

Notes

of an informal meeting of

Joint Scrutiny Committee members

held on Tuesday, 13 July 2021 at 6.00 pm

This was an informal meeting of committee members and was held virtually.

Watch the recording of the meeting here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yxDjEXX23zY>

Open to the public, including the press

Present:

Members:

South Oxfordshire District Councillors:

Sam Casey-Rerhaye, Kate Gregory, David Turner, Ian White (co chair)

Vale of White Horse District Councillors:

Nathan Boyd (chair), Andy Cooke, David Grant, Alison Jenner (sub),

Officers: Emma Baker, Andrew Down, Adrian Duffield, Candida Mckelvey

Also present: Cabinet members, Councillors Debby Hallett and Anne-Marie Simpson.

Sc.41 Apologies for absence

Cllr Hayleigh Gascoigne submitted apologies. Cllr Alison Jenner attended as a substitute member.

Sc.42 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations.

Sc.43 Urgent business and chair's announcements

Chair ran through the procedure for this informal meeting.

Sc.44 Public participation

There were no public participants or speakers.

Sc.45 Oxfordshire Plan 2050 - Regulation 18 (part 2) consultation

This item was introduced by Cabinet member Councillor Debby Hallett. Cabinet member Councillor Anne-Marie Simpson was also present to answer questions.

This was an item to scrutinise the consultation, not the plan itself.

Emma Baker and Andrew Down were supporting officers for this item. Adrian Duffield also joined the meeting for this item.

The purpose of this item was to allow scrutiny to view the cabinet report on the Regulation 18 consultation, before Cabinet review it.

It's the 2nd consultation on Regulation 18. Consultation starts on 30 July for 10 weeks. Community webinars will be occurring for the public. For Vale, these will happen on 19 August and 22 September (lunchtimes). For South, they will happen on 18 August and 23 September (evenings).

The five local planning authorities need to endorse the consultation and the statement of community involvement.

There is a report for both councils. Appendix A contained the draft plan. An edited version was circulated yesterday. Extra documents were circulated to all councillors by wetransfer.

The item was opened up to comments from members.

- Does this come back to scrutiny? It was confirmed that the results would come back to scrutiny. Detailed schedule of review was not prepared yet. Chair will ensure there will be a standing item on the work programme.
- A view was raised about the intention for more retail / commercial space in Oxford City, when it could be utilised for housing, given the need. Reclaim the city centre for people. Councillors were encouraged to submit their views to the consultation.
- Duty to cooperate – Officer responded that the documents have been drawn up by a shared team from County and the 5 authorities, it's a shared effort. Statutory duty – we have a statement of common ground for collaboration. It is a separate entity in its own right, working together on the key issues. It is a strategic plan, and our local plan picks up on the detail within our district.
- There are 5 spacial strategy options identified for consultation. Oxford-led growth is one – good opportunity to give views. Policy options are identified for councillors to respond to in the consultation.
- Communications – how is it presented? Response cabinet member was that this will be online, for the statement of community involvement (appendix B). There will be mailing list distribution, printed copies available to request, webpages, social media and a comms press release to media. Virtual consultation is mindful of Covid risks.
- Website needs to be accessible to all. Plan website and Oxfordshire Openthought. Some concern over the engagement of offline groups, or people not already on our lists or following our social media/websites.
- This is a consultation for the public to review the options – you can feedback what you think is missing, what needs to be in focus – Cabinet is being asked to endorse this consultation. Is the options list ready for public consultation?
- Is there a definition of 'sustainable'? Need a punchy definition. Cabinet member Cllr Anne Marie Simpson responded that there is some helpful information on page 160 – common principles.
- How are Town and Parish Councils involved? It was responded that the normal process is that we update all councils and we write to Town and Parish Councils to let them know how to access this and how to get assistance. There will be communications (print, media etc) as outlined in the report.
- We need to engage young people. Officer responded that social media comms will be catering for younger audiences too.

South Oxfordshire District Council and Vale of White Horse District Council – Joint Scrutiny informal notes

- A member asked what was the issue with the data that warranted the edit that was circulated? It was responded that the housing numbers data was updated as the figures regarding completions needed adjusting. Satisfied of accuracy.
- Can a video be made / easy read documents? A YouTube video to explain? A 2 to 3-minute video will be available. This would be an overview, not detailed. It was queried whether there could be a longer one, to help engage. The Openthought website will have interactive links also.
- Registered blind and partially sighted people – braille will be available by request. Screen reader software, support at libraries. Could Oxfordshire Association for the Blind be involved to communicate to residents?
- What is the likelihood of net zero carbon not being achieved? Councillor was urged to submit this to consultation. It could also be raised at local plan level.
- Keep Carbon neutral / zero terminology consistent. Officers asked for examples to help officers pick up this within their teams.
- Definitions would be very helpful at the beginning.
- Can we ask for Environment Agency (EA) input? Flood risk. Ask EA what is feasible. It was confirmed that agencies like EA are often involved in such documents. This will be picked up and officers do their best to get input from EA.

If anyone needed the documents sent by wetransfer, contact communications, who sent the link. Cllr Hallett is looking into document accessibility options.

Chair thanked all involved, and the committee members for their input.

Meeting closed 19.02