

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee held on
Tuesday, 22 January 2019 at 5.20 p.m.

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

Councillors:	Anna Bradnam	Dr. Martin Cahn
	Gavin Clayton	Graham Cone
	Dr. Claire Daunton	Dr. Douglas de Lacey
	Bill Handley	Steve Hunt
	Peter McDonald	Judith Rippeth
	Sue Ellington	Geoff Harvey

Councillors Philippa Hart, Dr. Tumi Hawkins, Bridget Smith, Hazel Smith and John Williams were in attendance, by invitation.

Officers:	Victoria Wallace	Democratic Services Officer
	Beverly Agass	Chief Executive
	Susan Gardner Craig	Head of People and Organisational Development
	Bob Palmer	Interim Executive Director
	David Roberts	Principal Planning Policy Officer

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Ruth Betson and Sarah Cheung Johnson. Councillor Sue Ellington was present as a substitute for Councillor Betson and Councillor Geoff Harvey was present as a substitute for Councillor Cheung Johnson.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In relation to agenda item 5, Waterbeach New Town Draft SPD, Councillors Judith Rippeth and Anna Bradnam pointed out that they were the local members for Waterbeach.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 December 2018 were agreed as a correct record, subject to the addition of Councillor Hazel Smith's attendance at the meeting.

4. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

No public questions had been received however two members of the public had requested to make statements under agenda item 5, Waterbeach New Town Draft SPD.

5. WATERBEACH NEW TOWN DRAFT SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT (SPD)

The Principal Planning Policy Officer presented the report which summarised and responded to the representations made on the draft Waterbeach Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) during the public consultation, which had taken place between 14 September 2018 and 26 October 2018. The committee was informed of the following:

- The consultation, which had received 361 representations, had resulted in a number of amendments to the SPD which would be recommended for adoption by Cabinet.
- The committee was informed that legal advice on ransom was still awaited and details of this would be included in the report to Cabinet.
- The main issues raised during the public consultation were outlined.
- Officers had met with the Environment Agency, Cambridgeshire County Council as the lead local flood authority, cycling and equestrian groups, which had led to a number of proposed changes to the SPD, where appropriate taking on board these groups' interests.
- The committee was informed that a whole new section had been included in the SPD regarding flood risk, which reflected the Environment Agency's concerns regarding residual flood risk. This risk had been known about since 2014.

Kate Grant, Chairman of Waterbeach Parish Council's Planning Committee, was invited to make her statement to the committee. She made the following points:

- The SPD was not consistent with policy SS/6 regarding its housing capacity of 11,000 homes.
- There had been a lack of clarity in the consultation process; there was a lack of access to view other documents and comments made by other parties making representations. The consultation website had proven very difficult to use in a proper investigative manner. Following the Waterbeach Neighbourhood Forum meeting, documents did become available online however this did not allow sufficient time to analyse the responses in advance of the deadline to make representation to the Scrutiny and Overview Committee. Waterbeach Parish Council considered this to be undemocratic.
- Waterbeach Parish Council considered that from its inception, the SPD had been rushed through the planning process in order to justify assumptions made with planning applications that had been submitted to the Council. The Parish Council believed that the submission of such planning applications was premature being before the adoption of the SPD, and that they had influenced the form and content of the SPD.
- Waterbeach Parish Council was disappointed to learn that matters such as waste water and other infrastructure would be addressed through planning applications.
- The analysis of representations was not comprehensive.
- Waterbeach Parish Council believed that the SPD had been rushed through a flawed and undemocratic process and was not compliant with the fundamental aims and parameters of SS6, the policy on which it was explicitly based.
- There should be a further independent review of the SPD and the representations.

Paul Bearpark, Chairman of the Waterbeach Cycling Campaign was invited to make a statement:

- Waterbeach Cycling Campaign had 120 signed up supporters in the village and worked closely with Camcycle which had 1300 members. The group formed to campaign for better cycling infrastructure in the Waterbeach area, which was currently very poor.
- In response to the SPD, the group created the 'People First Vision for the New Town' and was pleased to see that this had been considered in the proposed changes to the SPD. The principle of this vision was that it must be quicker to cycle from one place to another in Waterbeach than to travel by car. This principle had led to the achievement of very high levels of cycling in the Netherlands. The group's proposal to achieve this was to have a peripheral ring road with segmented development within it. It was important that vehicles could not drive through the middle of the development. This was based on Dutch urban planning principles.
- The cycling campaign was pleased that the SPD had been modified however the

- changes did not achieve what was needed to really encourage walking and cycling.
- The cycling campaign did not think the proposed changes were strong enough to prevent traffic movements through the middle of the town and on secondary roads. The roads would serve to encourage car use in the town and encourage rat running. Secondary roads should not enable cross town traffic or more direct routes than the primary road; it was requested that this be included in the SPD.
 - The cycling campaign did not want secondary roads to be used by cyclists. In the Dutch model for town design, there were no secondary roads. Residential areas connected via a direct route to the primary road. Footpaths and cycle paths were provided which connected residential blocks directly. The roads and paths were segregated by virtue of the fact that they did not go the same way.
 - The southern part of the proposed perimeter road should be further south; the further south it was, the fewer new town residents would have to cross it. The same was thought about the north east perimeter road.
 - The SPD needed to address restricting parking around schools. This should be addressed when the school was designed rather than after it was built.
 - The SPD lacked any targets for mode shift.

The Principal Planning Policy Officer responded to the points raised in these statements. Regarding Waterbeach Parish Council's representation:

- Policy SS/6 referred to approximately 8,000 to 9,000 homes and the SPD did not endorse any particular dwelling capacity.
- The consultation process had followed the Council's agreed 'Statement of Community Involvement' and included mailouts, a local exhibition and media releases. The requirements of Local Plan regulations had been followed which required main issues to be identified and how these had influenced the SPD. The Consultation Statement was quite detailed and extensive.
- The lack of access to the consultation website was acknowledged. As soon as officers had become aware of these issues, they were addressed. Paper copies of representations would have been provided on request.
- Local Plan regulations stated that representations had to be made within the consultation period.
- Waste and water recycling was not an issue for the SPD but separate planning processes. Delivery issues were generally addressed in much more detail in the Waterbeach SPD than would normally be done in a site specific SPD.

The Principal Planning Policy Officer responded to the statement made on behalf of the Waterbeach Cycling Campaign:

- Officers had met with the cycling campaign and the County Council's transport assessment team.
- It was difficult to have a perimeter road in the south due to the urban outline of the existing village meaning parts of the new town would lie outside it.
- The Dutch model had been looked at which involved dual carriageways around a new settlement with multiple roundabouts. The County Council's transport team had advised that many benefits could be realised by ensuring that the town centre did not have a major cross route. Historic England had expressed concerns about this in relation to the Denny Abbey heritage complex.
- The spatial framework diagram was not a masterplan.
- It was not intended that secondary routes would all have through traffic.
- The SPD did not set standards for parking at schools. Parking standards for schools were set out in the Local Plan and this could not be varied from. Development Management colleagues were keen to discourage parents from using cars to take children to and from school.
- The SPD could not contain the level of detail such as targets for mode shift; this was

properly addressed in the planning process rather than the SPD.

The Scrutiny and Overview Committee was made aware that the Environment Agency had raised concerns about waste water recycling. The Principal Planning Officer emphasised that this was a matter for the separate planning processes and not the SPD. These concerns would be brought to the attention of Cabinet.

The Leader of the Council commented that she was confident in the County Council's policy to not facilitate parking close to schools. She also pointed out that sustainable transport was a huge priority for South Cambridgeshire District Council, which wanted to promote recreational cycling in communities as well as commuting cycling.

The Scrutiny and Overview Committee discussed the report:

- The committee was informed that there was no single housing density in the Waterbeach new town. Generally the density was around 40 dwellings per hectare but within that there were pockets of higher and lower density.
- There was limited capacity on site for foul water drainage, as well as at Waterbeach Research Park. After a certain level of development, alternative foul water drainage would need to be sought off-site.
- Reference was made in the SPD to community and recreational facilities coming forward at 'appropriate stages'. Experience of this not happening with other developments, such as Cambourne, was cited. Members sought assurance that these facilities would be delivered. In response to this the Leader of the Council informed the committee that a considerable amount of work had been carried out on delivering community and recreational facilities in new developments and these facilities would be delivered at an appropriate stage for the community rather than at a stage that suited the developer. Cambourne was a thriving community however had experienced the negative impacts of community facilities being delivered slowly. The committee was informed that community facilities were already being delivered at Northstowe. Housing would not be built that was not supported at the right time by community infrastructure.
- It was emphasised to the committee that the SPD was a template and the detail would emerge during the planning process.
- The SPD was not creative enough regarding carbon neutral targets; Members wanted to see creative thinking around this within the legal constraints.
- The committee was informed that the SPD could not make policy; it could only supplement Local Plan policy. The Council had an ambition to become carbon neutral and this would be reflected in the next Local Plan, on which work had commenced. The Council was trying to encourage developers to be more ambitious regarding low carbon and a quality mark with developers may be looked at.
- Disappointment was expressed that the County Council had ignored the Dutch model of development as the Dutch had vast experience of this and achieving the mode shift to which the Council aspired. The Dutch had achieved segregated cycleways very successfully and it was felt that a lot could be learnt from them.
- It was suggested that putting an emphasis on prioritising cyclists over cars would be beneficial.
- Enabling the less able and elderly to get from A to B without requiring the use of a car, needed to be built into the planning process.
- Caution was advised regarding placing a road amongst houses. It needed to be ensured that this was not hard to cross and that it was not a shared surface. Traffic needed to be slowed sufficiently so that pedestrians and bicycles had priority.
- The following concerns of Waterbeach residents were raised:
 - The use of Cody Road to access the railway station; residents wanted to see a clear indication of how the construction phase would be managed.

- There was concern that for a long time, the first part of the development would be isolated from the existing Waterbeach village which could cause issues with community cohesion.
- The SPD needed to indicate where development would happen gradually from the existing village; clarification was sought of where the existing village ended and the new development began.
- Confirmation was sought that Denny Abbey's rural aspect would not be compromised and impacted by the 24/7 lighting from the park and ride site.

In response to the committee's queries and suggestions regarding mode shift, the committee was informed that this was properly addressed at the planning stage rather than in the SPD. It was also pointed out with regards to the Dutch model, that Holland had a very dense motorway network. The new town would have a number of local centres, which would be easier for the less able to access.

Subject to the integration of comments made, the Scrutiny and Overview Committee **RECOMMENDED** to Cabinet that it:

- a) Noted the main issues raised in the public consultation, agreed responses to the representations received and agreed the consequential proposed modifications to the SPD set out in the Consultation Statement;
- b) Adopted the amended Waterbeach New Town SPD; and
- c) Delegated to the Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development in liaison with the Deputy Leader, the authority to make any editing changes prior to publication including to the figures and spatial framework diagram to ensure consistency with the agreed text of the SPD.

6. GENERAL FUND AND HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) BUDGETS 2019-2020

The Interim Executive Director (Corporate Services) and Lead Cabinet Member for Finance, presented the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budgets 2019-20. The committee was informed that the £3 million savings target over the life of the Medium Term Financial Strategy was felt to be achievable and lower than most other councils.

The committee was informed that:

- Investment had previously been focussed on Ermine Street Housing. Going forward there was a need to diversify the investment portfolio.
- Member training on evaluating investment proposals, was being arranged with the East of England Local Government Association.
- It had been possible to finance additional Ermine Street Housing funding through existing cash reserves.
- The Council had not needed to borrow money to fund the ice rink.
- The committee was assured that the Council's borrowing was not excessive. Any borrowing was for investments and the ownership of assets.
- The audit of last year's accounts was in progress.

The committee discussed the report and made the following points:

- Disappointment was expressed that the pay policy increase would be a percentage increase. Rather than a percentage increase it was suggested that this should be a sum of money paid to all staff, as a percentage increase simply made high paid staff richer and gave those at the bottom of the pay structure a percentage of very little. The committee was informed that this would be taken on board for future negotiations with the unions.
- Concern was raised that staff were not necessarily trained to manage investment

accounts. Assurance was sought that the organisation had this expertise and sufficient staffing. The committee was informed that the council would be looking at setting up an investment board serviced by officers with relevant experience.

The committee moved to confidential session to discuss the Ermine Street Housing Business Plan, which contained commercially sensitive information. The committee was informed that as Ermine Street Housing was approaching its purchase target of 500 properties, a thorough review would be undertaken.

The Scrutiny and Overview Committee **ENDORSED** the recommendations to Cabinet, as detailed in the report.

7. BUSINESS PLAN 2019-2024 CONSULTATION OUTCOMES

The Leader of the Council presented the report which provided a summary of the responses to the Business Plan 2019-24 public consultation.

The consultation had received a higher rate of response compared to previous years. The main issues raised were:

- Transport; following the consultation feedback, this would feature far more in the business plan.
- Economic development; there were strong concerns regarding broadband and the impacts of growth.
- Housing was a concern. The priority was affordability. People wanted to see more council housing and local amenities built.
- There needed to be a stronger emphasis on local businesses.

The committee discussed the report:

- There needed to be more emphasis on community development and social interaction. It was pointed out that the lonely, elderly, disabled and mentally ill were very unlikely to complete a consultation questionnaire. The Leader of the Council provided assurance that social interaction and preventing loneliness was a priority for the Council and would be emphasised in the business plan.
- Customer service was a concern for residents who wanted to be able to speak to and email officers with queries. The customer portal would help with this and this would be promoted when it was launched.
- The importance of transport, housing and infrastructure was emphasised.
- The underutilisation of Cambourne business park was raised as a concern. The committee was informed that this and whether there was a role for the Council to intervene in this, was being looked into.
- The committee was informed that sustainable economic growth was built into the housing strategy and would be built into the Local Plan.
- Targets needed to be measurable. The Leader emphasised the importance of measuring progress rather than emphasising targets.

The committee was informed that the Council was limited in what it could do regarding public transport. South Cambridgeshire District Council did not have the power to set up a bus company, however it could and had supported community transport initiatives and had subsidised local bus services, such as the X3 service. The Council was looking at community transport in the north of the district. A steer from the Mayor was needed on his vision for the future transport network. A report on bus franchising would be considered by the Combined Authority's Board.

8. ICT ISSUES

The Scrutiny and Overview Committee Chairman provided an update on the work of the Scrutiny ICT Working Group:

- The group had met with the Interim Head of the ICT Shared Service, David Edwards. A new permanent director would be in post from March 2019.
- The Chairman had written to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Chairmen at Huntingdonshire District and Cambridge City Councils to seek their views on the ICT Shared Service; a response was awaited.
- The working group considered that the testing that had been conducted was insufficient; there had been no overall system test from start-up and no denial of service testing.
- An external audit had been undertaken in October 2018 and a copy of this report had been requested.
- The lack of Member engagement on the Shared Service Board was a concern.
- The working group thought that Cabinet may want to consider commissioning an external audit of the management of the ICT Shared Service.
- The lack of a 3C ICT security policy was a particular concern.
- The work of this group was ongoing.

The working group had not reached a stage to make formal recommendations however the committee was informed of the following potential emerging recommendations:

- An external security contractor should be commissioned to assess the ICT service.
- There should be Member involvement on the Shared Service Management Board.

The committee made the following points:

- Concern was raised regarding the competence of suppliers and enforcement of Service Level Agreements.
- Members praised ICT staff for bringing the ICT system back online as quickly as they had in November 2018.

The Lead Cabinet Member for Customer Services and Business Improvement welcomed the suggestion that there should be Member involvement on the Shared Service Board.

9. WORK PROGRAMME

The work programme was noted.

10. MONITORING THE EXECUTIVE

There were no updates from Scrutiny monitors.

11. TO NOTE THE DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The next meeting would take place on Wednesday 20th February 2019 at 5.20pm.

The Meeting ended at 8.47 p.m.

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