

# **SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

Minutes of a meeting of the Joint Local Planning Advisory Group held on  
Tuesday, 2 June 2020 at 5.30 p.m.

**PRESENT:** Councillor Dr. Tumi Hawkins – Chair  
Councillor Katie Thornburrow – Vice-Chair

Councillors: Tim Bick Mike Sergeant  
Dr. Aidan Van de Weyer Timothy Wotherspoon  
Nick Wright

Officers in attendance for all or part of the meeting:

Jonathan Dixon (Principal Planning Policy Officer), Paul Frainer (Assistant Director of Shared Planning Service), Caroline Hunt (Strategy and Economy Manager), Hana Loftus (Special Projects Officer), Matthew Paterson (Planning Officer), Terry De Sousa (Planning Officer), Julian Sykes (Principal Planning (project manager)).

## **1. ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR**

Councillor Aidan Van de Weyer proposed, and Councillor Katie Thornburrow seconded, the nomination of Councillor Tumi Hawkins as Chair.

It was agreed unanimously that Councillor Hawkins be Chair for the ensuing year.

Councillor Tim Bick proposed, and Councillor Tumi Hawkins seconded, the nomination of Councillor Katie Thornburrow as Vice-Chair.

It was **agreed** unanimously that Councillor Thornburrow be Vice-Chair for the ensuing year.

## **2. APOLOGIES**

No apologies were received for this meeting.

It was noted that Councillor Nick Wright had replaced Councillor Tom Bygott as the conservative representative from South Cambridgeshire District Council.

### **3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest.

#### **4. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 2 June 2020 were agreed as a correct record, subject to the following amendment:

- In minute 5, page 3, the wording in the second line to read "...resulting from consultation responses suggesting that new settlements were the preferred choice rather than expansion of existing villages".

## **5. NORTH EAST CAMBRIDGE AREA ACTION PLAN**

Members were shown a presentation which highlighted the strategic objectives, key proposals and section of the North East Cambridge Area Action Plan (NECAAP). Officers intended on bringing back a paper to members on the representations received through

the summer NECAAP consultation.

Following the presentation on NECAAP, Chair Tumi Hawkins issued a thank you to everyone who had been involved in drafting the NECAAP & all the supplementary documents. All members of the JLPAG seconded this.

In response to the presentation on the NAACP, Members had the following comments:

- I. The Chair questioned why there wasn't already a plan to implement a secondary school, instead protecting the land in case it was needed.
- II. It was questioned if the NECAAP planning was occurring too early, as it was going to be a 7-year period until the work could commence.
- III. It was commented that the integration of public transport would be fantastic, never had there been a site like this before with such a variety of transport links.
- IV. Enquired if there may be less need for office space in a post COVID-19 world.
- V. It was noted that employers were to be assigned blocks of employee designated housing under the AAP and commented that this would go against the Cambridge Local Plan policy 45.
- VI. That there was some clarification needed on HMOs (homes of multiple occupancy), it was remarked that the AAP discusses HMOs developing over time but simultaneously that the build to rent housing would all be HMOs, which was a contradiction.
- VII. Noted that there was not much information for the public in the report on density, and that there was concern about flexibility on the height of buildings for developers. The report stated 5 to 6 floors, but with a potential for 8, it was questioned how they would stop developers always taking the maximum of 8.
- VIII. The chair questioned how they would build and manage HMOs, as well as querying how they would consider Article 4.

In response, officers from the Greater Cambridge Planning Service said the following:

- I. Advice from officers at the County Council had stated that a secondary school was likely not to be needed.
- II. As the NECAAP requires the re-siting of the waste water works, which would require its own consultation and planning period, preparing now allows the planning service to engage with the wider community and ensure the process is not developer led.
- III. Officers noted that the planning service was communicating on how to provide an integrated public transport system across the whole of Cambridgeshire.
- IV. It was remarked that the policies would be kept under review as the situation may change rapidly. A section would be added at the beginning of NECAAP to state that

- all policies would be kept under review due to the impact of COVID-19.
- V. It was commented that employers had been assigned blocks of housing due to the desire to drive down car use. It was noted however, that the plan is in its draft stage and comments were invited.
  - VI. Officers noted that they would review any apparent contradiction regarding HMOs.
  - VII. Officers noted that the plan was for a variation in development height across the site, so developers would not be allowed to consistently have the maximum building height of 8 floors.
  - VIII. Noted that Article 4 is retrospective and as such, can only be applied once an issue is determined and that this would only be done if it could be managed through extant policy.

Members made the following further comments on the NECAAP presentation:

- I. Noted that open space is a very important feature and asked for the quantitative data from the Local Plan Issues and Options consultation around this topic.
- II. Asked officers to explain succinctly what the site wide use of water would be and queried if the site wide approach would help them to achieve their target of 80 litres per day, per home, without infringing on national policy.
- III. How would officers ensure that the development would provide for a variety of industry types and not just hi-tech industries?
- IV. Queried why the consultation was still occurring this summer as opposed to delaying it due to COVID-19.
- V. Highlighted the need to address the Fen Road level crossing issue jointly, particularly with regards to creating an integrated transport system. It was also queried why land had not been allocated in the AAP for dealing with this issue.
- VI. It was highlighted that the AAP intends to 'pepper-pot' affordable housing throughout the area, which was in contradiction to policy 45 of the Cambridge Local Plan.
- VII. Noted that Anglian Water would need to start a pre-submission public consultation for relocating the sewage treatment works and queried what the timing of this would be compared to the consultation for NECAAP?

In response, officers from the Greater Cambridge Planning Service said the following:

- I. From the Issues and Options consultation, 6 options had emerged for how to provide open space but that there was no clear favourite.
- II. There would be various strands to the water policy and that these would all be covered in the water cycle study and in an infrastructure delivery plan, which would come at a later stage.

- III. Officers noted that while it was important not to disregard top end office floor space for hi-tech, there was a strong desire to provide jobs for local people who were already in the area and that a detailed strategy of how this would be achieved would be presented in due course.
- IV. The Community forum felt it was important to build on the momentum that had been built and to get the public to answer these questions while it was fresh in their minds.
- V. Officers noted that the Fen Road issue had been highlighted in the first round of consultation and commented that Network Rail would be brought in to take part in the community consultation in this. With regard to land allocation, it was noted that this land was not owned by the two councils.
- VI. It was noted that the AAP can set out variance from local plan, but that it must set out why that is important.
- VII. Officers commented that Anglian Water were working towards 3 rounds of consultation. The first two of which would be 'informal' as they are not deemed necessary for the development control order (DCO) process. It was noted that the first round was due to happen in the summer but that there was no firm date. The second round of consultation was due to occur at the end of the year but that this would be determined by responses to the first round.

Members of the Joint Local Plan Advisory Group **agreed** by affirmation to:

- 1. Recommend the name of the AAP be formally changes to the North East Cambridge Area Action Plan and the boundary of the Area Action Plan be amended to be as shown on the new Policy map (Appendix A).
- 2. Review and comment on the draft North East Cambridge Area Action Plan: consultation document (Appendix B);
- 3. Note the response to comments received to the Issues & Options document as set out in the Statement of Consultation (Appendix C);
- 4. Note the findings of the updated Joint Equalities Impact Assessment, Draft Sustainability Appraisal, and Draft Habitats Regulation Report (Appendices D, E and F respectively); and
- 5. Recommend to the respective Councils decision-making processes that they should approve the draft North East Cambridge Area Action Plan, and supporting documents, for a ten-week period of public consultation.

## 6. GREATER CAMBRIDGE LOCAL PLAN: ISSUES & OPTIONS FEEDBACK

Officers displayed a presentation for Members highlighting proposed changes to the programme that would add further stakeholder consultation to take place in Autumn 2020 with preferred options for the next stage of public consultation to take place in summer 2021.

Members made the following comments after a presentation on the Local Plan Issues and Options Feedback:

- I. Queried if there would be any external valuation of the reach of the Local Plan consultation ensure that any mistakes can be learned from for future consultations.
- II. Questioned if having two options for the Local Plan timeline in the LDS (Local Development Scheme) was lawful or if it may be challengeable by a third party.
- III. Asked if officers knew what stage the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority's non-spatial framework had gotten to.
- IV. Asked what the impact would be of the East/West rail and Cam metro projects on the Local Plan and the NECAAP, and if conversations had been had with national rail and the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority with regards to the implications of these plans.
- V. Queried if having two plans for the timelines could cause an excess of homes and jobs if the NECAAP were to come through after the Local Plan.
- VI. Remarked on the need to flesh out the consequences of environmental measures on economic viability in further stages of consultation.
- VII. Queried if proceeding with two timeline options would double the work for officers and remarked that the sooner the joint local plan was submitted and weight given to it, the better, so as to move away from the flaws of previous Local Plans.
- VIII. It was queried if it was possible to include the AAP as part of the local plan, so there would be one document and one timetable.

In response, officers from the Greater Cambridge Planning Service said the following:

- I. There would be no independent evaluation of the consultation process due to resource concerns, but a lot of work was being done internally. It was noted that the public had been asked to voluntarily feedback and that these would be shared with members in due course.
- II. Remarked that it was unusual to have two potential timelines but commented that it wasn't a clear decision to take one option right now and therefore more sensible to leave their options open. A legal view was obtained, that this was a reasonable approach.
- III. Officers had not received any recent updates from the Combined Authority on its Non-Statutory Spatial Framework.
- IV. Officers were engaging with Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority on the Cam Metro. It was remarked that although it was early days for the East/West rail project officers were in communication with national rail; and that this would need to be monitored as the plan was developed, to correspond to the weight it could be given in informing the local plan as it develops.
- V. Officers commented that they would have to consider the potential implications in

- determining the right approach to the timetables. It was remarked that the decision would be informed as officers work through the strategic options over the next several years and the level of corresponding level of certainty regarding the AAP.
- VI. There would be work around economic growth and which sectors are seen to be likely to grow alongside the work into working towards net zero carbon. It was remarked that there would be stakeholder workshops to create an evidence-based plan as time progresses.
  - VII. Every effort would be taken to try to progress the Local Plan as swiftly as possible but that it was also important to get the process right to create the best possible Local Plan.
  - VIII. The AAP was a necessary document to support the DCO (Development Control Order) process, which would then later support the Local Plan, as such it was important to keep the AAP separate from the Local Plan for the time being but that this would be kept under review.

Members of the Joint Local Plan Advisory Group **agreed** by affirmation to:

- (a) Recommend to the respective Council's decision-making processes that they should:
  - i. Note the report on Initial Feedback from the First Conversation consultation included at Appendix 1.
  - ii. Agree additional informal member and stakeholder engagement and Preferred Options stages be added to the Local Plan making process.
  - iii. Agree the approach to addressing the Duty to Cooperate included as Appendix 3 to this report, subject to any material changes necessary as a result of consultation with Duty to Cooperate bodies.

## 7. GREATER CAMBRIDGE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME

The discussion for this item was dealt with under the previous substantive item.

Under the previous substantive item, Members of the Joint Local Plan Advisory Group **agreed** by affirmation to:

- a) Recommend to the respective Council's decision-making processes that they should:
  - i. Adopt the updated Local Development Scheme for Greater Cambridge included at Appendix 1 of this report.
  - ii. Grant delegated authority to the Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development, in liaison with the South Cambridgeshire Lead Cabinet member for Planning and the Cambridge City Council Executive Councillor for Planning

Policy and Open Spaces (and also the Chair and Spokes for the Planning Policy and Transport Scrutiny Committee), to make any minor editing changes and corrections identified prior to publication.

Members of the Group noted that the next meeting was likely to take place in October and that more information would be released when it was available.

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**The Meeting ended at 8.20 p.m.**

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