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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