

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Planning Portfolio Holder's Meeting held on
Tuesday, 17 November 2015 at 2.00 p.m.

Portfolio Holder: Robert Turner

Councillors in attendance:

Scrutiny and Overview Committee monitors: Kevin Cuffley

Opposition spokesmen: Henry Batchelor and Aidan Van de Weyer

Also in attendance: David Bard, Anna Bradnam, Jose Hales,
Lynda Harford, Tumi Hawkins, Peter Johnson,
Janet Lockwood, Tony Orgee, Robin Page,
Deborah Roberts, Ben Shelton, Bridget Smith,
John Williams and Tim Wotherspoon

Officers:

Jane Green	Head of New Communities
Caroline Hunt	Planning Policy Manager
Jo Mills	Planning and New Communities Director
Ian Senior	Democratic Services Officer
Julian Sykes	Urban Extensions Project Manager
Alison Talkington	Senior Planning Policy Officer

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In relation to Minute 5 (Neighbourhood Plans: Cottenham Area Designation), Councillor Tim Wotherspoon declared a non-pecuniary interest as a member of Cottenham Parish Council, applicant in this case.

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Planning Portfolio Holder signed, as a correct record, the Minutes of the meeting held on 8 September 2015.

3. LOCAL PLAN - CONSIDERATION OF FURTHER WORK AND CONSEQUENTIAL MODIFICATIONS

The Planning Portfolio Holder considered a report setting out the further work carried out by Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council on the Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire Local Plans, following initial conclusions received from the Inspectors examining the Plans in a letter dated 20 May 2015. The report and attached documentation set out the Councils' response to the issues raised by the Inspectors, and modifications to the Local Plans arising from the additional evidence. The Portfolio Holder noted that the intention was that the proposed modifications should be made available for public consultation between December 2015 and January 2016.

The Planning Policy Manager summarised the background set out in paragraphs 5 to 10 of the report from the Planning and New Communities Director. The Joint Strategic Transport and Spatial Planning Group had considered a similar report on 16 November 2015, and had supported the recommendations. There had been strong support for the Green Belt, and some consideration of New Settlements.

The Planning Portfolio Holder paid tribute to the Planning Policy Manager and her Planning Policy team at South Cambridgeshire District Council, and corresponding officers at Cambridge City Council, for co-ordinating the work leading up to this meeting.

Councillor Bridget Smith referred to the modification in the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan changing the housing requirement from 19,000 to 19,500. The Planning Policy Manager explained that the extra 500 dwellings would count towards the District Council's City Deal commitment of 1,000 dwellings on rural exception sites.

Councillor Peter Johnson asked whether the option of beginning the construction of a new town at Waterbeach effectively meant more dwellings on that strategic site. The Planning and New Communities Director said there would not be more dwellings overall, but there might be more than originally planned by the end of the Local Plan period in 2031. The intention was simply to allow flexibility.

Councillor Tony Orgee was supportive of proposals to submit to district-wide consultation those sites put forward by Parish Councils.

Councillor John Williams referred to land north of Cherry Hinton Road, and asked whether the proposed new secondary school was taken into account when undertaking the traffic assessment. The Planning Policy Manager replied that the traffic assessment took account of the larger site.

Councillor Dr. Tumi Hawkins established that, should development of the Bourn Airfield be approved by the Inspector, and it was possible to advance the start date to 2021 or 2022, there would be a reduction from 250 dwellings a year to 150 dwellings a year in terms of build out.

Councillor Dr. Tumi Hawkins made a statement on behalf of the residents of Caldecote. She said that the quality of life of those residents would be affected adversely by not improving transport infrastructure other than public transport links. Measures must be taken to protect other modes of transport, and to improve roads, including the A1303 linking with the M11.

Councillor David Bard also stressed the importance of transport infrastructure improvements.

Those present discussed the independent Green Belt study, and the Councils' response to it. There was disquiet about the proposed erosion of Green Belt south of Addenbrookes.

Councillor Deborah Roberts described the revised proposals as still being detrimental to the quality of life of residents throughout South Cambridgeshire. In reply, the Portfolio Holder said that the Councils had to strike a balance in order to be able to once again demonstrate a five-year housing land supply, to put in place updated Local Plans and thereby stop the submission of further speculative planning applications.

The Planning Policy Manager commented further on the measures outlined in the report to address the shortfall in housing land supply. She referred to the relative sustainability

factors surrounding edge-of-Cambridge policies as opposed to policies focussing development on new settlements. It would be for Full Council to decide on its preferred strategy.

Councillor Tim Wotherspoon took comfort from paragraph 8 of Appendix D, which stated:

“Our analysis suggests that past housing delivery in the study area was suppressed by land supply, mainly due to the Green Belt; and development elsewhere in the HMA did not fully compensate for this. This suppression is particularly significant for Cambridge City and less so for South Cambridgeshire. This suggests that the above demographic projections underestimate housing need and should be adjusted upwards.”

The Planning Portfolio Holder

1. **recommended** that the Special meeting of Full Council on 30 November 2015:
 - (a) agrees that the consultation document with proposed modifications (Appendix A) and sustainability appraisal (Appendix B), subject to the reason for the proposed modification to PM/SC/2/G including the words “...subject to the provision of transport infrastructure improvements”, and approves it for public consultation between 2 December 2015 and 25 January 2016;
 - (b) agrees that any amendments and editing changes that need to be made to the consultation material and proposed modifications (Appendix A) and sustainability appraisal (Appendix B) be agreed in consultation with the Planning Portfolio Holder;
 - (c) notes the documents attached to this report as Appendices C to J and submits them as part of the evidence base for the Local Plan; and
 - (d) gives to the Director of Planning and New Communities delegated powers to make any subsequent minor amendments and editing changes, in consultation with the Planning Portfolio Holder; and
2. **agreed** an update to the Local Development Scheme as set out in paragraph 15 of the report from the Planning and New Communities Director.

4. **CAMBRIDGE NORTHERN FRINGE EAST AREA ACTION PLAN - ISSUES AND OPTIONS CONSULTATION FEEDBACK**

The Planning Portfolio Holder considered a report summarising responses received to the Cambridge Northern Fringe East (CNFE) Area Action Plan (AAP) Issues and Options consultation, and seeking his agreement to revised redevelopment options for the potential range of development in the emerging AAP proposals.

Julian Sykes, Urban Extensions Project Manager with Cambridge City Council, summarised the report, and referring to the two new options. Option 2A and Option 4A. He also mentioned that the Joint Strategic Transport and Spatial Planning Group on the 16th November 2015 had considered this matter and agreed the same recommendations, plus an additional recommendation *(d) to investigate a phased approach from Option 2A to*

Option 4A'

Councillor John Williams suggested that Option 2A was the only practical approach. He focussed on the location of the Stagecoach depot, arguing that there was no suitable alternative available. The future of public transport in Cambridge could be at stake, were the depot to be moved. The Planning and New Communities Director recognised the constraints involved, and said that all opportunities for progress should be explored. Mr. Sykes pointed out that Option 4A has more space, but that Options 2A and 4A both recognised the need to resolve the Stagecoach and other existing employer issues.

Councillor Aidan Van de Weyer noted the importance of the site for employment purposes, but asked about housing. He also sought an indication as to whether future plans included a bridge over Fen Road. Mr. Sykes confirmed that the AAP was employment-led but added that an appropriately-balanced housing element would be included. He was also conscious of transport pressures. With regard to a bridge, Mr. Sykes said this could add significantly to cost which could only reasonably be funded by development on the other side of the railway line and that land is Green Belt and subject to drainage issues.

Councillor Jose Hales asked about the A10 study. The Planning and New Communities Director said that this was being undertaken by Cambridgeshire County Council, and related only to that part of the A10 leading north from Cambridge towards Ely.

The Planning and New Communities Director proposed that the additional recommendation d) (above) from the Joint Strategic Transport and Spatial Planning group be added to this recommendation.

The Planning Portfolio Holder:

1. **Noted** the summary of responses to the Area Action Plan (AAP) Issues and Options consultation (as referred to in Appendices A and B);
2. **Agreed** two revised options (Options 2A and 4A) for the potential range of development for the purposes of:
 - testing the potential environmental and infrastructure impact and the economic viability of the emerging AAP proposals; and
 - informing the preparation of other ancillary assessments required to ensure the deliverability and soundness of the draft AAP; and
 - guiding further conceptual urban design work that will inform the ultimate preferred development approach.
3. **Agreed** an additional recommendation from the Joint Strategic Transport and Spatial Planning Group meeting on 16 November 2015 to investigate a phased approach from Option 2A to Option 4A; and
4. **Agreed** an addendum to the Local Development Scheme with the revised timetable for the CNFE AAP as set out in Appendix D.

5. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANS: COTTENHAM AREA DESIGNATION

The Planning Portfolio Holder considered a report on the application to designate the parish of Cottenham as a Neighbourhood Area.

Councillor Francis Morris, Chairman of Cottenham Parish Council, addressed the meeting. He highlighted a number of challenges facing Cottenham.

Councillor Lynda Harford (a local Member) commended the Parish Council Chairman for his leadership on this topic, and said a Neighbourhood Plan would help to mitigate the impact of future development in the village.

Councillor Tim Wotherspoon (another local Member) declared a non-pecuniary interest as a member of Cottenham Parish Council, and declined the invitation to speak.

The Planning Portfolio Holder **approved**

- (a) The designation of a Neighbourhood Area for Cottenham as proposed by the Parish Council; and
- (b) An amendment to the neighbourhood area addendum of the Local Development Scheme that was approved in August 2015 so that Cottenham can be added to the list of Neighbourhood Area designated within the District.

6. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANS: FOXTON AREA DESIGNATION

The Planning Portfolio Holder considered a report on the application to designate the parish of Foxton as a Neighbourhood Area.

Councillor Deborah Roberts supported the proactive approach being taken by Parish Councillors in the village.

The Planning Portfolio Holder **approved**

- (c) The designation of a Neighbourhood Area for Foxton as proposed by the Parish Council; and
- (d) An amendment to the neighbourhood area addendum of the Local Development Scheme that was approved in August 2015 so that Foxton can be added to the list of Neighbourhood Area designated within the District.

7. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANS: WEST WICKHAM AREA DESIGNATION

The Planning Portfolio Holder considered a report on the application to designate the parish of West Wickham as a Neighbourhood Area.

The Planning Portfolio Holder **approved**

- (e) The designation of a Neighbourhood Area for West Wickham as proposed by the Parish Council; and
- (f) An amendment to the neighbourhood area addendum of the Local Development Scheme that was approved in August 2015 so that West Wickham can be added to the list of Neighbourhood Area designated within the District.

8. AMENDMENTS TO THE CURRENT SCHEME OF DELEGATED POWERS AND FUNCTIONS FOR PLANNING DECISIONS

The Planning Portfolio Holder considered a report containing responses received to the

consultation on proposed changes to the Scheme of Delegation, forming part of the Council's Constitution.

The Head of New Communities summarised the proposed changes set out in paragraphs 7 to 14 of the report from the Planning and New Communities Director, and drew attention to two additional responses that had been received from Fowlmere and Great Chishill Parish Councils. Both objected to the proposed changes, as originally drafted.

Whilst objections were raised to the original proposal, a significant number of parishes supported the amended proposal, which had emerged through the consultation period and which was now being promoted as the preferred change.

The Head of New Communities acknowledged the number of helpful suggestions made by Parish Councils about how the District Council could work more effectively with them. These suggestions would all be considered carefully to see whether they could be implemented. Responses would be given to the suggestions made.

Members brought a number of points to the Portfolio Holder's attention. These included:

- The valuable contribution made by Parish Councils, because of the special knowledge they had of their local areas, should not be underestimated
- Localism.
- An inconsistent relationship between some Parish Councils and their District Councillors
- Unreasonable pressure that would be placed on the Planning Committee Chairman
- Parish Councils already feel vulnerable because of South Cambridgeshire District Council's inability to demonstrate a five-year housing supply, thus rendering some local planning policies inoperable. As such, this report was poorly timed.
- Applications deemed minor from a district point of view were often seen as major at parish level
- Parish Councils were not statutory consultees: local Members should be more alert about proposals coming forward in their wards and work more closely with them, especially smaller parish councils.
- A lack of awareness by at least one Parish Council about the proposed changes.
- A recognition that Planning Committee should focus on the more significant and contentious applications.

It was requested that the draft consultation letter to Parish Councils (Appendix C) be further amended, to encourage and welcome Parish Council attendance at Planning Committee, stressing the value of such attendance.

Clarification was sought, and confirmation given, that Parish Councils would receive written responses if requested items were not taken forward to Planning Committee, and that further planning training would be offered to Parish Councils.

The Planning and New Communities Director said that the revised proposal had been thoroughly thought through, culminating in debate at the Parish Councils Forum. Parish Councils had received four notifications / emails about the proposed changes, encouraging comments on the scheme. The Planning and New Communities Director highlighted the current anomaly, summarised in paragraph 11, whereby Parish Councils had an automatic referral, whereas local Members, who were part of the Local Planning Authority, could only refer through designated officers and the Chairman of The Planning Committee.

Councillor Lynda Harford, speaking in her capacity of Planning Committee Chairman, expressed regret at the disquiet caused by the proposal. Councillor Harford accepted that the opportunity must be seized to communicate more effectively so as to explain the reasons for decisions, and to make Parish Councils feel a greater part of the process. She currently did this and would continue to do so. She insisted that the proposed changes had not been prompted by the need to address staffing issues within the District Council's Development Control service.

Following further discussion, the Portfolio Holder invited Councillor Morris, Chairman of Cottenham Parish Council to address those present. Councillor Morris described the proposal as a bad move at a bad time. He claimed that South Cambridgeshire District Council had demonstrated a lack of urgency in addressing issues surrounding the draft Local Plan, and that it should show more empathy with parishes.

The Portfolio Holder stressed that there was no intention to disenfranchise Parish Councils. The Head of New Communities added that the aim was to listen to, and work with, Parish Councils, hence the change to the scheme now being proposed as a result of feedback given during the consultation period. A further aim was to improve and streamline the planning process so as to improve the South Cambridgeshire District Council's performance.

Recognising the mood of the meeting, the Planning Portfolio Holder agreed to ask officers to look again at the scheme of delegation of planning decisions, and to **defer** making a recommendation to Full Council for a period of up to six months.

9. REVIEW OF CAMBRIDGE FRINGES JOINT DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE TO DETERMINE CITY DEAL INFRASTRUCTURE SCHEMES

The Planning Portfolio Holder considered a report proposing amendment of the Terms of Reference of the Fringes Joint Development Control Committee so as to include the determination of City Deal Infrastructure Schemes.

The Planning Portfolio Holder **recommended** that Full Council supports the proposed changes to the Joint Development Control Committee (Cambridge Fringes) Terms of Reference, subject to the formal approval of Cambridgeshire County and Cambridge City Councils.

10. NORTHSTOWE JOINT DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE

The Planning Portfolio Holder considered a report relating to the future of the Northstowe Joint Development Control Committee.

Councillor Tim Wotherspoon, Chairman of the Joint Development Control Committee, thanked the committee for its work, recognising its achievements in shaping and determining the strategic applications for Phase 1 and 2. He acknowledged that the Northstowe project was now moving to a delivery phase and, as such, did not need a dedicated committee. Reserved Matters applications would instead be directed to South Cambridgeshire District Council's Planning Committee. He reminded members about the workshop scheduled for 18 November 2015 to discuss how best to channel the energy and enthusiasm of County, District and Parish councils into getting the new community at Northstowe off to the best start.

The Planning Portfolio Holder, and Councillor Lynda Harford (a member of the Northstowe Joint Development Control Committee), both thanked Councillor Wotherspoon for the manner in which he had conducted the Joint Committee's business.

The Planning Portfolio Holder **recommended** to Full Council that the Northstowe Joint Development Control Committee be decommissioned, and that further consideration be given of committee arrangements for the new settlements when there is more clarity about the timing of the relevant strategic decisions.

11. WORK PROGRAMME

The Planning Portfolio Holder **received and noted** the Work Programme attached to the agenda.

12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next Planning Portfolio Holder meeting had been scheduled for Friday 4 December 2015, starting at 10.00am.

The Meeting ended at 5.10 p.m.
