

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Joint Local Planning Advisory Group held on
Monday, 21 November 2022 at 5.30 p.m.

PRESENT:

Councillor Katie Thornburrow – Vice-Chair

Councillors:	Peter Sandford	Neil Shailer
	Simon Smith	Dr Richard Williams
	Katie Porrer	Henry Batchelor

Officers in attendance for all or part of the meeting:

Laurence Damary-Homan (Democratic Services Officer), Johanna Davies (Principal Planning Officer), Mark Deas (Senior Planning Policy Officer), Jonathan Dixon (Planning Policy Manager), Caroline Hunt (Strategy and Economy Manager), Charlotte Morgan-Shelbourne (Planning Policy Officer), Jenny Nuttycombe (Principal Planning Officer), Stephen Kelly (Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development), Bruce Waller (Principal Planning Policy Officer) and Lizzie Wood (Senior Planning Policy Officer)

Councillor Hilary Cox-Condron was in attendance as a guest.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillors Dr Tumi Hawkins and Tim Bick sent Apologies for Absence. Councillors Henry Batchelor and Katie Porrer were present as substitutes.

With the absence of the Chair, the Vice-Chair assumed the role of Chair for the meeting and nominated Councillor Peter Sandford as Vice-Chair for the meeting. This was seconded by Councillor Henry Batchelor and approved by affirmation.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

With respect to Minute 3, Councillor Peter Sandford declared that he was a non-remunerated director of Ermine Street Housing, a subsidiary of South Cambridgeshire District Council. Councillors Katie Thornburrow and Katie Porrer (Anglia Ruskin University) and Dr Richard Williams (University of Cambridge) declared that their employers had made comments as part of the consultation.

3. HOMES AND WELLBEING AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

The Planning Policy Manager introduced the report. The Principal Planning Policy Officer, Jenny Nuttycombe, introduced the overview of the Housing section. Members asked a number of questions and received responses from officers on various topics. Build to Rent housing, first home provision, application of national space standards and requirements for amenity space were discussed, and officers highlighted the relevant national legislation and Government guidance that impacted these, as well as the commercial context surrounding development. Officers provided clarity on the criteria for what constitutes a custom build in response to a question.

Analysis of housing need and mix, both in exception sites and more general development, was discussed and some Members shared a view that they felt the provision of smaller market dwellings was insufficient. Officers referenced studies conducted as part of the evidence base for the initial proposals of the Local Plan, as well as the evidence used by

the Councils' Housing Departments when assessing local need as part of their response. The Group was also informed that, due to the rate of change in housing policy being far quicker than the Local Plan cycle, officers were of the view that it was best to avoid being overly prescriptive in the Local Plan and instead use Local Plan policies to give weight to local housing policies that were constantly evolving.

Some concerns were raised over the housing density policy approach and the ability to resist inappropriately dense development; officers responded that fixing density did not reflect national guidance but policy would seek to bring forward the right densities in the right locations with a design led approach to effectively protect local distinctiveness. Officers agreed to take away comments around amenity space standards and how these were relevant to redevelopments the levels of M4(3) compliant dwellings in market housing developments and the standards applied to developments with uncommon housing usage that are not specifically accounted for in policy- "apart-hotels" were used as an example of this.

The Senior Planning Policy Officer, Mark Deas, presented the subsections regarding a number of policies (H/BR, H/MO, H/DC, H/RM, H/RC H/GT and H/CH) and the Principal Planning Policy Officer, Bruce Waller, presented the Student Accommodation (H/SA) subsection. The Chair noted that some of the questions asked earlier in the meeting were relevant to the policies presented and further comments were made on Build to Rent and housing density. Members stated that they would welcome further consultation once the gypsy and traveller needs assessment was completed and comment 56656 regarding policy H/DC was endorsed. Officers provided further detail on policy H/GT and how traveller sites would be addressed. The standards in policy H/MO were welcomed but reservations were raised over how the policy would apply to different types of occupancy, such as through the use of a dwelling as an AirBnB. The Group was informed that Visitor Accommodation was to be covered under the Jobs section of the Local Plan at a later meeting and officers agreed to take away the comments on AirBnBs. Regarding policy H/SA, Members expressed a desire to see a clear definition on what constituted a student, and further information on the accommodation needs of the universities and their usage of developments. Officers informed the Group that further engagement with the colleges at the universities was to continue to assess their needs and informed Members that Section 106 agreements could provide restrictions on the usage of developments.

The Health and Social Wellbeing section was presented by the Senior Planning Officer, Lizzie Wood, and the Principal Planning Policy Officers, Bruce Waller and Johanna Davies. Members commented that this section was the least developed in the Local Plan and that there was still evidence to be gathered. Members emphasised their desire to see the provision of facilities to cater for older children and young adults. Officers noted this and detailed the various strategies around sports facilities provision that would support the Local Plan, stating that the strategies were wide ranging and covered more niche activities alongside common pastimes. Further encouragement to ensure that facilities were provided in rural areas was given by Members and the concept of 30 minute communities was raised. In response to a question regarding who would conduct Health Impact Assessments, officers informed the Group that the Health Team at South Cambridgeshire District Council had experience with reviewing and conducting the assessments and would continue to conduct more in the future. Members stated that hidden disabilities needed to be accounted for in considerations. Officers stated that further assessment of allotment provision was ongoing and would take away enquiries as to whether light pollution and wildlife corridors would fall under the provisions of policy WS/HS. Regarding policy WS/PH, officers informed the Group that CAMRA were consulted on redevelopments of public houses and advised if they felt that the pub would be a viable business post development and officers assured Members that they were cognisant of the concerns around pub redevelopment.

Officers assured Members that there was ongoing work to develop these policies and that this would continue. The balance between the role of the Local Plan and the planning application process was discussed, with officers stating that expectations of developers needed to be clear and that policies needed to be robust to ensure compliance. The Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development responded to a question on the finer points of developments, such as the provision of water fountains and public toilets, and informed the Group that wider considerations on how to ensure the effective stewardship of public facilities were being assessed, with the financial implications of the management of these facilities being factored into these considerations.

Members thanked officers for their work and the detail involved in both the policy proposals and the consultation analysis. The Chair informed the Group that the next meeting would be held on Monday 13 February 2023.

The Meeting ended at 7.30 p.m.
