

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Council held on
Wednesday, 23 March 2016 at 2.00 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillor Sue Ellington – Chairman
Councillor David McCraith – Vice-Chairman

Councillors: David Bard, Val Barrett, Henry Batchelor, Anna Bradnam, Francis Burkitt, Nigel Cathcart, Grenville Chamberlain, Graham Cone, Pippa Corney, Simon Crocker, Christopher Cross, Kevin Cuffley, Simon Edwards, Andrew Fraser, Jose Hales, Roger Hall, Lynda Harford, Roger Hickford, Mark Howell, Caroline Hunt, Peter Johnson, Sebastian Kindersley, Janet Lockwood, Mervyn Loynes, Ray Manning, Mick Martin, Raymond Matthews, Cicely Murfitt, Charles Nightingale, Tony Orgee, Tim Scott, Ben Shelton, Bridget Smith, Hazel Smith, Peter Topping, Richard Turner, Robert Turner, Bunty Waters, Aidan Van de Weyer, John Williams, Tim Wotherspoon and Nick Wright

Officers:	Jonathan Dixon	Principal Planning Policy Officer (Transport)
	Tim Driver	Legal Officer
	Jean Hunter	Chief Executive
	Jo Mills	Planning and New Communities Director
	David Roberts	Principal Planning Policy Officer
	Graham Watts	Democratic Services Team Leader

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Tom Bygott, Neil Davies, Philippa Hart, Tumi Hawkins, Douglas de Lacey, Des O'Brien, Alex Riley, Deborah Roberts, Edd Stonham and David Whiteman-Downes.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Reference was made to the comprehensive interests declared by Members at the meeting of Council held on 13 March 2014 when the Local Development Plan was initially being considered for submission. Members took the interests they declared at that meeting as read in respect of the Local Development Plan's further work and consequential modifications for consideration at this meeting.

Councillor Cicely Murfitt, in addition to the interest she declared at the meeting on 13 March 2014, declared a disclosable pecuniary interest due to the fact that she knew one of the owners of Bourn Airfield. She therefore left the Council Chamber at this stage of proceedings and was not in attendance during the discussion or vote for minute number 3.

3. SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE LOCAL PLAN - CONSIDERATION OF CONSULTATION ON PROPOSED MODIFICATIONS

NOTE – further to her declaration of a disclosable pecuniary interest in minute number 2, Councillor Cicely Murfitt had left the meeting prior to the commencement of this item and was not present for the discussion or vote.

Council considered a report which set out the results of the consultation on proposed modifications to the Cambridge Local Plan and South Cambridgeshire Local Plan, held between 2 December 2015 and 25 January 2016.

Councillor Robert Turner, Portfolio Holder for Planning, proposed the recommendations contained within the report and took an opportunity to pay tribute to Caroline Hunt, Planning Policy Manager, and her team who had undertaken so much work to get the Council to this stage of the process. He also thanked colleagues from Cambridgeshire County Council and Cambridge City Council.

Councillor Turner, in presenting the report, reminded Members that two years ago the Council had agreed to submit the Local Plan for examination by Inspectors. A letter had subsequently been received by the Inspectors in May 2014 requesting further work in a number of areas and the Council had agreed to undertake this work to address the issues raised by the Inspectors. The additional work fed into the creation of the proposed modifications consultation document for Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire. He explained that this had been approved by both Councils for consultation at their respective meetings held on 30 November 2015.

Councillor Turner reported that the consultation process had taken place between 2 December 2015 and 25 January 2016 on proposed modifications to the Cambridge Local Plan and South Cambridgeshire Local Plan, together with the associated sustainability appraisal report. It was noted that the consultation had received a total of 1,037 representations, made up of responses from 222 individuals, groups and organisations as outlined in the report. All representations had been assessed and reviewed by the consultants as part of the evidence base for the Local Plan, which had also taken relevant Greater Cambridge City Deal transport infrastructure schemes into account.

Councillor Turner highlighted that the main modification proposed following the conclusion of the consultation process related to the piece of land located in the green belt to the south of the Cambridge Biomedical Campus. Further work on this aspect of the Plan would be undertaken separately and considered again by the Council in due course.

Councillor Ray Manning, Leader of the Council, seconded the proposal.

Councillor Aidan Van de Weyer was pleased to see that further work would take place in respect of the land south of the Biomedical Campus, particularly in view of the close proximity of this piece of land to Nine Wells nature reserve. He added that any development on this piece of land would have a detrimental impact on the delicate ecosystem and hydrology of the nature reserve's system of wells. Councillor Van de Weyer said that this important nature reserve needed to be protected and was keen for Members to ensure that this occurred when the matter came back to the Council for reconsideration later in the year.

Councillor Peter Johnson expressed his concern in removing the limit of 1,400 houses from Waterbeach, meaning that additional houses proposed in the area could be built earlier than anticipated. For this reason, he explained that he was unable to support the proposal.

Councillor Tony Orgee referred Members to the proposed modifications in respect of sites at the Abingtons and said that he was very happy to support them. They had received widespread local support and he thanked the Parish Council for its proactive action in this regard, as well as officers for their advice and assistance.

Councillor John Williams, Deputy Leader of the Opposition, was also pleased to see that consideration of land near to the Nine Wells nature reserve site was being deferred. He highlighted a site located north of Cherry Hinton in terms of its extremely close proximity to an airfield and asked, in the context of current ongoing airport activities, what mechanism the Council had at its disposal to ensure that the airport owner made the necessary changes to its operation to ensure that development could take place.

Councillor Sebastian Kindersley highlighted the importance of the Local Development Plan and urged the Council not to be so passive, stating that it needed to take much greater control of its own destiny. He referred to a significant debate recently held at Cambridgeshire County Council in respect of a devolution proposal which, he said, would remove planning and development control matters, including related policies, from local authority control. He cited this Local Plan process as an example of why it was so important for such policy and strategy documents to be developed, considered and decided by local Councils and by locally elected representatives.

Councillor Ben Shelton supported the additional work that would be undertaken in respect of the site located near the Nine Wells nature reserve.

Councillor Turner, in responding to comments regarding the piece of land located near the Nine Wells nature reserve, thanked Members for their contributions and confirmed that more work would be undertaken, including further investigations into ecology, flooding and various other issues. He acknowledged that it was a sensitive piece of the green belt, explaining that this was the reason for proposing that consideration of this aspect of the Plan be deferred. The outcomes of the further work would be submitted to a future meeting of the Council.

In respect of the land north of Cherry Hinton, Councillor Turner reported that a live planning application for the site had been received which would be considered by the Cambridge Fringes Joint Development Control Committee. He had advised the local Parish Council that relocation of the airport's testing bay would require the submission of a further application. Councillor Turner also stated that any Section 106 funding to support this site would be taken out of the costings of the Wing development, therefore acknowledging that there were cost implications.

Councillor Turner supported Councillor Kindersley's comments regarding the importance of the Council having control over what was happening in the area it represented. He stated that he had never known a Local Plan go through such an in-depth process, leaving the Council susceptible to speculative planning applications. This was a point he had made in several meetings with Members of Parliament and Ministers and he reiterated that he was negotiating as much as he could to ensure that the Local Plan could be adopted as soon as possible.

Councillor Bridget Smith, Leader of the Opposition, highlighted the proposed amendment to Policy CC/2 in respect of renewable and low carbon energy generation, with particular reference to wind turbines. She had opposed the original submission in this respect, but felt that the revised modification placed communities in a worse position, citing a very successful community wind turbine in Gamlingay that she felt would not be permitted if put forward in the context of this revision to the Local Plan. She said that the community wind turbine in her village had lots of benefits and what was included in this modification precluded communities developing similar proposals unless they had a Neighbourhood Plan in place. With regard to Neighbourhood Plans, she said that the uptake in South Cambridgeshire had been very low compared to other Councils which she felt was as a result of people being misled into thinking that they would cost up to £30,000 and could only be developed for large villages. Councillor Smith asked if there was anything further that could be done to better support schemes such as the community wind turbine in Gamlingay, as well as the development of Neighbourhood Plans. She also suggested amending the number of wind turbines referred to in the proposed modification from one to two.

Councillor Nigel Cathcart felt that the timetable associated with the Local Plan process going forward was too vague, but was pleased with the progress that had been made in responding to the issues raised by the Inspectors. He sought an assurance, however, that the Council was doing everything it could to ensure that the Plan was adopted as soon as possible. He was also keen for the Council to seek advice and reinforce its position where possible in respect of any appeals received resulting from speculative planning applications.

Councillor Nick Wright, Portfolio Holder for Economic Development, was pleased to see the inclusion of proposals put forward by Graveley Parish Council included in the proposed modifications and thanked officers for their support in that respect.

Councillor Turner did not support Councillor Smith's suggestion to change the modification in respect of Policy CC/2 from one wind turbine to two and said that community wind turbines could be included as part of a Neighbourhood Plan. He made the point that, although larger villages tended to produce Neighbourhood Plans, one of the district's smallest villages had also produced a Plan so emphasised that any village had the opportunity to develop a Neighbourhood Plan.

Councillor Ray Manning, Leader of the Council, said that at various meetings comments or objections had been made in respect of the amount of time the Local Plan had taken to produce and get adopted. He said that a contributing factor to the complexities of the Plan was the fact that there were lots of people wishing to live in South Cambridgeshire, therefore meaning that there was a large demand for new houses. In respect of Nine Wells nature reserve, Councillor Manning reiterated that this issue would come back to the Council for further consideration. He emphasised the importance of having the Local Plan adopted as soon as possible, particularly in respect of the submission of speculative planning applications and being able to confirm the district's five year land supply.

The Chairman noted that the majority of Members speaking had thanked officers for the vast amount of work and quality of work that they had undertaken, both in terms of preparing the initial Local Plan and the further work required in response to the letter by

the Inspectors. She took this opportunity to add her own thanks to the officers involved.

Voting on the proposal, with 41 votes in favour and 1 vote against, Council **AGREED**:

- (a) That the Proposed Modification Report on Consultation, as set out in Appendix A and the supplement to Appendix A(i), the proposed modifications to the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan at Appendix C and the supplement to the Sustainability Appraisal Addendum at Appendix E, be approved for submission to the Inspectors examining the Local Plan.
- (b) That the documents attached to the report at Appendices F to J be noted and submitted as part of the evidence base for the Local Plan.
- (c) That delegated authority be given to the Director of Planning and New Communities to make any subsequent minor amendments and editing changes, in consultation with the Planning Portfolio Holder.

Enough Members as prescribed by Council's Standing Orders requested a recorded vote. Votes were therefore cast as follows:

In favour

Councillors David Bard, Val Barrett, Henry Batchelor, Anna Bradnam, Francis Burkitt, Nigel Cathcart, Grenville Chamberlain, Graham Cone, Pippa Corney, Simon Crocker, Kevin Cuffley, Simon Edwards, Sue Ellington, Andrew Fraser, Jose Hales, Roger Hall, Lynda Harford, Roger Hickford, Mark Howell, Caroline Hunt, Sebastian Kindersley, Janet Lockwood, Mervyn Loynes, Ray Manning, Mick Martin, Raymond Matthews, David McCraith, Charles Nightingale, Tony Orgee, Tim Scott, Ben Shelton, Bridget Smith, Hazel Smith, Peter Topping, Richard Turner, Robert Turner, Bunty Waters, Aidan Van de Weyer, John Williams, Tim Wotherspoon and Nick Wright.

Against

Councillor Peter Johnson.

The Meeting ended at 2.45 p.m.

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