

DRAFT

Note: These Minutes will remain DRAFT until approved at the next meeting of the Committee

COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON

MONDAY, 16 JULY 2012

Councillors Present: Peter Argyle, Howard Bairstow, Pamela Bale, Jeff Beck, Brian Bedwell, Dominic Boeck, Jeff Brooks, Paul Bryant, George Chandler, Keith Chopping, Hilary Cole, Richard Crumly, Billy Drummond, Adrian Edwards (Chairman), Sheila Ellison, Marcus Franks, Dave Goff, Manohar Gopal, Paul Hower, David Holtby, John Horton, Carol Jackson-Doerge (Vice-Chairman), Graham Jones, Alan Law, Tony Linden, Royce Longton, Gordon Lundie, Gwen Mason, Geoff Mayes, Tim Metcalfe, Irene Neill, Graham Pask, David Rendel, Garth Simpson, Anthony Stansfeld, Tony Vickers, Virginia von Celsing, Quentin Webb, Keith Woodhams and Laszlo Zverko

Also Present: Liz Alexander (Team Leader - Planning Policy), Nick Carter (Chief Executive), Andy Day (Head of Strategic Support), Gary Lugg (Head of Planning & Countryside) and Bryan Lyttle (Planning & Transport Policy Manager), Linda Pye (Principal Policy Officer)

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting: Councillor David Allen, Councillor David Betts, Councillor Roger Croft, Councillor Roger Hunneman, Councillor Mike Johnston, Councillor Mollie Lock, Councillor Alan Macro, Councillor Joe Mooney, Councillor Andrew Rowles, Councillor Julian Swift-Hook, Councillor Ieuan Tuck and Councillor Emma Webster

PART I

19. Declarations of Interest

Councillors Emma Webster, Ieuan Tuck and Roger Hunneman declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 3 and reported that they would not be attending the meeting.

Councillors Keith Woodhams, Marcus Franks and Paul Hower declared an interest in Agenda Item 3, but reported that, as their interest was personal and not prejudicial, they determined to remain to take part in the debate and vote on the matter.

20. West Berkshire Core Strategy Inspector's Report and Adoption

(Councillor Emma Webster declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in Agenda item 3 by virtue of the fact that her employer would be involved in the public relations, stakeholder engagement and communications in respect of Sandford Park and she was a shareholder in the business. As her interest was a disclosable pecuniary interest she did not attend the meeting and took no part in the debate or voting on the matter).

(Councillors Ieuan Tuck and Roger Hunneman declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in Agenda item 3 by virtue of the fact that one of the proposed developments set out in the Core Strategy was in close proximity to their homes. As their interest was a disclosable pecuniary interest they did not attend the meeting and took no part in the debate or voting on the matter).

(Councillor Keith Woodhams declared a personal interest in Agenda item 3 by virtue of the fact that he was employed at the Racecourse which was one of the proposed developments in the Core Strategy. As his interest was personal and not prejudicial he was permitted to take part in the debate and vote on the matter).

(Councillors Marcus Franks and Paul Hower declared a personal interest in Agenda item 3 by virtue of the fact that they were employed by Sovereign Housing. As their interest

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was personal and not prejudicial they were permitted to take part in the debate and vote on the matter).

The Chairman ensured that all Members in attendance at the meeting had received a copy of the Proposals Map – those who had submitted apologies would receive a hard copy in their bags later in the week.

The Council considered a report (Agenda Item 3) informing Council of the receipt of the Inspector's Report into the Examination of the West Berkshire Core Strategy and Council were asked to consider the adoption of the West Berkshire Core Strategy Development Plan Document as attached in Appendix A to the report, and accompanying Proposals Map.

MOTION: Proposed by Councillor Keith Chopping and seconded by Councillor Alan Law:

"That the Council resolved that the West Berkshire Core Strategy Development Plan Document attached at Appendix A and the accompanying Proposals Map were adopted in accordance with Section 23 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended). The Council also resolved that delegated authority was given to the Head of Planning and Countryside to agree any minor typographical and formatting refinements to the West Berkshire Core Strategy Development Plan Document and accompanying Proposals Map before publication."

Councillor Keith Chopping in introducing the report stated that although he had only been Portfolio Holder for a couple of months he recognised that this was the culmination of a long process which had commenced seven years ago. Following an Examination in Public the Inspector's report had been received a couple of weeks ago in which the Core Strategy had been declared sound. The fact that it had been found sound was important for West Berkshire as without it the Council could be vulnerable to developers obtaining planning permission via the planning appeals process.

The Core Strategy would become part of the Development Plan for West Berkshire and would be key in the determination of future planning applications. A review of the overall housing numbers would need to take place within three years.

Councillor Chopping thanked Councillor Alan Law, the previous Executive Member, as he had worked closely with Officers and the Planning Policy Task Group to bring this process to a conclusion. He also thanked Officers for their hard work in achieving the best Plan possible.

Councillor Tony Vickers also added his thanks to Officers and Members of the Planning Policy Task Group, and in particular Councillor Alan Law who had achieved what he had set out to do. However, he referred to page 19, paragraph 37 of the Inspectors Report, which stated that this Plan had unfortunately been caught in the transitional period between the demise of the Regional Strategies, which had still not concluded, and the emergence of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) as the sole higher tier guidance for the preparation of Local Plans. He criticised the Council as he felt that it should have responded more constructively to the changing planning context following publication of the draft NPPF in the previous Summer. Councillor Vickers was pleased to see that the Core Strategy included the Higher Energy Standard and the ability to negotiate affordable housing from smaller sites but he stated that he would not be able to support the overall adoption of the Strategy due to the fact that Sandleford remained as a strategic site for the Newbury/Thatcham area. Councillor Vickers remained disappointed that the proposed Core Strategy had not focused more on using existing brownfield sites rather than Sandleford. The Inspector had not found specific reasons to change the strategic site but had made a balanced decision on the soundness of the Core Strategy.

Councillor Jeff Brooks recognised that this had been a long and difficult process and he thanked all those who had worked hard on this process. It was never an easy process to

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develop a greenfield site and it had been surprising to note from a recent report that only 2.27% of England had been developed the remainder was greenfield. He looked forward to the review of ECON1 in the future. Councillor Brooks was of the opinion that the Council had chosen the wrong strategic site and measures would need to be put in place to mitigate the damage. With the development of the household waste and recycling centre and the proposal to build 10,500 houses at Sandleford the green lung to the south of Newbury would soon disappear. Councillor Brooks clarified that the Liberal Democrats had supported going to consultation on the Core Strategy but had been opposed to the Strategy itself.

Councillor David Rendel reported that he had been saddened by the decision of the Inspector when he had declared the Core Strategy as being sound. That decision would be crucial to the future of this area and 13 years from now local residents would see the way Newbury had developed following the decision which had been made tonight. Had Sandleford been the only option for a strategic site then the Core Strategy would have been acceptable.

Councillor Graham Jones echoed the comments made in respect of thanks to officers and Members from both sides on the Planning Policy Task Group as this had been a long process. Councillor Jones stated that housing demand had risen and would continue to do so. The key was how that growth would be controlled. If Sandleford had not been chosen then it would have been another site possibly to the north of Newbury. The fact that Sandleford had been chosen as a strategic site meant that development on that area could be controlled. It was essential to guarantee supply of housing and that involved making difficult decisions at times. He commended the Core Strategy to Council.

Councillor Alan Law added his thanks to the Officer team and in particular to Liz Alexander who had managed the Examination in Public particularly well. He also referred to the Members of the Planning Policy Task Group who had provided an excellent level of scrutiny and advice especially during the formative stages in 2008/09.

Councillor Law acknowledged that due to the tortuous nature of the process the local taxpayer had been put to considerable expense and he confirmed that he would write to the relevant MP in respect of the cost incurred.

The Inspector had agreed with the selection of Sandleford as the strategic site as there were insufficient brownfield sites within the area to make up the housing numbers. The Council was now in control of future developments which would make Newbury and West Berkshire fit for the 21st century. The new Portfolio Holder had given his commitment that he would work with the residents of Sandleford to produce a community that they could be proud of.

The Chairman of the Council, Councillor Adrian Edwards, also thanked Members of the Task Group and Officers for their commitment to the process and stated that their efforts had been much appreciated.

In accordance with Procedure Rule 4.15.2 it was requisitioned that the voting on the Amendment be recorded. The names of those Members voting for, against and abstaining were read to the Council as follows:

FOR the Motion:

Councillors Peter Argyle, Howard Bairstow, Pamela Bale, Jeff Beck, Brian Bedwell, Dominic Boeck, Paul Bryant, George Chandler, Keith Chopping, Hilary Cole, Richard Crumly, Adrian Edwards, Sheila Ellison, Marcus Franks, Dave Goff, Manohar Gopal, Paul Hower, David Holtby, John Horton, Carol Jackson-Doerge, Graham Jones, Alan Law, Tony Linden, Gordon Lundie, Tim Metcalfe, Irene Neill, Graham Pask, Garth Simpson, Anthony Stansfeld, Virginia von Celsing, Quentin Webb, Laszlo Zverko (32).

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AGAINST the Motion:

Councillors Jeff Brooks, Billy Drummond, Royce Longton, Gwen Mason, Geoff Mayes, David Rendel, Tony Vickers, Keith Woodhams (8).

ABSTAINED:

There were no abstentions.

The Motion was put to the meeting and duly **RESOLVED**.

21. Revised Code of Conduct

The Council considered a report (Agenda Item 4) clarifying the adoption process following the inclusion of preparation powers in the Localism Act 2011 (Commencement No.6 and Transitional Savings and Transitory Provisions) Order 2012..

MOTION: Proposed by Councillor Dominic Boeck and seconded by Councillor Gwen Mason:

That the Council confirmed the adoption of the Code of Conduct for Members and supporting arrangements were effective from 01 July 2012.

The Motion was put to the meeting and duly **RESOLVED**.

(The meeting commenced at 7.00 pm and closed at 7.39 pm)

CHAIRMAN

Date of Signature