

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee held on
Thursday, 12 July 2018 at 6.00 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillor Grenville Chamberlain – Chairman
Councillor Brian Milnes – Vice-Chairman

Councillors:	Ruth Betson	Anna Bradnam
	Dr. Martin Cahn	Sarah Cheung Johnson
	Graham Cone	Dr. Claire Daunton
	Dr. Douglas de Lacey	Bill Handley
	Peter McDonald	Dawn Percival
	Geoff Harvey	

Councillors Bridget Smith, Aidan Van de Weyer, Dr. Tumi Hawkins and Hazel Smith were in attendance, by invitation.

Officers:	Victoria Wallace	Democratic Services Officer
	Mike Hill	Health and Environmental Services Director
	David Roberts	Principal Planning Policy Officer

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Gavin Clayton and Eileen Wilson. Councillor Geoff Harvey was present as a substitute for Councillor Wilson.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In relation to Agenda Item 6, Councillor Bradnam declared a non-pecuniary interest as she had a friend who lived close to the boundary. Councillor Geoff Harvey declared a non-pecuniary interest as he lived close to the area and Councillor Dawn Percival declared a non-pecuniary interest as she worked on the Genome Campus.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 June 2018, were agreed as a correct record of the meeting.

4. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

No public questions had been received.

5. SCRUTINY AND OVERVIEW COMMITTEE'S OUTLINE WORKING AGREEMENT

The Chairman presented the committee's draft Outline Working Agreement. A description of the role and scope of Scrutiny Monitors would be added to this.

The time of day of meetings was discussed. The following concerns were raised regarding holding meetings in the evenings:

- Missing evening Parish Council meetings.
- Concern regarding officers working unsociable hours to attend meetings.
- There was concern for those with longer commutes home after evening

meetings, particularly for those who commuted by bicycle or public transport.

It was pointed out that for working councillors, evening meetings were more convenient as if meetings took place in working hours, these councillors had to take annual leave or unpaid leave to attend. By holding meetings in the evening, working councillors felt they could attend and take part in the business of the Council. Councillors with childcare responsibilities also found that organising childcare was more convenient in the evenings. It was also felt that members of the public could more easily attend evening rather than daytime meetings.

The committee therefore **AGREED** that meetings would continue to take place in the evening, starting at 6pm.

The Leader of the Council welcomed the committee's working agreement and that one meeting a year would be held in the community. The committee would aim to align meeting topics and meeting venues, whilst being mindful of the cost to the Council. The Deputy Leader of the Council suggested that Waterbeach may be an appropriate venue for the committee's meeting in December.

The Chairman confirmed that either he or the Vice Chairman would attend Cabinet meetings in person and agreed with the Leader, that a standing Scrutiny and Overview Committee item would be added to the Cabinet agenda.

6. RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION ON PRE-SUBMISSION DRAFT UTTLESFORD LOCAL PLAN (REG 19)

The Deputy Leader of the Council presented the report which outlined the Council's proposed consultation response to the pre-submission draft Uttlesford Local Plan Regulation 19. The Council was objecting to the proposed new North Uttlesford Garden Community (NUGC) and the committee was informed of some of the following concerns that the Council had about the proposal:

- The impact on transport infrastructure, particularly the A505 corridor which was already congested at peak periods, and the potential for rat running through South Cambridgeshire villages.
- The impact on the landscape and the visual impact as the site was elevated and visible from a considerable distance. There was particular concern for this during the winter months, with the visibility of a large elevated development at night.
- There was concern regarding the potential impact on the growth of the south of South Cambridgeshire.

The committee discussed the report and made the following comments:

- The committee was concerned that Uttlesford was proposing large scale development with no substantial additional transport infrastructure. The potential impact on existing transport infrastructure was significant, which raised significant concerns regarding the sustainability of the development.
- The Local Member for Duxford informed the committee that the parish councils in his ward supported the report. The committee was informed that the parish councils were grateful and felt a thorough job had been done by South Cambridgeshire officers.
- Concern was expressed that Uttlesford had not addressed mitigations to potential rat running and the visual impact on the landscape.
- Major intervention works would be needed on the A505.
- There was concern that the NUGC could negatively impact potential future planning applications in South Cambridgeshire, that were important for the district's future

economic growth, accepting that those planning applications would have to be assessed on their own merits taking account of all material planning considerations.

- Members recognised that the NUGC would provide housing for employment sites in South Cambridgeshire, however the delivery of this could not be relied upon as it was not in the Council's control.
- Concerns were raised regarding the visual impact of the NUGC on the landscape as this was an undulating area of South Cambridgeshire. South Cambridgeshire officers considered the potential visual impact to be significant. The committee was informed that Uttlesford's consultants also considered the potential visual impact to be significant. It was noted that Uttlesford's Sustainability Appraisal commented that it was uncertain whether the landscape impact could be mitigated without affecting the development area.
- The committee asked that reference to aquifers be added to the Council's response to Uttlesford, based on the Council's representations from 2017.
- The committee also requested that officers included other points raised in the Council's 2017 representations. Officers advised that while some of these points were no longer relevant, this would be considered and relevant points included.
- Members recognised the difficulties faced by Uttlesford as it planned for the future of its district and reaffirmed South Cambridgeshire District Council's commitment to continue to work constructively with Uttlesford on planning matters into the future.

Members thanked officers for their work on the proposed response, which the committee supported.

7. WORK PROGRAMME

The committee discussed its work programme and agreed the following:

- A report regarding the progress on the implementation of Universal Credit would be added to the agenda for the committee's August meeting. The Benefits Manager would be asked to present this.
- Recruitment and Retention in Planning would be pushed back to September 2018. It was suggested that the remit of the recruitment and retention work be extended to include attraction, retention and reward. It was felt that there were many things that could be done to attract raw talent to the organisation. The committee was informed that a Customer Service and Business Improvement policy group had been set up, the work of which may be relevant to this. The Leader of the Council advised that the remit of the Employment Committee had been expanded to include staffing and a programme of work was being put together for this committee. She suggested that any recommendations could go to that committee.
- Crime in rural areas would be added to the work programme for October 2018, with a view to inviting external guests such as the Police and Crime Commissioner and the local Police Superintendent, to a future meeting.
- The committee agreed that a small group of committee members would draft a written brief prioritising key questions to be answered, which would be sent to officers and external guests in advance of the relevant meetings.
- Gypsy and Traveller issues would be moved to the November/December meeting cycle. It was felt that there was little the committee could do to influence this before the end of the year. This would look at Gypsy and Traveller needs, prioritisation and cost. It was suggested that when the committee invited external witnesses to discuss this, that impacted parish council chairmen and clerks be invited to participate in discussions.
- The committee agreed with the Director of Health and Environmental Service's suggestion that the committee hold preliminary discussions with relevant officers and

at a second formal session, invite external witnesses to discuss with them the most important issues identified in the preliminary discussions with officers. He advised the committee against inviting external witnesses to formal committee meetings before topics had been narrowed down.

- The Chairman and Vice Chairman would meet with the Director of Health and Environmental Services, to discuss the committee's work programme.

8. MONITORING THE EXECUTIVE

Councillor Handley confirmed he would be the Finance Scrutiny Monitor. Regarding the role of Scrutiny Monitors, the Chairman referred to a document which had been circulated to the committee at the recent Scrutiny Committee training. It was suggested that Scrutiny Monitors meet to discuss their roles. The Leader advised that Portfolio Holders would be providing updates at full Council meetings, which may provide a stimulus for Scrutiny Monitors to have discussions with Portfolio Holders on issues of interest or concern.

9. TO NOTE THE DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The dates of future meetings were confirmed as follows:

- Tuesday 14 August 2018 at 6pm
- Tuesday 18 September 2018 at 6pm
- Thursday 18 October 2018 at 6pm
- Thursday 22 November 2018 at 6pm
- Tuesday 18 December 2018 at 6pm
- Tuesday 29 January 2019 at 6pm
- Wednesday 20 February 2019 at 6pm
- Thursday 21 March 2019 at 6pm
- Tuesday 16 April 2019 at 6pm

The Meeting ended at 7.27 p.m.
