

## NORTHSTOWE AND NEW COMMUNITIES PORTFOLIO HOLDER'S MEETING

WEDNESDAY, 25 JANUARY 2012

### DECISIONS

Set out below is a summary of the decisions taken at the Northstowe and New Communities Portfolio Holder's Meeting held on Wednesday, 25 January 2012. Decisions made by the Portfolio Holder will be subject to call-in. Recommendations made to the Cabinet or to the Council are not subject to call-in. The wording used does not necessarily reflect the actual wording that will appear in the minutes.

If you have any queries about any matters referred to in this decision sheet please contact Ian Senior.

**1. CAPITAL AND REVENUE ESTIMATES FOR THE NORTHSTOWE AND NEW COMMUNITIES PORTFOLIO**  
**This recommendation is not subject to call-in**

The Northstowe and New Communities Portfolio Holder:

- (a) endorsed the Revenue Estimates for 2012/13 and the Capital Programme up to 2016/17, relating to services within the Northstowe and New Communities Portfolio, and recommended them for consideration by Cabinet;
- (b) recommended to Cabinet that £30,000 (thirty thousand pounds) be included as a Precautionary item in respect of Neighbourhood Planning.

**2. SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME**

The Northstowe and New Communities Portfolio Holder agreed that the Local Development Scheme be revised to show a single South Cambridgeshire Local Plan being prepared incorporating a review of the Core Strategy Development Plan Document (DPD), Site Specific Policies DPD and the Development Control Policies DPD to the timetable set out in Appendix 1. The Gypsies and Travellers DPD will no longer be prepared separately and any policies and proposals for gypsy and traveller accommodation will be included in the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan.

**Options Considered:** The key issues addressed in this report are the updating of the overall timetable for preparing the Local Plan and incorporating policies and proposals for meeting gypsies and traveller accommodation needs into this single plan.

1. There is not much scope for reducing the timetable. Additional resources might be a way of speeding up the process but there are statutory procedures and Council approval processes which inhibit the scope for progressing much faster. Earlier in the report the possibility of moving more quickly than currently programmed through the examination process is raised but whether this will be possible will be largely outside the control of the Council.
2. The option of keeping the Gypsy and Traveller DPD as a separate plan is no longer really available. Last year, when Council agreed this option it also agreed extra manpower resources that would be necessary to do so. The slippage that has occurred with this plan means that this would not be a good use of resources and this option is therefore no longer desirable. Additional manpower will not now result in getting a plan in place for gypsies and travellers any more quickly. There are equalities reasons for now producing a single Local Plan.

**Reason For Decision:** The progress achieved on the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan over the last year means that there is no longer any advantage in progressing a separate Gypsies and Travellers DPD. The recommended approach of combining DPDs has advantages in that it is consistent with current government thinking on plan-making, enables savings to be made on consultations and examinations, and the Policy Team would be better able to resource the key stages in the plan making process which will incorporate all key issues together.

### 3. LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT 2010/11

The Northstowe and New Communities Portfolio Holder:

- (c) agreed the contents of the Annual Monitoring Report (included as Appendix 2 to the report) for publication and submission to the Secretary of State; and
- (d) delegated any further minor editing changes to the Annual Monitoring Report to the Corporate Manager (Planning and New Communities) where they are technical matters.

**Options Considered:** It is a legal requirement that the Council publish its Annual Monitoring Report, and that it monitors progress on the implementation of its Local Development Scheme and the performance of the planning policies included in its development plan documents.

**Reason For Decision:** Local planning authorities are required to publish information that monitors progress on the implementation of their Local Development Scheme and planning policies included in their development plan documents, and that this should be done at least on an annual basis.

### 4. REVIEW OF JOINT URBAN DESIGN TEAM

The Northstowe and New Communities Portfolio Holder agreed that

- (e) the secondment arrangements for the Joint Urban Team should not be renewed beyond the end of March 2012, and be replaced with collaborative joint working outlined in Option 4 in paragraph 21 – 26 of the report.
- (f) the revised working arrangements should be underpinned with a written protocol.

**Options Considered:** The review presented a range of options for the provision of urban design advice:

#### Option 1: External consultancy support

External consultancy support would carry a prohibitive cost. Maintenance of close working relationships with other Council teams and Design Review Panels would become more difficult.

#### Option 2: Continuation of current arrangements

Continuation is not a straightforward option in that the City Council has, as part of a restructure, deleted the Head of Urban Design post that has since 2008 fulfilled the role of Head of JUDT. The establishment of a new post managing both urban design and conservation functions in the City Council means that the

management arrangements of a continuing JUDT would inevitably have to be different in the future.

#### Option 3: Expansion of the functions to include Conservation work

The skills deployed in Conservation and Urban Design work are closely aligned, and this may be something that could be explored in the future however, at present, the new arrangements are in their infancy at the City Council. It is only after the new working arrangements in the City have been sustainably secured that the option to pursue the creation of a joint urban design and conservation centre across the two Councils could realistically be considered.

#### Option 4: Revised working relationship between officers from each of the Councils in a modified shared service arrangement

A fourth option would be to maintain close co-operation between the urban designers within each Council but move away from the current formal JUDT arrangement with team members instead reporting to management structures within both authorities. This would allow greater integration and joined-up working within each council including at South Cambridgeshire with new communities, development control and conservation teams and specialist staff including ecologists and landscape designers.

In a more informal collaborative-based arrangement the urban design function would operate in the same way that the major applications teams and the planning policy teams operate within the two Councils, where officers from the two teams work closely together, leading on the sites that fall predominately within their District and reporting to a Joint Development Control Committee.

**Reason For Decision:** A collaborative approach including informal secondment arrangements and matrix management has worked successfully for other parts of the service including the New Communities Planning Team. The new arrangements are expected to maintain a resilient and customer focussed urban design service providing advice on growth sites and other major developments.