Oxfordshire Growth Deal and S106 affordable housing commuted sums to support the development of an affordable housing scheme of eight units at Eynsham Road, Dean Court, Cumnor.

The project would provide eight affordable one and two-bedroomed apartments at Dean Court, Cumnor. This would be largely funded by affordable housing money provided through the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal and topped up by section 106 funding set aside to support such affordable housing schemes.

The risks of funding the project had been addressed with mitigating measures and a condition of the agreement would be that the Oxfordshire Community Land Trust must be a Registered Social Landlord, a status which it had not yet been achieved, but an application was pending for approval by the Regulator of Social Housing.

The affordable housing would meet local need, which had been demonstrated in a recent neighbourhood plan survey, and contribute to the council's corporate plan objective of providing homes by working with community trusts.

RESOLVED: to create a capital budget of £944,000 towards the Oxfordshire Community Land Trust affordable housing scheme at Dean Court, Eynsham Road, Botley, comprising a virement of £600,000 from the existing capital budget for Growth Deal affordable housing and funded by the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal, and £344,000 funded from Section 106 affordable housing commuted sums, from the Westway, Botley scheme (£194,000) and the Former Warnborough College, Boars Hill scheme (£150,000).

The meeting closed at 9.30pm