

## **SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

Minutes of a meeting of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee held on  
Tuesday, 21 May 2019 at 5.20 p.m.

**PRESENT:** Councillor Grenville Chamberlain – Chairman  
Councillor Brian Milnes – Vice-Chairman

Councillors:	Ruth Betson	Anna Bradnam
	Dr. Martin Cahn	Gavin Clayton
	Graham Cone	Dr. Claire Daunton
	Steve Hunt	Peter McDonald
	Judith Rippeth	

Councillors Dr. Tumi Hawkins and John Williams were in attendance, by invitation.

Officers:	Victoria Wallace	Democratic Services Officer
	Suzy Brandes	Principal Accountant (General Fund & Projects)
	Susan Gardner Craig	Head of People and Organisational Development
	Caroline Hunt	Planning Policy Manager
	David Roberts	Principal Planning Policy Officer
	Claire Spencer	Senior Planning Policy Officer
	Amanda Thorn	Principal Planning Policy Officer

### **1. APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Douglas de Lacey, Sarah Cheung Johnson, Peter Topping and Deborah Roberts who had hoped to attend the meeting as a substitute for Councillor de Lacey. Councillor Philip Allen was present as a substitute for Councillor Cheung Johnson and Councillor Graham Cone was present as a substitute for Councillor Topping.

### **2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

In relation to agenda item 7 (Bourn Airfield Supplementary Planning Document), Councillors Grenville Chamberlain and Gavin Clayton both declared a non-pecuniary interest as the local members representing the neighbouring wards of Hardwick and Cambourne.

### **3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 April 2019 were agreed as a correct record of the meeting.

### **4. PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

There were no public questions.

### **5. STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER**

The committee reviewed the draft Strategic Risk Register and made a number of comments and suggestions which officers agreed to incorporate. These included:

- The committee felt that while some of the risk controls were clear and

- succinct, which the committee liked, some of the controls were aspirational.
- Regarding IT risks, the committee requested the inclusion of reference to the Scrutiny ICT Working Group.
  - The committee pointed out reference being made to the names of officers who have left the organisation, and felt that it may be preferable to refer to role titles rather than names.

The committee felt that the document was a big improvement and agreed to note it.

## **6. 2018-19 QUARTER 4 PERFORMANCE REPORT**

The committee considered and noted the Quarter 4 Performance Report. Committee members requested a standard deviation and a scale on the graph be included in future reports.

The committee also raised concerns regarding the poor performance of the Customer Contact Centre.

## **7. BOURN AIRFIELD SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT - DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION**

The Planning Policy Manager and Principal Planning Officer presented the draft Bourn Airfield Supplementary Planning Document and associated documents to be published for consultation, explaining the consultation and engagement process for this.

The Planning Policy Manager informed the committee of the following:

- The SPD sought to achieve higher levels of sustainability and captured the Council's ambition for zero net carbon by 2050.
- The SPD's green ambitions were explained, as was access and the importance of ensuring there would not be rat running through surrounding villages.
- A junction enabling direct access from the A428 to Bourn Airfield was not being proposed and the reasons for this were explained. This was in accordance with the advice of Highways England that there was no strategic need for this.
- The intention of the SPD was to be completely consistent with Local Plan policy and representatives from the local community had been engaged in its preparation.
- A secondary school would be necessary and this would be located on the northern boundary of the site.
- The aim was for public consultation to take place from 17 June until 29 July 2019, with three public exhibitions taking place in Bourn, Caldecote and Cambourne.

Des O'Brien representing Bourn Parish Council, addressed the committee and set out the parish council's severe concerns regarding the dismissal of the option for direct access from Bourn Airfield onto the A428, and the impact that this would have on local roads and villages. He referred to the 2011 census which stipulated the population of Cambourne as 8186, of which 3371 travelled to work by car. In Autumn 2014 a traffic survey found that 3100 cars left Cambourne between 7.15 and 9.15am. It was likely that 9500 people would be living at Bourn Airfield, therefore once it was built out it was likely that 3500 cars would be travelling from Bourn Airfield, which would go onto local roads and compete with the existing Cambourne traffic. It was not felt that there had been a proper assessment of the traffic and that the developer's traffic assessment hugely underestimated the numbers of cars. Mr O'Brien suggested the committee suspended

this process in order to look at the traffic. Mr O'Brien raised concern that the Cambourne to Cambridge busway was being presented as the solution to everything when it was not; despite the busway there would still be huge numbers of cars on the roads. Bourn was a village that could not sustain the levels of traffic that would come from Bourn Airfield and a new solution that properly addressed the problem was needed. He suggested that money was put into assessing having direct access to the A428 from Bourn Airfield and that options were looked at.

Councillor Tumi Hawkins also addressed the meeting as the local member representing Caldecote. She made the following points:

- She echoed Bourn Parish Council's concerns regarding the lack of direct access to the A428 and questioned the traffic modelling that had been used. Councillor Hawkins had raised this issue with Highways England.
- She pointed out that Bourn Airfield did not have any employment space, therefore residents would all have to leave the settlement to go to work. The Cambourne to Cambridge Busway would not serve any employment parks and would just be going to central Cambridge, which was not where the majority of commuter journeys ended. Therefore many people would not use this and would still use their cars to travel to work.
- Policy SS/7 stated that there should be at least two useful highway accesses to the north east and north west of the site; Councillor Hawkins pointed out that there was already a deficiency in the local junction providing access to the A428.
- There would be rat running through Caldecote village and there was already difficulty with traffic on this road.

Councillor Geoff Harvey was also present to represent the Climate and Environment Advisory Committee.

Councillor Grenville Chamberlain who was the local member representing Hardwick, pointed out an error on page 14 of the SPD, which stated that the A428 provided access to the M11; this was incorrect as the A428 provided access to the A1303, which was congested every morning to access the M11. Councillor Chamberlain pointed out that this congestion would get worse and create more rat running through the villages, with buses not serving the destinations the majority of commuters needed them to serve. The Cambourne to Cambridge busway was of little value as it would only go to central Cambridge. He echoed the need for direct access from Bourn Airfield to the A428 and did not accept Highways England's response to this. He felt that transport was a major obstacle that was not being overcome by the SPD.

Councillor Ruth Betson who was the local member representing Cambourne, expressed support for direct access from Bourn Airfield to the A428, the lack of which would force traffic from Bourn Airfield to merge with existing Cambourne traffic. She raised concern regarding single lane access to Girton; she informed the committee that she had spoken to Highways England about the modelling for this, which was flawed. She informed the committee that experience of Cambourne residents using the current bus service was that it regularly took one and a half hours to get from Cambourne to Cambridge.

Councillor Philip Allen as the local member representing Harston and Comberton, agreed with the concerns raised by other local members in relation to traffic. He pointed out that 75% of commuter journeys did not end in Cambridge, therefore people would not use the Cambourne to Cambridge busway. He also pointed out that this project was likely to be delayed as it was likely to be challenged and go to judicial review.

The committee had a long and in depth discussion with members making the following points:

- Transport infrastructure needed to be put in place at the beginning of development in order for modal shift to happen. If interim measures were not put in place, this would not be achieved.
- A railway station at Cambourne would provide the option for access to the Cambridge Biomedical Campus and although this would be years away, should be taken into account.
- It was pointed out that Cambourne residents also travelled to St Neots in order to get the train to London.
- It was suggested that at least two clear access points were needed for a development of this size.
- A number of committee members echoed suspicions about the traffic modelling and wanted this to be explored.
- Traffic for the potential new park and ride site to be located at the Hardwick/Dry Drayton roundabout, needed to be taken into account in the traffic modelling.
- It was pointed out that if the council was serious about the 2050 zero net carbon target, it had to be assumed that a lot of existing traffic would reduce. The focus should not be on making car transport easier.

The Planning Policy Manager responded to the concerns raised by committee members:

- Transport was an issue explored through the Local Plan process and the transport modelling for the Local Plan had looked at this proposal. There had been a lot of challenge on transport modelling by local groups and developers. The transport modelling had been tested in detail for the Local Plan, which had been accepted and adopted. The SPD supplemented the Local Plan and did not conduct fresh modelling, the SPD modelling was very strategic. Detailed testing of the transport assessment took place at the planning application stage, which would challenge the soundness of the modelling. It was emphasised that this level of scrutiny was best placed at the planning application stage.
- It was suggested that wording be incorporated in the SPD to capture committee members' concerns around the potential impact of the development and the need to ensure this impact could be mitigated. The SPD could not specify direct access to the A428, but could include this challenge.
- The context of Bourn Airfield would be different when it was built as there was currently a limited public transport system. The Greater Cambridge Partnership however, was actively taking forward the Cambourne to Cambridge Busway, which was not dependent on the implementation of the CAM Metro. This would provide transport to the west of Cambridge and access to the employment centre at Eddington. The busway would use very modern buses and would be a segregated route so the journey time would be reliable.
- The committee's concerns were acknowledged and officers would give further thought as to what they could recommend to Cabinet, taking these concerns into account.

In response to the officer's comments, the Vice Chairman, who was also a member of the Planning Committee, suggested it would be difficult for the Planning Committee to take into account the cumulative impact of this development when it reached the planning application stage. He raised concern that the Greater Cambridge Partnership and Combined Authority did not seem to communicate with each other and was nervous about relying on these organisations to come up with a coherent plan.

Des O'Brien was invited to address the committee again. He said that as a former district councillor and member of the Planning Committee, he was aware of the

limitations of the committee. He suggested the issue of building big developments and putting more cars on the roads needed to be addressed; options to mitigate this needed to be looked at now.

Councillor Tumi Hawkins suggested the Greater Cambridge Partnership, Highways England, County Council, District Council and Combined Authority needed to discuss the traffic modelling together. She suggested the sentence 'The new village will not be served by direct access from the A428' on page 37 of the SPD, should be removed as direct access was needed at the Broadway.

Committee members also raised concerns regarding the Bourn Airfield build boundary and buffer zones. It was pointed out that the buffer zone between Bourn Airfield and Cambourne seemed to be thin, with the Broadway being the only separation. Officers assured the committee that this fulfilled Local Plan Policy. Councillor Hawkins also raised strong concerns regarding this, emphasising the need for Bourn Airfield to be completely separate from Caldecote and for parcel 4 to be entirely woodland.

In response to the concerns raised regarding the build boundary and buffer zones, the Planning Policy Manager explained the diagrams and the boundary. The committee was informed that there were very substantial gardens on the boundary with Caldecote, so there was significant distance between the Bourn Airfield boundary and existing dwellings.

Concern was raised regarding lack of provision of community facilities at Bourn Airfield, including GP provision:

- The committee was informed that Cambourne Town Council was concerned about the pressure that Bourn Airfield would put on the existing community facilities in Cambourne, including GP provision, with the lack of facilities planned at Bourn Airfield. There was concern from members that the pressures put on the GP surgery would become untenable and that as a result, GPs would walk away. In response to this the committee was informed that South Cambridgeshire District Council was working on a Health and Wellbeing Strategy.
- It was suggested that a GP surgery was needed at Bourn Airfield. The committee was informed that NHS funding was a problem for new developments as funding was based on the number of older people, and new developments were usually made up of young families and were therefore penalised with regards to funding.

In response to these concerns, officers informed the committee that the SPD reflected the most recent advice from the NHS. The extension of the existing surgery in Cambourne to make a super surgery, was the NHS' preferred option. This could however change and this detail would be picked up at the planning application stage.

Committee members discussed and raised concerns about place making and made the following points:

- More work on the specifics around place making was suggested, so this was not left to chance, it was requested that the SPD made reference to this.
- The idea of shops with flats above, was supported.
- There should be more specific quantitative triggers regarding retail and services, to ensure facilities were actually delivered.
- Sustainable drainage should not be included in the calculation of open space for recreation; officers agreed this would be double checked.
- The committee was informed that the County Council could not guarantee shared use of the school playing field as this would need to be agreed with the school provider, which had not yet been appointed. Members queried whether a

condition could be placed on the provider to ensure this and were informed that officers were continuing to work with the County Council on this.

- A local member representing Cambourne urged the need to think about provision for all age groups and not just young children, as there had been some issues with teenagers in Cambourne and there needed to be provision for them. What the triggers for community facilities would be was queried and the need for triggers to ensure facilities were delivered was emphasised; officers advised that this was being worked on.
- In response to queries regarding buildings in the village centre being up to four storeys in height, members were informed that this was not excessive and was design led to ensure the centre of the village was obvious, creating interest with the use of a mix of heights.
- Members suggested the village centre should be in the geographical centre of the development, not to the north west, so it did not compete with Cambourne.
- Concern was expressed regarding the location of the schools to the north, which was close to the A428 and therefore close to noxious gases from traffic.
- It was suggested that there should be post office provision in the village to avoid journeys needing to be made to other villages to access services.
- It was queried whether the local aquifer had capacity to supply sufficient potable water to the development.
- The need to incorporate dementia friendly design was emphasised. Learning from the experience of Cambourne, it needed to be ensured that benches provided in the development were not too low for older people to use, as this had happened in Cambourne.

The committee agreed the following recommendations to Cabinet:

- (a) The committee had severe reservations regarding transport. Committee members felt that there needed to be access from Bourn Airfield to the A428. The committee was concerned that the scale of modal shift desired was highly unlikely to be achieved.
- (b) The committee was unconvinced by Highways England and other transport assessments and was concerned that transport infrastructure would not be in place before the development was built.
- (c) How health services, including social prescribing, would be provided in accordance with the development of the Council's Health and Wellbeing policy, should be consulted on with the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Clinical Commissioning Group.
- (d) The village centre should be located in the centre of the settlement.
- (e) There should be additional attention to place making, especially the village centre and more inclusion in the SPD of how economic development support would be provided where planning is not able to, such as for example to enforce occupancy of empty retail units, and, to include provision of amenities for youth and the aged.
- (f) The committee had concerns about buffer zones on the eastern and western sides of the development. It should be ensured that these did not include gardens.

Given the reservations it had, the committee did not feel it could endorse the SPD in its current state.

**8. SCRUTINY ICT WORKING GROUP UPDATE**

The Vice Chairman of the committee provided a brief update on the ongoing work of ICT Working Group. The LGA had offered the Council 5 days of ICT support, the use of which would be discussed with the Head of ICT to ensure best value was achieved from this time.

The committee was informed that a meeting had taken place to work on resolving the issues with the Chamber microphone system and progress had been made in moving this forward.

**9. WORK PROGRAMME**

The committee noted its work programme.

**10. MONITORING THE EXECUTIVE**

There were no updates.

**11. TO NOTE THE DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

The next meeting would take place on Thursday 13 June 2019 at 5.20pm.

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**The Meeting ended at 8.50 p.m.**

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