

OXFORDSHIRE PLACE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the meeting held on Friday, 7 October 2022 commencing at 4.00 pm and finishing at 5.45pm

Present:

Councillor Kieron Mallon – in the Chair

Councillors:

Charlie Hicks
Brad Baines
Ted Fenton

Judy Roberts
Richard Webber
Roz Smith

Freddie van Mierlo

The Council considered the matters, reports and recommendations contained or referred to in the agenda for the meeting and decided as set out below. Except insofar as otherwise specified, the reasons for the decisions are contained in the agenda and reports, copies of which are attached to the signed Minutes.

15/22 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TEMPORARY APPOINTMENTS

(Agenda Item 1)

Apologies were received from Councillor Sally Povolotsky.

Councillor Roz Smith substituted for Councillor Povolotsky

16/22 PARKING STANDARDS FOR NEW DEVELOPMENTS

(Agenda Item 4)

Councillor Ian Middleton addressed the Committee, stating that in his division, houses and bungalows were often redeveloped into apartment blocks. Owing to the small footprints of such properties, which were often used as short-stay accommodation, limited onsite parking was provided, leading to residents parking indiscriminately on the highway and grass verges. Cllr Middleton supported the principle of reducing car parking; however, he advocated a holistic approach which addressed the risk of indiscriminate, displaced parking. The Cabinet Member for Travel and Development Strategy explained that the proposed Standards would inform the development of local plans and guidance and responses by the council to planning applications.

The Chair noted that Thames Valley Police preferred on-road parking, as parking courts could become sites of antisocial behaviour.

The Cabinet Member for Travel and Development strategy introduced the report, explaining that the council's Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP) addressed modal shift from car journeys but not car ownership; it

sought to improve the convenience, and thus levels, of active travel and public transport while recognising that there would remain journeys for which cars would be most appropriate. The LTCP aimed to deliver a net-zero transport network by 2040 and a carbon positive network by 2050, to enfranchise those who do not own cars, and alleviate road congestion.

In September 2022, the Cabinet had approved 'Decide & Provide' under which transport planning and provision would be based on LTCP mode share targets, rather than historic trends. That, along with forthcoming workplace parking levies, would reduce the demand for parking spaces. The Standards would align development with transport trends and aspirations.

The Cabinet Member recognised that in different parts of the county and for different types of development, different levels of car use and thus parking would be necessary.

The Standards would be regularly reviewed and updated.

The Cabinet Member for Highway Management added that the adoption of the standards had been deferred as Cabinet wanted more clarity on figures relating to vehicle numbers associated with development growth.

The Chair noted that transport and housing planning had historically assumed that people lived close to work, but that was decreasingly common. Oxfordshire was the most rural county in South East England, containing a city and market towns with large conurbations, and rural hinterlands which crossed administrative boundaries. Residents would continue to need private vehicles and places to park them. Public transport services for new developments were often dependent on section 106 (Town and Country Planning Act 1990) contributions, which often ceased after three years, pushing people back into private vehicles. He identified the relationship between parking availability and car usage and the National Planning Policy requirement of clear and compelling justification for maximum parking Standards as issues for the Committee to consider.

The Cabinet Member for Travel and Development Strategy stated that parking availability at destinations was more relevant to journey mode than availability at journey source. The Cabinet Member's view based on experience across Oxfordshire was that parking availability at people's homes would have little initial impact on journey mode. The Deputy Chair referenced a European Union report which indicated that residential parking availability influenced car usage.

Benchmarking showed that the levels of parking permitted by the council's existing Standards was lower than that of other councils in the South East. There was not reliable empirical evidence that reduced residential parking influenced car journey rates; however, there was for commercial parking. In urban areas in the Netherlands, less than one

parking space was the norm – a Committee member clarified that was one space per dwelling. There were significant risks associated with reducing parking without enabling modal change.

The Cabinet Member for Highway Management highlighted that the proposed Standards required a sufficient level of parking (up to the maxima) for developments which utilise and encourage sustainable and active travel. The Standards should be read in conjunction with other policies, such as the council's Street Design Guide, and allowed for car free developments supported by controlled parking zones and that met key criteria set out in the Standards. In his view, it was common sense that the availability of sustainable travel alternatives and the availability of parking would influence mode shares.

Cllr Smith left the meeting at 4.35 pm.

Witnesses were unable to provide the number of car journeys that were likely to be removed by the proposed Standards.

The approach was not a zonal one but one of providing guidance to inform local plans and the council's responses to individual applications as a statutory planning consultee. While the Standards differentiated between more- and less-urban/rural areas, specific geographical locations outside the city had not been identified for car-free-development. The Cabinet Member for Travel and Development Strategy suggested that, in addition to within the city, sites outside of the city and adjacent to multi-modal transport hubs could be suitable for car-free development.

A Member asked whether the edge-of-city sites referenced in the papers were areas designated to meet the unmet housing needs of the city in district council local plans, as they considered they should.

A Member highlighted that the Standards would not reduce the parking available at existing properties, which would remain available to those with greater parking needs.

Parking for student accommodation would be considered on a case-by-case basis; however, it was assumed that students accommodation would not include parking other than for blue badge holders and operational requirements. All developments would need to be Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

The council's responses to planning applications were described as highly influential. The case for, and expected impact of, the proposed Standards needed to be better evidenced. The Growth Manager – South and Vale stated that without baseline monitoring data, it was difficult to evaluate the empirical trip-rate reduction that the level of parking permitted for a development would provide. The LTCP monitoring exercise would provide the necessary data.

Developers and the residents of new developments were key stakeholders. There were areas of the county which did not function well and were unpleasant to live in due to ill-advised development. There was an issue of development viability if parking was over-restricted.

It was highlighted that the two latter categories of dwelling in Table 4(b) overlapped.

The new Standards would become active when agreed by Cabinet; plans had been prepared to distribute it internally and externally.

It was suggested that the levels of cycle parking required for developments were unclear and potentially insufficient.

Car clubs were suggested for student accommodation.

The Infrastructure Strategy Team Leader left the meeting at 5.15 pm.

Cllr Baines left the meeting at 5.23 pm.

The Committee **RESOLVED** that –

1. The Committee's recommendations be circulated to the Cabinet Member for Travel and Development Strategy and the Corporate Director – Environment and Place as soon as practicable so that they may inform, and be referred to in, the Parking Standards for New Developments when brought to the Cabinet.

The Committee **AGREED** the following recommendations:

1. Officers review the evidence available on the relationship between both residential and non-residential parking availability and private car use and report to the Cabinet and Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee.
2. Table 4(b) of the Parking Standards for New Developments be revised to clarify the maximum levels of parking permitted for dwellings with four bedrooms.
3. The Committee endorses the differentiation of the city, towns and rural areas in the Parking Standards for New Developments. However, those areas should be more clearly defined.
4. Officers use what data is available to produce a best estimate of current private car trip rates in Oxfordshire and use that estimate to produce numerical values for the LTCP headline targets regarding private car journeys – this should accompany the Parking Standards for New Developments report to Cabinet; and use those estimates to review, and if necessary revise, the maximum levels of parking

proposed in the Parking Standards for New Developments, applying the Decide & Provide approach.

5. Parking must be planned with regard to public safety implications.
6. The Parking Standards for New Developments be reviewed at an appropriate time sooner than 12 months post adoption if practicable.
7. The levels of cycle parking required under the Parking Standards for New Developments must align with the LTCP ambitions for the future mode share for cycling.

..... in the Chair

Date of signing