

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Northstowe and New Communities Portfolio Holder's Meeting held on
Wednesday, 25 January 2012 at 2.00 p.m.

Portfolio Holder: Tim Wotherspoon

Councillors in attendance:

Scrutiny and Overview Committee monitors: Alison Elcox

Opposition spokesmen: Trisha Bear and Lynda Harford

Also in attendance:

Officers:

John Garnham	Principal Accountant (General Fund and Projects)
Jane Green	Head of New Communities
Keith Miles	Planning Policy Manager
Jo Mills	Corporate Manager, Planning and New Communities
Jennifer Nuttycombe	Planning Policy Officer
Ian Senior	Democratic Services Officer

34. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

35. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Northstowe and New Communities Portfolio Holder signed, as a correct record, the minutes of the meeting held on 15 November 2011, subject to the following:

Min. 24 (Rampton Drift Retrofit Scheme)

- Second paragraph – ‘*summarised*’ rather than ‘ummarised’
- Fourth paragraph – Sustainable Parish Energy *Partnership* not Programme

The Corporate Manager (Planning and New Communities) referred to Minute 22 (Service Plan Priorities 2012-13). Since the meeting on 15 November 2011, the issue of sport had been clarified in that, although it remained a priority for the Planning and New Communities Portfolio, it would not be promoted as a corporate objective.

The Northstowe and New Communities Portfolio Holder signed, as a correct record, the minutes of the meeting held on 24 November 2011.

36. CAPITAL AND REVENUE ESTIMATES FOR THE NORTHSTOWE AND NEW COMMUNITIES PORTFOLIO

The Northstowe and New Communities Portfolio Holder considered a report about the Revenue Estimates for 2012-13 and the Capital Programme up to 2016-17, relating to services within the Northstowe and New Communities Portfolio.

The Principal Accountant (General Fund and Projects) highlighted the key issues, and initiated a discussion about the advisability or otherwise of recommending a precautionary item in respect of Neighbourhood Plans. He added that such a precautionary item would not have an impact on the level of Council Tax levied in 2012-13. The Portfolio Holder

said that if it became known that there was a precautionary item, it was highly possible that he would come under pressure to spend it. However, if there was no precautionary item, that in itself would be a reason for not funding Neighbourhood Plans. A counter argument was that not allocating a precautionary sum for Neighbourhood Plans would be contrary to the concept of Localism. At the very least, people should be encouraged to contribute ideas to the emerging Local Plan, but this should not be to the exclusion of something at community level. The Planning Policy Manager reminded those present of the Council's statutory duties, and highlighted the availability of a £50 million Government Grant. However, such grant was intended to fund Neighbourhood Plans nationwide, and there were clear risks should South Cambridgeshire District Council decide to rely on this instead of setting aside its own precautionary sum. These risks were that there was no guarantee that South Cambridgeshire's bid for funding would be successful or that there would be money remaining by the time a bid was made. Those present tried to assess the possible uptake of financial support for Neighbourhood Plans, and how the money might be used. The Planning Policy Manager explained that it would help to pay the cost of public examinations and local referenda. Parish Councils would have to meet any balance by increasing their precepts. On the other hand, the Local Plan would not require the holding of a referendum. An argument was put forward that a precautionary item would be beneficial to staff should it become necessary to allocate resources to Neighbourhood Plans, but the Planning Policy Manager expressed caution about using such monies to fund additional staff. Concluding the debate, the Portfolio Holder accepted the principle of a precautionary item, but pegged it at £30,000.

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.

37. SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME

The Northstowe and New Communities Portfolio Holder considered a report about updating the Local Development Scheme, which would set out the timetable for preparing the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan for the duration of the review period up to 2015.

The Portfolio Holder endorsed paragraph 8 of the report, which stated that the timetables for the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan and the Gypsy & Travellers Development Plan Document would now coincide during Summer 2012 and that, therefore, there was no advantage in progressing these plans separately. He noted with enthusiasm that combining these plans would have the advantage of treating all sections of the community equally. This in turn increased the chances of the Council's Gypsy and Traveller policies being adopted without undue delay.

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.

38. LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT 2010/11

The Northstowe and New Communities Portfolio Holder considered a report seeking his agreement to publish the Local Development Framework Annual Monitoring Report on the Council's website and submit it to the Secretary of State.

In reply to a question, the Planning Policy Manager said that existing Supplementary Planning Documents were related to adopted planning policies included in the Local Development Framework and therefore if those policies were carried forward into the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan, the SPDs would need to be revised and re-adopted.

In reply to a question, the Planning Policy Manager outlined the process of preparing the new Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report.

A Member queried the percentage of household waste recycled and composted. It was anticipated that the next Annual Monitoring Report would show an increase in household waste recycled and composted compared to the last monitoring year, which only reflected six months since the implementation of the blue bin scheme.

The Annual Monitoring Report included the results of the assessments of 12 completed housing developments against the Building for Life standard. In the last monitoring year, two developments had achieved 'silver', four developments had achieved 'average' and six developments had achieved 'poor'. The Portfolio Holder stressed the importance of securing the highest possible quality of housing design throughout South Cambridgeshire. The Head of New Communities said that the Design Council was reviewing the Building for Life scheme and that in future the Council would consider testing housing developments against the Building for Life standard much earlier in the application process so that the design quality could be improved before the planning application was determined.

The Portfolio Holder suggested that the Annual Monitoring Report be publicised to Members and residents as it highlighted many of the Council's achievements.

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.

39. REVIEW OF JOINT URBAN DESIGN TEAM

The Northstowe and New Communities Portfolio Holder considered a report based on a review of the Joint Urban Design Team conducted by South Cambridgeshire District Council and Cambridge City Council.

The Northstowe and New Communities Portfolio Holder **agreed** that

- (a) 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.
- (b) the revised working arrangements should be underpinned with a written protocol.

40. FORWARD PLAN

The Northstowe and New Communities Portfolio Holder noted the Portfolio Forward Plan attached to the agenda.

He noted that the following issues would be added to the Forward Plan:

- South Cambridgeshire Local Plan Options – June 2012
- Sports / Olympics – March 2012

41. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Those present noted that the next meeting would be on Tuesday 6 March 2012 starting at 2.00pm (moved from 21 February 2012).

The Meeting ended at 3.35 p.m.
