

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet on Monday 8 June 2020

www.oxford.gov.uk



Committee members present:

Councillor Brown (Chair)	Councillor Turner (Deputy Leader)
Councillor Hayes (Deputy Leader)	Councillor Chapman
Councillor Clarkson	Councillor Hollingsworth
Councillor Rowley	Councillor Linda Smith
Councillor Tidball	Councillor Upton

Officers present for all or part of the meeting:

Gordon Mitchell, Chief Executive
Tom Bridgman, Executive Director (Development)
Caroline Green, Assistant Chief Executive
Anita Bradley, Monitoring Officer
Adrian Arnold, Head of Planning Services
Carolyn Ploszynski, Planning Policy and Place Manager
Sarah Harrison, Team Leader (Planning Policy)
Amanda Ford, Planning Policy Team Leader
John Mitchell, Committee and Member Services Officer

Apologies:

None

1. Declarations of Interest

None.

2. Addresses and Questions by Members of the Public

Mr Roy Darke addressed Cabinet in his capacity as Chair of the of New Marston Residents' Association, in respect of the Local Plan item on the agenda with particular reference to SP 28. Councillor Alex Hollingsworth, Cabinet Member for Planning & Housing Delivery gave a detailed response to the points made, a copy of which is attached to these minutes.

3. Councillor Addresses on any item for decision on the Board's agenda

None.

4. Councillor Addresses on Neighbourhood Issues

None.

5. Items raised by Board Members

None.

6. Scrutiny Committee Reports

Scrutiny Committee met on 02 June to discuss the Adoption of Local Plan 2036 but had made no recommendations to Cabinet in relation to it.

7. Adoption of Oxford Local Plan 2036

The Head of Planning Services had submitted a report to request that Cabinet recommends the adoption of the Oxford Local Plan 2036 to Council.

Councillor Alex Hollingsworth, Cabinet Member for Planning & Housing Delivery, spoke to the report by first thanking officers, with particular reference to those in the Planning Team, for their work over the last 4 years in getting the plan to its current stage. He noted that the Planning Inspector had also taken time at the end of the hearings to thank officers for the excellent and detailed presentation of evidence and knowledge they had brought to the process which was a tribute to all those involved.

He went on to table an additional recommendation to those before Cabinet, as follows:

Recommend that Council NOTES that, as previously outlined in earlier discussions of the Oxford Local Plan 2036 in Scrutiny, Cabinet and Full Council, a timetable for the next Local Plan which is aligned to the latest Oxfordshire Plan 2050 timetable and co-ordinated with the Local Plan timetables of other District Councils in Oxfordshire will be brought to Cabinet in July 2020 – and Scrutiny as required – as part of the updated Local Development Scheme.

As the wording indicated, this would serve to reinforce what had been said on previous occasions and would facilitate more effective joint working on Local Plan issues than hitherto.

The Chair added her thanks to all those involved for this very significant piece of work.

Cabinet resolved to:

1. **Recommend** that Council agrees to adopt the Oxford Local Plan 2036 and associated updates to the policies map; and **recommend**

That Council resolves to:

1. **Adopt** the Oxford Local Plan 2036 (set out at Appendix 1 to this report), which incorporates the Inspectors' Main Modifications (set out at Appendix 3 to this report) and the City Council's Additional Modifications (set out at Appendix 4 to this report) as part of the statutory development plan for the area as listed in Appendix 6;

2. **Adopt** the updates to the Oxford City Adopted Policies Map in line with the Oxford Local Plan 2036 set out at Appendix 5 to this report;
3. **Authorise** the Head of Planning Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Delivery, to finalise the necessary documents to support adoption including the Adoption Statement (draft as Appendix 7) and Sustainability Statement (draft as Appendix 8) and to make such minor editorial corrections to the adopted Local Plan (Appendix 1) and Policies Map (Appendix 5) as deemed necessary ahead of publication. This will include a final desktop published version of the Oxford Local Plan 2036 and adopted policies map; and
4. **Note** that, as previously outlined in earlier discussions of the Oxford Local Plan 2036 in Scrutiny, Cabinet and Full Council, a timetable for the next Local Plan which is aligned to the latest Oxfordshire Plan 2050 timetable and co-ordinated with the Local Plan timetables of other District Councils in Oxfordshire will be brought to Cabinet in July 2020 – and Scrutiny as required – as part of the updated Local Development Scheme.

8. Addendum to the Statement of Community Involvement in Planning

The Head of Planning Services had submitted a report to seek Cabinet approval of an addendum to the Oxford City Council Statement of Community Involvement in Planning 2015 in relation to the Coronavirus disease pandemic.

The Cabinet Member for Planning & Housing Delivery introduced the report by explaining that it simply sought to make changes to the Statement of Community Involvement in Planning necessitated by Covid-19.

Cabinet resolved to:

Approve the Addendum to the Statement of Community Involvement in Planning 2015 (set out at Appendix 1 to the report).

9. Minutes

Cabinet resolved to APPROVE the minutes of the meeting held on 11 March 2020 as a true and accurate record.

10. Dates of Future Meetings

Meetings are scheduled for the following dates:

- 24 June 4.00pm
- 15 July
- 12 August
- 09 September
- 14 October
- 11 November
- 09 December

All meetings start at 6pm unless otherwise stated..

The meeting started at 12.00 pm and ended at 12.20 pm

Chair

Date: Wednesday 24 June 2020

Question put to Cabinet by Mr Roy Darke in relation to Adoption of Oxford Local Plan 2036 and response given by Cllr Alex Hollingsworth, Cabinet Member for Planning & Housing Delivery.

Q.

Given the Council's commitment to dealing with the climate crisis, including setting up a Citizen's Assembly last year to ask for local opinion, why is the Council still allowing a policy in Local Plan 2036 (SP 28) to build in the flood plain at Park Farm, New Marston when the field was under water for much of last winter?

A.

The site in question has been the subject of careful consideration throughout the process of developing the Local Plan, and was subject to detailed examination by the Inspectors. The site allocation, in conjunction with all the other policies in the Local Plan, was found sound.

Turning to the detailed points raised in the statement, it is understood that some areas of Park Farm are in the flood zone, and that is why detailed evidence on flood risk was prepared and consulted upon and put in front of the Inspectors. A sequential flood risk test justified allocation of the site, alongside the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) level 2. The SFRA includes consideration of potential climate change impacts. The SFRA level 2 concluded that for this site safe access and egress was possible as routes in and out keep dry. It also concluded that there may need to be significant mitigation and that a detailed Flood Risk Assessment would be needed to demonstrate any proposed development would be safe and would not worsen flood risk elsewhere. The areas of highest flood risk within the site could not be built on.

The presence of standing water does not of itself make a site undevelopable. Modelling and available technology to understand flood risk have advanced significantly. It is certainly the case that a great deal of work will be needed from any developer of this site to demonstrate that it is safe from flood risk and that flood risk is not worsened elsewhere, as is required by other Local Plan policies. Developers will also need to liaise with Thames Water as early as possible with regards to assessing the impacts of development on the sewerage system.

The farm is used for horse grazing and initial biodiversity work has shown that there is unlikely to be significant biodiversity value within the site itself. The policy requires that development proposals demonstrate that there would be no adverse impact on the integrity of the nearby SSSI. Developers will be required to provide an assessment of groundwater and surface water flows, and provide details of sustainable drainage scheme with an appropriate management plan. Whoever holds the lease on the land would be subject to the requirements for management of SSSIs, and a new management arrangement would need to be developed if the current lease ends.

The impact on the wider Green Belt is limited because of the relatively small size of the site and because development would not encroach closer to the river. Careful design is required by policy to minimise the impact on the remaining Green Belt. The arguments for allowing exceptional circumstances for releasing sites from the Green Belt were discussed exhaustively during the Local Plan hearings, and have been accepted by the planning Inspectors.

Viability of the policies of the Plan has been tested as a whole. Assumptions made in the viability report were that build costs would be high in Oxford because most sites are complex; allowances were made in the build cost assumptions for issues such as contaminated land and flood risk as well as the high standards of design and carbon efficiency that will be required. Like most sites there is not yet a detailed scheme for development of this site, so detailed viability is not known. That is not a reason not to allocate the site.

The site allocation policy, alongside generic policies of the Plan, ensures that at planning applications stage the applicant will need to demonstrate that the proposed development would not cause harm to the SSSI, that the development would be safe in terms of flood risk and that flood risk would not be worsened elsewhere.