

Minutes

of a meeting of the

Joint Scrutiny Committee

held on Tuesday, 30 October 2018 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: Sue Lawson, David Nimmo-Smith, David Turner, John Walsh and Ian White

Vale of White Horse District Councillors: Debby Hallett (co-chairman in the chair), Mike Badcock, Robert Hall, Anthony Hayward, Chris Palmer

Officers: Phil Ealey, Liz Hayden and Nicola Meurer

Also present:

Councillor Caroline Newton (South Oxfordshire)

Councillors Eric Batts and Emily Smith (Vale of White Horse)

Sc.19 Apologies for absence

The Vale Cabinet Member for Housing and Environment, Elaine Ware, sent her apologies. Councillor Eric Batts substituted. South Councillor Ian White sent apologies in advance of being late for the meeting.

Sc.20 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 September 2018 were agreed as an accurate record and were signed by the Chairman.

Sc.21 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

Sc.22 Urgent business and chairman's announcements

There were no chairman's announcements.

Sc.23 Public participation

None.

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

Sc.24 Draft housing allocations policy

The committee considered the report of the head of housing and environment which detailed the draft joint housing allocations policy (HAP), which sought comments to be taken into consideration as part of the current consultation process. Background documents had been circulated prior to the meeting, including the:

- Draft housing allocations policy; and
- Equality Impact Assessment.

Caroline Newton, South Cabinet member for housing and environment introduced the report. Also present to answer questions were Vale Councillor Eric Batts (substituting for Councillor Elaine Ware), Cabinet member for legal and democratic services; Liz Hayden, head of housing and environment; and Phil Ealey, Housing Needs Manager.

In response to members' questions, the committee was informed that:

- If a household does not have a local connection anywhere, they are eligible to join the housing register and the local authority will have a duty to provide housing assistance, but not an automatic duty to accommodate.
- Due to continued work in homelessness prevention in collaboration with private landlords, the number of those on the housing register and in temporary accommodation is falling.
- The current consultation is ongoing until 26 November 2018; officers will check this is reflected on the websites.
- The housing allocation policy includes the mechanism for allocating Oxford City's unmet need, subject to any agreement within both council's Local Plans. South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse would retain control of the nomination and allocation process, not Oxford City.
- The term 'keyworker' has not been included due to the difficulty with definition; it is more inclusively 'workers'.
- Once the consultation period is finished, the report will be presented to Cabinet Briefings followed by Cabinets and, subject to approval and not being called-in, will be formally adopted on 11 February 2019.

Committee requested that officers circulate the final consultation report to members prior to the Cabinets meeting.

RESOLVED: to note the draft joint housing allocation policy and request a further report be brought back to scrutiny committee once the Oxford unmet need allocation has been agreed and been in operation; the timescale of which is to be confirmed.

Sc.25 Work schedule and dates for all South and Vale scrutiny meetings

The committee noted its work programme.

The meeting closed at 7:30pm