

## **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 4 December 2024 at 6.00 pm

#### Present:

Councillor Dr Isabel Creed (Chairman)  
Councillor Nigel Simpson (Vice-Chairman)  
Councillor Gordon Blakeway  
Councillor John Broad  
Councillor Phil Chapman  
Councillor Frank Ideh  
Councillor Simon Lytton  
Councillor Lynne Parsons

#### Substitute Members:

Councillor David Rogers (In place of Councillor Barry Wood)

#### Apologies for absence:

Councillor Grace Conway-Murray  
Councillor Andrew Crichton  
Councillor Harry Knight  
Councillor Barry Wood

#### Also Present:

Councillor Jean Conway, Portfolio Holder for Planning and Development Management

#### Officers:

Ian Boll, Corporate Director Communities  
David Peckford, Assistant Director Planning & Development  
Christina Cherry, Planning Policy, Conservation & Design Manager  
Maria Dopazo, Principal Planning Policy Officer  
Michael Carr, Interim Principal Officer - Scrutiny and Democratic Lead  
Martyn Surfleet, Democratic and Elections Officer

#### Officers Attending Virtually:

Shahin Ismail, Interim Head of Legal Services & Deputy Monitoring Officer  
Holly Jones, Planning Policy Officer  
Karyn Panting, Development Monitoring officer

42 **Reconvening of Meeting**

The Chairmen announced the reconvening of the adjourned meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny held on the 26 November 2024 and noted that members who were present at the previous meeting but unable to attend the reconvening sent their apologies to the committee.

43 **Proposed Cherwell Local Plan 2042 - Supplementary PUBLIC Documents**

\*\*At its 26 November 2024 meeting, Overview & Scrutiny Committee resolved to adjourn consideration of this item. The Committee reconvened to consider this item\*\*

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered a report of the Assistant Director Planning and Development on the draft proposed Cherwell Local Plan 2042 at its extraordinary meeting on 12 November 2024.

At the meeting, the Committee requested that the following supporting documents be submitted to this meeting for consideration prior to submission to Executive on 2 December 2024.

- a1) Draft Sustainability Appraisal Non-technical Summary
- a2) Draft Sustainability Appraisal WIP
- b) Draft WIP Habitats Regulation Assessment
- c) the Health and Equalities Impact Assessment
- d) Interim Duty to Cooperate Statement
- e) Local Plan Appendix 4 - Strategic Gaps associated with Banbury, Bicester and Heyford Park: Key Characteristics and Recommendations

The draft versions of these documents were published as Exempt papers with the original agenda publication, for the reasons set out on that agenda, but having been subsequently finalised and made available for publication. They were published with a Supplementary Note: Summary of Changes to the O&S Supplementary Documents on Monday 25 November.

Prior to the introduction of the Proposed Local Plan 2042 Supplementary Public Documents, members were informed of correspondence received from solicitors on behalf of prospective Developers challenging various factors of the Local Plan process, such as the duty to cooperate and unmet housing needs of neighbouring authorities. Members were advised that officers had consulted the Councils Legal team and were in the process of drafting responses to said correspondence, members were also advised that the correspondence would not change the outcome of the proceedings of the meeting and any potential decisions made.

Members posed several questions to the Assistant Director Planning and Development and Conservation and Design Manager relating to Strategic Options and Considerations, Timetable and Governance, Housing and

Economic Needs Assessments, Climate Change and Sustainable Development, Infrastructure, Consultation and Engagement.

In response to a question in relation to stipulations for the installation and retrofitting of solar energy panels on both domestic and industrial units with the goal of reducing energy costs, the Assistant Director Planning and Development explained that the sustainable construction standards proposed for net zero emissions in the plan should ensure that the resulting developments would be more energy efficient, and that the plan cannot require the use of Solar PV on developments, but through the standards proposed, the overarching goal of net zero emissions would therefore be achieved through multiple technologies and innovations which may well include solar energy. And if achieved would then result in lower energy costs involved in heating said developments.

In response to a question in relation to the Sustainability Assessment and the designation of land for employment and industrial use the Assistant Director Planning and Development explained that the plan contained flexibility to allow various forms of employment and development to take place within designated sites.

In response to a question in relation to the allocation and removal of green belt land adjacent to the Oxford Technology Park to allow for expansion of the site, members requested a further review of land allocated the Assistant Director Planning and Development explained that since the Local Plan 2015 the land in question had been allocated and subsequently built on and therefore had no need to remove it from the green belt, and that in preparation for the current proposed Local Plan a full review of green belt land had been undertaken, and therefore further examination would not be required.

At the end of questions, the chairmen on the request of members, agreed to adjourn the meeting for ten minutes to allow time to read the correspondence received and replies drafted to the prospective developers.

The meeting was adjourned, and the webcast paused at 19:54.

The meeting then reconvened, and the webcast resumed at 20:08 at which point members noted there were no questions or implications resulting from said correspondence.

The committee then considered its conclusions, observations, and recommendations to the Executive.

**Resolved**

- (1) That the following observations be noted: -
  - i). In consideration of the Draft Local Plan timeline being followed, it is noted that if the Local Plan submission is rejected by the Planning Inspectorate this could present a serious risk to the Council's local planning process.

- ii). Regarding the “duty to cooperate”, the importance of evidence of engagement with neighbouring local authorities, (including Oxford City Council).
  - iii). It is noted that planning officers agreed to meet with Chesterton Parish Council on employment proposals along the A41 corridor.
  - iv). The importance of the robustness of the Local Housing Needs Assessment is noted, particularly in regard to unmet housing needs of neighbouring local authorities.
  - v). It is noted that the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) will form part of the evidence base for the Local Plan.
  - vi). That it be noted that lessons learnt from the process followed pre-consultation scrutiny of the proposed Draft Local Plan include that there should be a longer lead in time for pre-consultation scrutiny.
- (2) That the following Recommendations be made to the Executive: -

- i). That the Draft Local Plan include a reference to Health in Rural Areas (provision of health facilities partially in rural areas).

*Proposed by Councillor David Rogers, Seconded by Cllr Phil Chapman and agreed with 7 votes for, 0 against and 2 abstentions*

- ii). That Executive be recommended to agree that the Proposed Cherwell Local Plan 2042 be approved for the purpose of inviting representations under Regulations 19 and 20 of The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended).

*Proposed by Councillor Isabel Creed, Seconded by Nigel Simpson and agreed unanimously*

The meeting ended at 8.27 pm

Chairman:

Date: