

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

At a meeting of the Conservation and Design Advisory Group held on
Wednesday, 12 July 2006 at 10.00am

Councillors:	Mrs PM Bear	AN Berent
	RF Bryant	NN Cathcart
	Mrs SJO Doggett	Mrs JM Guest
	Mrs CA Hunt	SGM Kindersley
	RM Matthews	EJ Pateman
	RJ Turner	Dr SEK van de Ven
	NIC Wright	

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs A Elsby, R Hall, JA Quinlan and JA Hockney (Conservation, Sustainability and Community Planning Portfolio Holder).

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

Councillor RF Bryant nominated Councillor NN Cathcart as Chairman of the Conservation and Design Advisory Group. This was seconded by Councillor E Pateman and, there being no other nominations, it was

RESOLVED that Councillor NN Cathcart be elected Chairman of the Conservation and Design Advisory Group for the coming year.

Councillor Cathcart took the Chair and paid tribute to his predecessor as Chairman, Sam Agnew. Councillor Cathcart outlined the challenges facing the Conservation and Design service, and expressed the hope that these would be met successfully as the district developed in the future. He was also confident that officers would seize every opportunity to pursue appropriate initiatives during the coming year, and beyond.

2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

Councillor E Pateman nominated Councillor Mrs C Hunt as Vice-Chairman of the Conservation and Design Advisory Group. This was seconded by Councillor NIC Wright and, there being no other nominations, it was

RESOLVED that Councillor Mrs C Hunt be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Conservation and Design Advisory Group for the coming year.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In connection with Minute no. 8 (Green Infrastructure Strategy), Councillor A Berent declared a personal interest as a member of SUSTRANS.

In connection with Minute no. 6 (Proposed Cambridgeshire Archaeological Partnership), Councillor RJ Turner declared a personal interest as a Cambridgeshire County Councillor.

4. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Conservation and Design Advisory Group authorised the Chairman to sign, as a correct record, the Minutes of the Conservation Advisory Group meeting held on 26 April 2006.

In connection with Minute no. 4 (Thatch and Thatching in South Cambridgeshire), the

Conservation and Design Manager reminded Members about the three thatching materials used predominantly in South Cambridgeshire, namely reed, long straw and wheat straw. Consultation carried out in relation to the Council's proposed thatching policy had highlighted a variant of long straw that utilised a different technique in working with the material, and which had potential cost benefits to the Thatcher because it could be manufactured off-site. The Conservation and Design Manager stated that it would be necessary now for officers to consider how best the proposed policy should reflect the new technique, if at all, while protecting more traditional materials and methods. One Member wondered whether a solution might be to restrict the new 'hybrid' technique to instances of new build or reparation required as a result of fire damage.

5. **SUPPORT FOR THE CAMBRIDGESHIRE AND PETERBOROUGH BIODIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP CO-ORDINATOR**

The Conservation and Design Advisory Group considered a report on the role and success of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Biodiversity Co-ordinator, Fabiola Blum, who made a PowerPoint presentation to Members on the work of the Partnership.

Members raised the following issues:

- Concern at the lack of support for the Partnership from East Cambridgeshire District Council and Cambridge City Council
- The need to protect historic orchards
- The effectiveness of the Biological Records Office
- The Partnership's budget
- The need to promote sustainability

In relation to East Cambridgeshire District Council and Cambridge City Council, the Partnership Co-ordinator referred briefly to their internal arrangements, but expressed a hope that one or both of them might consider re-engaging with the Partnership in 2007-08.

In connection with orchards in South Cambridgeshire, there were a number of options available to help secure their future. These included their designation as County wildlife sites. The Ecology Officer said that landowners should be encouraged to recognise the importance of their orchards in providing a 'breathing space' for biodiversity. A Member highlighted the possible implications of climate change in defining what constitutes a traditional orchard in the future.

In connection with the Biological Records Office, the Ecology Officer stated that the facility would become increasingly effective as it gathered more and more information over the coming years.

In connection with the Partnership's budget, a Member suggested that the proposed event referred to in paragraph 12 of the report focus more on key targets for the future rather than a celebration of the last ten years. She suggested that Cambridge City Council might be approached with a view to contributing financially to that event as an alternative to helping to fund the Partnership's ongoing work during the current year.

The Conservation and Design Advisory Group

1. **SUPPORTED** the continued development of the Biodiversity Partnership;
2. **RECOMMENDED** that the Conservation, Sustainability and Community Planning Portfolio Holder maintains, where possible, the current funding allocation into 2007-08 for the Biodiversity Partnership as an effective value for money initiative

and as a practical means of helping to achieve sustainable development throughout the District; and

3. **ENCOURAGED** the Conservation, Sustainability and Community Planning Portfolio Holder to use his best endeavours, together with other partners, to encourage the re-engagement of East Cambridgeshire District Council and Cambridge City Council in the Partnership, which was weakened without their contribution.

6. **PROPOSED CAMBRIDGESHIRE ARCHAEOLOGY PARTNERSHIP**

The Conservation and Design Advisory Group considered a report proposing the negotiation of a formal Service Level Agreement between South Cambridgeshire District Council and Cambridgeshire County Council relating to a county wide archaeology partnership to support specific countryside archaeology work.

Adrian Tindall, the County Archaeologist, attended the meeting and outlined the principle objectives of the archaeological service. One of these was to ensure that archaeological investigations were carried out effectively by developers. He proposed that the SLA should be for an initial period of one year only. Noting that South Cambridgeshire District Council already contributed to the Monument Management Programme, Mr Tindall added that it would be for this Authority to determine how that was reflected within any SLA, specifically with regard to any additional financial support. He stressed however that the overall partnership was the priority, rather than individual aspects of it.

In reply to a Member, Mr Tindall stated that, while archaeology remained a statutory responsibility of the County Council, from whom funding was also being sought, the Archaeological Service also had a role to play in enabling South Cambridgeshire District Council to fulfil its responsibilities as Local Planning Authority without having to establish its own service or to retain archaeological consultants from the private sector.

The Conservation and Design Manager referred Members to paragraph 24 of the report relating to budgets, and reminded them of the availability (in the short term) of Planning Delivery Grant.

Mr Tindall said that he would be very reluctant to charge developers for advice, where that advice was that they, the developers, had to carry out, and pay for, an archaeological dig. In reply to a Member's suggestion that developments should be categorised by size for the purposes of archaeological potential, the Conservation and Design Manager reported that the Service's main role was to advise in connection with small-scale developments.

The Conservation and Design Advisory Group **RECOMMENDED** that the Conservation, Sustainability and Community Planning Portfolio Holder :

1. Supports, in principle, the concept of developing a Service Level Agreement (initially for one year only) with Cambridgeshire County Council and District Council partners, to develop and maintain the countryside archaeological service; and
2. authorises officers to attempt to identify suitable and sustainable funding resources (initially for one year only) and potentially including the Planning Delivery Grant, which may be allocated without compromising other key Conservation and Design or Portfolio objectives.

7. **BIODIVERSITY STRATEGY**

The Conservation and Design Advisory Group considered a report summarising amendments made following detailed consideration of the public consultation exercise for the draft South Cambs. Biodiversity Strategy.

A Member stated that the final Strategy document should refer specifically to the impact of climate change on biodiversity.

The Conservation and Design Advisory Group

1. **SUPPORTED** the Strategy; and
2. **RECOMMENDED** that the Conservation, Sustainability and Community Planning Portfolio Holder presents the South Cambs. Biodiversity Strategy to Cabinet to seek its approval and adoption as Council Policy, subject to reference being made in it to the continuing need to adapt to the impact of climate change on biodiversity, and the addition of wording reflected in the fourth paragraph of Minute no. 5 of the Conservation Advisory Group meeting held on 26 April 2006.

8. **A GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY FOR THE CAMBRIDGE SUB-REGION**

The Conservation and Design Advisory Group considered a report on the Green Infrastructure Strategy.

The Chairman referred to paragraph 12 of the report, which highlighted the impact on the South Cambridgeshire landscape of a number of on-going initiatives.

A Member highlighted the opportunities to provide biodiversity refuges alongside the proposed Guided Bus route.

The Conservation and Design Advisory Group

1. **SUPPORTED** the development of the Green Infrastructure Strategy; and
2. **RECOMMENDED** that the Conservation, Sustainability and Community Planning Portfolio Holder urges Cabinet to support the adoption of the Strategy as Council Policy, and authorises officers to continue to work with partners to secure the Strategy's long-term delivery.

9. **CONSERVATION DESIGN GUIDES**

The Conservation and Design Advisory Group considered an officer request to establish a small Task and Finish sub-group to meet with officers in order to review emerging drafts for new Conservation Area Design Guides over the coming year.

The Conservation and Design Advisory Group **ESTABLISHED** a small Task and Finish sub-group to meet with officers, as necessary, to consider emerging drafts for new Conservation Area Design Guides during the course of the year. The sub-group would consist of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Conservation and Design Advisory Group, Councillor R Turner, and either one or two other Members whose willingness to serve would be canvassed prior to the next meeting of the Advisory Group on 13 September 2006.

10. **DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

The Conservation and Design Advisory Group noted that future meetings would be held

on the following dates (all Wednesdays except where indicated):

- 13 September 2006
- 7 November 2006 (Tuesday)
- 17 January 2007
- 14 March 2007
- 16 May 2007
- 11 July 2007
- 12 September 2007
- 14 November 2007

The Meeting ended at 12.50 p.m.
