

Date: 9 October 2008

TO: All Members of the Executive
FOR ATTENDANCE

TO: All Other Members of the Council
FOR INFORMATION

Dear Sir/Madam

Your attendance is requested at a meeting of the **EXECUTIVE** to be held in the **GUILDHALL, ABINGDON** on **FRIDAY, 17TH OCTOBER, 2008** at **2.30 PM**.

Yours faithfully



Carole Nicholl
Head of Democratic Services

Members are reminded of the provisions contained in the Code of Conduct adopted on 30 September 2007 and Standing Order 34 regarding the declaration of Personal and Prejudicial Interests.

A G E N D A

A large print version of this agenda is available. Any background papers referred to may be inspected by prior arrangement. Contact Steve Culliford, Democratic Services Officer on telephone number (01235) 540307; e-mail: steve.culliford@whitehorsedc.gov.uk.

Please note that this meeting will be held in a wheelchair accessible venue. If you would like to attend and have any special access requirements, please let the Democratic Officer know beforehand and he will do his very best to meet your requirements.

Open to the Public including the Press

Map and Vision **(Pages 18 - 19)**

A map showing the location of the venue for this meeting, together with a copy the Council Vision is attached.

STANDING ITEMS

1. Apologies for Absence

To receive apologies for absence.

2. Minutes

To adopt and sign as a correct record the public minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 1 August 2008, (previously circulated).

3. Declarations of Interest

To receive any declarations of Personal or Personal and Prejudicial Interests in respect of items on the agenda for this meeting.

Any Member with a personal interest or a personal and prejudicial interest in accordance with the provisions of the Code of Conduct, in any matter to be considered at a meeting, must declare the existence and nature of that interest as soon as the interest becomes apparent in accordance with the provisions of the Code.

When a Member declares a personal and prejudicial interest he shall also state if he has a dispensation from the Standards Committee entitling him/her to speak, or speak and vote on the matter concerned.

Where any Member has declared a personal and prejudicial interest he shall withdraw from the room while the matter is under consideration unless

- (a) his/her disability to speak, or speak and vote on the matter has been removed by a dispensation granted by the Standards Committee, or
- (b) members of the public are allowed to make representations, give evidence or answer questions about the matter by statutory right or otherwise. If that is the case, the Member can also attend the meeting for that purpose. However, the Member must immediately leave the room once he/she has finished; or when the meeting decides he/she has finished whichever is the earlier and in any event the Member must leave the room for the duration of the debate on the item in which he/she has a personal and prejudicial interest.

4. Urgent Business and Chair's Announcements

To receive notification of any matters which the Chair determines should be considered as urgent business and the special circumstances which have made the matters urgent, and to receive any announcements from the Chair.

5. Statements and Petitions from the Public Under Standing Order 32

Any statements and/or petitions from the public under Standing Order 32 will be made or presented at the meeting.

6. Questions from the Public Under Standing Order 32

Any questions from members of the public under Standing Order 32 will be asked at the meeting.

7. Referral under the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules or the Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules

None

8. Referrals from the Overview and Scrutiny Committees and Other Committees

None

9. Financial Monitoring

(Pages 20 - 21)

Members are requested to consider any significant budget variances and any requests for virement or permanent budget adjustment.

KEY DECISIONS

10. Forward Plan

(Pages 22 - 24)

To receive the Forward Plan containing Executive decisions to be taken from October 2008 to January 2009.

Recommendation

that the Forward Plan be received.

11. The Vale's Strategy for Sustainable Communities - 2008 to 2016 (the "Sustainable Community Strategy")

(Pages 25 - 79)

To receive and consider report 91/08 of the Strategic Director.

Introduction & Report Summary

Under the Local Government Act 2000 and Sustainable Communities Act 2007, the Council is responsible for preparing a Sustainable Community Strategy. Government

guidance requires the strategy to have regard to the economic, social and environmental well-being of the Vale and to identify key priorities for action which will help secure that well being for the future.

The first community strategy for the District was prepared in 2004 for the period up to 2008. In 2007 the Council and its partners in the public, private and voluntary sectors (the Vale Partnership) began to prepare a new strategy.

This report provides information about the sustainable community strategy for 2008 to 2016 which was approved by the Vale Partnership Board on 2nd October 2008.

The contact officer for this report is Toby Warren, Head of Community Strategy (Tel: 01235 547695 Email toby.warren@whitehorsedc.gov.uk).

Recommendations

Members are requested to note the information contained in this report.

Members are requested to recommend the adoption of the Vale's Strategy for Sustainable Communities - 2008 to 2016, by full Council.

Members are requested to formally recognise that John Robertson has been appointed Chair of the Vale Partnership Board.

12. Review of Public Conveniences

(Pages 80 - 86)

To receive and consider report 92/08 of the Deputy Director (Commercial Services).

Introduction and Report Summary

This report relates to a scheme for the modernisation of the service provision of Council owned public conveniences.

The contact officer for this report is Bill Farrar, Deputy Director (Commercial Services), telephone: 01235 540356.

E-mail address: bill.farrar@whitehorsedc.gov.uk

Recommendation

That the Executive approves the new service arrangements for Council owned public conveniences.

OTHER MATTERS

13. Community Grants

(Pages 87 - 100)

To receive and consider report 93/08 of the Strategic Director.

Introduction and Report Summary

The purpose of this report is to set out the budget position for the Executive in respect of Community Grants and to invite Members to consider and determine the grant applications received. The Executive currently considers grant applications bi-annually, in April and October.

The contact officer for this report is Lorna Edwards, Community Strategy Officer, telephone (01235 547626). E-mail: lorna.edwards@whitehorsedc.co.uk

Recommendations

- (a) *that Members note that the Executive's remaining budget for 2008/09 for Vale-wide grants is £8,214;*
- (b) *that Members consider and determine the following grant applications and agree the Council agenda and priority:*
 - (i) *Oxfordshire Play Association, £5,673.00, towards core costs of providing support services to play settings in the Vale, Social Agenda, Access priority*
 - (ii) *South & Vale Carers Centre, £7,938.00, towards core costs or providing a support service to carers, Social Agenda, Access priority*
 - (iii) *Oxford Inspires, £1,500, to stage a series of arts events in the Vale, Social Agenda, Town & Village Vitality priority*
 - (iv) *Assisted Reading for Children in Oxfordshire, £3,000, to impart a love of reading to children in the Vale, Social Agenda, Access priority*
 - (v) *Oxfordshire Playbus, £6,000, towards a replacement sensory vehicle for children with special needs, Social Agenda, Access priority*
 - (vi) *Vale of White Horse Schools Football Association, £500, towards additional pitch fees, Social Agenda, Access priority*
- (c) *that Members consider and determine the following application for third party funding to be awarded from the Lottery and Other Grants Support Fund:*
 - (vii) *Upton Village Hall Amenities Trust, £9,020, as third party funding towards an extension to the village hall.*

14. Budget Setting 2009/10

(Pages 101 - 106)

To receive and consider report 94/08 of the Head of Finance.

Introduction and report summary

This report sets out the four stages that the budget setting process will follow.

The contact officer for this report is Alice Brander (Chief Accountant) telephone 01235 540429. Email address:

Alice.Brande@whitehorsedc.gov.uk

Recommendation

That the budget setting process as detailed in this report and summarised in the timetable at Appendix 1 is approved by the Executive.

15. Local Development Framework: Changes to the Local Development Scheme

(Pages 107 - 134)

To receive and consider report 95/08 of the Deputy Director (Planning and Community Strategy).

Introduction and Report Summary

The Local Development Scheme (LDS) sets the overall timetable for producing documents that comprise the Local Development Framework (LDF). The current LDS was submitted to the Government towards the end of 2006 and agreed by them in May 2007. It is important that it is kept up to date as all LDF documents must be prepared in accordance with it; it informs people what documents will be produced and when; and one element of the Planning and Housing Delivery Grant is dependent on Councils meeting the key milestones it sets out. The LDS should therefore be as realistic as possible about the future work programme.

For ease of reference Appendix 1 to this report sets out the key milestones for:

- The Core Strategy – which establishes the vision for the future of the Vale and the different communities within it, the broad framework for development in the district, key policies and strategic sites
- A “Managing Development” Plan Document – (formerly called the Site Allocations Document) which identifies smaller sites, contains the criteria based development control policies and shows detailed designations (such as major developed sites in the Green Belt)
- The Statement of Community Involvement - sets out how people will be involved in the preparation of the LDF documents
- Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) for design and also sustainable construction and resource efficient buildings.

Appendix 2 contains the LDS as proposed to be revised and submitted to the Government Office.

We have recently received a request from Thames Valley Police to secure contributions or facilities for the police. Officers are currently assessing the need for and timing of such guidance, and whether the resources are available to prepare and implement it. The Strategic and Local Planning Advisory Group considered it would be appropriate for a decision on whether to include this in the LDS to be delegated to the Deputy Director (Planning and Community Strategy) in consultation with the planning portfolio holder and opposition spokesman.

The contact officer for this report is Katie Barrett (Development Policy Manager, telephone 01235 540339. E-mail address: katie.barrett@whitehorsedc.gov.uk)

Recommendations

The Executive agree the changes to the timetable for the preparation of the documents that will comprise the local development framework as set out in Appendix 1 to this report, and agree to the Local Development Scheme in Appendix 2 to this report being submitted to the Government Office.

In the event that the Government Office requires changes to the Local Development Scheme, authority be delegated to the Deputy Director (Planning and Community Strategy) to:

- i) make minor changes that do not affect the overall approach of the LDS*
- ii) make more substantive changes in consultation with the planning portfolio holder and opposition spokesman.*

Authority be delegated to the Deputy Director in consultation with the planning portfolio holder and opposition spokesman to decide the principle of whether to include an SPD for contributions towards new infrastructure for the police arising from new development.

16. Proposed Changes to the Draft South East Plan

(Pages 135 - 145)

To receive and consider report 96/08 of the Deputy Director (Planning and Community Strategy).

Introduction and Report Summary

The Government is consulting on the proposed changes it intends to make to the draft South East Plan that will guide development in the region to 2026. The closing date for comments is 24 October 2008. Members will recall that the draft plan was prepared by the South East England Regional Assembly (SEERA). It was submitted to Government in March 2006 and after a period of consultation an examination in public was held (November 2006 – March 2007) where an independent panel of planning inspectors tested the plan for soundness. The report of the panel, including their recommended changes, was published in August 2007. The Council made comments on the panel's recommendations (see report to Executive October 2007).

Three key documents have been received

- a schedule of the changes proposed to the draft plan with the Secretary of State's reasons for doing so (532 pages)
- a sustainability appraisal and habitats regulation assessment (40 pages) and
- a companion document showing what the final plan would look like if all the changes proposed were incorporated (313 pages).

These documents are available for public inspection at the local services point and the members lounge in Abbey House. They can also be viewed on the Government Office web site at www.gose.gov.uk/planning/regional_planning and there is an item for information on the Council's web site.

Section 4 of this report very briefly summarises the key changes proposed and focuses on the implications of the changes for Central Oxfordshire and the Vale. The South East Plan is important as when approved it will replace the Oxfordshire Structure Plan and along with key documents in the Council's Local Development Framework it will

form the development plan. All plans and strategies of the Council must take the development plan into account, and applications for planning permission should be determined in accordance with it.

The contact officer for this report is Katie Barrett (Development Policy Manager) telephone (01235 540339). E-mail address:

katie.barrett@whitehorsedc.gov.uk

Recommendations

The Advisory Group recommends the Executive to inform the Secretary of State for the Environment that the Council:

- (a) Broadly supports the proposed changes to simplify the structure and format of the South East Plan, in particular the definition of a clear spatial strategy, and make the wording clearer, more focused and more succinct than in the draft plan. However, the focus for Central Oxfordshire should be managed economic growth as this more accurately reflects the policies for the sub region. It is also regrettable that some proposed policies that set out the approach local authorities should take when preparing LDFs in the form of a list of criteria (e.g. Policy C7) have not been expressed as general policies that could be used to determine applications – this would have obviated the need for policies in local development documents covering the same matters.*
- (b) The changes to the wording from general intentions to a more positive approach, and the use of the word ‘will’ rather than ‘should’, put a much greater onus on the local authorities to deliver, particularly through the LDF process. Whilst this is not unreasonable, or the tasks difficult in themselves, the implications for local authorities are considerable. LDFs are required to have a greater scope, give greater certainty and detail early in the development process, and cover a much longer time period than the local plans they replace. The Government should not expect such plans to be delivered more quickly than old style local plans particularly in view of the need to consider all reasonable options, the much greater emphasis on a robust evidence base, limited public funds (including the requirement for year-on-year efficiency savings), the shortage of experienced planning staff and the demands being put by all local authorities on the service providers who may be unable to respond fully in the timescales set out.*
- (c) The Council objects to the removal of the conditionality clause in policy CC7, which stated development would only be allowed if there was the infrastructure to support it, as, particularly through the development control process, it could result in unsustainable development and lead to a continuation of past trends of under investment in the region that could damage its social and economic strengths. The Government should recognise that councils cannot be held responsible for those aspects of delivery they do not control: the market and Government spending on infrastructure and affordable housing play a large part. The need for infrastructure to support the social well-being and economic vitality of the South East should be fully reflected in future Government spending reviews.*
- (d) While there is no objection to the deletion of the policy on strategic gaps at the regional level, the reasons for doing so must not preclude such designations at*

the local level. The panel recognised this may be necessary where gaps between settlements cannot be protected by landscape and other policies. PPS7 is not sufficient to prevent the coalescence of settlements where the open gaps are very narrow.

- (e) There should be references to the need to ensure inter-regional connectivity, including with the South West region, in the text introducing the spatial strategy.*
- (f) The Council objects to policy RE1 as it should refer to employment land reviews being the basis for the provision of employment land in LDFs. As worded it would allow for the release of more employment land than justified by employment land reviews in response to something as ill defined as changes in the global economy. It pushes down to a local level decisions that should be made at the national or regional level and could result in speculative applications and subsequent appeal decisions leading to a significant over development of employment land in some areas in relation to the level of housing and other planned infrastructure, which would not be sustainable. The Government should set out in the RSS what levels of employment development will be appropriate. Otherwise the decision over the level of development in the most important area of the UK for employment will be left up to individual Councils. This approach contradicts the early review of employment land suggested under policy RE3.*
- (g) Policy RE5 refers to local authorities enabling businesses to operate as efficiently as possible in relation to movement. There should be recognition that the means to effect improvements in movement lie outside the hands of local authorities and are the responsibility of Government. Councils cannot improve the capacity of trunk roads, motorways or railways. Without Government support on this aspect Councils cannot operate this.*
- (h) While the Council is pleased that the overall level of housing in the district has increased by only 60 houses over the 20 years, it objects to policy H1 as it does not give clear strategic guidance on the levels of housing development to be planned for, and fails to give certainty to communities, service providers and developers. Although there are figures for the minimum number of houses to be provided in each area, local development frameworks are expected to test higher levels of housing development. These are key strategic matters that should be resolved at the regional level and not in an ad hoc way through a myriad of local development documents. It puts additional demands on an already complex LDF process and it is not at all clear how local authorities will know whether they have done sufficient testing and whether any increase proposed will be in general conformity with the overall strategy of the RSS. Furthermore the approach could leave the way open for decisions to be taken on higher levels of growth through the development control process. Especially when taken in conjunction with policy RE1, it undermines the ability to plan comprehensively for balanced housing and employment growth and the provision of infrastructure and services to meet the needs of new development. It undermines the objectives of sustainable housing and the validity of the sustainability appraisal undertaken at the regional level. The reference to the housing figures being minimal should therefore be deleted and any increase sought should be determined through a review of the South East Plan. The Council also objects to the reference to councils assessing the ability to*

accelerate the rate of housing delivery in the new growth points (which includes Didcot) as this is something that should be assessed through the review of the South East Plan.

- (i) If the Government retains the figures in policy H1 as minima, clarification is required that the need to provide a 'minimum annual average' rate of housing does not mean that over provision in one year will not count towards the overall total, or that the requirement to plan for an upward trajectory of housing completions does not necessitate a year on year increase in completions. In addition it is not at all clear how local authorities are to test the longer term issues arising from eco-towns through emerging LDFs when so little is known about them – this should be something the Government takes into account when it assesses whether particular proposals should be pursued.*
- (j) The Council objects to policy NRM3 as the Environment Agency has concluded that currently it cannot support Thames Water's proposed reservoir. If the reservoir is not required to be as large as currently proposed, then in the Council's view there is no need for it to be located in Oxfordshire. The geographic reference to the Upper Thames Reservoir being in Oxfordshire should therefore be removed from policy NRM 3.*

For Central Oxfordshire and the Rest of the Vale

- (k) While the objective of improving self containment of towns is generally supported, the plan must recognise that much of the employment for Didcot and Wantage/Grove will be provided at Milton Park and Harwell. Policy CO1 should seek the self containment of the Quadrant area as a whole and not the individual settlements.*
- (l) The redistribution of some dwellings from the Central Oxfordshire part of the Vale to the figures for the rest of the district although small is welcome (policies CO1 and AOSR1).*
- (m) The Council objects to the way the south Oxford strategic development area (SDA) has been justified. The regional imperative to deliver higher housing numbers could be met elsewhere in the South East: therefore it is not an exceptional circumstance that over-rides Green Belt policy. Furthermore the Western Otmoor eco-town as proposed would provide housing linked to Oxford by a fast, free and frequent public transport services. It is not, therefore correct to say at this stage that there is a lack of alternatives to the strategic development area.*
- (n) The Council objects to proposed paragraph 22.15 and the last sentence of paragraph 22.20. As worded there is no guidance on who will judge whether the land south of Oxford is unsuitable for development. It is not realistic to assume that the local authorities would agree alternative locations for the 4,000 homes proposed for this area. Even if agreement could be reached it is difficult to see how this could be tested at examination – which could involve two or more different LDFs and would seriously prejudice public involvement in the process. Such proposals would not be in general conformity with the South East Plan and could result in legal challenges. The desire for flexibility to achieve the building rates proposed creates considerable uncertainty and may affect delivery. Furthermore it is not consistent with the Government's previous insistence that for Didcot the*

Oxfordshire Structure Plan had to clearly apportion the housing requirement to particular districts. If there are serious doubts whether the SDA south of Oxford is deliverable it should not be included in the Plan. Given recent statements that the Government is reducing its overall target of 240,000 new homes a year to 210,000 and the current debate about a possible eco town at Weston Otmoor, the need for additional homes on the edge of Oxford should be deleted from this plan and reassessed through the review of the South East Plan. This would also give the opportunity to fully assess whether the location chosen for development is deliverable. It is noted that SEERA's report to the regional planning committee objects to the south Oxford SDA as the preferred spatial option should be based on growth at Bicester, Didcot, Wantage & Grove and within the built up area of Oxford. However, this strategy was based on significantly lower level of development. This ability to deliver an increase in numbers in these locations and the implications for traffic accessing Oxford have not been tested, therefore no increase in housing numbers elsewhere should be made or alluded to in this Plan.

- (o) The policy in the spatial strategy section of the plan (SP5) requires selective reviews of the Green Belt including to the south of the Oxford to accommodate an extension to Oxford city: by definition of it is demonstrated that land in South Oxfordshire is unsuitable, then to comply with the policy it would fall to the Vale to undertake a review of Green Belt in its area as it is the only other authority with land south of the city. Unlike land to the north of the city, the County Council has never proposed an urban extension to Oxford in this district. If the Government retains the strategic development area south of Oxford in the Plan and if subsequently a case is made that an urban extension cannot be built in South Oxfordshire, alternative locations must be considered through a review of the South East Plan. The wording of policies SP5 and CO4 should be changed to 'a selective review of Green Belt boundaries is required in the following locations'. This would mean that if the review failed in South Oxfordshire it would not follow that there should be a further review south of the city. In no other areas where a review is proposed does the South East Plan require a wider review to deliver alternative locations if the area proposed for the development is not achievable. In addition it is not reasonable for the review of the Green Belt to safeguard land for development to at least 2031 based on the rate of development proposed in the SDA to 2026. The SDA is proposed to meet the requirements of the period to 2026: what happens beyond then should be judged afresh and not simply continue the growth proposed in this plan period.*
- (p) Changes in the transport section referring to prioritising transport schemes that aid delivery of the sub-regional strategy, improving the links between homes and jobs in the Didcot-Wantage and Grove corridor, and local schemes including improving the A415 and providing the Marcham bypass are welcome. However, it should be pointed out that in a relatively large and mainly rural area with only one rail station, the car will remain the dominant mode of travel.*
- (q) There should be recognition of the status of the larger market towns (such as Abingdon) in the policy or explanatory text of policies BE4 and/or CO1. They currently have the same policy approach as villages, yet they are sustainable locations that could accommodate development that meets the need of a wider area than just the needs of that community.*

17. Draft South West Spatial Strategy – Secretary of State’s Proposed Changes August 2008

(Pages 146 - 154)

(Wards Affected: Faringdon and The Coxwells; Shrivenham;)

To receive and consider report 97/08 of the Deputy Director (Planning and Community Strategy).

Introduction and Report Summary

The draft Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West (or South West Plan) covers the area which abuts the Vale’s western boundary. This area includes Swindon. An independent panel of planning inspectors examined the draft Plan and the representations made. The Report of the Panel was submitted to the Secretary of State in January 2008. Following receipt of the Panel Report the Secretary of State has now published her proposed changes to the draft Plan under cover of a letter from Baroness Andrews to Sir Simon day, Chair of the South West Regional Assembly. Responses to the proposed changes are required by Friday 24 October 2008. This report describes and comments on the main changes that are proposed and sets out a proposed response from this Council. The document incorporating the proposed changes runs to some 290 pages.

There is also a covering letter from Baroness Andrews to Sir Simon day, Chair of the South West Regional Assembly.

In the draft South West Plan, Swindon is identified as a Strategically Significant City or Town (SSCT) and, among other things, the Plan includes the proposed location of a strategic urban extension of about 12,000 dwellings on the eastern side of the town. This was endorsed by the Panel Report. The Secretary of State has accepted that provision for sustainable housing growth in Swindon should include 12,000 new homes to the east of the town. This and other more detailed matters will be considered further in the main body of this report.

In her covering letter the Secretary of State notes that while the basis of the draft Plan has been retained, changes are proposed to reduce its length and make it clearer. These are summarised as:

- a) Section 2 ‘The Context for the Spatial Strategy’ has been deleted in its entirety.
- b) Section 4 ‘Sub-Regional Strategy Statements and Housing Distribution’ and Section 5 ‘Regional Approach to Transport’ have been deleted and completely replaced.
- c) A new policy ‘Policy CSS’ sets out the core objectives of the strategy.
- d) Housing provision over the plan period is increased by 29% over that in the draft Plan. The additional housing growth is proposed at Bristol, Exeter and Plymouth.
- e) The affordable housing target is increased from 7,500 to 10,000 homes per annum.
- f) Changes have also been made to Policy G on Sustainable Construction and Policy RE5 on Renewable Energy to more closely align them with national policy.

The Secretary of State comments that the changes signal the need for the draft Plan to

be refined through a partial review to ensure the South West maximises its contribution to the national home building target. Any additional housing growth will need to be planned in the most sustainable way by identifying further broad locations to meet longer term development needs, considering proposals for New Growth Points and Ecotowns.

The Secretary of State also notes that the changes amend the overarching policy in the draft Plan on infrastructure to ensure that the policy is focussed on regional and sub-regional infrastructure but that the changes do not include detailed proposals on infrastructure as further work is required to assess infrastructure needs and priorities. Further comment is made on this in the main body of this report.

The contact officer for this report is Nick Burroughs, Principal Planning Officer (Planning and Community), telephone (01235 520202 extn. 496). E-mail: nick.burroughs@whitehorsedc.gov.uk

Recommendations

That the Executive agree that the following responses on the draft South West Plan Proposed Changes, subject to any further amendments, are formally submitted to the Government Office for the South West:

- (c) The Council objects to Development Policy A, as proposed to be changed, because the references to the wider context have been deleted and recommends that new Development Policy A, as proposed to be changed, is amended to restore these explicit references to the wider context;*
- (d) The Council objects to Development Policy D, as proposed to be changed, because it does not require that the regionally and sub-regionally significant infrastructure required to service development has been identified and proven to be deliverable and recommends that Development Policy D, as proposed to be changed, is amended by the addition of the words 'as part of the relevant major development proposal as set out in the RSS';*
- (e) The Council supports the addition to para 3.7.3 of the clause "well-connected by sustainable transport to higher order services and facilities in city and town centres";*
- (f) The Council objects to Development Policy F, as proposed to be changed, because it does not explicitly acknowledge that urban extensions have implications for their surrounding communities and recommends that Development Policy F, as proposed to be changed, fourth bullet point, is amended as follows; 'amenity space and green infrastructure that meets community needs, provides adequate protection to existing neighbouring communities, respects the landscape setting and supports improved biodiversity';*
- (g) The Council objects to Policy HMA2: Swindon HMA, as proposed to be changed, because it should make provision for an additional search area of sustainable housing and accordingly make consequential changes to the quanta of new homes set out in the respective search areas and require that the regionally and sub-regionally significant infrastructure required to service development has*

been identified and proven to be deliverable. It recommends that Policy HMA2: Swindon HMA, as proposed to be changed, is amended;

- (i) as it relates to Area of Search 2A to the east of Swindon by the deletion of 12,000 new homes and the substitution of 10,200 new homes,*
- (ii) by the insertion of a new Area of Search at Commonhead for 1,800 new home, and*
- (iii) by the insertion of the following text ' The release of land for the proposed 10,200 homes at Area of Search 2A to the east of Swindon is dependent upon the confirmation that the transport and other infrastructure required to service the development has been identified and proven to be deliverable.';*

- (h) The Council objects to Policy RTS1, as proposed to be changed, because it does not reflect the connectivity that the regionally important A420 provides between the South West and South East Regions and recommends that Policy RTS1, as proposed to be changed, is modified to reflect that the A420 Swindon to Oxford Road has the same status as it has in the draft South East Plan.*

18. Partial Review of the South East Plan - Provision of Caravan Sites for Gypsies and Travellers

(Pages 155 - 160)

To receive and consider report 98/08 of the Deputy Director (Planning and Community Strategy).

Introduction and Report Summary

The South East Regional Assembly (SEERA) is undertaking a partial review of the South East Plan relating to the provision of sites for gypsies and travellers in the south east. The first stage was an opportunity for councils to submit their advice on the expected numbers and distribution of sites in their areas. In Oxfordshire a steering group of Councillors representing the County Council and the five District Councils worked with the support of an officer working group to provide a response. The work involved consultation with stakeholders, a recalculation of the expected need as set out in the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) prepared by the Association of Councils of the Thames Valley Region (ACTVaR) and an alternative disaggregation of the County figure down to District level. The recalculated need for the County to 2016 is 42 pitches in comparison to the original GTAA figure of 98 to 2016. The response of this Council was agreed at a meeting of the Executive on 5th October 2007.

SEERA is now undertaking consultation on four options for pitch provision for long term occupation, transit spaces and travelling showpeople. The closing date for responses is 21 November 2008. A public consultation event will be taking place in Oxfordshire. Following consultation SEERA will submit a draft Partial Review document and Sustainability Appraisal to Government in April 2009 and then an Examination will follow with adoption expected in 2010.

The Strategic and Local Planning Advisory Group met on 6 October 2008 and agreed with the recommendations set out below.

The Contact Officer for this report is Peter Williams, Principal Planning Officer, (01235 520202 ext 502)

Recommendations

That the Council:

- (a) supports the suggested overall provision of 42 gypsy and traveller pitches in Oxfordshire and provision for the Vale of either 1 pitch under option A;*
- (b) opposes the redistribution of gypsy and traveller pitches across the region under options B, C and D as being arbitrary, not supported by evidence and unsustainable;*
- (c) supports the consultation's transit site provision for Oxfordshire and requests SEERA to clarify the basis for the local distribution of sites and how the provision relates to the translation of transit provision into new sites in the GTAA;*
- (d) supports the overall provision of 7 travelling showpeople plots across Oxfordshire and the distributions under options A and B with a preference for A;*
- (e) opposes the redistribution of travelling showpeople plots across the region under options C and D as being arbitrary, not supported by evidence and unsustainable; and*
- (f) requests SEERA to closely examine the information presented by the Guild of Travelling Showmen to support the provision for 42 homeless families and take into account their needs in the distribution of provision.*

19. Local Authority Carbon Management Programme

(Pages 161 - 163)

To receive and consider report 99/08 of the Deputy Director (Housing and Community Development).

Introduction and Report Summary

This report updates the Executive Committee on progress made in delivering the Council's Climate Change Strategy

In particular it details the Council's progress on the Carbon Management Programme, a Government sponsored programme that the Council is embarking upon this year to assist it with the delivery of reductions in its carbon emissions

The contact officer for this report is Paul Staines, Deputy Director Housing and Community Safety, telephone (01235 547621).

paul.staines@whitehorsedc.gov.uk

Recommendation

The Executive note the progress made in delivering the climate change strategy.

20. Health and Safety Performance 2007/08

(Pages 164 - 170)

To receive and consider report 100/08 of the Deputy Director (Organisational Development and Support).

Introduction and Report Summary

The Annual Report on Health and Safety Performance for 2007/08 is attached at Appendix A. The aim is to provide members, the public and others interested in health and safety with information on what the district council is doing to protect its employees, volunteers, contractors, clients and service users. Overall the council's health and safety record has been good. 2007/08 has been a good year for embedding a robust framework to ensure a high level of health and safety performance at all levels, underpinned by an understanding of roles and responsibilities, quality training and development, and consistent application of policies and procedures.

In particular, an IOSH (Institute of Occupational Safety and Health) accredited development programme for managers and members has been put in place and training has commenced. The Vale's Governance arrangements for health and safety at both a board and operational level have been embedded. A review of risk assessments has been undertaken in all service areas, ensuring that all significant risks have been covered. Also new initiatives on monitoring have been introduced with our partners in delivering services in leisure and grounds maintenance.

The contact officer for this report is Helen Bishop, Deputy Director (Organisational Development and Support), telephone (01235 540372).
E-mail: helen.bishop@whitehorsedc.gov.uk

Recommendation

That the Annual Report on Health and Safety Performance for 2007/08 is received and published.

21. Leisure Contracts Annual Reporting

(Pages 171 - 214)

To receive and consider report 101/08 of the Strategic Director.

Introduction and Report Summary

This report provides background information to elected members on the two Annual Reports attached relating to the two leisure contracts currently operating within the Vale.

There are different elements found within each report due to the differing make up of the two contracts under which the services are provided. Members are asked to take this into consideration when evaluating the two reports.

The Contact Officer for this report is Chris Webb Leisure Facilities Manager (chris.webb@whitehorsedc.gov.uk), 01235 540358.

Recommendations

The Executive are recommended to agree to these reports are for information only and there are no recommendations.

22. Exclusion of the Public, including the Press

The Chair to move that in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public, including the press, be excluded from the remainder of the meeting to prevent the disclosure to them of exempt information, as defined in Section 100(I) and Part 1 of Schedule 12A, as amended, to the Act when the following items are considered:

- Item 23 Minutes
(Category 3 - Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information.))

- Item 24 Referral from Personnel Committee
(Category 3)

EXEMPT INFORMATION UNDER 100A(4) OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

STANDING ITEMS

23. Minutes

To adopt and sign as a correct record the Exempt minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 1 August 2008, (previously circulated).

OTHER MATTERS

24. Referral from Personnel Committees

(Page 215)

To consider the attached paper.