

Minutes

of a special meeting of the

Council



held on Wednesday 18 September 2024 at 7.00 pm
at The Ridgeway, The Beacon, Portway, Wantage, OX12 9BY

Open to the public, including the press

Present:

Councillors: Kiera Bentley (Chair), Paul Barrow, Ron Batstone, Cheryl Briggs, Sue Caul, Robert Clegg, Mark Coleman, Andy Cooke, James Cox, Andy Crawford, Eric de la Harpe, Lucy Edwards, Neil Fawcett, Andy Foulsham, Katherine Foxhall, Hayleigh Gascoigne, Jenny Hannaby, Scott Houghton, Sarah James, Diana Lugova, Robert Maddison, Patrick O'Leary, Viral Patel, Helen Pighills, Jill Rayner, Judy Roberts, Val Shaw, Andrew Skinner, Peter Stevens, Emily Smith, Bethia Thomas and Max Thompson

Officers: Emily Barry (Democratic Services Officer), Steven Corrigan (Democratic Services Manager), Suzanne Malcolm (Deputy Chief Executive – Place), Tim Oruye (Head of Policy and Programmes) and Vivien Williams (Interim Head of Legal and Democratic)

28. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Debra Dewhurst, Oliver Forder, Debby Hallett, Mike Pighills and Sally Povolotsky.

29. Declarations of interest

Councillor Crawford declared an interest in agenda item 5 as a Director of Westmill Solar - a co-operative based in Watchfield. On seeking advice from the monitoring officer, he remained in the room and voted on the item.

30. Urgent business and chair's announcements

The chair advised that there was no urgent business and provided housekeeping announcements.

31. Public participation

No members of the public had registered to address Council.

32. Joint Local Plan 2041 - Approval of Publication Version and Next Steps

Council considered Cabinet's recommendations, made at its meeting immediately preceding the Council meeting on the approval of the publication version of the Joint Local Plan 2041.

Councillor Foulsham, Cabinet Member for Policy and Programmes, introduced the item and moved Cabinet’s recommendations. In doing so he began by expressing his delight that he was able to present a plan to Council which reflected the policies which so many members had been campaigning on and pursuing with diligence and enthusiasm at recent elections and during their time as councillors. The Regulation 19 Joint Local Plan (the Plan) presented to Council marked the culmination of collaborative work commenced in March 2021 with South Oxfordshire District Council. The Plan would set a higher policy requirement for new development leading to more sustainable development in each district. The Plan would secure nature recovery, more affordable housing, a substantial response to climate change and protect landscapes. He advised that the Plan was being brought forward earlier than anticipated. The revision to the timeline was in response to an offer from the Deputy Prime Minister to submit a plan within one month of the new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) coming into force. Whilst the Plan had been accelerated, he emphasised that effective consultation had been undertaken with the public who had responded positively. In addition, 35 member steering group sessions had been undertaken and 14 all member roundtable sessions. He reminded Council that to enable the submission of the Plan in December it was necessary to agree the Plan as drafted. Unpicking elements of the Plan at this stage risked running into problems with the Sustainability Appraisal, Habitats Regulation Assessment and Viability Assessment which would prevent the early submission, and with it the advantages, of the Plan. He thanked Councillor Debby Hallett, the previous Cabinet portfolio holder, for all the work she had undertaken to progress the Plan, and Councillor Anne-Marie Simpson, South Oxfordshire District Council’s Cabinet Member for Planning, who had provided him with support and guidance during the development of the Plan.

Members welcomed the Plan which was ambitious for residents and the environment. Members welcomed the policies included to provide housing for residents – affordable, rental and of different sizes and types. They welcomed the policies to protect the environment, tackle climate change, build sustainable communities and the inclusion of policies applicable to development including embodied carbon, biodiversity net gain and dark skies mapping. The development of a joint plan would also serve those communities within the new developments around Didcot well, which were split between the two district councils.

Whilst members who expressed a view welcomed the Plan some issues and observations were raised. Concern was expressed that the Plan allocated the bulk of employment sites across both districts to Harwell Campus which was not well located for sustainable travel, was not located close to where people lived and would not protect the landscape and beauty of the North Wessex Downs National Landscape. Views were also expressed regretting the need to reduce the requirement for affordable housing from 50 per cent to 40 per cent, the reduction in the embodied carbon requirement, the need to ensure adequate healthcare, leisure facilities and infrastructure provision.

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 68, which provides for a recorded vote if three members request one, the chair called for a recorded vote on the motion which was declared carried with the voting as follows:

For	Against	Abstentions
Paul Barrow		
Ron Batstone		
Kiera Bentley		

Cheryl Briggs		
Sue Caul		
Robert Clegg		
Mark Coleman		
Andy Cooke		
James Cox		
Andrew Crawford		
Eric de la Harpe		
Lucy Edwards		
Neil Fawcett		
Andy Foulsham		
Katherine Foxhall		
Hayleigh Gascoigne		
Jenny Hannaby		
Scott Houghton		
Sarah James		
Diana Lugova		
Robert Maddison		
Patrick O'Leary		
Viral Patel		
Helen Pighills		
Jill Rayner		
Judy Roberts		
Val Shaw		
Andrew Skinner		
Emily Smith		
Peter Stevens		
Bethia Thomas		
Max Thompson		
Total: 32	Total: 0	Total: 0

RESOLVED:

1. that the Joint Local Plan 2041 Publication Version (Appendix 1 of the report of the Head of Policy and Programmes to the special meeting of Cabinet on 18 September 2024), Proposed Joint Local Plan Policies Map Publication Version (Appendix 2 of the report of the Head of Policy and Programmes to the special meeting of Cabinet on 18 September 2024) and supporting documents be made available for a six-week period under Regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012;
2. that following the six-week period, to authorise the Head of Policy and Programmes, in consultation with the South Cabinet member for Planning and the Vale Cabinet member for Policy and Programmes, to submit the Joint Local Plan 2041 Publication Version and all associated documents, together with a Statement including how the responses to the Preferred Options Joint Local Plan have been taken into account and a summary of the main issues raised in the publication stage responses, to the Secretary of State for independent examination under Regulation 22 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012;
3. to authorise the Head of Policy and Programmes in consultation with the South Cabinet member for Planning and the Vale Cabinet member for Policy and Programmes, to make non-material changes and corrections to the Joint Local

- Plan 2041 and supporting documents, to address editorial, typographical and grammatical errors, up to the publicity period;
4. to authorise the Head of Policy and Programmes in consultation with the South Cabinet member for Planning and the Vale Cabinet member for Policy and Programmes, to propose changes and corrections to the Joint Local Plan 2041 and supporting documents, including policy updates, editorial, typographical and grammatical errors, during and following the publicity period, plan submission and during examination;
 5. to authorise the Head of Policy and Programmes, once the Joint Local Plan 2041 has been submitted for examination, to invite the examining Inspector(s) to recommend any modifications they consider to be necessary in accordance with section 20(7C) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004;
 6. to approve the Joint Local Development Scheme (August 2024), attached at Appendix 3 of the report of the Head of Policy and Programmes to the special meeting of Cabinet on 18 September 2024.

33. Response to the Local Government Boundary Commission's Warding Proposals for Vale of White Horse

Council considered the recommendations of the Community Governance and Electoral Issues Committee on the proposed council's response to the local Government Boundary Commission for England's (the Commission) draft recommendations on a warding pattern for the district.

Councillor Maddison, Chair of the Community Governance and Electoral Issues Committee, introduced the committee's recommendations and advised that the committee had considered member responses on the Commission's draft recommendations at its meeting held on 3 September 2024. He highlighted that the majority of the proposed wards wholly or mostly matched those submitted by the council earlier in the review process.

RESOLVED:

1. To agree the draft submission response agreed by the Community Governance and Electoral Issues Committee and as attached to the report of the head of legal and democratic to Council on 18 September 2024.
2. To authorise the democratic services manager to finalise the document for submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England.

The meeting closed at 8.05pm

Chair:

Date: