



To: Cambridge City Fringes Joint Committee

Report by: Head of Planning Services, Cambridge City Council and Corporate Manager for Planning and New Communities, South Cambridgeshire District Council

Relevant scrutiny committee: Cambridge City Fringes Joint Committee 23rd March 2011

Joint Planning Arrangements: Plan-making Key Decision

1.0 Executive Summary

- 1.1 At the request of the Department of Communities and Local Government (CLG), Cambridge City Council, Cambridgeshire County Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council agreed to the establishment of the Cambridge City Fringes Joint Committee (hereafter referred to as the Section 29 Committee) in 2009. This resulted in the Section 29 Committee becoming the Local Planning Authority for plan-making for North West Cambridge, Cambridge East and Cambridge Northern Fringe East.
- 1.2 Given that the Area Action Plan for the Northern Fringe East is still at an early stage and the funding position for the work of the Section 29 Committee has changed, the Councils need to collectively consider the approach to future working arrangements.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Committee is recommended to agree:
- a) That the future co-ordination and policy development for Cambridge Northern Fringe East is incorporated within each Council's separate Development Plans;
 - b) That the S29 Committee is no longer required and is abolished.

3.0 Background

Context

3.1 At the request of CLG, South Cambridgeshire District Council, Cambridge City Council and Cambridgeshire County Council agreed to the establishment of the Cambridge City Fringes Joint Committee which will be the Local Planning Authority as far as plan-making is concerned for three cross boundary locations on the edge of Cambridge:

- The University land between Huntingdon Road and Madingley Road (North West Cambridge)
- Cambridge Airport, land north of Newmarket Road and land north of Cherry Hinton (Cambridge East)
- Land bounded by the A14, Kings Lynn railway, former St Ives railway line and A10 / Cowley Road (old A10) (Cambridge Northern Fringe East).

3.2 The joint plan-making committee was established by Order of Parliament on 1st July 2009 under the provisions of Section 29 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

3.3 The Cambridge City Fringes Joint Committee was the third joint planning committee to be established, the other two being established under the provisions of Section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972 dealing with planning applications for major development areas on the edge of the City and at Northstowe.

3.4 As a consequence of the establishment of these joint committees, CLG made available to Cambridgeshire Horizons revenue funding of £1,400,000 (£700,000 each for the Section 101 and Section 29 Committees) for implementation purposes. The three Councils support the administration costs of the Section 29 Committee and accordingly the responsibility for administration of the Committee passes annually between the Councils.

3.5 Unlike the two joint development control committees, the Section 29 Committee requires a budget for its plan-making activities. CLG considered the running costs of the Committee in determining revenue funding paid to Cambridgeshire Horizons. At the time that the Committee was set up, the running costs were considered to be around £110,000 annually, subject to the particular needs of the Committee in a given year. The activities for which the Committee requires a budget to create a Development Plan Document (DPD)

include development of the evidence base; production of documents; publicity and public consultation; and costs for the examination of a DPD, including provision of an Inspector and appointment of a Programme Officer.

Local Development Scheme

- 3.6 The Parliamentary Order required the submission of a Local Development Scheme to the Secretary of State no later than 1st January 2010. The Local Development Scheme sets out a three-year timetable for the preparation of DPDs within the area over which the Committee has jurisdiction. The draft Local Development Scheme was approved by the Section 29 Committee at its meeting on 28th September 2009. The report and its appendices can be viewed at <http://scambsmoderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=867&MId=4895&Ver=4>. Subsequently, the Local Development Scheme was submitted to the Secretary of State in December 2010.

Northern Fringe East

- 3.7 The Local Development Scheme included a timetable for a joint Area Action Plan for Northern Fringe East. As outlined in the previous report of September 2009, the need for an Area Action Plan stemmed primarily from the impetus for the early provision of a new mainline railway station at Chesterton Sidings. It was agreed that the Area Action Plan would set out a vision and planning framework to ensure the future co-ordination of development at Cambridge's Northern Fringe East. Proposals for the area comprise mixed-use employment-led development, a new railway station and public transport gateway for Cambridge.
- 3.8 Following the adoption of the Local Development Scheme, little progress has been made on the development of an Area Action Plan for the Northern Fringe East due to competing workload priorities and also uncertainty about future plan making arrangements.
- 3.9 In terms of the position with Chesterton Station, there is currently no scope for Government funding of the Chesterton Interchange from the local major schemes process before 2015/16 at the earliest. The County Council is seeking to identify other mechanisms through which the station could be delivered. A bid for the scheme to the Government's Regional Growth fund was prepared by the County Council, EEDA and Cambridgeshire Horizons and submitted by the Greater Cambridge - Greater Peterborough LEP. However, it is possible that funding may not be achieved from this source, in which

case delivery could be facilitated either through the long term renewal of the Greater Anglia franchise in 2013, or through private investment. Both of these options would be likely to require the Department of Transport to facilitate a mechanism to link fare income from tickets and parking to the costs incurred by the party who delivered the station, if early scheme delivery were to be achieved.

Localism Bill

- 3.10 The Localism Bill was published in December 2010. It sets out a series of proposals to shift power away from central Government and towards local people. In terms of the planning system, the Bill contains proposals to make the system clearer, more democratic, and more effective. These reforms will be brought about by a combination of adding to, amending and replacing the existing legislation.
- 3.11 Amongst other proposals, the Localism Bill provides the legal basis for the abolition of Regional Spatial Strategies. This means that there will no longer be regional targets or policies forming part of the development plan, with housing provision being set at a local level.
- 3.12 Despite key changes at the regional level of planning, the Local Development Framework system does not appear to be the subject of significant change. The Government recognises the larger than local element to planning especially in relation to key strategic cross boundary issues and as a result a duty to cooperate is to be introduced in order to ensure cooperation between Local Planning Authorities and other bodies such as key infrastructure providers. The duty requires ongoing constructive and active engagement in the preparation of plans and provision of strategic infrastructure.
- 3.13 Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council with support from the County Council on transport and service planning have a strong history of partnership working in relation to tackling strategic planning issues and joint plan making including transparent decision-making processes. Together, the two authorities have produced a range of evidence base documents; two joint Area Action Plans for North West Cambridge and Cambridge East; and have also produced separate but consistent policies for the Southern Fringe in the Cambridge Local Plan 2006 and in the Southern Fringe Area Action Plan. Both the Cambridge East and North West Cambridge Area Action Plans were successfully prepared and adopted prior to the inception of the Section 29 Committee.

3.14 As a part of the ongoing changes to funding at a national level, no further monies will be made available through Local Delivery Vehicles (Cambridgeshire Horizons). Whilst further funding may be available for Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire as a result of the New Homes Bonus, there is no funding directly available for the Section 29 Committee.

Options for the future of the Section 29 Committee

3.15 Given that the Area Action Plan for the Northern Fringe East is still at an early stage and the funding position for the work of the Section 29 Committee has changed, the Councils need to collectively consider the approach to future working arrangements.

3.16 In terms of the co-ordination of the future development of Northern Fringe East, the Councils could continue to prepare an Area Action Plan. However, this would have additional cost and resource implications for each authority. An alternative approach would be to incorporate the co-ordination of the future development of Northern Fringe East into each Council's separate new Development Plan Documents. This approach would require continued joint working between the authorities in order to progress a consistent approach, but would provide cost savings in comparison to preparing a separate document. The current cost for preparing a separate document is in the region of £200,000 - £250,000. Both the City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council are in the process of reviewing their timetables for preparing new Development Plan Documents and these have been considered at separate meetings.

3.17 Given the above, the future of the Section 29 Committee also needs to be considered. If the latter approach in paragraph 3.16 is taken forward, then this calls into question the need for the Section 29 Committee. Under the terms of the Parliamentary Order, the Section 29 Committee may be terminated at the request of any of the three authorities with the agreement of the Secretary of State. Termination will be necessary as the Section 29 Committee has sole jurisdiction for plan-making purposes. If agreed, the best way of taking this forward would be for the three Councils to send a joint letter to the Secretary of State setting out the request and the reasons for it. As the establishment of the Committee was approved by Council resolution, a decision to seek its dissolution should also be made by resolution of each Council.

4.0 Implications

Financial/Procurement

- 4.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. Both the City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council are in the process of reviewing their timetables for preparing new Development Plan documents and there will be separate costs associated with the preparation of these documents.

Staffing

- 4.2 There are no direct staffing implications arising from this report. Any future work on Cambridge Northern Fringe East will be supported through existing resources.

Equal Opportunities

- 4.3 There are no direct equal opportunities arising from this report. Equalities Impact Assessments will be undertaken as part of preparing new development plan documents for each district.

Environmental

- 4.4 There are no direct environmental implications arising from this report. The policy development for Cambridge Northern Fringe east will consider improvements to the overall environmental quality of the area.

Community Safety

- 4.5 There are no direct community safety implications arising from this report.

5.0 Background papers

- 5.1 These background papers were used in the preparation of this report:
- Cambridge City Fringes Joint Committee Local Development Scheme 2010 –2013.

6.0 Inspection of papers

To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact:

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