

## WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the Economic and Social Overview & Scrutiny Committee  
held in Committee Room 1, Council Offices, Woodgreen, Witney,  
at 6.30pm on Thursday 5 January 2017

### PRESENT

Councillors: P J Handley (Chairman), Mrs E H N Fenton (Vice-Chairman), M A Barrett, A C Beaney, Mrs L C Carter, J C Cooper, Mrs M J Crossland, Mrs J M Doughty, H B Eaglestone, P D Kelland, T N Owen and A H K Postan.

Also in attendance: J Haine.

#### 54. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TEMPORARY APPOINTMENTS

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs L E C Little, and the Head of Paid Service reported receipt of the following resignation and temporary appointment:-

A H K Postan for B J Woodruff

#### 55. MINUTES

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 24 November 2016 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

#### 56. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest from Members or Officers relating to matters to be considered at the meeting.

#### 57. PARTICIPATION OF THE PUBLIC

There had been no requests from the public to address the meeting under the Council's Rules of Procedure.

#### 58. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were none.

#### 59. CALL-IN OF CABINET DECISION – CONSULTATION ON CHERWELL LOCAL PLAN PARTIAL REVIEW

The Committee received and considered the report of the Head of Democratic Services giving details of the call-in request relating to the Cabinet decision of 14 December 2016 in respect of the response to the consultation on the partial review of the Cherwell Local Plan. The report included the reasons for the call-in request, and the report to the Cabinet meeting and the minute of its consideration had both been appended.

Mr Cooper explained the reasons for the request for the matter to be reconsidered, and in doing so emphasised that he was not opposed to the entirety of the consultation response approved by Cabinet. He contended that the "mindset" that addressing Oxford's unmet housing need had to lead to development in the Green Belt should be challenged, including in the context of the new train route from Bicester North into Oxford and the location of Oxford Parkway station in the area of the Northern Gateway, having improved access to the City. Mr Cooper argued that this point should be put to Cherwell, and also expressed a concern that failing to oppose development in the Green Belt in Cherwell would make it more difficult to resist planning applications in the Green Belt within West Oxfordshire, citing Bladon and Cassington as areas which could be impacted. Finally, he drew attention to South Oxfordshire District Council's position in identifying sites outside

of the Green Belt in order to accommodate the apportionment of Oxford's unmet need attributed to its district and suggested that WODC should follow this lead.

The Head of Planning was asked to comment on any technical aspects of the above views, and briefly explained that options around development in the Green Belt had been considered as part of the technical assessments leading to the Growth Board apportionment. He further explained that reductions in the amount of development in Green Belt areas could necessarily mean the allocation of alternative land outside the Green Belt, which could have a greater impact on West Oxfordshire, including in the environs of Woodstock. Finally, he advised the Committee of the Local Plan processes which had to be undertaken in order to allocate sites in existing Green Belt, stating that the removal of land from Green Belt in one location through a Local Plan review would not add weight to any planning application proposal in a different area of Green Belt.

Mr Haine, as the Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning, expressed his agreement with the balance of allocations, and agreed with the previously made comment about the impact of reducing Green Belt allocations. He also referred to the comments included in the Cabinet approved response to the consultation relating to the need for A40 improvements. In doing so, he mentioned the recent announcement of Government support for the proposed Garden Village north of Eynsham, and the very recent and welcome news that the government would be providing funding to support the progression of those proposals. Mr Haine was of the opinion that it was not for this Council to advise Cherwell as to the location of sites to meet Oxford's unmet need, and asserted that Cherwell District Council was well aware of the points raised. Finally, he reminded Members that the current consultation would be followed in due course by further consultation when the proposed changes had been considered in the light of the responses.

The Strategic Director advised the Committee that, as part of the spatial options assessment and work of the Oxfordshire Growth Board, transport links had been taken into account, and this would have included the improved access to the City mentioned earlier; and the Head of Planning informed Members of the background work undertaken by Cherwell, and the involvement of specialist transport consultants. He also confirmed that this was an issue in respect of which this Council would continue to work closely with both Cherwell and the County Council.

In making final comments on his views, Mr Cooper reiterated his view that the response to question 15 in the consultation relating to transport should be strengthened; and Mr Haine again gave his view that it was appropriate to await Cherwell's response and further discussions and proposals before further consideration was given to the matters raised.

The Committee was supportive of the proposal contained in the resolution set out below, but the need for future consideration was emphasised.

Finally, in response to a question, Mr Haine confirmed that Members would be supplied with more information about the Garden Village funding from government to which he had referred earlier, and which had been announced earlier in the day. The Committee -

**RESOLVED:** That the call-in request was not supported, but that further consideration be given to the matter in due course, in the light of Cherwell District Council's response and its subsequent proposals for inclusion in its amended Local Plan.

The meeting closed at 7:07 pm

Chairman