

Annex C - Draft Terms of Reference: Carterton Area Strategy Working Group

Purpose

To receive updates on and provide a sounding board for the development of proposals for a delivery vehicle for the Carterton Area Strategy, which will lay the foundations for growth, homes, regeneration and connectivity improvements in and around Carterton.

Background

Carterton, as the second-largest town in West Oxfordshire and home to RAF Brize Norton, presents significant opportunities for transformational economic growth. Carterton has a young growing population, as a result of relatively affordable housing due to significant private housing development from the 1980's and 2000's onwards. The town and area around it have high economic activity rates (73.1%) and low unemployment, with over 7,000 jobs, including military and civilian positions being hosted at the air base, making the MOD the largest employer in the area.

Carterton has good public transport connections by bus and is located close to the A40 so has good transport links with other towns in the district and Oxford, however the town centre is small and offers limited choice to shoppers, which results in trade 'leaking' away from it.

A Strategic Study was produced in March 2024 to help guide the future of Carterton and the surrounding area. The Study was intended to inform the review of the Local Plan and other non-planning matters pertaining to Carterton.

Whilst the Study made a number of suggested interventions, which focused around key themes that included leisure, wellbeing, business and housing, it didn't look at the wider strategic opportunities or how these could be delivered. Therefore, the focus going forward will be to develop the proposed vision, how the interventions will help realise this and identify a delivery model to help guide the future of Carterton and the surrounding area.

Approach

The Working Group will meet with senior officers and may with the agreement of the Director of Place engage with external stakeholders. The Working Group will examine the issues and provide feedback to officers but won't make reports or recommendations to Council.

Membership

The Working Group will comprise 5 Members based on nominations made by political groups and appointed at the Annual Meeting of full Council, plus the Executive Member with portfolio responsibility for the Carterton Area Strategy who will be an ex-officio member.

The membership does not have to be politically proportionate to the Council as a whole but the principle of proportionality will be applied, subject to all political groups being represented on the 5-Member Working Group.

The quorum for a meeting is any three Councillors, who may be in attendance in person or remotely.

Substitute members will be permitted on the Working Group, with members being substituted by a member from the same political group.

The Chair of the Working Group will be the Executive Member with portfolio responsibility for the Carterton Area Strategic Plan.

Meetings and access to information

Meetings will be scheduled as required with the first meeting taking place in summer 2025. The frequency of meetings is expected to be quarterly but this may vary and meetings will be called as and when required.

The Working Group is not a formal committee or sub-committee and is not subject to access to information regulations. To ensure that all attendees feel that they can speak openly about the issues, meetings will not be open to the public but will be open to all West Oxfordshire District Councillors. The content of the meetings is to be treated as confidential and not shared beyond the membership of the Council.

Meetings will generally take place either remotely via Teams, or will be hybrid meetings, or in person meetings. Meetings will not be webcast.

Officer support

The Working Group will be primarily advised by the Director of Place but may be advised by other officers as required.

Democratic Services will attend meetings and make a note of the key points and actions arising, which will be presented at the next suitable meeting of the Working Group.

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