

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Planning Portfolio Holder's Meeting held on
Tuesday, 8 March 2011 at 10.00 a.m.

Portfolio Holder: Nick Wright

Councillors in attendance:

Scrutiny and Overview Committee monitors: Mike Mason

Opposition spokesmen: Trisha Bear and John F Williams

Also in attendance: David Bard and Lynda Harford

Officers:

John Garnham	Principal Accountant (General Fund and Projects)
David Grimster	Accountant
Gareth Jones	Head of Planning
Nicole Kritzinger	Development Officer
Keith Miles	Planning Policy Manager
Jo Mills	Corporate Manager, Planning and New Communities
Sean Missin	Procurement Officer
Ian Senior	Democratic Services Officer

36. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

37. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Planning Portfolio Holder agreed that the Minutes of the Planning Portfolio Holder meeting held on 25 January 2011 were a correct record.

38. SERVICE PLANS 2011/12

The Planning Portfolio Holder considered the Planning and New Communities Service Plan 2011-12 insofar as it related to the Planning portfolio.

The Corporate Manager (Planning and New Communities) drew his attention to the Value For Money Template and Service Improvement Action Plan.

Those present noted the replacement Table relating to the "Context / Resources" part of the Service Plan.

A Scrutiny and Overview Committee monitor challenged the risk overview relating to STR05 (Lack of Development Progress). The principal concern was that building houses on windfall sites in locations where employment had been lost was creating an imbalance that, ultimately, would result in the Council failing properly to deliver the Local Development Framework. Officers acknowledged that there was a potential conflict between policies, but pointed out that the Local Development Framework allowed for development in villages as a means of delivering enough new housing to address housing need in the district. Those present discussed the issue of sustainable development in the context of the current economic climate.

With regard to the percentage of large major planning applications determined within 16 weeks, officers pointed out that the actual number of such applications was small, and that speed of determination was less important than maintaining a high quality of customer service and ensuring that appropriate ancillary measures, such as Section 106 Legal Agreements, were dealt with effectively.

Members welcomed the clear layout of the Service Plan.

The Planning Portfolio Holder **noted, approved and adopted** the Planning aspects of the Planning and New Communities Service Plan 2011-12.

39. CHANGES TO THE COUNCIL'S PROCUREMENT STRATEGY

The Planning Portfolio Holder considered a report linking the Procurement Strategy with the Climate Change Action Plan 2010-13 and incorporating Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults into the Procurement Strategy.

The Planning Portfolio Holder approved the following amendments to the Procurement Strategy:

- (a) In relation to the Climate Change Action Plan 2010-13 by:
 - (i) amending paragraph 4.8.6 of the Procurement Strategy to read as follows:

“As part of the Council’s Climate Change Action Plan 2010-13 the Council is committed to reducing its own carbon footprint and procurement can play a part in achieving this aim. The Council will therefore place significant weight upon seeking to ensure that the level of life-cycle carbon emissions associated with the materials, products, services and utilities that it procures are in line with its carbon reduction commitments.”
 - (ii) amending paragraph 4.8.9 of the Procurement Strategy to read as follows:

“The strategy is concerned with adopting a consistent approach for assessing the environmental impact of procurement activity within all the Council’s service areas. To this end technical guidance, support documents and training sessions will be made available to staff. This includes the use of life cycle assessments, eco-labels (e.g. energy star) and sustainability criteria in tender documentation.”
- (b) In relation to the Safeguarding Children Policy 2009 and Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy 2010:by inserting the following new section into the Procurement Strategy:
 - 10 Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults
 - 10.1 The Council needs to safeguard the welfare of children and vulnerable adults. Therefore Contract Regulations will ensure that where procurement involves contractors coming into contact with children or vulnerable adults, the service will include criteria in the specification relating to the conduct of employees, health & safety, Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adult terms and put suitable reporting processes in place to mirror the Council’s internal procedures.

40. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY FOR SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE 2010-15

The Planning Portfolio Holder considered a report detailing the results of the consultation on the draft proposed Economic Development Strategy for South Cambridgeshire (2010 – 2015).

The report highlighted the key themes and actions identified in the strategy, which was sufficiently flexible to allow for variances in the economic climate and changing partnership and delivery arrangements including the establishment of the Local Enterprise Partnership.

The Portfolio Holder had been very impressed by the original document, and noted that no significant changes had been necessary as a result of consultation with internal and external stakeholders. South Cambridgeshire had been identified in surveys as one of the best places in the country in which to live. He congratulated the Development Officer for producing such a high quality Strategy document.

The Planning Portfolio Holder:

- (a) **Noted** the content of this report
- (b) **Adopted** the Economic Development Strategy, attached in Appendix 1.

41. CAMBRIDGESHIRE LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN 3

The Planning Portfolio Holder considered a report on the approach being taken by Cambridgeshire County Council in its review of the Local Transport Plan (LTP).

A Scrutiny and Overview Committee monitor expressed concern that, should the Portfolio Holder endorse without reservation the County Council's Draft LTP3 on behalf of South Cambridgeshire District Council, he would be ignoring the County Council's difficult financial position, and its inability to deliver the current programme, such failure having severe implications for County and District Council Taxpayers. The County Council had included Integrated Public Transport as a main priority in every LTP since 2001 and in equivalent proposals before that date. Structure Plan and LDF policies had been based on assumptions that previous transport plans would have delivered the necessary infrastructure to support major development at little cost to the local taxpayer and that block grant funding from government would continue at a sufficient level. The County Council continued to face challenges in delivering the Cambridgeshire Guided Bus scheme.

The Portfolio Holder noted the inferences made and reminded those present that the Guided Bus project was only one part of the LTP that, as a whole, remained within budget. He considered that, in general, South Cambridgeshire residents were satisfied with the manner in which the District Council, as Local Planning Authority, had dealt with planning conditions connected with the Guided Bus project.

The Portfolio Holder:

- (c) **supported** the emerging Local Transport Plan 3; and
- (d) **endorsed** the District Statement for inclusion within LTP3 (attached at Appendix 3 to the report from the Corporate Manager (Planning and New Communities)).

42. CARRY FORWARD OF UNCOMMITTED GRANT BALANCES TO 2011-12

The Planning Portfolio Holder considered a report seeking his authority to carry forward into 2011-12 the uncommitted grant balance in respect of Heritage Initiative Grants and the total balance on the Historic Buildings Preservation Fund.

The Conservation Manager highlighted instances in which these sums of money would be beneficial.

The Planning Portfolio Holder **resolved** that the following uncommitted grant balances be carried forward into the 2011/12 financial year:

- Heritage Initiatives Grants £29,061
- Historic Buildings Preservation Fund £54,622

43. FORWARD PLAN

Those present **noted** the Forward Plan for the Planning Portfolio attached to the agenda.

44. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Those present noted that the next Planning Portfolio Holder meeting would take place on 19 May 2011, starting at 10.00am.

The Meeting ended at 11.20 a.m.
