

CARTERTON TOWN COUNCIL  
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 18 DECEMBER 2012  
AT 7.45 PM

Present:	Cllr A Coomber -	Town Mayor
	Cllr Mrs L Little -	Deputy Town Mayor
	Cllr Mrs D Bulley	Cllr P Madden
	Cllr R Crapper	Cllr N Miah
	Cllr Mrs M Crossland	Cllr P Scott
	Cllr A Farmer	Cllr M Steward
	Cllrs Jobs	

Apologies: Cllrs Mrs MacRae and Cllr MacRae.

The Clerk reported that the deadline to request an Election had passed and that the Council could now co-opt to fill the two vacancies. It was agreed to advertise the vacancies after Christmas.

108 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 20 November 2012, copies of which had been previously circulated to Members, were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Mayor.

109 MATTERS ARISING

The Clerk reported that Wren had agreed a grant of £15,000 for the adaptations to the pavilion.

110 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no DPis. Cllr Scott declared an interest as Chairman of the Chamber of Trade and the NAG. Cllr Crapper declared an interest as a member of the Chamber of Trade. Cllr Farmer declared an interest in Carterton Football Club. Cllr Mrs Little declared an interest in cheque 10423, as a Governor of Edith Moorhouse School and in the Community College. Cllr Mrs Crossland declared an interest in the discussions on the Local Plan as a member of WODC Planning Committee. Cllr Coomber declared an interest in RAF/MOD matters as a member of the armed services.

111 TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor said that he and the Deputy Mayor had attending a training day in London on the Portas Pilot scheme and that he had also been to the town centre public meeting and two town team design workshops. He thanked all those who had been involved in the switch on of the Christmas lights and in the Christmas craft fair. The Mayor had attended carol services at Burford and Witney and the Songsters Christmas Concert and he thanked those who had supported the Council's Christmas dinner. The Mayor had had a meeting with ISS Defence to see if they might support the adaptations to the pavilion. The Mayor also circulated a letter of thanks from the family of a serviceman who had been repatriated during November.

112 ADJOURNMENT FOR PUBLIC TO RAISE MATTERS

No issues were raised.

## 113 ADJOURNMENT FOR COUNTY COUNCILLORS TO RAISE MATTERS

Councillors Couchman and Handley had sent their apologies.

## 114 RESPONSE TO THE LOCAL PLAN

The Clerk gave a summary of the public consultation which had run for the first two weeks of December and which is appended to these minutes.

Cllr Farmer, as Chairman of Policy, introduced the Council's draft response to the consultation exercise. In discussion, Cllr Mrs Crossland expressed disappointment that so few had responded to the consultation. She also commented on the distance from the proposed eastern SDA to the Community College and the need to secure developer funding for the second phase of the leisure centre. Councillors noted that the public consultation had identified the A40, particularly towards Oxford, as being a major problem and it was agreed that this should be included in the Council's response as being in urgent need of upgrading. Councillors also agreed that the response should refer to the possible need for new medical facilities to support the new housing.

Cllr Farmer expressed concern that the WODC plan did not address the long term issues that had been identified by the Town Council, particularly the need for land for employment, for recreation, and for the expansion of RAF Brize Norton. He suggested that the Town and District Council should work together to try to resolve these issues.

It was clarified that the Town Council's response was commenting on the proposals set out in the Local Plan, namely that there be an SDA to the east of the town, and that the Council objected to this development in its present form.

RESOLVED that subject to the additions mentioned above, the draft response (which is appended to these minutes) should be submitted to WODC.

RESOLVED that the District Council should be asked to work with the Town Council to find some long term solutions to the issues identified in the response.

Cllr Mrs Crossland abstained from both votes.

## 115 CLERK'S REPORT

The Clerk's Report, copies of which had previously been circulated, was received. The decisions taken on the Report are recorded at Annex 'A'. See below.

## 116 PLANNING COMMITTEE

Council received the Minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 20 November. This was noted.

## 117 CHRISTMAS LIGHTS COMMITTEE

The Council received the note of the meeting held on 4 December. It was noted that there might be some changes to make it more of a community event. Cllr Mrs Crossland suggested that it might be held on a Sunday and expanded to include the lantern procession and a carol service. Cllr Scott reported some problems with the road closures resulting in lorries using Lawton Avenue.

Cllr Mrs Little invited councillors to attend the next meeting of the committee that she would be arranging in the near future, or to let her have their ideas in writing.

#### 118 CHANGES TO THE TAX BASE

The Council received notification from WODC of changes to the way parish precepts would be calculated. The District had agreed to use some of its Council Tax Support Grant to lessen the impact on parish councils and was seeking views on whether they should allocate grant in line with benefit which would result in winners and losers, or whether they should seek to smooth the losses and gains to create, if possible, a nil impact on all parishes.

RESOLVED to support the suggestion that the overall impact of the changes should be as neutral as possible.

The Clerk reported that a government announcement was due the following day about the possible capping of parish council precepts. She said she would notify Councillors as soon as she had any news.

#### 119 REQUESTS FOR GRANT AID

The Council received further information about the request from Carterton Day Centre for funding. It was noted that the day care was to be provided by another body in the town and the Council therefore decided not to grant aid the Day Centre. The Clerk was asked to find out what other services there were in the town for older residents. The Council also considered an application for funding from the CAB. It was agreed that this application should be postponed until the next round of applications is considered in the spring.

#### 120 FINANCIAL STATEMENT

The Financial Statement to 30 November set out at Annex 'B' was approved. A summary of Income and Expenditure by Budget Heading was also provided at Annex 'B'.

#### 121 ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT

Council RESOLVED that the Accounts set out at Annex 'C' be approved for payment. It was agreed that there should be a separate report to future meetings on the cost of the Town Hall extension.

#### 122 PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960

RESOLVED that as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, the Press and Public be excluded from the Meeting.

The meeting ended at 8.45 pm.

15 January 2013

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Town Mayor

1. **West Oxon LPA.** Please see attached letter about proposed merger of West Oxfordshire and Cherwell Police Areas. **Noted.**
2. The Council has received letters from St John's Church and Life Education Centres Thames Valley thanking us for their grants. **Noted**
3. **Forthcoming meetings and events:**

8 January 2013	Planning and Recreation
11 January 2013	10 am. Land for sport
15 January 2013	Planning and Council
5 February 2013	Planning and Policy
19 February 2013	Planning and Council
20 February 2013	Highways Surgery
4. **The Town Hall will close from midday on 24 December and reopen on Wednesday 2 January 2013. Noted.**

## **LOCAL PLAN**

### **Consultation responses.**

In early December, the Town Council issued a special edition of the Town Crier which was delivered by the Post Office to every house in Carterton and some houses in Brize Norton. The newsletter also appeared on the Town Council web site. In addition, a newsletter by Crest promoting development to the west was delivered by hand to many parts of the town on 13 December. A number of the replies received over the weekend appear to be commenting on Crest newsletter rather than the one issued by CTC. As at midday on 17 December we had received 76 replies in total (75 from individuals and one from the Chamber of Trade). The comments are summarised below.

### **Improvements in Infrastructure**

Of the 27 commenting on the Council's 'wish list' most were broadly supportive of the Council's vision for more land for recreation, improved roads and pedestrian links and more retail choice in the town centre. However:

- 14 say that there is no need for more employment land as existing estates are empty.
- 11 comment on the need to improve the A40 (not currently included in our response)
- 4 say there is no need for a fire station.
- 3 commented that the town centre would never be worth visiting

### **Strategic Development sites**

Comments from individuals are:

- 3 say no development until A40 is improved
- 6 support development solely on the REEMA sites. A number of other people support the redevelopment of the REEMA sites in addition to the east. No respondents are opposed to the redevelopment of the REEMA sites.
- 39 support development to the east and/or object to west. All of these people are Carterton residents. The main reason given is that the west is unspoilt countryside which should be left undeveloped. A number of respondents have referred to the petition signed last year by 1,700 residents objecting to development to the west. Other objections given include flooding and increased traffic on Upavon Way.
- 15 object to development to the east. 9 of these replies are from Brize Norton residents, 3 are from Carterton residents and the remainder have not given addresses. The main reasons for objection are the coalescence of Carterton and Brize Norton, pollution from the base and flooding in Brize Norton Village.
- 5 prefer development to the west. 3 of these are from Brize Norton residents and 2 from Carterton residents. 1 resident believes the development to the west should be fully evaluated.

Comments from the Chamber of Trade:

- The Chamber supports the development to the west as promoting the economy of the town
- The development will encourage people to visit the town centre
- It will protect local schools, and
- It will reduce flooding and improve infrastructure.

## **CARTERTON TOWN COUNCIL'S RESPONSE TO THE WODC CONSULTATION ON THE DRAFT LOCAL PLAN**

The Town Council welcomes the opportunity to respond to this consultation exercise and also the opportunity to engage more directly in the local planning process.

### **Introduction**

We welcome the District Council's commitment to the further expansion of the town. In 2010, the Town Council employed a planning consultant to advise Councillors on the benefits of growth. The Planning Policy Team has received a copy of this report but in summary we believe the town must grow if it is to strengthen its role as a service centre. Our aim is to support existing services and facilities and, where possible, to develop these. We are particularly keen to develop the town centre to provide improved retail opportunities and to see an increase in local employment. We recognise our neighbouring parishes view expansion with concern and we want to address these concerns and support them in overcoming them, including the provision of green buffer zones to protect the villages. By expanding the range of services on offer in the town and improving the local infrastructure we believe residents in neighbouring villages could benefit significantly.

The Council has also undertaken a local consultation exercise having issued a special version of the Town Crier newsletter seeking views on the content of this response. The Council has taken these comments into account in formulating its response.

### **Core Policy 29**

The Town Council broadly agrees with the vision for the town set out in **Core Policy 29** although we want to see stronger statements in a number of areas particularly employment, the road network and land for sport. It is not for the Town Council to comment on the overall number of houses to be provided in the Carterton Sub Area (**core policy 6**) but we accept that the town should be the focus for new development with development elsewhere being limited to meeting local community needs. We welcome the commitment to develop affordable housing and also homes for older people (**Core Policy 7**). We support **Core Policy 4**, high quality and sustainable design and would ask that a specific reference be included in **Core Policy 29**.

### **Core Policy 11 and Core Policy 29 – Land for Business**

#### **The Council objects to these policies**

The Town Council wants to see these policies strengthened to include:

- Identifying new land for employment uses. If WOBP were to become available for purchase it could be fully occupied providing employment for current residents. The planned new homes over the period of the plan requires additional employment opportunities if residents are not to be forced to work out of town. We believe significantly more employment land is being provided in Witney on a like for like basis. We would welcome assurances that the method used to calculate employment land takes account of the fact that Carterton has a relative high proportion of residents of working age. We also ask you to note that 5 of the units on Ventura Park are currently under offer.
- Recognition that although the West Oxfordshire Business Park is vacant 'on paper' in practice it is not available. The Economy Study Update 2012 mentions that spaces on WOBP are not always attractive to potential employers due to the price and the requirement to take the land leasehold
- Recognition of the need for accommodation for start-up businesses.
- Recognition of the dangers of over reliance on RAF Brize Norton as employers.

- Recognition of the potential for encouraging aviation related businesses to come to the area.

### **Core Policy 16 and core policy 30 – Town Centres**

**The Council supports these policies** but in addition would like to see reference to:

- The need to support existing town centre retailers
- The need to improve the overall design of the town centre and the importance of a Design Strategy to guide short and medium term development
- The importance of ensuring any new major development includes strong measures to encourage the residents to use the town centre, rather than drive out to Witney.
- A commitment to encourage residents of the surrounding villages to use Carterton as their location of choice for day to day essentials.
- Recognition of the work that is being undertaken to establish a longer term vision for the town

### **Core Policy 29 – Transport**

**The Council objects to these policies.**

The Town Council believes that this section of the Plan is particularly weak. We believe the Local Plan should be amended to include:

- Improvements to the A40 particularly in an easterly direction
- The creation of a significantly improved link to the A40. We understand that OCC will be reviewing all possible routes during 2013 and the Town Council wishes to have an input into this exercise.
- The rapid implementation of the Shilton Road link
- Improvements to the Wycombe Way/Brize Norton Road junction
- A 4 way access onto the A40 at Minister Lovell or improvements to the road from BN to the A40 west by the quarry (a shorter journey for people travelling westwards.)
- the creation of a by-pass to the Shilton dip
- improvements to the roads leading out of the town to the west particularly bypassing the bottle necks in Kencot and Filkins
- creating a lorry free zone in the centre of Carterton
- creating a town cycling strategy
- The need to access south west quadrant car parks from the west

### **Core Policy 29 - Recreation**

**The Town Council supports this policy** but wishes to see the following items included in the Plan.

- Recognition that there is a need for more than 2 pitches and that the towns sports facilities should be co-located rather than spread across several sites.
- A firm commitment about the provision of specific acreage for allotments
- A firm commitment to the completion of phase 2 of the leisure centre (rather than a commitment to a contribution).

### **Core Policy 29 - Infrastructure**

The Town Council believes the Local Plan should:

- Identify ways to increase pupils at Carterton Community College
- Give a firm commitment about provision of specific acreage for burials.
- Give firm commitment on provide fire station (or emergency services station)
- Consider whether further medical facilities would be required in the town to support the new houses.

### **Core Policy 31 East Carterton SDA**

Although the Council understands why WODC have recommended the east, the Council objects to this policy because a number of issues have been ignored, been given little priority, or completely overlooked.

The proposal is for 700 houses to the east of Carterton. Although the Council welcomes the provision of a new, sustainable mixed housing development, we cannot support the location of this SDA because:

- It closes the gap between Carterton and the village of Brize Norton and is particularly close to the residents of Burford Road, Brize Norton
- It does not provide adequate land for employment
- It does not allow adequate land for the development of new sports pitches and for other recreational purposes
- It restricts future expansion of RAF Brize Norton for future military or civilian use
- It does nothing to benefit the town centre offer and will not encourage people to support town centre retail
- The proposed local centre will compete with the local centre on Shilton Park
- There is no reference to the provision of a pub/restaurant and hotel.
- There is no room for further expansion beyond the scope of this Plan. The Council does not understand the logic of encroaching closer to Brize Norton village when a development to the west has much less impact on the built up areas of neighbouring villages.
- The site is too small for a creative development. At 34 dph it will be dense and subject to noise and light pollution from the base.
- New housing to the east is further from the existing secondary school which currently has a large number of vacancies.

### **Core Policy 32 REEMA North and Central SDA**

#### **The Council supports this policy.**

The Council welcomes the fact that a decision has at last been reached about the number of married quarters that the RAF need although we are disappointed that many RAF families have been housed outside the town and that others have chosen to stay at Lyneham. The overall reduction in the number of families moving into the town has had a negative impact on the primary and secondary schools within the town.

The Council stresses the need for the new housing (both MOD and private) to be high quality and sustainable. We welcome confirmation that the new development will be to a lower density than when the MOD housing occupied the site. We would urge the District Council to use its best endeavours to bring landownership issues on REEMA central to speedy conclusion so that the rebuilding can begin.

#### **Items for developer contributions**

The Plan identifies a number of projects for developer funding. The Council realises that not all of these can be met as a result of a development of 1,850 new dwellings. We have therefore attached a priority to each of the items and would ask that the District consider these priorities when negotiating future s106 or CIL agreements:

	<b>Project Details</b>		<b>Priority</b>
Transport	1 Provision of improved road access to A40	Not costed	High
	2 Various bus service improvements	Not costed	Medium
	3 Various cycle/pedestrian routes	Not costed	High
Utilities	4 Upgrade water main/sewage	Not costed	High
	5 Upgrade gas network	Not costed	Medium
	6 Upgrade energy network	Not costed	Medium
Police	7 2 PCSOs	£343,000	Medium

	8	1 marked car	£42,300	Medium
Fire	9	Provision of fire station	Not costed	Depends on current review
Burials	10	Provision or contribution to be sought	Not costed	High/Essential
Recreation	11	2 new pitches	Not costed	High
	12	Enhance CCC sports hall and ATP	Not costed	Medium. ATP already funded
	13	Phase 2 of leisure centre	Up to £3.5m	High
	14	Extend Country park	Not costed	Low
	15	Allotments as part of east SDA	Not costed	High
Education	16	New primary as part of East SDA	£7.39m	Review existing capacity
	17	Expand capacity of CCC	Not costed	Fill current capacity

### **Conclusion – key issues**

On land for employment, sport and the potential expansion of RAF Brize Norton, Council asks WODC to clearly identify adequate land for these activities.

On transport Council asks WODC to be more specific about essential improvements to the road systems to the A40, and other road links to the north and west.

On additional housing the Town Council is not able to support the proposed development to the east of the town in its current form. Council considers development to the west to provide the best long term option. Whichever option WODC decides upon, subject to certain specific amendments to that option, our requirements for land for employment, sport and recreation might in part be satisfied.

In the draft Local Plan, WODC give a number of reasons for not considering the land to the west as a site for an SDA. The Town Council's responses to these points are:

**Significant Impact on the landscape:** This can be mitigated with a comprehensive landscaping plan and there is adequate land to achieve such a plan.

**Would require an extensive infrastructure across an environmentally and ecologically sensitive area including the Shill Valley flood plain.** This overstates the situation where a road with associated bridge is required and this impacts a very small percentage of the area. Offsetting this is the opening up of this area of some 20 acres for public access.

**Development would represent a major incursion into open countryside.** Very few people live, work or walk in this area and with proper landscaping the development would not be unsightly from the existing boundary roads. It also offers space for a more pleasant living environment and at 300 acres will accommodate at least 2000 dwellings, thus allowing the town to grow up to 2040.

**Promote thriving and inclusive communities.** We disagree that in this respect the west is worse than the east. By moving residents closer to Witney, and with the poor links to the town via Shilton Park, we believe that the east option will promote a less thriving town.

**Improve accessibility to all services and facilities.** By integrating the west into the current bus routes, and because it is closer and more accessible to a number of the town's facilities and services, the west scores more highly than the east

**Improve efficiency of land use.** Land to the east is better used to provide space for employment, sport facilities, a buffer for Brize Norton and the possible long-term expansion of RAF Brize Norton rather than housing. Land to the west will not meet these uses but is well suited for residential development.

**Reduce the risk from all sources of flooding.** We believe that both the east and west solutions include proper safeguards which will reduce the current risk of flooding.

**Conserve and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity.** Sensitive residential development to the west could provide a more interesting environment with access to the Shill Valley and the surrounding area. This land is currently in private ownership and is not managed in such a way as to promote conservation or biodiversity.

**Conserve and enhance the landscape character and historic environment.** The landscape to the west is rolling fields used for arable agriculture. The land is of low to medium quality due to the high limestone content. There are some hedges but most fields are bounded by stone walls in a poor state of repair. Sensitive development could enhance this environment.

**Building on the flood plain.** As far as the Council is aware, there are no plans to build on the Shill Brook flood plain.

A development to the west would also better support Carterton Community College.