

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Northstowe and New Communities Portfolio Holder's Meeting held on
Thursday, 23 June 2011 at 2.00 p.m.

Portfolio Holder: Tim Wotherspoon

Councillors in attendance:

Scrutiny and Overview Committee monitors: Mike Mason and Bunty Waters

Opposition spokesmen: Trisha Bear and Lynda Harford

Also in attendance: Ray Manning, Alex Riley, Bridget Smith,
Hazel Smith and John Williams

Officers:

Holly Adams	Democratic Services Team Leader
Jonathan Dixon	Principal Planning Policy Officer (Transport)
John Garnham	Principal Accountant (General Fund and Projects)
Keith Miles	Planning Policy Manager
Jo Mills	Corporate Manager, Planning and New Communities

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

The minutes of the 13 April 2011 Northstowe Portfolio Holder's meeting were approved.

The minutes of the 19 May 2011 New Communities Portfolio Holder's meeting were approved subject to the incorporation of the following amendments:

- Minute 62, Gamlingay: Educational Provision – "Councillor Nick Wright also expressed concern ~~concerns~~ and said..."
- Minute 66, Forward Plan – "Councillor Bridget **Smith** paid tribute..."

3. GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION ON DRAFT PPS PLANNING FOR TRAVELLER SITES

The Portfolio Holder considered a suggested response to the government consultation on the draft new Planning Policy Statement (PPS) "Planning for Travellers", which had been long awaited and would have a significant influence on how the Council completed its Gypsy and Traveller Development Plan Document (DPD).

In response to questions, it was confirmed that:

- The PPS would apply to the Council as a material planning consideration when submitting the DPD;
- Regional targets were to be removed and it would be necessary to develop and consult on local targets;
- The Draft PPS drew parallels with the "Planning for Housing" PPS 3, and in the absence of a demonstrable five year land supply, the Council would be required to consider favourably applications for temporary planning consents. This is stronger than the guidance regarding temporary consents in current circular;
- The response focussed primarily on plan making as this was the major issue

- locally, but details about enforcement costs could be included;
- The response sought to have included in the PPS an acknowledgement of the opportunity afforded by major development sites to address Gypsy and Traveller site provision;
- It was unknown how the forthcoming Duty to Co-operate with neighbouring authorities would operate, but this would be a factor in the development of local targets; and
- The Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment is being undertaken in partnership across a range of authorities, to help avoid any double-counting and to ensure that the figures are robust.

Officers were thanked for their thorough review and response.

The Northstowe & New Communities Portfolio Holder **AGREED** to respond to the government consultation on the draft new Planning Policy Statement (PPS) "Planning for Travellers" with the comments set out in Appendix 1 to the report, subject to the following amendments, the wording of which to be finalised by officers in consultation with the Portfolio Holder:

- A summary of this Council's enforcement and appeals experiences under the heading "Other Matters";
- Recognition that, as in the settled community, the travelling community was comprised of different groups, often with different needs, for which a single target might not be appropriate;
- To seek clarity whether the relationship between the number of pitches and plots and the size and density of the surrounding population (Policy B paragraph 9f) was positive or inverse; and
- To address minor typographical errors before submission.

4. GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION ON RELAXATION OF PLANNING RULES FOR CHANGE OF USE FROM COMMERCIAL TO RESIDENTIAL

The Portfolio Holder considered the proposed response to the government consultation on proposals to relax planning rules to allow the change of use from commercial (B use classes) to residential (C3 use classes) without planning permission. This proposal attempted to address an apparent over-supply of employment land and undersupply of housing; however, it was felt by those present at the meeting that the proposal was better suited for urban centres and not rural districts.

The importance of maintaining the sustainability of South Cambridgeshire villages was key to the District remaining resilient. Without the requirement for planning permission, commercial use properties could be converted into residential areas without any assessment of the impact on local education and health provision, or section 106 or affordable housing contributions. Loss of opportunities for village employment would lead to increased traffic as more residents had to travel to work. Officers were commended for a thorough response.

The Northstowe & New Communities Portfolio Holder **AGREED** to respond to the government consultation on proposals regarding relaxation of planning rules for change of use from commercial (B use classes) to residential (C3 use classes) with the comments set out in Appendix 1 to the report, subject to the following amendments, the wording of which to be finalised by officers in consultation with the Portfolio Holder:

- When responding to Question E about whether or not the full range of possible issues has been identified, to include specific reference to the impact of the proposals on the Green Belt and on conservation areas; and
- To elaborate further on the impact on nearby commercial users of the presence of

residential users.

5. PERFORMANCE MEASURES 2011-12

The Corporate Manager (Planning & New Communities) clarified that the performance measures in this report referred to the current year and not the previous year as had appeared in paper copies of the agenda. The Northstowe & New Communities Portfolio Holder **AGREED** in principle the proposed performance measurements identified in paragraphs 8-12 of the report and **NOTED** that these measurements could be revised mid-year as the programme evolved.

6. FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT 2010-11 - FINAL

The Principal Accountant (General Fund and Projects) presented the 2010/11 year-end financial monitoring report and explained that, in light of the re-allocation of Cabinet responsibilities on 23 May 2011, figures relating to services previously in the separate New Communities Portfolio and Northstowe Portfolio, but which were not part of the Northstowe & New Communities Portfolio, would be reported to the relevant Portfolio Holders under the new Cabinet structure. The figures showed that 91% of the revenue budget had been spent and the report set out the reasons for the underspend. It was clarified that the word 'overspent' in the table at Appendix A was an error and should not have appeared.

The Northstowe & New Communities Portfolio Holder **NOTED** the revenue and capital expenditure for the Portfolio budget for the year ending 31 March 2011.

7. FORWARD PLAN

The Portfolio Holder confirmed the content of the Forward Plan. In response to questions, it was clarified that:

- Grant applications were now to be determined by the Leader;
- The Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment results would be considered by the Housing Portfolio Holder as the process was led by the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA); and
- The Water Cycle Strategy and the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment were two separate, yet complementary, pieces of work.

8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Portfolio Holder asked those present to note that the August and October meetings had been re-scheduled to September and November respectively.

The next meeting would be on Tuesday 20 September 2011 at 2pm.

The Meeting ended at 3.45 p.m.
