

## PLANNING PORTFOLIO HOLDER'S MEETING

TUESDAY, 9 SEPTEMBER 2014

### DECISIONS

Set out below is a summary of the decisions taken at the Planning Portfolio Holder's Meeting held on Tuesday, 9 September 2014. Decisions made by the Portfolio Holder will be subject to call-in. Recommendations made to the Cabinet or to the Council are not subject to call-in. The wording used does not necessarily reflect the actual wording that will appear in the minutes.

If you have any queries about any matters referred to in this decision sheet please contact Ian Senior.

**1. SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE LOCAL PLAN: MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL AND SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL - GREATER CAMBRIDGE HOUSING TRAJECTORY**

The Planning Portfolio Holder approved the Memorandum of Understanding between Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council as attached as Appendix 1 to the report from the Planning and New Communities Director.

**Options Considered:** The Council could decide not to sign up to a Memorandum of Understanding. This option is not preferred in the light of the changed circumstances identified in paragraph 6.

**Reason For Decision:** Changes in circumstances since the submission of the Local Plan, including the signing of the City Deal, the publication of the National Planning Practice Guidance and the recent Waterbeach appeal decisions, indicate that a Memorandum of Understanding between the Councils will demonstrate the soundness of the plans at the examination.

**2. LOCAL PLAN: MEMBER LIAISON DURING THE EXAMINATION**

The Planning Portfolio Holder confirmed the methods of liaison with Members during the Local Plan Examination, as follows:

- (a) Regular Updates and Briefings –
  - (i) Weekly email updates to all Members outlining the matters to be examined the following week, and providing a summary of the previous week's hearings. This will be issued each Friday, unless circumstances arise which necessitate a change, in which case Members will be kept informed.
  - (ii) The Portfolio Holder will have monthly informal meetings with Group Leaders to provide a regular opportunity for feedback and discussion.
  - (iii) The Portfolio Holder will be kept informed of progress throughout the Examination and ensure other liaison as appropriate, for instance, an All Member Briefing.
- (b) Formal Portfolio Holder meetings arranged each month for the duration of the Examination hearings. These will be held as necessary or cancelled if not needed.

**Options Considered:**

- 1 The recommended option for informal liaison is outlined in paragraph 8(a) above. The Examination will be intense. The weekly 'look forward' will help Members to decide which Examination sessions to attend; and the weekly 'looking back' will bring Members up to speed with the progress of the Examination.
2. Alternative means of informal liaison could be used, such as weekly all member briefings. This is not recommended. Verbal briefings would not reach all Members, and would introduce greater potential for lack of clarity. As stated above, the Portfolio Holder has discretion to arrange an all-member briefing at any time.
3. The monthly Formal Portfolio Holder meetings will provide opportunity for all Members to discuss the progress of the Examination, and any modifications that have been requested. These meetings will be used for decision-making. As the Examination progresses, the extent of requested modifications to the Local Plan will become clear. If appropriate, decisions regarding consultation on modifications may be made by Cabinet.

**Reason For Decision:** To ensure that Members are kept informed about the progress of the Local Plan Examination and have an opportunity to provide a steer as necessary within the overall Local Plan framework agreed by Council on 13 March 2014.

**3. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANS: HISTON & IMPINGTON AREA DESIGNATION**

The Planning Portfolio Holder

- (a) gave the Planning and New Communities Director delegated powers to approve the Histon and Impington Area Designation following the closure of the consultation on 12 September 2014, subject to there being no objections received; and
- (b) agreed that, should objections be received before the end of the consultation period, he make a decision without holding a meeting, such decision being subject to call-in.

**Options Considered:** The Portfolio Holder could

- (a) delegate authority to the Director, Planning and New Communities, to approve the Histon and Impington Area Designation following the closure of the consultation on 12 September assuming there are no objections received,
- (b) make a decision outside of a meeting, which can be subject to call-in, if any objections are received, or
- (c) defer a decision on the application to designate part of the parish of Histon and Impington as a Neighbourhood Area until the next Planning Portfolio Holder Meeting on 18 November 2014.

**Reason For Decision:** There are currently no objections to the application to designate part of the parish of Histon and Impington as a Neighbourhood Area. A delegated officer decision, assuming there are no objections received, will ensure that a timely decision is made and allow the parish to progress the development of their Neighbourhood Plan. If any objections are received a record of decision completed by the Portfolio Holder outside of a meeting, which can be subject to call-in, would also ensure that the parish is able to progress more swiftly than waiting for the next Portfolio Holder meeting on 18 November 2014.

#### 4. **NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANS - WORKING WITH PARISH COUNCILS**

It is recommended that the Planning Portfolio Holder

- a) Approves for consultation with parish councils the Service Level Agreement as set out in Appendix B to be used as a model agreement between South Cambridgeshire District Council and Parish Council/s within the district who are preparing neighbourhood plans for their areas. The results of the consultation to be reported back to the next Planning Portfolio Holder Meeting.
- b) Agrees that a review of the approach for neighbourhood planning is taken by the Council in a year's time

**Options Considered:** The Planning Portfolio Holder could decide not to have a SLA or could delay agreeing the approach to neighbourhood planning until such time as there is more experience of neighbourhood planning within the district. However this would lead to uncertainty as to what level of support parish councils could expect from the Council and impact on what resources they may subsequently need to prepare a NP.

**Reason For Decision:**

It was agreed by Cabinet in May this year that a process for supporting neighbourhood planning within South Cambridgeshire should be prepared. The recommendation is intended to establish this process, and that this approach should be reviewed in a year's time to see if it has been successful. Cabinet determined that future decisions on Neighbourhood Planning matters be delegated to the Planning Policy and Localism Portfolio Holder (now the Planning Portfolio Holder).

#### 5. **ST NEOTS NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN - RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION**

The Planning Portfolio Holder endorsed the following response to the St Neots Neighbourhood Plan:

1. **Support Policy PT1.** As St Neots is within the A428 corridor and car traffic generated from within this area will impact on the road network used by people who live and work in South Cambridgeshire the Council welcomes this policy. The successful implementation of this policy should reduce car traffic on the wider road network.
2. **Support Policy PT1 – Railway station improvements** - The railway station in St Neots is for many who live or work in the west of the district their local station so the Council would welcome the positive support shown in the neighbourhood plan to improvements to the facilities at the station. However the Town Council may wish to include in the policy consideration of improving sustainable travel links to the station e.g. cycle paths.
3. **Support Policy PT4- part (d).** South Cambridgeshire DC welcomes the inclusion of the Town Council being willing to work with Huntingdonshire DC and Cambridgeshire County Council about dualling the A428. Improving the traffic flow on this road by dualling from the A1 to Caxton Gibbet would help the road network within the district to move more efficiently. It is one of the critical corridors for development within the county with planned development at St Neots, West Cambourne and Bourn Airfield. The Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire Transport Strategy recognises the A428 corridor as one that needs improvement to accommodate planned growth.

**Options Considered:** The Portfolio Holder could decide not to respond to the

consultation. This could result in a missed opportunity to respond to a plan that after a successful referendum would be part of the statutory development plan for Huntingdonshire District Council.

**Reason For Decision:** St Neots is a settlement within Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC) and shares a boundary with South Cambridgeshire. Proposals within the neighbourhood plan could impact on our district and when it is adopted the plan will become part of the statutory development plan for HDC. Therefore it is considered beneficial to respond to the consultation to ensure that any issues within the St Neots Plan are compatible with the Local Plan for South Cambridgeshire.

## **6. GOVERNMENT TECHNICAL CONSULTATION ON PLANNING**

The Planning Portfolio Holder endorsed the response to the consultation set out in Appendix 1 to the report from the Planning and New Communities Director, subject to expressing concern regarding the suitability of these changes for rural areas, and the need to protect local shops and services.

**Options Considered:** Alternative options would be for the Council not to respond, but given the potential impact of the proposals this is not recommended. A further alternative would be to support the proposals, but given the potential issues that have been identified this is also not recommended.

**Reason For Decision:** This is an important and wide-ranging consultation, as the proposed changes will affect planning in South Cambridgeshire for 'town centre' uses, leisure, retail, employment and residential development, and the control the Council has over change of use. It also reviews the processes for Neighbourhood Planning and Nationally Significant Infrastructure. Some of these proposed changes could have significant implications for the district.