

# Minutes

of a meeting of the

## Scrutiny Committee

held on Monday, 20 July 2020 at 7.00 pm

virtual meeting:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=boFxYFMN5No>



### Present:

Members: Councillors Nathan Boyd (Chair), Ron Batstone, Andy Foulsham, Mike Pighills, Max Thompson and Cabinet member for Planning, Catherine Webber

Officers: Adrian Duffield (Head of Planning), Suzanne Malcolm (Acting Deputy Chief Executive for Place), Candida Mckelvey, Emma Wright, Richard Sandith, Nina Merritt, Clare Roberts, Lucy Murfett and Paul Bateman

### Sc.42 Urgent business and chairman's announcements

There was no urgent business. The chairman ran through virtual meeting housekeeping rules.

### Sc.43 Apologies for absence

The chairman received apologies from Councillor Briggs.

### Sc.44 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting on 6 July 2020 were agreed as a correct record of the meeting and will be signed by the chairman as such.

### Sc.45 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

### Sc.46 Public participation

None.

### Sc.47 Statement of Community Involvement

Councillor Catherine Webber, Cabinet member for Planning, introduced the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) report. The committee's views were sought on the revised SCI, which had been presented with tracked changes, to reflect updates made since consideration of comments during the six-week consultation period in February 2020, and the impact of Covid-19. The three separate documents have been combined into one, to improve accessibility.

The chairman invited members to raise their questions and views, section by section. Planning officers and the Cabinet member for Planning were present to answer questions.

Vale of White Horse District Council – Scrutiny Committee minutes

Monday, 20 July 2020

**Sc.1**

### Section one:

It was agreed that the report was clear, well laid out, based on good principles, and with evidence of improved accessibility. Overall comments included request for Plain English where possible. Pre-defining of acronyms was agreed as good practice. Documents should be shorter where possible. Diversity in photographs of people to reflect the population was another view expressed. In the introduction on page 13 of the meeting pack - need to remove the preposition.

A request was made to hold Councillor training on the wider principles of planning – environmental impact assessments, local plan etc. It was agreed that this may be possible – Cabinet member for Planning to explore options.

### Section two:

Page 21, 10.4: It was confirmed that the site selection method and document has not yet been produced for the new Local Plan.

Page 24, 11.10: How do we determine a significant environmental effect? Which sites would require a Development Plan Document? The committee were informed that the scope of the screening is set out in legislation. If it meets criteria, strategic environmental assessment with partners such as Natural England, Environment Agency and Historic England. It was agreed that item 11.10 would benefit from rewording. Officers also clarified that if a strategic environmental assessment is not required, an appraisal can be undertaken to show that sustainability is embedded in the plan.

Link to the LPP2 Sustainability Appraisal was provided as requested:

[http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/java/support/dynamic\\_serve.jsp?ID=1173041573&CODE=562231D9660B6B1937B8845D0B2E25A7](http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/java/support/dynamic_serve.jsp?ID=1173041573&CODE=562231D9660B6B1937B8845D0B2E25A7)

On page 22, it was asked how policy documents are activated. In response, it was confirmed that Area Action Plans (AAPs) are a Council decision, examples being Didcot Garden Town and Dalton Barracks – where there is sufficient change. AAP's are used sparingly. SPD's are subservient to the Local Plan. An action arose from this item to reword in order to clarify.

Page 30, 11.32: Who reviews Local Development Orders (LDO)? It was confirmed that this happens every 10 years, currently in progress in the Milton Park LDO. This should be presented to scrutiny within the next 9 months.

Item 11.9 – 11.12: A link was requested to show example documents.

### Section three:

Councillors agreed it was good to see the methods used for notification. On page 39, it was asked why Residents Associations were struck out of the document. It was confirmed that there aren't any of these, so it was misleading to include them.

A discussion took place regarding notifying, and it was concluded that the letter going to households, which currently is correctly addressed to the homeowner as required, could include a line to ask tenants to pass the letter onto the landlord/owner. Land registry searches would be required to get the exact name of each owner, which is time consuming, costly and not always up-to-date details.

A request was made to include a line in the notification letters to ask tenants to pass information about developments to the owner.

Cabinet member for Planning added that Vale of White Horse District Council goes above what is required in terms of notification. A site notice is the requirement, so this council is going above requirement by sending neighbouring homeowners a letter.

The committee discussed development forums, and how more community organisation is required to hear views. Could there be a document that shows how we help residents to object or support a development.

Cabinet member for Planning added that for Valley Park, there is a forum set up by the developer, and ward Councillors will be involved.

Paragraph 24, page 10: it was confirmed that the £2,000 figure was a printing budget.

**RESOLVED:** to welcome the head of planning's report on the changes to the Statement of Community Involvement and request that, before submitting it to Cabinet for approval, the head of planning amends the draft statement to include a section on engagement with development forums for developments over 200 homes, highlighting how residents can get involved.

## **Sc.48 Authority Monitoring Report**

Cabinet member for Planning introduced the Authority Monitoring Report. The report is for 2018-2019, created under a different administration. A large focus of the report was the Local Plan 2030-31 to meet the districts development needs. In 2018-19, housing delivery was above expected and on target. The committee was asked for feedback on the report which would feed into the next year's report.

The committee suggested and discussed the following:

- On table 2, page 93 of the meeting pack, there is a page break issue to resolve.
- Members commended the report and particularly liked the abbreviations given at the front of the report and could be considered for other reports. The report showed solid numbers and clearly presented trends.
- The phrase "positive progress" was queried, how is it arrived at? It was clarified by officers that it means on target, but planners suggested that more definition could be added.
- The 2019-2020 report will be available in early 2020-2021.
- Can we capture future plans for neighbourhood plans in the report? Agreed yes.
- A question was raised about granted developments – can the report show expected start and completion of the developments, in the next one to two years, or later. Planning officers responded that figures from land supply could be inserted.
- Table 4 figures are fixed at the time of 2018-19.
- Discussion regarding SHMA progress targets and whether they remain relevant. Page 128-129 states that the housing need was one and two-bedroom homes, but there were more builds of three and four-bedroom homes. Planning officers responded that the targets against SHMA are relevant for this report.
- Page 152 – a definition for "windfall" will be provided as requested.
- Table seven on page 108 – the new jobs figures were explained – 23,000 jobs is the target, and during 2018-19, 10,000 were created, leaving 13,000 jobs left to create as of 2018-19.

The feedback on this report will be taken on board by planning officers, and changes implemented for the next report. Summary of amends as follows:

- Resolving page breaks
- Plain English used, shorter if possible and simplified to increase accessibility.
- Abbreviation glossary at the front is excellent – use for other reports.
- Define positive progress
- Define windfall
- Details to be added regarding future neighbourhood plans
- Add land supply figures on expected completion of granted developments

Officers and the Cabinet member for planning were thanked for their hard work.

## **Sc.49 Work schedule and dates for all South and Vale scrutiny meetings**

Vale of White Horse District Council – Scrutiny Committee minutes

Monday, 20 July 2020

**Sc.3**

The committee chair spoke about progress on dates – the Cabinet work programme is settling down so we can start to get dates for reports to be presented at committee.

Acting Deputy Chief Executive for Place confirmed that for the civil parking enforcement report, we can only move as quickly as other partners in this Oxfordshire-wide project. Acting Deputy Chief Executive for Place will ask the Head of Housing and Environment whether a pre-brief can be provided. Committee chairman suggested it could be an all councillor briefing, not just scrutiny.

The meeting closed at 8.18 pm