

GROWTH & INFRASTRUCTURE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the meeting held on Wednesday, 6 October 2010 commencing at 2.00 pm and finishing at 4.50 pm.

Present:

Voting Members: Councillor David Nimmo-Smith – in the Chair

Councillor Roger Belson
Councillor Michael Gibbard
Councillor Charles Mathew
Councillor Keith Strangwood
Councillor David Turner
Councillor Roy Darke (In place of Councillor John Tanner)
Councillor Jean Fooks (In place of Councillor Anne Purse)

Other Members in Attendance: Councillor Ian Hudspeth (for Agenda Items 5, 6, 7 & 9)

Officers:

Whole of meeting Director for Environment & Economy; E. Johnston (Policy Unit), G. K. Malcolm (Committee Services).

Part of meeting

Agenda Item	Officer Attending
5	M. Tugwell, Interim Head of Sustainable Development
6	S. Howell, Deputy Director (Highways & Transport)
7	S. Kent & M. Tugwell (Environment & Economy)
9	S. Howell & M. Tugwell (Environment & Economy)

The Scrutiny Committee considered the matters, reports and recommendations contained or referred to in the agenda for the meeting and agreed as set out below. Copies of the agenda and reports are attached to the signed Minutes.

29/10 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TEMPORARY APPOINTMENTS (Agenda No. 1)

Apology from:	Substitute
Councillor Pete Handley	-
Councillor Anne Purse	Councillor Jean Fooks
Councillor John Tanner	Councillor Roy Darke
Councillor Nicholas P. Turner	-

30/10 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST - SEE GUIDANCE NOTE ON THE BACK PAGE

(Agenda No. 2)

Item 5:

Councillor Mathew declared a personal interest as local member for Eynsham;
Councillor Gibbard declared a personal interest as local member for Yarnton.

Item 6:

Councillor Mathew declared a personal interest as a user of travel tokens.

31/10 MINUTES

(Agenda No. 3)

The Minutes of the meetings held on 13 May 2010 and 9 August 2010 were approved and signed subject at Minute 18/10 to clarification that it was Councillor Nicholas P. Turner who had declared the personal interest.

32/10 SPEAKING TO OR PETITIONING THE COMMITTEE

(Agenda No. 4)

Agenda item 5:

Councillor Lorraine Lindsay-Gale as a local member

Councillor Don Seale as a local member

Mr. Steve Thompson for the Parishes Against Gravel Extraction campaign
(a copy of each address is attached to these Minutes).

33/10 OXFORDSHIRE MINERALS AND WASTE DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK: CORE STRATEGY - PREFERRED MINERALS STRATEGY

(Agenda No. 5)

The Forward Plan indicated that the Cabinet on 19 October 2010 would seek approval to agree the guiding principles for the Council's preferred minerals strategy for public consultation.

Following discussions at the Minerals and Waste Working Group on 27 September 2010 the Committee had an opportunity to comment to the Cabinet on the recommended way forward.

Mr Steve Thompson addressed the Committee.

Councillor Lindsay-Gale then addressed the Committee.

Councillor Don Seale then addressed the the Committee.

(The text of each address is attached to these Minutes).

Mr. Tugwell, Interim Head of Sustainable Development introduced the report (GI5) which set out the background to the Minerals and Waste Development Framework, the development and assessment of Minerals Strategy options, the views of the Minerals and Waste Plan Working Group and the next steps.

The Committee considered the report in detail with Councillor Hudspeth, Cabinet Member for Growth & Infrastructure and Mr. Tugwell who responded to members' questions and comments regarding in particular the three (revised) options and assessment for sand and gravel extraction and the consultation and decision processes. Councillor Mathew made a statement in support of the 'hybrid' option at paragraph 7.5 of the paper.

Following debate the Committee, in supporting the recommendation of the Working Group that the Council's preferred spatial strategy for sand and gravel working should be based on option 1 – concentrate extraction at existing areas of working - emphasised the importance of maximising the use of recycled aggregates as a means of reducing the need for primary aggregates. In addition, the Committee welcomed the work on the assessment of local need and stressed the importance of ensuring flexibility in supply to meet changes in demand.

34/10 CONCESSIONARY FARES

(Agenda No. 6)

Mr. Howell, Deputy Director, (Highways & Transport) introduced a report (GI6) which provided an update on the current position regarding the Government's decision to move with effect from 1 April 2011 the responsibility for funding concessionary fares from district to county councils. He explained that the duty was in two parts, the issue of smart card passes and the reimbursement of bus operators for concessionary journeys in the Council's area, with discretionary powers to provide enhanced concessions. He outlined the differences between the existing district schemes, the exemption of special categories of service and the potential cost implications.

Members explored the changes, in particular issues around eligibility, carers and the less able travelling on bus services and using the Dial-a-Ride service, and implications for rail users. Mr. Howell confirmed that the arrangements for consultation were currently under consideration.

The Committee noted the report and thanked Mr. Howell and colleagues for the update and their work.

35/10 ENERGY CONSUMPTION TAX POSITION

(Agenda No. 7)

Mr. Tugwell and Ms. Kent introduced a briefing paper on the Energy Consumption Tax position in the light of the introduction of the CRC Energy Efficiency Scheme which started in April 2010 and by April 2011 would introduce a tax on energy consumption. The scheme was designed to incentivise energy efficiency and required the Council to cover the amount of energy it forecast to consume each year, with results published in a league table each year. The paper gave the background to the scheme and a forecast based on the current information of the Council's likely position in the table, and actions which could improve the Council's performance.

The Committee supported early action to encourage energy efficiency and to improve the Council's position, and thanked Mr Tugwell and Ms Kent for their update and work.

36/10 FORWARD PLAN
(Agenda No. 8)

No topics from the current Forward Plan were identified for scrutiny.

37/10 DIRECTOR'S UPDATE
(Agenda No. 9)

The Director for Environment & Economy, the Deputy Director (Highways & Transport) and the Interim Head of Sustainable Development gave updates on Service and resource planning prior to the Star Chamber on 8 October 2010 for scrutiny committee members and portfolio holders, as follows:

Director for Environment & Economy - Property Asset Management;
Deputy Director – Highways and Transport Services;
Interim Head of Sustainable Development – Sustainable Development / Waste Partnership.

Members thanked the officers for the briefings and asked them to circulate where possible the presentation slides to Committee members.

..... in the Chair

Date of signing