

Cherwell District Council

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held at Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury, Oxon OX15 4AA, on 16 August 2023 at 6.30 pm

Present:

Councillor John Broad (Chairman)
Councillor Simon Holland
Councillor Ian Middleton
Councillor Rob Pattenden
Councillor Dorothy Walker
Councillor Douglas Webb

Substitute Members:

Councillor Rebecca Biegel (In place of Councillor Isabel Creed)
Councillor Andrew Crichton (In place of Councillor Dr Chukwudi Okeke)
Councillor George Reynolds (In place of Councillor Bryn Williams)
Councillor Sean Woodcock (In place of Councillor Lynne Parsons)

Apologies for absence:

Councillor Isabel Creed (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Patrick Clarke
Councillor Ian Harwood
Councillor Dr Chukwudi Okeke
Councillor Lynne Parsons
Councillor Bryn Williams

Also Present:

Councillor Dan Sames, Portfolio Holder for Planning and Development
Councillor Phil Chapman, Portfolio Holder for Healthy and Safe Communities
Councillor Sandy Dallimore, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services
Councillor Nigel Simpson, Portfolio Holder for Sport and Leisure

Also Present Virtually:

Councillor Barry Wood

Officers:

Shiraz Sheikh, Assistant Director Law, Governance & Democratic Services/Monitoring Officer
David Peckford, Assistant Director Planning & Development
Christina Cherry, Interim Planning Policy Team Leader
Chris Thom, Principal Planning Policy Officer
Emma Faulkner, Principal Officer - Scrutiny and Democratic Lead
Matt Swinford, Democratic and Elections Officer

Officers Attending Virtually:

Ian Boll, Corporate Director Communities
Maria Dopazo, Acting Planning Policy, Conservation & Design Manager

22 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

23 **Chairman's Announcements**

There were no Chairman's announcements.

24 **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

25 **Draft Cherwell Local Plan Review 2040 (Regulation 18) Consultation**

The Assistant Director for Planning and Development submitted a report which presented the draft Cherwell Local Plan 2040 for scrutiny ahead of its consideration by the Executive on 4 September 2023.

The Assistant Director for Planning and Development introduced the draft Local Plan 2040 (Regulation 18) Consultation and advised that the plan had been drafted using a wide range of information including evidence, work with stakeholders and responses from previous consultations.

The Assistant Director for Planning and Development explained to the Committee that the Regulation 18 consultation was an opportunity to present the draft I plan to residents and stakeholders, and to receive meaningful contribution and comment on the details from the interested parties. Engagement would continue over the course of the Local Plan process and further documents to support the Local Plan would be published as part of the public consultation. The responses received during the consultation would be considered by officers and inform any changes prior to the Regulation 19 stage consultation.

The Assistant Director for Planning and Development confirmed that the three key themes listed in the draft local plan had not changed since the last consultation on the Regulation 18 draft plan in January 2023, however minor amendments had been made.

It was advised by the Assistant Director for Planning and Development that if Executive approved the draft for consultation at their meeting on 4 September, the public consultation would start in mid-September and last for six weeks. A communications plan had been established with the Council's communications team to ensure that there was wide engagement in addition to the statutory consultation requirements.

Following concerns from the Committee regarding distribution of the draft Plan and the amount of information, the Assistant Director for Planning and Development advised that the Members Advisory Group had held meetings and invited all members of the Committee to attend. The early draft version of the plan had been discussed, and subsequently distributed to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee members.

Following a question from the Committee as to whether a feasibility survey had been carried out regarding use of solar power, further to an assessment being referenced in the documentation suggesting wind power was not feasible within Oxfordshire, the Interim Planning Policy Team Leader advised that an assessment had not been carried out and advised that Oxfordshire County Council were carrying out ongoing work on climate change. The Interim Planning Policy Team Leader also advised through the Pathways to a Zero Carbon Oxfordshire (PaZCO) workstreams, more work was being carried out to investigate the use of solar power.

In response to questions from the Committee regarding if the Council had scope to include storage of grey water for new developments within the plan, the Interim Planning Policy Team Leader advised that there were elements within the housing policies that covered grey water as well as water efficiency in terms of building standards. The Assistant Director for Planning and Development advised that core policy 8 on Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) stated that the use of SuDS in all developments was required for management of surface water run-off.

In response to a question from the Committee regarding suggestions in the draft plan that biodiversity net gain would be offsite, the Interim Planning Policy Team Leader advised that sometimes it was more advantageous to have the biodiversity net gain offsite and members advised it would be better that the offsetting was carried out locally instead of nationally.

Following a comment from the Committee suggesting developments within air quality management areas should be carefully considered due to the potential impact on air quality, the Interim Planning Policy Team Leader advised that Environmental Health Officers who monitored air quality were consulted when applications and allocations were considered.

In response to questions from the Committee regarding core policy 21 on sustainable transport and connectivity and the availability of public transport in rural areas, the Assistant Director for Planning and Development advised that the council must be realistic on what could be achieved and provide choice for residents. The Assistant Director for Planning and Development advised the policy was aimed more at a strategic level and not an exclusion policy.

The Assistant Director for Planning and Development, in response to questions regarding the possibility of greater housing density on sites being allocated for housing on greenbelt land, advised that views on the loss of green belt land for development would be sought as part of the consultation.

Following questions from the Committee regarding justifications on the housing need numbers stated within the draft plan, the Assistant Director for Planning and Development advised that the Housing and Economic Needs Assessment (HENA) was a document commissioned jointly by the council with Oxford City Council that was published in 2022, which recommended the housing need be understood on the basis of the projected share of employment across the county by 2040. Different scenarios for housing need were outlined within the plan under core policy 34, and this included the government policy guidance.

In response to a question from the Committee regarding other districts view on developments to meet the Oxford unmet housing need, the Assistant Director for Planning and Development advised that each Council made their own decisions as to what they would be including in their Local Plans and there was clear policy within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) about addressing identified unmet housing need of neighbouring authorities.

The Interim Planning Policy Team Leader, in response to a question from the Committee regarding infrastructure of local NHS services, advised that they were aware of long term plans from the Oxfordshire University Hospital Trust being developed, and advised if these were available in time they would be reflected within the Local Plan.

In response to a question from the Committee regarding Junction 9 of the M40, development around that area and the impact on the transport network, the Principal Planning Policy Officer advised that the Council were at the early stages of the making of the plan and potential sites being put forward for consultation. Some initial work had been carried out on transport impact including an assessment of the existing transport network. As sites are proposed for allocation then transport modelling would take place. Work would need to be carried out with National Highways to address work around the three junctions of the M40 that were within the district.

In response to concerns from the Committee regarding some villages appearing to be referenced as part of Kidlington within the draft plan, the Assistant Director for Planning and Development clarified that the Kidlington area strategy focussed on Kidlington and surrounding villages. Parish boundaries were not considered material to Planning issues, however the Assistant Director for Planning and Development understood that it would be

more helpful for communities in the area of Kidlington to be referenced accurately within the plan.

In response to questions from the Committee on core policy 87 and concerns regarding the time lag between end of year and production of the Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) which was used to establish whether the plan was being effectively actioned, the Assistant Director for Planning and Development advised that the AMR was produced for the previous financial year and was typically published at the end of the calendar year so an AMR was yet to be produced for the period ending 31 March 2023. The Assistant Director for Planning and Development stated that the AMR helped the Council assess the development within the district.

In response to Members questions regarding the motion passed at the Council meeting in February 2023 regarding housing affordability on new developments, the Committee commented that the Executive should consider including an affordable element of at least 50% within future housing developments and that this should be included in the draft Plan. The Assistant Director for Planning and Development advised that the Council wanted to push the increased percentage and would attempt to add in supportive text to strengthen the message.

It was proposed by Councillor Sean Woodcock and seconded by Councillor Ian Middleton that the following comment be made to the Executive for consideration:

that in line with the carried motion at February 2023 full Council meeting on housing affordability mix, the Local Plan be stronger in terms of the desirability of having more affordable housing in the allocated sites; and delegate to the Chairman to report detailed comments made by Committee to the Executive on the 4 September 2023.

It was proposed by Councillor Sean Woodcock and seconded by Councillor Ian Middleton that the following comment be made to the Executive for consideration.

- that in line with the carried motion at February 2023 full Council meeting on housing affordability mix, the Local Plan be stronger in terms of the desirability of having more affordable housing in the allocated sites; and delegate to the Chairman to report detailed comments made by Committee to the Executive on the 4 September 2023.

Resolved

- (1) That having given due consideration to the draft Local Plan 2040 (Regulation 18), the following comment be made to the Executive:
 - that in line with the carried motion at February 2023 full Council meeting on housing affordability mix, the Local Plan be stronger in terms of the desirability of having more affordable housing in the allocated sites; and delegate to the Chairman to report detailed comments made by Committee to the Executive on the 4 September 2023.

- (2) That it be noted that the Assistant Director for Planning and Development will retain delegated authority, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Development, to make minor amendments to the draft document, including correcting any typographic or formatting errors, up to the start of the consultation.

The meeting ended at 9.55 pm

Chairman:

Date: