

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Planning and New Communities Joint Portfolio Holders' meeting held
on
Tuesday, 11 November 2008 at 10.00 a.m.

Portfolio Holders :	Councillor Dr DR Bard – New Communities Councillor NIC Wright - Planning
Scrutiny and Overview Committee monitors:	Councillors Mrs VM Barrett
Scrutiny and Overview Committee monitors and Opposition spokesmen	Councillor Ms BZD Smith
Opposition spokesmen	Councillor Mrs PM Bear, AN Berent and JF Williams
Officers in attendance for all or part of the meeting:	David Bevan (Conservation Manager), Gareth Jones (Corporate Manager, Planning & Sustainable Communities), Suzanne McBride (Immediate past Corporate Manager - New Communities), Keith Miles (Planning Policy Manager), Jo Mills (Corporate Manager (New Communities)) and Ian Senior (Democratic Services Officer)
Also in attendance	Councillors MJ Mason

24. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

25. DRAFT SERVICE PLAN - NEW COMMUNITIES

The immediate past Corporate Manager (New Communities) was in attendance to present this item. She highlighted the following factors

- the Service Plan was only in draft form at this stage
- the process adopted
- its dependence on appropriate resources being available and budgets agreed
- its relationship with the Planning Service Plan

The New Communities Portfolio Holder said that the draft Service Plan would have to be developed further taking into account revised forecasts in the Regional Spatial Strategy for employment growth in the district, and other issues such as the impact of climate change and the governance of Northstowe.

The Portfolio Holder noted an observation that the Council Action to increase the number of residents taking up sport or formal exercise by 1% in 2009 was a modest target, and received a call to increase that target and the proposed budget of £20,000. Those present discussed a number of issues relating to this matter, but the Portfolio Holder concluded that it conformed to national targets.

The Portfolio Holder noted an observation that a “community link” was imperative in

progressing developments such as Northstowe and Orchard Park, including where Section 106 obligations were being agreed and monies distributed. The Council's establishment would shortly be strengthened following the appointment of an officer responsible for monitoring the Section 106 process.

Those present discussed the issue of cycle paths.

The New Communities Portfolio Holder **noted** the draft Service Plan as being "work in progress", and instructed officers to prepare an updated and more detailed document for his consideration in due course.

26. CAMBRIDGESHIRE GUIDED BUSWAY

The New Communities Portfolio Holder noted that this item had been published after publication of the agenda, and had not been in the public domain for the statutory period. He admitted it to the agenda as a late item, on the grounds of urgency, because of the need to submit comments to Cambridgeshire County Council before 24 December 2008 and therefore before the next meeting on 13 January 2009.

The New Communities Portfolio Holder considered a report about the Guided Bus project. Cambridgeshire County Council was in the process of undertaking formal statutory consultation on the establishment of a Quality Partnership Scheme and Ticketing Scheme relating to the operation of the Cambridgeshire Guided Busway.

Following detailed discussion, the New Communities Portfolio Holder agreed to raise the following concerns with the County Council, namely

- the inadvisability of allowing advertising on the rear of buses
- absence of the anticipated requirement for vehicles to be double glazed
- emergency evacuation procedures
- the need to clarify the policy on no standing passengers
- location of the control centre
- ticketing issues, including integration with the railway and the use of existing bus passes and other concessionary measures
- a suggestion that the Guided Bus system might be introduced in phases rather than in one go
- the collection and distribution of fares among the various operators
- emission controls

The New Communities Portfolio Holder

1. **supported** Cambridgeshire County Council in its aims to introduce a quality bus partnership scheme (QBP).
2. **supported** the provision of multi-operator ticketing to enable flexibility for bus users, and the proposed measures through the QBP to improve the reliability, quality and therefore public perception of bus services to be operated along the Guided Busway.

27. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Planning Portfolio Holder and New Communities Portfolio Holder agreed that the minutes of the meeting held on 6 October 2008 were a correct record.

28. DATES AND AGENDA ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

The Planning Portfolio Holder and New Communities Portfolio Holder noted that the next three meetings had been scheduled for 13 January 2009, 10 March 2009 and 12 May 2009. They did not identify any agenda items for these meetings.

29. DRAFT SERVICE PLAN - PLANNING

The Corporate Manager (Planning and Sustainable Communities) presented the draft Planning Service Plan, and apologised for the non-inclusion of sections relating to Conservation, Registration (Improvement and Action plans), and Building Control (Action plan).

The Planning Portfolio Holder noted that the Development Control element of the Service Plan had been published after publication of the agenda, and had not been in the public domain for the statutory period. He admitted it to the agenda as a late item because it formed part of the Planning Service Plan.

The Planning Portfolio Holder noted an observation that the demands now being placed on the Council as Local Planning Authority were disproportionate to the resources available to it.

Those present discussed the Gypsy and Traveller Development Plan Document (GTDPD), focussing in particular on anticipated timescales. Slippage had occurred as a result of the Council taking the work back in-house, and officers then being allocated to more immediately urgent issues such as the housing shortfall and the then possibility of an eco-town being built in South Cambridgeshire. The Portfolio Holder instructed officers to bring forward the adoption of the GTDPD from the proposed 2012, if the relevant procedures allowed. He said that to wait until 2012 could prejudice the Council's efforts to identify new Traveller sites, and expose it to legal challenge in the meantime. In any event, the Corporate Manager (Planning and Sustainable Communities) confirmed that the Service Plan would make clear the stages that would take place in the coming year.

Those present discussed the issue of consultation and, in particular, the need for better co-ordination between the Local Planning Authority's dates for determination of planning applications and the timing and frequency of parish council (or parish council planning Committee) meetings. The Corporate Manager (Planning and Sustainable Communities) said that all those concerned had to be as flexible as possible.

The Portfolio Holder noted the need to ensure the effective monitoring of planning conditions. He noted the ongoing investigation into the suitability of a shared Building Control Service.

In response to positive comments about the section's improved performance from Members present, the Planning Portfolio Holder thanked officers for these improvements and the general level of performance that had resulted in an outstanding Planning Delivery Grant settlement.

The Planning Portfolio Holder **noted** the draft Service Plan as being "work in progress", and instructed officers to prepare an updated and more detailed document for his consideration in due course.

The Meeting ended at 12.20 p.m.
