

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Planning Committee held on
Monday, 6 December 2010 at 1.00 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillor Pippa Corney – Chairman
Councillor Robert Turner – Vice-Chairman

Councillors:	Val Barrett	Trisha Bear
	Brian Burling	Jose Hales (substitute)
	Sebastian Kindersley	Mervyn Loynes
	Raymond Matthews (substitute)	David McCraith
	Charles Nightingale	Deborah Roberts
	Hazel Smith	John F Williams

Officers in attendance for all or part of the meeting:

Edward Durrant (Senior Planning Officer), Jane Green (Head of New Communities), Jo Mills (Corporate Manager, Planning and New Communities), Stephen Reid (Senior Planning Lawyer), Melissa Reynolds (Team Leader (Planning)) and Ian Senior (Democratic Services Officer)

Also present at the meeting were James Fisher (Section 106 Officer, South Cambridgeshire District Council), Andy Leahy (Independent Viability Adviser), Sarah Lyons (Partnership Projects Officer, South Cambridgeshire District Council), Afrieen Patel (Urban Design Officer, South Cambridgeshire District Council), Owen Pitt (Environment Agency) and Joseph Whelan (Cambridgeshire County Council).

Councillor David Bard was in attendance, by invitation.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Lynda Harford, Sally Hatton and Nick Wright

116. GENERAL DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Sebastian Kindersley declared a personal interest as a Cambridgeshire County Councillor and member of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority.

117. S/6438/07/O - CAMBOURNE (LAND AT UPPER CAMBOURNE)

The Committee considered a report on Outline Planning Application S/6438/07/O for up to 950 dwellings, a neighbourhood/community building, ancillary public open space, formal play areas, internal access roads, pedestrian and cycle routes, and associated drainage and engineering infrastructure, including electricity sub-stations on land at Upper Cambourne.

In introducing the report, the Head of New Communities reminded Members about the Council's original vision for Cambourne, that being of three separate villages connected by open space. She suggested that the Heads of Terms package of community gain features likely to form the basis of a future Section 106 Planning Obligation was the right one for Cambourne.

The Team Leader (Planning) referred Members to the update report and, in particular, to the additional elements of the recommendation. Members noted that the Local Highways Authority had no objections to the proposal and that the Environment Agency had withdrawn its objection. The Team Leader (Planning) commended the application as

making the best use of the land available.

A number of public speakers addressed the meeting.

Neville Stebbings (MCA) welcomed the partnership working to date between the developers, South Cambridgeshire District Council, Cambourne Parish Council and others as being the best way to achieve the most appropriate development for Cambourne. He reiterated MCA's commitment to the original three-village concept, and said that the additional dwellings were likely to strengthen commercial interest in the Sports Centre and the retail units in the High Street. The new development would provide an impetus to the provision of new schools, employment opportunities and demand for affordable housing. He confirmed that the proposed Section 106 Agreement would offer £13.6 million worth of community gain for Cambourne.

Stephen Koskey pointed out that the application was fully compliant with the policies contained in the South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework 2007, and added that Cambourne needed "critical mass". The application was self-sustaining and represented "inward investment" for the settlement.

In response to Councillor David Morgan (a local Member), Mr Stebbings refused to be drawn on the question of the likely generation of employment opportunities as a result of the construction of 950 new dwellings. Instead, he highlighted the importance of creating a "feel good factor" and thinking in terms of widening community facilities' "catchment area".

In response to Councillor Deborah Roberts, Mr Koskey said that the developers' reluctance to make provision for ten Gypsy and Traveller pitches was based entirely on material planning grounds.

Clayton Hudson (Chairman, Cambourne Parish Council) addressed the meeting, welcoming the proposal, subject to appropriate community gain, resolution of ongoing drainage issues in Cambourne and the provision of a bus link between Cambourne and the Broadway in Bourn. Recognising that Bourn residents had expressed reservations about the bus link, Mr Hudson said that, should it not go ahead, the monies allocated to it should be diverted towards funding other transport initiatives to the benefit of Cambourne.

Graham Smith (Chairman, Bourn Parish Council) addressed the meeting on behalf of the village of Bourn. Residents had grave reservations about the proposed bus link between Cambourne and their village. This had been rejected in 1995 and many people had been led to believe that that decision had been final. They needed to have confidence in the planning system. Mr Smith said that Bourn and Cambourne should remain as separate villages. The proposed "thin edge of wedge" in Cambourne could result eventually in general through-traffic. Mr Smith said that, in planning terms, there was no case for the proposed bus link which should therefore be rejected again.

Keith Wilderspin addressed the meeting on behalf of Swavesey Internal Drainage Board. He spoke about the potential adverse impact the proposal would have in terms of flooding in Swavesey, and said there should be no large scale development in Cambourne until a scheme to mitigate the effect of flooding had been agreed and implemented. The Corporate Manager (Planning and New Communities) confirmed that South Cambridgeshire District Council was continuing to work with partner organisations to find a solution to the flooding issues in Cambourne that would allow the proposal to proceed while protecting Swavesey. The Head of New Communities referred Members to Condition 36 in the report from the Corporate Manager (Planning and New Communities). This stated that 'Prior to the commencement of any development a scheme for the

provision and implementation of surface water and foul water drainage shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme which shall include provision for inspections by the LPA shall be constructed and completed in accordance with the approved plans prior to the occupation of any part of that development or in accordance with the implementation programme agreed in writing with the LPA'.

Owen Pitt (Environment Agency) informed the Committee that the Cambourne 950 proposal represented only a marginal increase in surface water flow. He confirmed that, in effect, better channelling coupled with resolution of drainage issues in Cambourne and construction of 950 new dwellings would improve on the current drainage situation in Swavesey.

Councillor Sue Ellington (Environmental Services Portfolio Holder and the local Member for Swavesey) addressed the meeting. She expressed concern at the flooding implications for Swavesey and called on the Committee to withhold granting planning permission until drainage issues had been resolved. The Chairman reiterated that resolution of the flooding issue was absolutely paramount and that the proposal would not proceed to a conclusion until that issue had been dealt with successfully. Those present discussed flooding at some length.

Andy Leahy (Independent viability consultant) said that the proposed scheme could not deliver more than £13.6 million of community gain. In response to a question from Councillor Kindersley, Mr Leahy acknowledged the time element (eight years) involved and that the concept of viability was likely to vary over that period. However, he was confident that the modelling adopted had been robust. Councillor David Morgan argued that there was little point in ensuring that 30% of the dwellings were affordable if there was insufficient increase in the level of employment locally. He suggested reducing the amount of affordable housing in the interests of improving viability for Cambourne as a whole.

The Head of New Communities dismissed the assertion of some Members that the proposal represented overdevelopment by stating that the development was design-led and the average density of 35.7 dwellings per hectare would accord with the Council's policy of 30 dwellings per hectare. She also gave details about prospective education provision. She highlighted the trigger points specified in Appendix 1 to the report from the Corporate Manager (Planning and New Communities). The Planning Lawyer envisaged that all monies due within the next eight years should either have been spent or committed within that period.

Joseph Whelan (Cambridgeshire County Council) addressed the questions of education and transport. He reported that the proposed Section 106 contributions could help fund a secondary school for Cambourne. He also confirmed that the Highways Agency was satisfied that the proposal would not pose any adverse operational issues either for the A428 or the A1198.

Members made a number of general observations. These included:

That there was no longer a nationally-applied minimum density requirement

The desirability of a community shop, subject to commercial interest

The need for some element of public art

Maintenance of Cambourne's 'village feel'

Sustainability issues

The advantage of providing facilities for working from home, such as lock-up units

Space for the future provision of 'granny annexes'

The tenure split in affordable housing

A comparison between the viability of the proposal at Cambourne and that at Clay Farm on Cambridge's Southern Fringe

Councillor Mervyn Loynes proposed that the issue about the bus link between Cambourne and the Broadway in Bourn be voted upon separately to the substantive question of the development of 950 new dwellings. This proposal was seconded by Councillor Val Barrett and, upon two separate votes being taken, the Committee gave officers **delegated powers to approve** (by 11 votes to three) outline planning application S/6438/07/O, as amended by plans and documents date stamped 31 March 2010, 22 April 2010, 22nd October 2010, 17 and 23 November 2010 subject to:

1. The draft conditions set out in the report and update report from the Corporate Manager (Planning and New Communities), with the final wording of an amendment to these to be agreed in consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Planning Committee and Local Members representing Cambourne prior to the issuing of planning permission;
2. The prior completion of a Section 106 legal agreement securing contributions in line with the Heads of Terms set out in Appendix 1 to the report from the Corporate Manager (Planning and New Communities) - final wording to be agreed in consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Planning Committee and Local Members representing Cambourne;
3. Reference back to Planning Committee to make sure it is satisfied that substantial resolution of drainage issues relating to Cambourne and a programme to upgrade Uttons Drove have been secured; and
4. A revised Design and Access Statement;
5. Addressing the comments in relation to the Renewable Energy Assessment and further comments of the Principal Lead Officer for Sustainability;
6. Revisions to the Health Impact Assessment to the satisfaction of the Lead Officer for Sport and Leisure and the NHS; and
7. Discussions to secure a strategy for timing and delivery of golf course.

Councillors Deborah Roberts and John F Williams requested that their votes against the proposal be recorded.

The Committee **refused**, by seven votes to six with one abstention, the proposal to construct a bus link between Cambourne and the Broadway in Bourn.

The Meeting ended at 3.45 p.m.
