

## **SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

Minutes of the Planning and Economic Development Portfolio Holder's Meeting (final meeting on 11 June 2014) held on  
Wednesday, 11 June 2014 at 2.00 p.m.

Portfolio Holder: Nick Wright

### **Councillors in attendance:**

Scrutiny and Overview Committee monitors and Opposition spokesmen: Bridget Smith

### **Officers:**

Julie Ayre	Planning Team Leader (East)
Nigel Blazeby	Development Control Manager
Clare Gibbons	Development Officer
Nicole Kritzingier	Development Officer
John Koch	Planning Team Leader (West)
Jo Mills	Planning and New Communities Director
Ian Senior	Democratic Services Officer
Susan Walford	Health Protection Team Leader

## **1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

With regard to Minute 37 (South Cambridgeshire District Council's Support for Village Pubs), Councillor Nick Wright declared a non-pecuniar interest as a Director of the Conington Pub Company, Conington

## **2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The Planning & Economic Development Portfolio Holder signed, as a correct record, the Minutes of the meeting held on 20 March 2014.

In connection with Minute 28

- **Disposal of St Denis Church, East Hatley** - the Planning and New Communities Director updated the Portfolio Holder as to progress, and was confident that the transfer target date would be met.
- **Tythe Barn, Landbeach** – Cambridge Past, Present and Future would be hosting a workshop on 30 June 2014, for which invitations would be issued shortly. Outcomes would help to formulate a final recommendation to the Planning Portfolio Holder in September (or as soon as possible thereafter).
- **Duxford Chapel** – the keys had been handed over by South Cambridgeshire District Council.

## **3. PLANNING: PRE-APPLICATION CHARGING: MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS**

The Planning and Economic Development Portfolio Holder considered a report on the current pre-application process and, in particular, the charging rates. A review was necessary to ensure that:

- Income generated through the pre-application charging structure would fully recover the cost of providing the service; and
- The schedule was more consistent with those of Cambridge City Council and Cambridgeshire County Council.

Those present discussed a number of aspects of the scheme. These included the need to promote the scheme more as a service, not just to agents but to applicants as well, and its relationship to Parish Councils. The principal message had to be that the right advice provided at the right time would save applicants both time and money.

Councillor Bridget Smith questioned the achievability of a next-day service and the value for money of the proposals. On the first point, the Planning and New Communities Director said the Council's aspiration was to be one of the country's leading local planning authorities. On the second point, the Portfolio Holder said that it was important to establish the principle first and then to build on it later.

Officers agreed to continue working on the messages being sent out to applicants and agents, and to defer implementation until October 2014.

The Planning and Economic Development Portfolio Holder **approved**

- (a) The revised fee structure for pre-application advice as set out at Appendix 3 of the report from the Planning and New Communities Director;
- (b) The revised hourly rates for the growth sites and other sites where Planning Performance Agreements are used
- (c) The inclusion of previously 'free of charge' categories identified in appendix 3, namely works needing just listed building consent, demolition of buildings in a conservation area, works to trees, discharge of conditions, applications by small businesses, and accountancy costs;
- (d) The revised fee structure to be implemented from 1 July 2014 other than for the types of application we don't currently charge for listed in (c) above.
- (e) a six-week consultation period with planning agents on the application types the Council has not previously charged for and for the responses to consultation to be considered by the Portfolio Holder before agreeing their introduction on 1 October 2014.
- (f) a six-week consultation period with planning agents on the proposed "one-off" meeting to provide advice and for the responses to consultation to be considered by the Portfolio Holder before agreeing their introduction on 1 October 2014; and
- (g) a further report, to the new Planning Portfolio Holder at a meeting not before September 2014 detailing the results of consultation and evidence of improved service provision.

The Planning and Economic Development Portfolio Holder **rejected** the recommendation of a charge for applications from Parish or Community Councils.

#### **4. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES AND ACTION PLAN**

The Planning and Economic Development Portfolio Holder considered a report updating him about progress with the Economic Development three-year action plan.

Those present discussed the function of the Business Register and how best to improve its effectiveness. It had to be promoted as widely as possible in order to increase its audience and, to this end, there was a discussion about how Members could help to spread the message.

The Planning and Economic Development Portfolio Holder **endorsed** the progress outlined in Appendix to the report from the Planning and New Communities Director.

## **5. SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL'S SUPPORT FOR VILLAGE PUBS**

The Planning and Economic Development Portfolio Holder **received and noted** a report providing an overview of the support available both to current pub businesses and to communities intent on retaining their public house. The report identified a number of possible actions and policy variations which might further support the viability of public houses and thus secure their future within communities.

He also noted a draft format for the Community Pub event, detailed in Appendix 1 of the report from the Planning and New Communities Director.

The Development Control Manager reminded those present that Local Planning Authorities could issue directions under Article 4 of the General Permitted Development Order 1995 (As Amended) thus requiring a planning application when otherwise the applicant would have permitted development rights. In order to be able to rely on Article 4, it was essential to identify a specific reason distinguishing the location or situation in question from similar locations or situations elsewhere in the country.

Those present discussed Article 4 in general terms. The Portfolio Holder expressed anxiety that the value of the public house or other community asset should be kept to what the community could reasonably afford.

The Planning and Economic Development Portfolio Holder **noted** the measures outlined in paragraphs 24 – 27 of the report from the Planning and New Communities Director, including: not to use Article 4 to restrict change of use of pubs, but to keep the Council's position under review and receive a further report in a year's time.

## **6. PLANNING SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLANS UPDATE**

The Planning and Economic Development Portfolio Holder **received and noted** a report relating to Planning Service performance for 2013-14. The Planning and New Communities Director and Development Control Manager were in attendance to add some detail. They added that the challenge now was to reduce the backlog of work while processing new applications.

The Planning and Economic Development Portfolio Holder and Councillor Bridget Smith welcomed the report and paid tribute to all those involved in achieving the improvement in performance.

## **7. FARMLAND MUSEUM**

The Planning and Economic Development Portfolio Holder **received and noted** a report summarising how the Farmland Museum had updated its business plan to reflect agreed grant funding (Minute 15 refers).

## **8. WORK PROGRAMME**

Officers would prepare a Work Programme for the Economic Development Portfolio Holder.

## 9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

This had been the final Planning and Economic Development Portfolio Holder meeting. However, a schedule of meetings for the remainder of 2014-15 had already been agreed and Councillor Nick Wright, as the new Economic Development Portfolio Holder, agreed that that schedule should be retained for his future meetings. Accordingly, the first Economic Development Portfolio Holder meeting would be on Wednesday 10 September 2014, starting at 2.00pm.

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**The Meeting ended at 3.45 p.m.**

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