

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee held on
Thursday, 17 October 2019 at 3.00 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillor Brian Milnes – Chairman
Councillor Judith Rippeth – Vice-Chairman

Councillors:	Anna Bradnam	Dr. Martin Cahn
	Nigel Cathcart	Dr. Claire Daunton
	Dr. Douglas de Lacey	Geoff Harvey
	Steve Hunt	Peter Topping
	Sue Ellington	

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

Officers:	Victoria Wallace	Scrutiny and Governance Adviser
	Stephen Kelly	Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development
	Peter Maddock	Head of Finance
	Liz Watts	Chief Executive
	Jonathan Dixon	Principal Planning Policy Officer (Transport)
	Mike Hill	Director of Housing and Environmental Services
	Caroline Hunt	Strategy and Economy Manager
	Stuart Morris	Principal Planning Policy Officer
	David Ousby	Head of Commercial Development & Investment
	Philip Bylo	Interim Planning Policy Manager
	John Williamson	Consultant, Cambirdge Planning Services

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Sarah Cheung Johnson, Peter McDonald, Ruth Betson and Graham Cone. Councillors Peter Topping and Sue Ellington were present as substitutes for Councillors Betson and Cone.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 September 2019 were agreed as a correct record, subject to the following amendments:

- David Ousby's job title to be amended to Head of Commercial Development and Investment.
- Minute 7 Investment Strategy Update: referring to ethical investments, it should be specified that the council should have no involvement with any company involved in child labour anywhere in the world.

4. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

There were no public questions.

5. PUBLIC SPACE PROTECTION ORDER: PROPOSED GATING OF SETCHEL DROVE, COTTENHAM

Public speakers were invited to address the committee in relation to the proposed gating of Setchel Drove, Cottenham.

Councillors Frank Morris and Jonathan Graves both representing Cottenham Parish Council and the Local Member for Cottenham, Councillor Eileen Wilson were invited to address the committee. All spoke in support of a PSPO being introduced to restrict access to Setchel Drove, by means of a gate in order to disrupt and prevent fly-tipping. The speakers made the following points:

- Fly tipping was a widespread problem in the Fens and local people had lost confidence in reporting this to the Council as they felt that fly tips were not cleared away quickly enough.
- A long term solution to fly tipping was needed and a gate could be the start of this.
- Gating the road was part of the solution and care was needed regarding where to situate it. It was suggested that the gate be installed further along Setchel Drove, so that those opening and closing the gate were less vulnerable when leaving their vehicles to doing so.
- As Setchel Drove also provided access to a fishing lake, there was concern that a gate code for an automated gate might be distributed widely in the public.
- The parish council was willing to manage an automated gate code as it already did so for the tennis courts in Cottenham.
- The Drainage Board supported the gating of Setchel Drove as it felt this would prevent rubbish that would block culverts from being dumped, which would prevent flooding.
- It was suggested that a physical barrier and surveillance cameras should be trialled.

Jackie Brand, Rosemary Jones and Jackie Smith speaking as local residents and farmers, were invited to address the committee. Rosemary Jones represented one of the largest landowners along Setchel Drove, which her family used every day to access their land and livestock. All spoke against the proposal to gate Setchel Drove and made the following points:

- They raised concern about the safety of the farmers who had to use Setchel Drove to access their land and livestock, several times a day every day of the year. Farmers had experienced physical intimidation on Setchel Drove and they felt that a gate would put them in danger by having to leave their vehicles in order to open and close a gate. Rosemary Jones requested it be recorded in the minutes that if anything happened to anyone as a result of a gate being installed, she would hold the Council responsible for this.
- Mrs Jones explained how fly tipping affected her family's farming operations. She explained that most rubbish was dumped on verges and in laybys, which did not block the movement of machinery along Setchel Drove. It was not a frequent occurrence that they had to clear rubbish from the ditches. When large items of rubbish had to be cleared from the ditches, a daily rate had to be paid to the Drainage Board to do so, however this did not happen often.
- A gate would not stop the fly tipping and would displace it elsewhere, potentially in front of the gate, which would make access to Setchel Drove more difficult and impact farming operations more negatively than the fly tipping currently did.

- It was pointed out that farmers had to access Setchel Drove throughout the winter, when it was dark.
- There was concern regarding veterinary access in the event of an emergency, during which farmers would be unable to leave their animals in order to open the gate.
- There was concern regarding access at harvest time, with contractors needing to access Setchel Drove constantly at this time.
- A gate would be vandalised, as had happened with CCTV shortly after it had been installed.
- A gate would take away freedom of access by the village to Setchel Drove. The gate would prevent dog walkers, birdwatchers and other members of the public from having the enjoyment of and free access to the countryside.
- They requested that the committee did not support the gating of Setchel Drove.

The Director of Health and Environmental Services presented the report. He explained that enforcement action had been difficult as this was an open area where there was not much opportunity for surveillance. A gate would be part of the solution. He informed the committee that there had been no recent prosecutions for fly tipping. According to the Council's Enforcement and Inspection Policy, deliberate fly tipping should attract an immediate formal response in the form of prosecution or a Fixed Penalty Notice. Officers were keen to look at options for CCTV and advice had been taken on this from the Police Technical Unit.

The committee discussed the proposals, taking into account the public representations that had been made:

- The committee asked the Director of Health and Environmental Services for a record of recent prosecutions for fly tipping in the district.
- Members were keen that options for more covert CCTV which transmitted images immediately, be investigated.
- Committee members expressed concern that those who used Setchel Drove most frequently, did not want a gate to be installed and would find this more of an inconvenience than the fly tipping.
- Concern was expressed by some Members that installing a gate would not stop fly tipping, but would displace it.
- Some Members were not convinced a gate would solve the problems and that detection and surveillance was needed first.
- Similar experience was referred to in Bassingbourn, where the installation of a gate had not solved the problem of fly tipping.
- Members queried how the success of installing a gate at Setchel Drove would be measured.
- Some Members felt that that installing a gate would create a conflict between preventing fly tipping and the legitimate use of and public access to Setchel Drove.

The Director of Health and Environmental Services informed the committee that the County Council had responded in support of the Public Space Protection Order. He also informed the committee that the Council would need authorisation from the Magistrates Court before it could install covert CCTV. The impact of this on local residents would be challenged when authorisation was sought, and an Equality Impact Assessment would be carried out.

Some committee members felt that the Police were not doing enough to tackle the problem of fly tipping and that the Police and Crime Commissioner's response to the Council, which had been included in the agenda papers, was inadequate. Councillor

Douglas de Lacey proposed the committee write to the Police and Crime Commissioner regarding this. This proposal was seconded by Councillor Daunton. Following debate of the proposal a vote was taken on it; six members supported the proposal and 5 members abstained from the vote. The committee therefore nominated Cllr Douglas de Lacey to write to the Police and Crime Commissioner on behalf of the committee.

The committee did not reach a conclusion on whether or not it supported the installation of a gate at Setchel Drove. Due to the complexity of the issue and the public interest in it, the committee supported the final decision on this issue being taken by Cabinet.

6. GENERAL FUND CAPITAL PROGRAMME UPDATE AND NEW BIDS

The Lead Cabinet Member for Finance and the Head of Finance presented the report on the Council's Capital Programme during 2018/19 and new Capital Programme bids from 2020/21.

The committee considered and commented on the report:

- The committee was informed by the officer and Lead Cabinet Member that the underspend was largely slippage.
- The Deputy Head of Finance would look into the ICT asset register with 3C ICT. He informed the committee that the equipment purchased on the Council's behalf by 3C ICT was owned by the Council and 3C ICT managed the asset register.
- The Director of Health and Environmental Services clarified that footway lighting referred to street lighting. The arrangements for ownership and responsibility for street lights in the district were explained. The programme referred to in the report referred to street lighting that was owned by the Council but for which the Parish Councils had the responsibility of running and paying the electricity. The Director of Health and Environmental Services clarified that the bid related to 1800 footway lights around the district and that there may be another 2000 lights on Housing Revenue Account properties. He informed the committee that the Council was replacing the lamps on the light columns with LED lights. The committee's Chairman informed officers that when Sawston Parish Council had sought quotes to replace street lights with LEDs, the cost quoted by Balfour Beatty had been 25% higher than other quotes received.
- The committee suggested that Shared Service priorities and projects, such as the Data Centre Generator listed under IT Investment projects, should reflect the Council's objective of being green to the core by ensuring that its projects used green energy. The Chief Executive would communicate this concern to the ICT shared service.
- The Head of Finance would seek further information regarding why the Revenues and Benefits system project had not been completed within budget.
- Councillor Heather Williams was invited to ask questions of the officers and Lead Cabinet Member. She suggested that the inclusion of a carried forward column would be helpful.
- The urgency of the replacement of the telephony system was highlighted; the committee was informed that this had been prioritised by 3C ICT.

The committee indicated its support for the recommendations to Cabinet.

7. PROPERTY ACQUISITION: CAMBRIDGE SCIENCE PARK

The committee agreed that the press and public should be excluded for the

consideration of this agenda item, in accordance with the provisions of Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Act), due to the commercial sensitivity of the information contained within the report.

8. PROPERTY ACQUISITION: COLMWORTH TRADING ESTATE, ST NEOTS

The committee agreed that the press and public should be excluded for the consideration of this agenda item, in accordance with the provisions of Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Act), due to the commercial sensitivity of the information contained within the report.

9. GREATER CAMBRIDGE LOCAL PLAN: ISSUES & OPTIONS CONSULTATION

(Councillors Peter Topping, Sue Ellington and Nigel Cathcart left the meeting before or during this agenda item. Councillor Pippa Heylings, Chairman of the Climate and Environment Advisory Committee (CEAC) was present for this item to provide feedback on behalf the CEAC).

The Lead Cabinet Member for Planning introduced the agenda item, highlighting that this consultation was an opportunity for communities to explore the main issues of the Local Plan. She explained the governance structure that had been put in place to develop the Local Plan, informing the committee that an officer board and a Member Advisory Group had been set up across the councils. A communications strategy was being put in place to ensure there was better engagement with local communities. Workshops had been held and the outcomes of these had informed the text for the issues and options consultation.

John Williamson presented the Lessons Learned and Good practice review of the adopted local plans. He provided an overview of the stakeholder engagement that had taken place and set out the main findings of the review.

The Interim Planning Policy Manager provided an overview of the workshops that had taken place to help develop the issues and options document, which had highlighted some feedback themes:

1. Housing affordability and the need to ensure the supply of the right types of housing.
2. The need to get housing location right in order to reduce commuting.
3. The need for a balance of jobs; the focus could not just be on planning for high tech jobs, jobs for everyone needed to be considered.
4. The climate change agenda.
5. Spatial distribution: ensuring villages had facilities and were vital places to live.
6. Ensuring water supply; more work on the evidence base would be done on this.
7. Ensuring good open space and networks were provided.
8. Biodiversity: ensuring good tree cover and improvement of biodiversity.

The committee noted the Lessons Learned and Good Practice review, the Statement of Consultation and provided comments on the issues and options report text and supporting documents:

- Comments were provided on the formatting of the document, which some Members found difficult to read; appendices needed to be labelled and the use of colour on colour needed to be avoided.
- The importance of using plain English, avoiding acronyms and explaining these, as well as the need for a larger glossary, was highlighted.

- Reassurance was sought that the Local Plan website would be fully accessible.
- Concern was raised regarding water resilience and confidence on this issue needed to be provided to communities. In response to this the committee was informed by officers that these concerns were recognised and expert consultants would be commissioned to carry out a water cycle study.
- Consideration should be given in the Local Plan to future changes in society, about which there was uncertainty, such as the heating and cooling of houses, as well as ensuring there was enough electricity to meet future power demands.
- The committee was keen to see that people from further afield geographically, who came to the district to work, were also consulted.
- Transport was highlighted as a major issue. Members queried how this would be tackled when councils did not control the transport networks or services and did not know whether transport infrastructure would be delivered. This impacted where housing was located and the viability of villages. In response to this officers informed the committee that there would be robust evidence and understanding of the impact of development on the transport network and there would be a complex assessment of the different options.

Cllr Heylings attended the meeting to provide comments as the Chairman of the Climate and Environment Advisory Committee (CEAC):

- The CEAC was positive about the issues and options document, including its focus on climate change and biodiversity issues.
- Cllr Heylings requested a workshop be held to bring together bodies, including the Environment Agency, to look at the water cycle strategy. The idea of water neutrality should be discussed at this workshop and the environmental consequences of spatial choices made in the plan should also be looked at.
- Thought needed to be given to what the questions being asked in the document were trying to achieve and whether they generated useful information.
- Water efficiency should be addressed in the housing quality section, as well as in the climate change section.

The Principal Planning Policy Officers provided an overview of the consultation process and public engagement that would be carried out. Officers were working hard to ensure that the consultation was accessible and informed the committee that there would be both a printed and online version of this.

The committee considered the proposed timing and length of public consultation. The committee favoured the consultation starting in January 2020 to avoid the Christmas period. If consultation started in January, the committee suggested that pre-consultation engagement should be undertaken. It was also suggested that the consultation document and questions be made available as far in advance as possible of the consultation start date. This would enable parish councils which may only meet once every two months, to start considering their consultation responses.

The committee received and noted the Lessons Learned and Good Practice review, and the Statement of Consultation.

10. WORK PROGRAMME

The committee received and noted its work programme.

11. TO NOTE THE DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The committee noted that its next meeting would take place on Thursday 14 November 2019 at 5.20pm.

The Meeting ended at 8.30 p.m.

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