

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Planning Policy and Localism Portfolio Holder's Meeting held on
Tuesday, 11 February 2014 at 10.00 a.m.

Portfolio Holder: Pippa Corney

Councillors in attendance:

Scrutiny and Overview Committee monitors: Bridget Smith

Opposition spokesmen: Janet Lockwood

Also in attendance:

David Bard, Richard Barrett, Val Barrett,
Trisha Bear, Jonathan Chatfield, Kevin Cuffley,
Alison Elcox, Sue Ellington, Andrew Fraser,
Jose Hales, Roger Hall, Tumi Hawkins,
Roger Hickford, James Hockney, Mark Howell,
Clayton Hudson, Caroline Hunt, Peter Johnson,
Douglas de Lacey, Mervyn Loynes, Mick Martin,
Raymond Matthews, David McCraith,
Charles Nightingale, Tony Orgee, Robin Page,
Alex Riley, Deborah Roberts, Tim Scott,
Hazel Smith, Peter Topping, Susan van de Ven,
Aidan Van de Weyer, David Whiteman-Downes,
John Williams and Nick Wright

Officers:

Jonathan Dixon
Caroline Hunt
Fiona McMillan

Principal Planning Policy Officer (Transport)
Planning Policy Manager
Legal & Democratic Services Manager and
Monitoring Officer
Planning Policy Manager
Planning and New Communities Director
Senior Planning Policy Officer
Principal Planning Officer
Democratic Services Officer
Senior Planning Officer (Transport Policy)
Senior Planning Policy Officer

Keith Miles
Jo Mills
Jennifer Nuttycombe
David Roberts
Ian Senior
Claire Spencer
Alison Talkington

15. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

16. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Planning Policy & Localism Portfolio Holder signed, as a correct record, the Minutes of the meeting held on 17 September 2013.

17. SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE LOCAL PLAN - CONSULTATION RESPONSES AND CONSIDERATION ON WHETHER TO SUBMIT FOR EXAMINATION

The Planning Policy & Localism Portfolio Holder considered the responses to consultation on the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan: Proposed Submission 2013, and a covering report from officers proposing that she recommend to a special Council meeting on 13 March 2014 that the Local Plan be submitted to the Secretary of State for public

examination.

The Planning and New Communities Director introduced the report as representing a key stage in the Plan-making process. Consultation had taken place in 2012 and 2013 on two rounds of Issues and Options for the new Local Plan. The Council had received about 30,000 representations to those consultations, informing the preparation of a Proposed Submission Local Plan, which had itself been subjected to consultation between 19 July and 14 October 2013. The Planning Policy Manager referred the Planning Policy & Localism Portfolio Holder and other Members present to paragraph 26 of the report, which gave a high level summary and assessment of the 7,400 representations received as a result of this final consultation. He said the Council had made sure that it followed due process, and complied with the duty to co-operate imposed on local authorities by the National Planning Policy Framework.

The Local Development Framework Team Leader guided the pplph and other Members present through the other elements of the report, namely:

- How much development?
- Where should it go?
- When is it needed?
- Strategic sites in the Plan
- Strategic sites not in the Plan
- Village housing sites in the Plan
- Parish Council proposals
- Village sites not in the Plan
- Climate Change
- Design
- Protecting and enhancing the natural and historic environment
- Housing
- Building a strong and competitive economy
- Promoting successful communities
- Promoting and delivering sustainable transport and infrastructure

How much development?

Those present made the following points:

- Be clear who the new homes are for, and why
- Housing needs should be assessed objectively to identify, where possible, how many of the new dwellings in South Cambridgeshire will be for people working within the District and how many will in effect be supporting employment in neighbouring local authority areas
- The needs of homeless people in South Cambridgeshire should be recognised by stressing the importance of affordable housing
- Infrastructure to support development should be put in place before that development took place

Officers commented that the Council had followed accepted national practice in developing the Local Plan, and had analysed all appropriate trends and economic models to make sure that it was able to support the continuing success of Cambridge and the surrounding area. They confirmed that the 22,000 jobs that the Plan had been designed to create were all located within South Cambridgeshire. The SHMA had been instrumental in determining the extent of housing allocation. In response to criticism that promises had been made in the past that further development in the District would be less than was now being proposed, officers argued that time moves on and policies had to

adapt to take account of changing circumstances.

Where should it go?

Those present made the following points:

- Recent events made it inappropriate that Girton should be upgraded from Group Village to Minor Rural Centre
- Relationship between the Local Plan and Cambridgeshire County Council's Transport Strategy
- Differential as between South Cambridgeshire and Cambridge City in the number of houses proposed, and relationship to infrastructure and employment
- Implications for traffic flow
- The need for rail links as the most realistic form of public transport
- Evidence needed as to the sustainability of a new village on Bourn Airfield
- Cambridgeshire County Council's lack of powers and funds to promote effective bus services in South Cambridgeshire
- Delivery of the City Deal should be a pre-requisite of development taking place at Bourn Airfield or Cambourne West
- Developments should be self-funding – City Deal money should not be relied upon but viewed instead as an additional source of funding

Officers commented that the majority of respondents to consultation had favoured development taking place in new communities rather than being dispersed among established smaller villages. The need to demonstrate a five-year land supply demanded that the Plan should be both robust and flexible. Transport modelling had been carried out throughout the Plan-making process. With regard to Girton, circumstances were constantly changing and, although it was still considered appropriate to upgrade the village, the Inspector would make a final decision based on updated evidence. The Transport Strategy had informed the Local Plan, and new settlements were considered more likely to attract the necessary funding for public transport enhancements. The Strategic Housing Market Assessment had been tested against the national Toolkit, and had been adjudged to be robust.

The Planning Policy & Localism Portfolio Holder said it was too early to go into the detail of the Local Plan, but assured Members that everything possible would be done to make sure that development proceeded in a co-ordinated way. She highlighted Northstowe as an example, pointing out that A14 improvements had always been a condition of the new town being built out in full.

When is it needed?

The Local Development Framework Team Leader said that 14,000 of the 19,000 dwellings proposed were already accounted for by virtue of the South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework 2007.

Strategic Sites in the Plan

There were no comments about NIAB 3.

- **Cambridge East**

The Local Development Framework Team Leader explained why officers had proposed a safeguarding policy for Cambridge East.

Those present made the following points:

- It should be returned to the Green Belt
- Not to return it to Green Belt would give preferential treatment to Marshalls, the land owners
- Cambridge East had been identified in the Local Development Framework as one of the best sites available at the time but was no longer needed because of new development sites at Bourn Airfield and Cambourn West
- The Council should be safeguarding the Green Belt as well

The Local Development Framework Team Leader said that Cambridge Airport had been removed from the Green Belt because it did not fulfil that function. There were no compelling reasons to change the Green Belt again so soon.

- **Cambridge Northern Fringe East**

Members welcomed agreement as to the boundary and protection for the Chesterton Fen Travellers site.

- **Waterbeach**

Barbara Bull (Waterbeach Parish Council) and John Halfpenny (Landbeach Parish Council) addressed the Planning Policy & Localism Portfolio Holder. They referred to the following:

- Waterbeach New Town opposed
- Support 900 new dwellings on former Barracks site
- Building on agricultural land
- Concern about flooding, water supply, contaminated land and sewerage disposal
- Concern about transport infrastructure
- Concern at “misrepresentation” about traffic and drainage
- Flawed consultation
- “bias”
- Fears about Waterbeach becoming a commuter town which would devalue the new town’s value to the local community
- Implications for the A10
- Railway issues
- Financial risk

Officers referred to the extensive consultation that had been carried out. In some areas it was difficult to avoid building on agricultural land. The new town would not increase flood risk or sewerage problems – a Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SUDS) would be used. A full transport assessment had been carried out. The Council had complied with its duty to take account of local needs but could not prohibit commuting. An Area Action Plan would be drawn up to examine and address detailed concerns.

Councillor James Hockney (a local Member) welcomed the commitment to protect the Green Belt but expressed opposition to building on agricultural land. He questioned the methodology used. He questioned the longer term need for a new town at Waterbeach. He suggested that the Council could be acting ultra vires

(beyond its powers) in seeking to bind future local plans covering periods beyond 2031. He accepted in principle plans to build houses on the previously developed part of the former barracks site.

Councillor Peter Johnson (a local Member) said current flood and sewerage issues had to be resolved before anything else happened. He said that agricultural land was need for food production, and should not be built upon. He raised concerns about increased traffic and about proposals to address that issue. He urged plans for Waterbeach to be deleted from the Local Plan.

The Local Development Framework Team Leader assured Members that the Council's primary objective was to make sure that new developments did not make conditions worse for existing communities.

Members made the following points:

- commuter traffic flows in many directions: it was easier to move between jobs than houses.
- Why had there been no formal analysis of commuting patterns?
- Biodiversity not mentioned
- The Council had a duty of care to the public

In reply, the Local Development Framework Team Leader said that the Strategic Housing Market Assessment did take account of commuting patterns. Consultees had not raised any objections on biodiversity grounds. She stressed the important role of Area Action Plans, which was to examine the details of proposals once the principle had been established.

- **Bourn Airfield and Cambourne West**

The Local Development Framework Team Leader said that the critical mass offered by larger communities made further development there more sustainable than elsewhere. Such tipping points, for example, had led to a secondary school being built in Cambourne. Bourn Airfield and an extension to Cambourne had been rejected in the past because other sites had been deemed preferable. However, the role of the draft Local Plan was to identify sites that were currently available. Viability at Bourn Airfield could be achieved with a density of 30 -35 dwellings per hectare. As with other proposals, transport infrastructure was key, and a number of funding options would be considered, including City Deal.

Similar comments applied to Cambourne, one of the largest villages in South Cambridgeshire. Cambourne West should reflect the character of the existing three linked villages of Lower, Great and Upper Cambourne. It might include the buildings at Swansley Farm as a minor change to the Plan. Officers had rejected the developer's proposals for a larger site abutting the A1198, on the grounds of landscape and size. Caxton Parish Council had raised the issue of governance as the proposed site of Cambourne West was situated mainly in Caxton Parish.

Paul Beskeen (Stop the Bourn Airfield Development (StopBAD) and Roger Hume (Cambourne West) addressed the Portfolio Holder. They referred to the following:

- Prevent adverse impact
- Development at Bourn Airfield could lead to an over-supply of dwellings by 2031 if requirements change before then
- Deliverability and capacity

- local authorities' ability to oversee several major developments at the same time
- concern at how representations have been summarised by the Council
- Delete Bourn Airfield from the Local Plan and commence other developments earlier
- Comments made over the past ten years about the extent to which Cambourne could expand
- Transport assessment with specific reference to the decrease during the past few years in buses serving Cambourne.

In connection with the concern about the summary of representations, the Local Development Framework Team Leader explained that that far greater detail was available in the Appendices to the report. In connection with the concern about local authority capacity to oversee development, the Local Development Framework Team Leader repeated that such detail would be explored as part of an Area Action Plan. South Cambridgeshire District Council already had a number of specialist teams experienced in meeting the challenge of dealing with concurrent major developments. As to over-supply, there had to be a reasonable lead-in time, and this required flexibility. The Local Development Framework Team Leader commended the robust nature of the proposals before the Portfolio Holder and other Members present.

In connection with comments made over the past ten years about the extent to which Cambourne could expand, the Planning Policy & Localism Portfolio Holder commented that it was not in the gift of any Councillors to make promises of that nature.

Nick Smith (MCA) addressed the Portfolio Holder: He referred to the following:

- disappointment that Cambourne West had been restricted to 970 dwellings, with the balance of 230 dwellings being built on the Business Park
- commendation of MCA's proposal for a larger development up to the A1198, helping with the five-year land supply and not being constrained by landscape features
- comment that Cambourne needs to achieve its full potential in order to become fully sustainable
- Proposals at Bourn Airfield are unsustainable and unviable, and should be scrapped: Cambourne West should be allowed to absorb some of the proposed dwellings

Councillor Mervyn Loynes (a local Member) would prefer to see development dispersed throughout the District as opposed to it being concentrated into a few areas as new developments. In particular, he opposed both Bourn Airfield and Cambourne West. Including development in Huntingdonshire, Papworth Everard and elsewhere, Councillor Loynes calculated that Bourn Airfield and Cambourne West would contribute to about 17,200 new dwellings proposed to be built along the A428 corridor.

Councillor Alison Elcox (a local Member) described Cambourne as a housing estate. She said it was unsustainable on employment grounds. Existing infrastructure was struggling to cope with the demands of present-day Cambourne. The marketing of employment sites had been too narrow. Infrastructure must come first.

The Local Development Framework Team Leader pointed out that Cambourne

was one of the most sustainable communities in the District, but accepted that expansion plans would create a challenge. The site north of the A428 had been rejected after a thorough assessment.

A discussion ensued relating to the following:

- The cost of required infrastructure
- Funding, including the City Deal
- Road capacity
- Coalescence and green separation
- Drainage
- Flooding in the Bourn valley
- Bourn Airfield is the wrong place to site 3,500 dwellings

Councillor Clayton Hudson (a local Member) described the Bourn Airfield Development as a “BAD idea”. He said a village of 3,500 homes would not be viable (even though Bourn Airfield was a suitable site) – in evidence, he pointed to the originally-sized Cambourne and the pressure first of all for a further 950 dwellings, and now for a fourth linked village. There was insufficient infrastructure to mitigate the risk of flooding along the Bourn Valley. Measures were also needed to mitigate flood risk downstream at Uttons Drove. Councillor Hudson described Cambourne as a fantastic place. He would prefer Cambourne West to be on the larger footprint proposed by MCA.

A further discussion ensued relating to the following:

- Flows into Bourn Brook
- The monitoring of Legal Agreements made under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990
- Biodiversity along the Bourn valley
- Process, and the roles of officers as advisers and Members as decision makers
- Balancing ponds and the maintenance liability that had been transferred to the Wildlife Trust
- It takes time for new communities to become sustainable
- In terms of green separation, the Council needed to learn lessons from the experience of Longstanton and Northstowe
- Uncertainties about the long-term viability of bus services in Cambridgeshire
- People would be attracted to public transport were it to become more reliable
- The non-viability of a village at Bourn Airfield (quoting the Inspector examining the Local Development Framework)

Strategic sites not in the Plan

There were no comments under this heading.

Village Housing sites in the Plan

- **Sawston**

Councillors David Bard, Kevin Cuffley and Raymond Matthews (local Members) raised concerns about the proposals saying the schools, surgery and sewerage works were already at full capacity. Pressure on car parking was also an issue. Councillor Tony Orgee, whose County Council Electoral Division included Sawston, said there was a need for more affordable housing in the area.

- **Histon & Impington**

There were no comments.

- **Melbourn**

Councillor Jose Hales expressed satisfaction with officers' assessment.

- **Gamlingay**

Councillor Bridget Smith supported officers' assessment in principle, but urged them to seek greater flexibility in terms of employment creation.

- **Willingham**

There were no comments.

- **Comberton**

Councillor Tim Scott (local Member) asked for as much affordable housing as possible. Councillor Tumi Hawkins (Member for the neighbouring parish of Toft) argued that 60 new dwellings would be more sustainable.

Parish Council Proposals

The proposals for Great and Little Abington and Graveley would both be submitted to the Inspector.

Village sites not in the Plan

The position would be clarified in the report to the Special meeting of Council on 13 March 2014.

Councillor James Stewart (Hardwick) asked whether a site at Hardwick could be considered.

Climate Change

There were no comments

Design

There were no comments

Protecting and Enhancing the natural and historic environment

There were no comments.

Housing

It was suggested that minimum room sizes would affect density levels. In reply, it was stated that these had been based on standards already enforced in affordable housing, and were unlikely to have a significant impact.

Building a strong and competitive economy

Councillor John Williams (Fulbourn) queried whether the land owners of the employment site in Fulbourn would release the land for development.

Promoting successful communities

There were no comments.

Promoting and delivering sustainable transport and infrastructure

There were no comments.

The Planning Policy & Localism Portfolio Holder **recommended** to a Special meeting of Full Council that:

- (a) the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan: Proposed Submission document and Proposed Policies Map be 'submitted' for examination in accordance with Regulation 22 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, together with the sustainability appraisal and associated evidence documents in support of the plan, with proposed Major Modifications (as contained in Appendix A) and proposed Minor Changes (as contained in Appendix B).
- (b) the following updated and additional evidence base documents be submitted with the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan:
 - Key Issues and Assessment (Update to the Audit Trail at Annex A of the Sustainability Appraisal Report) - Appendix C
 - Statement of Consultation Update – Appendix D
 - Duty to Co-operate Statement Update – Appendix E
 - Great and Little Abington Parish Council Proposals: including consultation leaflet and results of consultation – Appendix F
 - Graveley Parish Council Proposals: including consultation leaflet (if supported by local consultation – update to be provided to Council meeting on 13 March 2014) – Appendix G
 - Sawston Transport Modelling – Appendix H
 - Development Frameworks evidence paper update – Appendix I
 - Sustainability Appraisal – update for Parish Council led proposals for The Abingtons – Appendix J
 - Habitats Regulations Assessment update – Appendix K (to follow).
 - Cambourne Retail and Employment Study- Explores retail and employment development in the village and opportunities to support future development – Appendix L.
 - Strategic Spatial Priorities: Addressing the Duty to Co-operate across Cambridgeshire & Peterborough – Appendix M
 - Services and Facilities Study Update – once finalised.
 - Transport Strategy for Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire – to be considered by the County Council's Cabinet for agreement on 4 March.
- (c) delegated authority be given to the Director of Planning and New Communities to make further additions to the schedules of changes during the course of the examination (except where changes would be of such significance as to substantially alter the meaning of a policy or allocation). The exercise of this delegation to be reported back to Planning

Policy and Localism Portfolio Holder through the course of the examination process.

- (d) the Director of Planning and New Communities is authorised to prepare and submit reports, proofs of evidence, technical papers, statements of common ground and other such documents required in the presentation of the local plan through the examination process, reflecting the Council's agreed position on these matters and to take such other steps as are conducive or incidental to the submission and examination of the local plan.

18. UPDATE OF LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME (LDS)

The Planning Policy & Localism Portfolio Holder considered a report updating the Local Development Scheme for South Cambridgeshire which sets out the timetable for plan-making within the district. It included the timetable for the completion of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan and work on new Area Action Plans for major areas of change proposed in the Local Plan.

The Planning Policy & Localism Portfolio Holder **approved** the updated Local Development Scheme attached to the report as Appendix A, and **noted**

- (a) The inclusion of the revised timetable for the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan, so long as the Special meeting of Council on 13 March 2014 agreed it for submission to the Secretary of State, and
- (b) the preparation, dependent as in (a) above, of Area Action Plans for Cambridge Northern Fringe East (in conjunction with Cambridge City Council), a new town at Waterbeach and a new village at Bourn Airfield.

19. LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT 2012-2013

The Planning Policy & Localism Portfolio Holder considered a report about the Local Development Framework Annual Monitoring Report 2012-2013 for publication on the Council's website.

The Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) included the Council's updated housing trajectory setting out predicted completions each year up to 2031, and its five-year housing land supply position.

The Planning Policy & Localism Portfolio Holder

- (e) **approved** the contents of the Annual Monitoring Report 2012-2013 for publication; and
- (f) **delegated** to the Planning and New Communities Director the responsibility to make any further minor editing changes to the Annual Monitoring Report where they are of a technical nature.

20. WORK PROGRAMME

This item was not considered.

21. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

This item was not considered.

The Meeting ended at 4.55 p.m.
