

To: Cabinet
Date: 19 October 2022
Report of: Scrutiny Committee
Title of Report: Development Brief for Botley Road Retail Park

Summary and recommendations	
Purpose of report:	To present Scrutiny Committee recommendations for Cabinet consideration and decision
Key decision:	No
Scrutiny Chair:	Councillor Chris Smowton
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Alex Hollingsworth, Cabinet member for Planning and Housing Delivery
Corporate Priority:	Support Thriving Communities; Foster an Inclusive Economy; Pursue a Zero Carbon Oxford
Policy Framework:	Oxford Local Plan 2036 and evidence base for the preparation of the Oxford Local Plan 2040
Recommendation: That the Cabinet states whether it agrees or disagrees with the recommendations in the body of this report.	

Appendices	
Appendix A	Draft Cabinet response to recommendations of the Scrutiny Committee

Introduction and overview

1. The Scrutiny Committee met on 11 October 2022 to consider a report on the Development Brief for Botley Road Retail Park. The report, which is due for Cabinet consideration on 19 October 2022, recommends that Cabinet endorses the development brief.

Summary and recommendations

2. Councillor Alex Hollingsworth, Cabinet member for Planning and Housing Delivery, introduced the report. Cllr Hollingsworth emphasised that a development brief was not a scheme and explained that the purpose of such a development brief was to provide guidance to those who sought to bring forward development of the site and other interested parties.

3. Arome Agamah, Senior Planner, and Amanda Ford, Team Leader Planning Policy, also answered the Committee's questions.
4. The Committee explored why it was considered that none of the site was suitable for housing and heard that it was because of a lack of safe entrance and egress as a result of flood risk. The Committee established that it was the Environment Agency who had deemed it unsuitable and the Committee considered that consideration should be given to making this clear in the development brief and that editing the document to remove the passive voice would make the Council's logic and position clearer.
5. The Committee also explored ways in which the forthcoming Oxford Flood Alleviation Scheme might impact in the future and that advice could change. The Committee established that the development brief stated the position at the time of writing and that there was the possibility of change in the future.

Recommendation 1: That the Council should consider how to make clear where the deeming of unsuitability for residential provision has come from and should add text clarifying what bearing the actual effects of OFAS may have on future suitability for residential use.

6. The Committee established that the boundary of the area under discussion did not include the car park on Earl Street. The Committee considered that consideration should be given to making that explicit in the development brief.

Recommendation 2: That the Council should consider how to make clear that the Earl Street car park is not included within the boundary of the site.

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