

Notice of a Meeting

Growth & Infrastructure Scrutiny Committee

Monday, 23 April 2012 at 10.00 am

Earth Trust Centre, Little Wittenham, Oxon, OX14 4QZ

Membership

Chairman - Councillor David Nimmo-Smith

Deputy Chairman - Councillor Nicholas P. Turner

Councillors:

Anne Purse
Michael Gibbard
Patrick Greene

Pete Handley
Charles Mathew
Keith Strangwood

John Tanner
David Turner

Notes:

Date of next meeting: 25 June 2012

What does this Committee review or scrutinise?

- Transport; highways; traffic and parking; road safety (those areas not covered by the Safer & Stronger Communities Scrutiny Committee); public passenger transport
- Regional planning and local development framework; economic development; waste management; environmental management; archaeology; access to the countryside; tourism
- The planning, highways, rights of way and commons/village greens functions of the Planning & Regulation Committee

How can I have my say?

We welcome the views of the community on any issues in relation to the responsibilities of this Committee. Members of the public may ask to speak on any item on the agenda or may suggest matters which they would like the Committee to look at. **Requests to speak must be submitted to the Committee Officer below no later than 9 am on the working day before the date of the meeting.**

For more information about this Committee please contact:

Chairman	-	Councillor David Nimmo-Smith E.Mail: david.nimmo-smith@oxfordshire.gov.uk
Committee Officer	-	Michael Varrow, Tel: (01865) 323611 michael.varrow@oxfordshire.gov.uk



Peter G. Clark
County Solicitor

April 2012

About the County Council

The Oxfordshire County Council is made up of 74 councillors who are democratically elected every four years. The Council provides a range of services to Oxfordshire's 630,000 residents. These include:

schools	social & health care	libraries and museums
the fire service	roads	trading standards
land use	transport planning	waste management

Each year the Council manages £0.9 billion of public money in providing these services. Most decisions are taken by a Cabinet of 9 Councillors, which makes decisions about service priorities and spending. Some decisions will now be delegated to individual members of the Cabinet.

About Scrutiny

Scrutiny is about:

- Providing a challenge to the Cabinet
- Examining how well the Cabinet and the Authority are performing
- Influencing the Cabinet on decisions that affect local people
- Helping the Cabinet to develop Council policies
- Representing the community in Council decision making
- Promoting joined up working across the authority's work and with partners

Scrutiny is NOT about:

- Making day to day service decisions
- Investigating individual complaints.

What does this Committee do?

The Committee meets up to 6 times a year or more. It develops a work programme, which lists the issues it plans to investigate. These investigations can include whole committee investigations undertaken during the meeting, or reviews by a panel of members doing research and talking to lots of people outside of the meeting. Once an investigation is completed the Committee provides its advice to the Cabinet, the full Council or other scrutiny committees. Meetings are open to the public and all reports are available to the public unless exempt or confidential, when the items would be considered in closed session

If you have any special requirements (such as a large print version of these papers or special access facilities) please contact the officer named on the front page, giving as much notice as possible before the meeting

A hearing loop is available at County Hall.

AGENDA

- 1. Apologies for Absence and Temporary Appointments**
- 2. Declarations of Interest - see guidance note on the back page**
- 3. Minutes** (Pages 1 - 4)

To approve the minutes (**GI3**) of the meeting held on 27 February 2012 and to note for any matters arising from them.

4. Speaking to or petitioning the Committee

5. Director's Update

10:15

Verbal update on key issues in the Directorate from Huw Jones, Director for Environment & Economy.

6. The Countryside Service

10:30

The committee will be visiting the Earth Trust Centre, Little Wittenham, Oxon, OX14 4QZ for an opportunity to see the countryside service in practice. Senior officers from the service will give presentations to provide the committee with an overview and introduction to the key activities of the service. Hand-outs accompanying presentations will be available on the day.

The following people will be attending for this item;
Hugh Potter, Countryside Access Team Leader
Camilla Burrow, Director of Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre
Rob Dance, Service Manager – Planning & Regulation
Martin Tugwell, Deputy Director, Growth & Infrastructure
Representative of Chilterns Society
Representative of Forest Wychwood Project

7. Close of Meeting

12:00

Declarations of Interest

This note briefly summarises the position on interests which you must declare at the meeting. Please refer to the Members' Code of Conduct in Part 9.1 of the Constitution for a fuller description.

The duty to declare ...

You must always declare any "personal interest" in a matter under consideration, i.e. where the matter affects (either positively or negatively):

- (i) any of the financial and other interests which you are required to notify for inclusion in the statutory Register of Members' Interests; or
- (ii) your own well-being or financial position or that of any member of your family or any person with whom you have a close association more than it would affect other people in the County.

Whose interests are included ...

"Member of your family" in (ii) above includes spouses and partners and other relatives' spouses and partners, and extends to the employment and investment interests of relatives and friends and their involvement in other bodies of various descriptions. For a full list of what "relative" covers, please see the Code of Conduct.

When and what to declare ...

The best time to make any declaration is under the agenda item "Declarations of Interest". Under the Code you must declare not later than at the start of the item concerned or (if different) as soon as the interest "becomes apparent".

In making a declaration you must state the nature of the interest.

Taking part if you have an interest ...

Having made a declaration you may still take part in the debate and vote on the matter unless your personal interest is also a "prejudicial" interest.

"Prejudicial" interests ...

A prejudicial interest is one which a member of the public knowing the relevant facts would think so significant as to be likely to affect your judgment of the public interest.

What to do if your interest is prejudicial ...

If you have a prejudicial interest in any matter under consideration, you may remain in the room but only for the purpose of making representations, answering questions or giving evidence relating to the matter under consideration, provided that the public are also allowed to attend the meeting for the same purpose, whether under a statutory right or otherwise.

Exceptions ...

There are a few circumstances where you may regard yourself as not having a prejudicial interest or may participate even though you may have one. These, together with other rules about participation in the case of a prejudicial interest, are set out in paragraphs 10 – 12 of the Code.

Seeking Advice ...

It is your responsibility to decide whether any of these provisions apply to you in particular circumstances, but you may wish to seek the advice of the Monitoring Officer before the meeting.

GROWTH & INFRASTRUCTURE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the meeting held on Monday, 27 February 2012 commencing at 10.00 am and finishing at 1:05pm

Present:

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

Councillor Nicholas P. Turner (Deputy Chairman)
Councillor Michael Gibbard
Councillor Patrick Greene
Councillor Pete Handley
Councillor Keith Strangwood
Councillor John Tanner
Councillor Jean Fooks
Councillor Ian Hudspeth
Councillor Roz Smith

Other Members in Attendance: Councillor Linda Atkins (for Agenda Item 7)
Councillor Loraine Lindsay Gale (for Agenda Item 7)
Councillor Charles Shouler (for Agenda item 8)

By Invitation:

Officers:

Whole of meeting Martin Tugwell, Deputy Director Growth & Infrastructure
Alexandra Bailey, Corporate Delivery Manager
Peter Day, Minerals & Waste Policy Team Leader
Daniel Round, Strategic Policy Manager - Transport Planning

Part of meeting

Agenda Item Officer Attending

The Scrutiny Committee considered the matters, reports and recommendations contained or referred to in the agenda for the meeting [, together with a schedule of addenda tabled at the meeting/the following additional documents:] and agreed as set out below. Copies of the agenda and reports [agenda, reports and schedule/additional documents] are attached to the signed Minutes.

49/12 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TEMPORARY APPOINTMENTS (Agenda No. 1)

Apologies were received from Cllr Charles Mathew, with Cllr Ian Hudspeth substituting. Cllr David Turner, with Cllr Roz Smith substituting and Cllr Anne Purse, with Cllr Jean Fooks substituting.

50/12 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST - SEE GUIDANCE NOTE ON THE BACK PAGE

(Agenda No. 2)

Councillor Michael Gibbard declared an interest as Lead Member for Planning at Cherwell District Council.

Councillor Roz Smith declared an interest as a glider.

51/12 MINUTES

(Agenda No. 3)

It was noted that the countryside service will come back for consideration at the next meeting.

It was confirmed that the role of the Business Skills Bureau was different to Connexion and whilst they had a strong working relationship there was not an overlap in terms of functions.

The committee considered standards of defect management was now coming under agreed standards. Members agreed to report defects through the defect system which was proving more effective than one on one notification.

52/12 SPEAKING TO OR PETITIONING THE COMMITTEE

(Agenda No. 4)

Professor John Dowling spoke on behalf of himself and Christine Dowling. Professor John Dowling appealed to the Committee to consider the appropriateness of decision making on this matter at a time of political transition within the Council, asking that the decision is paused until the emerging political changes are confirmed. Professor Dowling also detailed his objection to the proposed excavation of sand and gravel near Eynsham emphasising the importance of Eynsham as a place for future economic investment. .

53/12 DIRECTOR'S UPDATE

(Agenda No. 5)

Huw Jones (Director, Environment & Economy) provided a summary of the implications of the budget agreed by council for the services provided by Environment and Economy. Council had agreed an additional £1million for the Area Stewardship Scheme which meant that with the £0.3m carry forward there would be £2.3 million in the fund for 2012/13. Councillor Gibbard asked further clarification for members on how the scheme would work and for a steer as to the criteria members should consider when determining priorities.

An additional £1 million had been agreed to improve rural road conditions (of non principal roads).

The Dial a Ride contract had been awarded to the internal ITU team.

The Committee **AGREED** to consider the broader issue of Community Transport at its June meeting, but noted that its working group on Community Transport would meet before that date.

A number of key contracts had now been awarded and this provided an opportunity to consider how best to structure the directorate. The directorate was likely to be restructured to enable greater focus and distinction between operational issues and strategic issues of place.

54/12 LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP/ENTERPRISE ZONE

(Agenda No. 6)

Martin Tugwell delivered a presentation outlining the context and priorities of the Local Economic Partnership (LEP) and the Enterprise Zone. The committee discussed the difficulties in balancing the plans for new jobs with the housing needs that these jobs bring. Martin Tugwell reassured the committee that the LEP would consider and plan for the broader infrastructure needs of the county as a whole.

It was **AGREED** that the Chairman of the LEP would be invited to the June meeting of the committee.

55/12 MINERALS AND WASTE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

(Agenda No. 7)

Mr Arthur Grayson, representing Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) addressed the committee. He outlined his concerns about the planning assumptions underpinning the sand and gravel projections and expressed a view that these were overstated.

Henry Thornton addressed the committee. He expressed his concerns about the impact of the proposals on Cholsey/Wallingford and on their economy which relies heavily on tourism. He expressed doubts that the impact of the site on ecology and archaeology in the surrounding area had been fully assessed and considered. He noted that the proposals may impact on the proposed Cycle Path which had been supported by the county.

Councillor Linda Atkins addressed the committee. She stated that as the assessment on the Area of Natural Beauty (AONB) had not yet been completed it was not yet possible to determine the impact of the proposals. She expressed concern that the possible impact of bird strikes had not been fully considered and that until this and the AONB assessment had been conducted the strategy could not be considered to be deliverable.

Martin Tugwell explained that the committee was being asked to consider a framework which deliberately did not address site specific issues. Instead site specific issues would be addressed as part of the planning process.

The Growth and Infrastructure Committee considered and recommended five aspects of the Core Strategy which it considered that Cabinet should satisfy itself of before agreeing the strategy:

- a) That the proposed figure for sand and gravel provision on 1.26 million tonnes per annum is sufficiently robust
- b) That the proposed strategy is sufficiently robust as to be deliverable
- c) That the process of preparing the Core Strategy had been undertaken in a way that enables the views of local communities to engage in it; specifically that the residents of Cholsey had had sufficient opportunity to have their views adequately considered
- d) That sufficient encouragement is given to the need to reduce the amount of lorry miles and;
- e) That sufficient encouragement is given to the use of rail facilities as a means of transporting materials.

The recommendation was carried by the committee with Councillor Tanner voting against the recommendation.

56/12 BICESTER: MASTERPLANNING

(Agenda No. 8)

Daniel Round outlined proposals for the development of Bicester. Councillors Shouler and Handley expressed concerns about the proportion of the county’s overall capital programme which was being spent in Bicester. The committee asked for reassurance that there would be sufficient planning and funding for the infrastructure necessary to sustain the housing developments. Martin Tugwell agreed that infrastructure was key to the development and that the key to this lay in the Local Development Framework.

The committee **AGREED** to consider this matter further at a future meeting.

57/12 CLOSE OF MEETING

(Agenda No. 9)

..... in the Chair

Date of signing