

## WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

### Minutes of the meeting of the **Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

Held in the Committee Room I, Council Offices, Woodgreen, Witney, Oxfordshire OX28  
1NB at 5.30 pm on **Wednesday, 15 October 2025**

#### PRESENT

Councillors: Andrew Beaney (Chair), Genny Early (Vice-Chair), Adam Clements, Steve Cosier, Natalie King, Nick Leverton, Dan Levy, Stuart McCarroll, Michele Mead, Ruth Smith, Mark Walker, Alex Wilson, Alistair Wray and Julian Cooper

Officers: Phil Martin (Director of Place), Andrew Brown (Head of Democratic and Electoral Services), Chris Hargraves (Head of Planning), Andrew Thomson (Planning Policy Manager), Ana Prelici (Senior Democratic Services Officer), Mathew Taylor (Democratic Services Officer) and Phil Shaw (Planning Services Transformation Lead)

Other Councillors in attendance: Andy Graham, Hugo Ashton and Alaric Smith

#### **44 Apologies for Absence and Temporary Appointments**

Apologies were received from Councillors Mark Walker and Adam Clements.

#### **45 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

#### **46 Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The Minutes of the previous meeting were considered by the Committee, and no amendments were made. Councillor Stuart McCarroll proposed accepting the minutes, which was seconded by Councillor Leverton.

**Resolved:** That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 3 September 2025 be approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

These were agreed unanimously.

#### **47 Chair's announcements**

The Chair stated that the next meeting of the Committee had been moved and would take place on 11 November at the usual time of 5:30pm.

#### **48 Participation of the Public**

There was no participation of the public.

**49 Report back on recommendations**

The Head of Democratic and Electoral Services explained the Executive's response on the recommendations on Local Area Energy Planning. They also explained the recommendations on the Youth Development item from a previous meeting. As the Youth Development recommendations were not time critical, they had come back to the Committee to be agreed.

Councillor Michelle Mead proposed accepting the recommendations. These recommendations were voted on and agreed unanimously.

**Resolved:** The Overview and Scrutiny Committee

1. Noted the Executive's response to the recommendations on the Local Area Energy Planning.

Agreed to submit the recommendations on the Youth Development item to the Executive.

**50 Updates from Task and Finish Groups**

Councillor Stuart McCarroll updated the Committee on the work of the Leisure Task and Finish group. The Task and Finish Group had met to carry out pre-decision scrutiny of the Leisure preferred options report, and having done this had concluded its work.

The Committee also noted that the Waste Transformation Task and Finish Group had two meetings scheduled and that the Public Conveniences Task and Finish Group was next due to meet in January 2026.

**51 Local Plan Spatial Options**

The Chair opened the item and explained that they wished to take the report sequentially, Annex by Annex.

The purpose of the item was pre-decision scrutiny of the Executive report on the Local Plan Preferred Spatial Options Consultation Paper. The Local Plan Preferred Spatial Options Consultation Paper was proposed to be published for consultation in accordance with Regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

The Planning Policy Manager presented the report, providing a summary.

The Planning Services Transformation Lead discussed the strategic sites and highlighted the key constraints and opportunities for development.

## Overview and Scrutiny Committee

15/October2025

The Planning Policy Manager highlighted the next steps in the Local Plan development process, the target was to submit this in September 2026.

Members discussed the annexes of the report sequentially, and made detailed recommendations to the Executive, which are attached in the annex to these minutes. The following points were also raised by the Committee;

- The Kingham Site near Gloucestershire was discussed, and the process surrounding consultees. The Head of Planning stated that the Council had a duty to co-operate on site options which affected other authorities, and that they were working with Cotswold District Council to meet this.
- The Committee explored the dichotomy between housing targets from central government and the lack of sewage infrastructure from Thames Water.
- Public accessibility should be prioritised in order to ensure engagement.
- School provision needed to support development, particularly in areas such as Carterton. The officers explained that this was an early stage of evidence gathering, and that the Council would be working with Oxfordshire County Council on details at future stages.
- It was recognised that Parish Councils may need more time to be consulted. The Executive Member and officers explained that if the Parish Council got in touch within the consultation timescale, this could be extended.

Councillor Liz Leffman left at 6:33pm

Councillor Natalie King left 7:17pm.

The Committee adjourned at 7:53pm and reconvened at 8:03pm.

The Executive Member thanked the Committee for their input and stated that their input had improved the work.

**52**

### **Committee Work Programme**

The Committee considered its work plan and made the following amendments;

- Moved the item on Supporting Mental Health to February, to allow enough time for it in light of the substantial Local Government Reorganisation item.
- Asked that the item on rural exception sites be brought to December's meeting.

Resolved: to note the work plan and amendments.

### **Executive Work Programme**

A member queried the Woodford way report, which was listed under Councillor Geoff Saul, the Executive Member for Housing, and not Councillor Hugo Ashton, the Executive Member for Planning. The Director of Place explained that this was because the report was largely regarding a housing scheme on the site but would also address parking concerns.

The Meeting closed at 8.20 pm

CHAIR