

# Ex.51

**MINUTES OF A MEETING  
OF THE EXECUTIVE**

**HELD AT THE CIVIC HALL, WANTAGE  
ON WEDNESDAY, 3RD DECEMBER,  
2008 AT 8.25PM**

**Open to the Public, including the Press**

PRESENT:

MEMBERS: Councillor Tony de Vere (Chair), Jerry Patterson (Vice-Chair), Richard Farrell, Jenny Hannaby, Angela Lawrence, Mary de Vere and Richard Webber

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE: Katie Barrett, Rodger Hood, Carole Nicholl and Tim Treuherz

NUMBER OF MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC: Nil

Ex.82 Apologies for Absence

None.

Ex.83 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Jerry Patterson declared a personal interest in the Local Development Framework: Core Strategy Preferred Options in so far as he was a Member of on the Executive Regional Planning Committee of the South East England Regional Assembly and also a member of the Central Oxfordshire Steering Group.

Ex.84 Urgent Business and Chair's Announcements

None.

Ex.85 Statements and Petitions from the Public Under Standing Order 32

None.

Ex.86 Questions from the Public Under Standing Order 32

None.

Ex.87 Local Development Framework: Core Strategy Preferred Options

Councillor Jerry Patterson had declared a personal interest in this item.

The Committee received and considered report 122/08 of the Deputy Director (Planning and Community Strategy) which reminded Members that the Council had to produce a Local Development Framework which was a new style of development plan that would replace the Local Plan. The first document to be prepared was the Core Strategy and an important part of the process was engaging with the public. To this end a draft Preferred Options report had been prepared under the guidance of the Strategic and Local Planning Advisory Group which Members had before them

It was noted that members of the Executive had been present at the Development Committee when it considered the report earlier in the evening and the Executive had regard to the comments made at that meeting.

One Member suggested that an explanation of what the Local Development Framework meant should be included in the Foreword to the document, to include an explanation of what the strategy was trying to achieve; an explanation of what the Council was required to do; details of the preferred option and the relevant legislation under which the strategy was required.

One member commented that a key element of the proposals was the requirement for adequate infrastructure and to this end there was a need to undertake technical feasibility assessments of the infrastructure and secure adequate funding towards those proposals. He expressed concern about raising expectations and emphasised that it was important that it be made clear that some proposals in the strategy were aspirational. He commented that dialogue with the County Council and the Highway Agency who were responsible for highways was needed and he asked that the Officers state this in the strategy advising that those discussions would take place. He sought further clarification on this, commenting that these prime discussions should be undertaken with the responsible Officer together with the relevant portfolio holder at the County Council. He stated that the commitment being given should be clear and the agreement for this was needed by the County Council also.

One Member expressed concern regarding a possible reduction in the provision of social housing and she asked that this should not be compromised when discussing section 106 contributions. In response the Officers reported that this was a matter for Members to consider in each case and that difficult choices would need to be made. It was emphasised that a development could not proceed if the right infrastructure was not in place. It was commented that further discussions were needed with the County Council regarding infrastructure requirements.

The Officers reported that the County Council had commissioned a central Oxfordshire transport strategy and that once this was available details would be reported to Members. It was commented that many of the issues raised in the discussion at the Development Control Committee meeting might be addressed in this document.

One Member commented that the most important map was that which classified the roads and he reiterated that dialogue between Members of the County Council and this Council was needed and he asked that this be phased into the process before the draft strategy was agreed. The Officers responded that they had been pressing for approval of the transport studies by the County Council to enable this Council to take forward the measures in the local development framework.

One Member referred to the comments made at the Development Control Committee regarding the possibility of reviewing the strategy in the future. The Officers confirmed that the strategy could be revised. It was considered that the Officers should emphasise that the strategy was the right strategy at this point in time having regard to how matters were seen now.

One Member considered that the proposal to concentration development in a few locations was more likely to secure financial contributions towards infrastructure.

One Member noted the comments made regarding the strategy needing review but stated that whilst there was a recession at present it was known that there was a still demand for housing in the south east and that that demand would increase.

In response to a question raised regarding the required number of new houses the Officers reported that there was a choice as to whether 1500 new houses should be allocated at Abingdon or at Wantage, although it was commented that this figure might reduce as there was still more work needed to assess development opportunities in the urban areas. It was noted that it was necessary to demonstrate that housing in urban areas would come forward. One Member commented that he was not sure that this was understood by members of the public generally. Another Member commented that both allocations could be agreed as the figures presented were based on the minimum requirement.

By 7 votes to nil it was

## *R E C O M M E N D E D*

- (a) *that the Preferred Options report be approved for publication in January 2009 subject to the following amendments:*
- (i) *reference to the names of special schools should be removed from the document;*
  - (ii) *Officers clarifying in the document the position of the Marcham Road improvements and those of Colwell Drive in Abingdon;*
  - (iii) *the need to make clear that the most likely section of the southern bypass at Abingdon would be the section over the river Ock and to this end the deletion of the last sentence in point 5 in paragraph 3.4;*
  - (iv) *reference to the Wilts and Berks Canal being added to paragraph 5.1 and that the canal should be depicted on the maps for Abingdon, Wantage and Grove;*
  - (v) *include a reference to the meaning of the Local Development Framework; an explanation of what the strategy was trying to achieve; an explanation of what the Council was required to do; details of the preferred option and the relevant legislation under which the strategy was required;*
  - (vi) *it being made clear that some of the infrastructure requirements are aspirational only and that it would be necessary to undertake technical feasibility assessments of the infrastructure and secure adequate funding towards those plans;*

- (vii) *it being emphasised that the strategy is the right strategy at this point in time having regard to how matters are seen now;*
  
- (b) *that the Deputy Director (Planning and Community Strategy), be delegated authority to make changes to the report which do not alter the overall content and message of the report and if necessary in consultation with the Chair and Opposition Spokesman of the Strategic and Local Planning Advisory Group be delegated authority to agree more substantive changes to the report.*

**Exempt Information Under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972**

None.

The meeting rose at 9.00 pm