

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Council held on
Monday, 30 November 2015 at 6.00 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillor Sue Ellington – Chairman
Councillor David McCraith – Vice-Chairman

Councillors: David Bard, Henry Batchelor, Anna Bradnam, Francis Burkitt, Nigel Cathcart, Graham Cone, Pippa Corney, Christopher Cross, Kevin Cuffley, Neil Davies, Andrew Fraser, Jose Hales, Roger Hall, Lynda Harford, Tumi Hawkins, Roger Hickford, James Hockney, Mark Howell, Peter Johnson, Sebastian Kindersley, Douglas de Lacey, Janet Lockwood, Mervyn Loynes, Ray Manning, Mick Martin, Cicely Murfitt, Charles Nightingale, Des O'Brien, Tony Orgee, Robin Page, Deborah Roberts, Tim Scott, Ben Shelton, Bridget Smith, Hazel Smith, Peter Topping, Richard Turner, Robert Turner, Aidan Van de Weyer, John Williams, Tim Wotherspoon and Nick Wright

Officers:	Alex Colyer	Executive Director, Corporate Services
	Gary Duthie	Senior Lawyer
	Caroline Hunt	Planning Policy Manager
	Jean Hunter	Chief Executive
	Jo Mills	Planning and New Communities Director
	Graham Watts	Democratic Services Team Leader

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Val Barrett, Grenville Chamberlain, Simon Crocker, Simon Edwards, Philippa Hart, Raymond Matthews and Bunty Waters.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Reference was made to the comprehensive interests declared by Members at the meeting of Council held on 13 March 2014 when the Local Development Plan was initially being considered for submission. Members took the interests they declared at that meeting as read in respect of the Local Development Plan's further work and consequential modifications for consideration at this meeting.

3. SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE LOCAL PLAN - CONSIDERATION OF FURTHER WORK AND CONSEQUENTIAL MODIFICATIONS

Councillor Robert Turner, Portfolio Holder for Planning, presented a report which set out the further work carried out by Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council on the Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire Local Development Plans, following initial conclusions received from the Inspectors examining the Plans in a letter dated 20 May 2015. The report and its accompanying appendices outlined the Councils' proposed response to the issues raised by the Inspectors and modifications to the Local Plan arising from additional evidence. A supplementary report was also presented, which had been circulated separately to the agenda pack for this meeting, reflecting recent communication with the Inspectors subsequent to the publication of the agenda about the way the consultation on proposed modifications was carried out.

Councillor Turner put forward the following proposition:

‘That the Council

- (a) Agrees the consultation document with proposed modifications (Appendix A), as amended by the supplementary report dated 27 November 2015, and sustainability appraisal (Appendix B) for public consultation between 2 December 2015 and 25 January 2016.
- (b) Agrees that any amendments and editing changes that need to be made to the consultation material and proposed modifications (Appendix A) and sustainability appraisal (Appendix B) be agreed in consultation with the Planning Portfolio Holder.
- (c) Notes the documents attached to the report as Appendices C to J and submits them as part of the evidence base for the Local Plan.
- (d) Agrees to give delegated authority to the Director of Planning and New Communities to make any subsequent minor amendments and editing changes, in consultation with the Planning Portfolio Holder.’

Councillor Turner highlighted that this aspect of the Local Plan had recently been considered at numerous meetings of both authorities, including the Joint Strategic Transport and Spatial Planning Group, the City Council’s Development Plan Scrutiny Sub-Committee and his Planning Portfolio Holder Meeting in the lead up to this meeting. The City Council was considering the same report at its meeting of Council, simultaneous to this meeting. He took this opportunity to pay tribute to Caroline Hunt, Planning Policy Manager, and her team for the tremendous amount of work they had undertaken in accordance with the very challenging deadline, as requested by Council.

Councillor Turner reflected on the complexity of this Local Development Plan and reminded Council that the first Hearings had been held in November 2014 until April 2015, further to which a letter from the Inspectors was received in May 2015 resulting in formal suspension of the inspection process on 28 July 2015. In order to address the issues highlighted by the Inspectors in their letter, and further to agreement by Council, additional work by the Council’s Planning Policy team and independently appointed consultants had been undertaken, the results of which were set out in the main report and supplementary report. In particular he referred to a new Green Belt study that had been completed and the Development Strategy which, he felt, provided the right balance for the Local Development Plan.

Councillor Lynda Harford, Chairman of the Planning Committee, seconded the proposal.

Councillor Aidan Van de Weyer proposed an amendment to add the words ‘following the removal of all sections relating to Policy E/1B’ to proposition (a). He said that the single field to the south of Addenbrooke’s was a significant habitat and wildlife corridor and he was very concerned about taking this piece of land out of the green belt. Councillor Van de Weyer added that there was no demand for development on this area of land, recognising that there were other areas in South Cambridgeshire and Cambridge where such development could take place. He explained that there was a balance between the impact of a development and the benefits delivered as a result of it. He could not see any benefit in developing this piece of land and made reference to its relatively close proximity to Nine Wells. Councillor Van de Weyer was of the opinion that permitting development on this part of the Green Belt would open the door for further development on other areas of the Green Belt.

Councillor Bridget Smith, Leader of the Opposition, seconded the amendment.

Councillor Sebastian Kindersley believed that the Green Belt should remain undeveloped unless there were compelling, exceptional and overwhelming reasons and circumstances to justify it. He did not think that there was any such justification included in the report or supplementary report and agreed that removing this piece of land from the Green Belt would send a very damaging message out to other landowners and developers, setting a dangerous precedent.

Councillor Ray Manning, Leader of the Council, did not agree with the comments that development in this part of the Green Belt would encourage further development in the Green Belt and said that this particular piece of land had been allocated as an employment site. He reminded the Council that the content of this consultation document had been produced by professional officers and independent experts to address the specific comments made by the Inspectors. He therefore felt that the Council should at least consult on this issue, which was what the proposition sought to do.

Councillor Lynda Harford reflected on the process that had been undertaken in response to the Inspectors' letter. She said that officers had done as had been requested by the Council, the work had been independently analysed, as agreed by the Council and it was therefore her view that the public should be given the opportunity to judge this issue for themselves.

Councillor Deborah Roberts queried what exceptional reason had been given for proposing that this piece of land be removed from the Green Belt.

Councillor Douglas de Lacey understood that officers had identified this piece of land within the Green Belt as a site which would not cause any harm if taken out of the Green Belt and used for development. He asked for clarity as to why.

It was noted that the Inspectors had carried out a number of strands of work in respect of the Local Plan, with one area being the Green Belt assessment and establishing the importance of the Green Belt. The independent consultants appointed by the Council had produced a report using a different methodology to that initially carried out by the Council, but it was largely consistent with the Council's findings. Two areas were identified, however, where they had a different view. The consultants felt that more land was available for development in the area south of Addenbrooke's, as well as in the area south of Fulbourn Road. The justification for the main modification in this respect was set out in the report and noted as follows:

'The Cambridge Inner Green Belt Boundary Study (November 2015) identifies land south of the Cambridge Biomedical Campus which would be released from the Green Belt for development without significant harm to Green Belt purposes. The Council considers that the need for jobs can comprise exceptional circumstances justifying a review of the Green Belt so far as this would not cause significant harm to Green Belt purposes.'

Council was informed that this was the reason behind this particular proposal being included in the consultation document and it was emphasised that further work would need to be undertaken if this was supported following the consultation process.

Councillor Bridget Smith quoted the Government's definition of the Green Belt and reflected on the words 'openness' and 'permanence', with the latter in her opinion being the important issue. She said that the report made no reference to a shortage of employment land or an increase in jobs, so could not understand why this particular

piece of land in the Green Belt was being sacrificed. Councillor Smith reflected on Nine Wells as a historically important site and said that it was vital for the purpose of their conservation that the chalk springs were not compromised. She therefore questioned why the Council was even considering this as a proposal, a consequence of which would see development move even closer to the Nine Wells boundary.

Voting on the amendment, with 16 votes in favour and 28 votes against, the amendment was lost.

Enough Members as prescribed in the Council's Standing Orders requested a recorded vote. Votes were therefore cast as follows:

In favour

Councillors Henry Batchelor, Anna Bradnam, Neil Davies, Jose Hales, Tumi Hawkins, Sebastian Kindersley, Douglas de Lacey, Janet Lockwood, Cicely Murfitt, Tony Orgee, Robin Page, Deborah Roberts, Bridget Smith, Hazel Smith, Aidan Van de Weyer and John Williams.

Against

Councillors David Bard, Francis Burkitt, Nigel Cathcart, Graham Cone, Pippa Corney, Christopher Cross, Kevin Cuffley, Sue Ellington, Andrew Fraser, Roger Hall, Lynda Harford, Roger Hickford, James Hockney, Mark Howell, Peter Johnson, Mervyn Loynes, Ray Manning, Mick Martin, David McCraith, Charles Nightingale, Des O'Brien, Tim Scott, Ben Shelton, Peter Topping, Richard Turner, Robert Turner, Tim Wotherspoon and Nick Wright.

Councillor Manning made the point that there were parts of the consultation that he did not necessarily agree with and may possibly argue against at the relevant stage, but said that the public should be given the chance to have their say. Members would also have the opportunity to respond in their own right as individuals to the consultation.

Councillor John Williams referred to the document entitled PM/SC/3/G which was an illustration of Major Development Area and Safeguarded Land at Cambridge East and a proposed modification to Figure 7. He highlighted land north of Cherry Hinton and was concerned with land contamination in that area, particularly in view of the location of the airport and fire service training facility, and was of the opinion that this would be a difficult site to develop. The Council had been exploring how much of the land in the adopted Area Action Plan could safely and appropriately come forward for development. It was noted that the landowners, in consultation with the City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council, had indicated that they were very keen to develop this site. The landowners were looking into the relocation of the fire training facility and it was proposed that the airport would only remain in operation during the early stages of development. Consultation was also taking place with other landowners in the area.

Councillor Hazel Smith made the point that the documentation did not take any account of new stations scheduled to be developed, such as the Cambridge North Station. She said that the ratios within the document did not therefore accurately reflect the true distance of sites to their nearest stations.

(Councillor Sebastian Kindersley left the meeting at this stage of proceedings).

Councillor Tony Orgee referred to three sites within his electoral ward that had been consulted upon locally in the relevant parishes and were well supported, but looked forward to these being part of the Local Plan consultant document and was pleased that people would be able to submit their views as part of that process. Confirmation was given that an exhibition would be held in The Abingdons as part of the consultation.

Councillor James Hockney had significant concerns regarding the infrastructure study that had been carried out and highlighted that no costings had been set out for power supply, water, drainage or flood mitigation in respect of Waterbeach. He emphasised that there were very serious sewerage capacity issues in the local community and was disappointed that no costings had been identified to rectify this. Councillor Hockney added that, in his view, the modifications relating to Waterbeach added significant risks and said that the infrastructure study referred to A10 corridor road and rail funding being available in the mid-to-late 2020's, so was concerned as to what would happen if the additional houses were built before then. Councillor Peter Johnson echoed these points. It was noted that the modification in relation to Waterbeach was specifically to remove limitations and provide flexibility, recognising that a lot had changed with regards to this area since the original submission. Development would still not occur as early as developers had originally intended and any application would have to demonstrate the relevant infrastructure required to support it.

Councillor Lynda Harford reminded Members that officers had done what the Council had asked in terms of assessing the points set out in the Inspectors' letter and using independent consultants to provide an independent insight into the work. She felt that this debate comprised well rehearsed arguments which themselves could be submitted as part of the consultation process.

Councillor Robert Turner said that a report on the results of the consultation would be submitted to his Planning Portfolio Holder Meeting and subsequently an extraordinary meeting of Council in March 2016.

The Chairman noted that the majority of speakers had thanked Caroline Hunt, Planning Policy Manager, and her team for the work they had done in respect of the Local Development Plan.

Voting on the substantive motion, with 33 votes in favour, 8 votes against and 2 abstentions, Council:

- (a) **AGREED** the consultation document with proposed modifications (Appendix A), as amended by the supplementary report dated 27 November 2015, and sustainability appraisal (Appendix B) for public consultation between 2 December 2015 and 25 January 2016.
- (b) **AGREED** that any amendments and editing changes that need to be made to the consultation material and proposed modifications (Appendix A) and sustainability appraisal (Appendix B) be agreed in consultation with the Planning Portfolio Holder.
- (c) **NOTED** the documents attached to the report as Appendices C to J and submits them as part of the evidence base for the Local Plan.
- (d) **AGREED** to give delegate authority to the Director of Planning and New Communities to make any subsequent minor amendments and editing changes, in consultation with the Planning Portfolio Holder.

Enough Members as prescribed in the Council's Standing Orders requested a recorded vote. Votes were therefore cast as follows:

In favour

Councillors David Bard, Francis Burkitt, Nigel Cathcart, Graham Cone, Pippa Corney, Christopher Cross, Kevin Cuffley, Sue Ellington, Andrew Fraser, Jose Hales, Roger Hall, Lynda Harford, Roger Hickford, Mark Howell, Douglas de Lacey, Janet Lockwood, Mervyn Loynes, Ray Manning, Mick Martin, David McCraith, Cicely Murfitt, Charles Nightingale, Tony Orgee, Tim Scott, Ben Shelton, Bridget Smith, Peter Topping, Richard Turner, Robert Turner, Aidan Van de Weyer, John Williams, Tim Wotherspoon and Nick Wright.

Against

Councillors Henry Batchelor, Anna Bradnam, Neil Davies, James Hockney, Peter Johnson, Robin Page, Deborah Roberts and Hazel Smith.

Abstention

Councillors Tumi Hawkins and Des O'Brien.

The Meeting ended at 7.00 p.m.
