

## **SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

At a meeting of the Council held on  
Thursday, 22 July 2004 at 2.00 p.m.

**PRESENT:** Councillor RF Bryant – Chairman  
Councillor Mrs CAED Murfitt – Vice-Chairman

**Councillors:** SJ Agnew, Dr DR Bard, RE Barrett, JD Batchelor, EW Bullman, BR Burling, NN Cathcart, Mrs PS Corney, Mrs J Dixon, Ms SJO Doggett, SM Edwards, Mrs A Elsby, R Hall, Dr SA Harangozo, Mrs SA Hatton, Mrs JM Healey, Mrs EM Heazell, JA Hockney, MP Howell, HC Hurrell, Mrs HF Kember, SGM Kindersley, RMA Manning, RB Martlew, MJ Mason, DC McCraith, DH Morgan, Mrs JA Muncey, CR Nightingale, Dr JPR Orme, R Page, EJ Pateman, A Riley, Mrs DP Roberts, NJ Scarr, J Shepperson, Mrs GJ Smith, Mrs HM Smith, RGR Smith, Mrs DSK Spink MBE, RT Summerfield, Mrs VM Trueman, RJ Turner, Dr SEK van de Ven, Mrs BE Waters, DALG Wherrell, Dr JR Williamson, NIC Wright and SS Ziaian-Gillan

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors JP Chatfield, Dr JA Heap, Mrs CA Hunt, JA Quinlan, JH Stewart and TJ Wotherspoon.

### **1. HOUSING OPTIONS APPRAISAL**

Before the formal meeting, a briefing on the housing stock options appraisal was given by Stephen Hampson (Housing and Environmental Services Director) , Solma Ahmed (Community Housing Task Force, ODPM), Robin Tebbut (HACAS Chapman Hendy) and Jon Holden (PS Consultants, independent tenant advisor).

It was noted that the deadline for considering options for the future of the housing stock was July 2005. Those options were: to retain the stock; to transfer it to a housing association; to use a private finance initiative; or to form arms-length management arrangements. A mixture of the options could be used. Tenants must be involved in the considerations and the final decision must have their support. A number of different methods would be used to inform and consult them.

The guests answered a number of questions, in which it was made clear that there would be no additional funding from the Government but that meeting the Decent Homes standard was the goal and the option chosen must be aimed towards that. There was no fifth option. The Housing and Environmental Services Director added that the options would be compared against the Council's objectives and that he expected the provision of affordable homes to be high on that list. Equity share-holders would be included in consultations; how the properties would be dealt with in the event of any transfer had still to be considered.

The Chairman thanked the visitors and the tenant representatives who were in attendance and reminded Members that this was one of the major issues on the Performance Plan for the current year so there would be opportunity for debate.

### **2. MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting of Council held on the 24th June 2004 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to the following:

**Declarations of Interest** (Minute 4)

Councillor R Page claimed that the Monitoring Officer's advice on the declaration of interests was important and wrong in saying that if a Member had fought for a cause s/he could not then take part in debate and voting on the matter, and that the Minutes were very inaccurate and too brief. He felt that it was important to have the full text of the advice in the Minute. Councillor Dr DR Bard queried whether that part of the advice referred only to regulatory committees. The Chairman agreed to take the request away and look at what could be included.

Councillor NJ Scarr pointed to this as another example of where meetings ought to be recorded. He gave a reminder that Councillor Page had raised this in February and that it had slipped again and again, and asked the Chairman to ensure action.

**CASCADE Update** (Minute 8.1)

Councillor Page asked that, in the interests of accountability, Councillor Batchelor's statement at the last meeting that the Council could not withdraw from the Contact Centre because it had spent £1 million should be recorded in the Minutes. Councillor Page considered that the Contact Centre had delivered an inferior means of communication at great cost. Councillor Batchelor stated that he had said that the Council had made a substantial investment, with over £1 million committed, but the reward would be reaped eventually. It was

**AGREED** that the Minutes be amended to record Councillor Batchelor's reference to the cost of the Contact Centre.

**Scrutiny and Overview**

Councillor DALG Wherrell commented that he had also raised the recording of meetings more than a year previously. He then went on to ask the Chief Executive to explain the results of his investigation into what had happened to cause the sudden last minute withdrawal of the call-in item from the agenda of the last Scrutiny and Overview Committee meeting. The Chief Executive responded that he had not yet completed his investigation but that it appeared the original advice that the decision could be taken by the portfolio holder had been given in the light of the greater freedom being given to portfolio holders. Paragraph 1.3.1 of the Delegation Rules, stating that if the local Member disagreed with a proposal it should be referred to Cabinet, had been overlooked and had not been recognised until just before the Scrutiny and Overview meeting.

Councillor Wherrell asked for a report to the next Council meeting on what action had been taken and Councillor MP Howell, Chairman of the Committee, asked that the report should be presented to the Scrutiny and Overview Committee, to which all Members would be welcome.

Councillor Mrs DP Roberts reiterated requests for fuller reports and recording and her view that the Constitution was far too long for anyone to know all its provisions.

**Appointment of Members of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee** (Minute 14)

The Chief Executive clarified that the reserve member of the Committee was not a substitute in the event of a member being unable to attend, but was the group's nomination should a member resign from the Committee.

**Reports of Meetings** (Minute 21)

Councillor Mrs VM Trueman reported on a planning application which the Parish Council and the two local Members had wanted referred to the Development and Conservation Control Committee but which had been decided at a Chairman's Delegation meeting.

She would have attended that meeting had she known it was possible and asked that the application be taken back so that there could be a site visit. Councillor Mrs JM Healey, Committee Chairman at the time, stated that site visits and referral to Committee were within the discretion of the Chairman. Although it was possible that the local Members might have swayed the decision, there had been lengthy debate and she was satisfied with the decision. It was confirmed that the decision notice had been signed and that the applicants were at liberty to appeal.

The Chairman curtailed detailed descriptions, but agreed that he had always understood that if a local Member requested reference to the full Committee this happened. Councillor RGR Smith, current Committee Chairman, advised Members that if they did not submit comments on an application the assumption was that they agreed with the officers' recommendations.

### 3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following interests in items before Council were declared:

Councillor Dr DR Bard	Correspondence had been received from one of the developers in relation to the Local Development Framework. However, it appeared that all Members had received the correspondence
Councillor MP Howell	In references to Papworth Hospital in the Local Development Framework, as a governor and because of his wife's work as a volunteer
Councillor A Riley	In relation to Northstowe, because of the proximity of his dwelling to the site
Councillor SM Edwards	In relation to Northstowe, because of the proximity of his dwelling to the site

### 4. LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

The draft Preferred Options reports for the Local Development Framework (LDF) as recommended by officers and Member working groups were presented and Council was invited to approve the reports for public participation purposes. The Chairman emphasised that Members would have the opportunity to discuss the documents further after the public participation.

The Planning and Economic Development Portfolio Holder explained that the timing, which was being driven by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and the Infrastructure Partnership, was very tight. Knowing that many were reluctant to endorse the high level of development set out in the Structure Plan, Councillor Bard advised that the Council had the opportunity to shape these developments and warned that if the Council did not proceed with making its plans, the Government could step in, possibly with a Development Corporation.

Debate ensued about the level of development required of the area by the Government and, in the view of a number of Members, the wish to refuse to accept that requirement on the grounds that it could not be sustainable. Councillor Bard expressed his sympathy but pointed out that similar arguments were debated during the preparation of the Structure Plan. In addition, he and officers had spent hours recently arguing against the extra 18,000 houses suddenly proposed for the next regional plan, but this did not relate to the papers before Council today.

Turning to Northstowe, Councillor SM Edwards argued that the three site options were equally viable and should be put forward for public consultation as equals, rather than as a preferred option, a variation and a rejected option. The other vital issue was the green separation for existing villages: if option 3 (extending over the railway line) were agreed as viable, the green separation area would have to be changed. Councillor Edwards therefore proposed the removal of reference to the actual amount of green separation pending the result of consultations. He argued that the preservation of the existing villages must be the priority and that the Council should not be forced by the Government to follow a timetable which did not allow for a good planning process.

Councillor A Riley supported Councillor Edwards in general terms, but proposed that there should be no decision on the Northstowe site until the green separation areas had been agreed. In addition, he objected to some of the proposed possible uses (for example allotments, playing fields, cemetery) of the green separation zone. He also considered that far reaching decisions were in danger of being taken in unseemly haste.

Councillor Bard warned that flexibility applied not only to the Council and residents but also to the developers. One of the reasons for the preferred option was that extending the site over the railway line was most likely to expose it to future expansion. He also cautioned against relying too much on green separation being retained in perpetuity. On the guided bus, Councillor Bard reported that the County Council had submitted an application under the Highways and Works Act, which was to be subject to an Inquiry. In principle the line was adjustable, but reopening the debate on the route at this stage would put the project back years. Councillor Bard agreed that the timetable for bringing forward Northstowe was very demanding, but feared that if the Council took an undue amount of time in preparing its plans the result might be that it had no say in decisions on the new town.

It appeared to Members that they were being asked to approve documents under threat from the Government and a request was made that this should be recorded.

In debate, points made included:

- that these were not documents ready to be presented for consultation and should be referred back for further discussion
- that houses at Northstowe would be occupied years before the A14 was improved
- the green separation distance was paramount and 200 metres was insufficient
- the green separation areas should be commuted to the parish council
- there was a real danger of being railroaded on the options being presented to people
- there was little confidence in the boundary of the new town holding
- the Council should not be swayed by developers' plans but consider the detail of a planning application in the same way as any other
- the public should be offered all the options
- it was doubtful whether 8,000 houses and necessary facilities could be accommodated on the old airfield without compromising the green separation
- a site visit should be held
- lessons appeared not to have been learned from Cambourne
- the site was one of the worst in the area for building, being at sea level
- land quality north of the railway line was worse than elsewhere in the area
- Willingham residents were unhappy as the traffic survey had not yet been carried out
- most local people had had no information except from Gallaghers

- all site options were favoured by one developer or another
- the rejected option could be changed to the least preferred

The Planning Policy Manager explained that the Structure Plan set a timetable of a start on site in 2006, and that officers were trying to work to this agenda. On this basis, the first dwellings could possibly be occupied in 2007. The timetable was tight and to meet it difficult decisions would need to be taken. If there were undue delay, those setting the targets would be likely to consider the options available to ensure that development began on time.

He also explained that the Ministry of Defence's interpretation of "previously developed land" offered at the Examination in Public and relied upon by Councillor Edwards was incorrect. This had been confirmed by the Examination in Public Panel, who concluded that the definition as contained in PPG3 was that all of the land within the curtilage of such a site would also be defined as previously developed.

On the amendment proposed by Councillor A Riley, seconded by Councillor Mrs DP Roberts, Council

**RESOLVED** that no decision be made on the site selection for Northstowe until the green separation for Longstanton and Oakington has been decided.

Names were requested and the voting was as follows:

**For the amendment**

Mrs PS Corney	Mrs HF Kember	A Riley
BR Burling	SGM Kindersley	Mrs DP Roberts
Mrs J Dixon	RMA Manning	Mrs VM Trueman
Ms J Doggett	RB Martlew	RJ Turner
SM Edwards	MJ Mason	NJ Scarr
R Hall	DH Morgan	Mrs BE Waters
Mrs SA Hatton	Mrs CAED Murfitt	DALG Wherrell
JA Hockney	CR Nightingale	NIC Wright
MP Howell	EJ Pateman	SS Ziaian-Gillan

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**Against the amendment**

SJ Agnew	RF Bryant	DC McCraith
Dr DR Bard	NN Cathcart	RGR Smith
JD Batchelor	Mrs JM Healey	

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**Abstention**

RE Barrett	HC Hurrell	Mrs HM Smith
EW Bullman	Mrs JA Muncey	Mrs DSK Spink
Mrs A Elsby	Dr JPR Orme	RT Summerfield
SA Harangozo	J Shepperson	De SEK van de Ven
Mrs EM Heazell	Mrs GJ Smith	Dr JR Williamson

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On a further amendment proposed by Councillor A Riley, seconded by Councillor Mrs DP Roberts, Council

**RESOLVED** that all references to "double counting" in the land use budget and possible uses of the green separation in the Northstowe Preferred Options Report be deleted.

Names were requested and the voting was as follows:

**For the amendment**

RE Barrett	MP Howell	J Shepperson	
JD Batchelor	HC Hurrell	Mrs GJ Smith	
RF Bryant	Mrs HF Kember	Mrs HM Smith	
EW Bullman	SGM Kindersley	RGR Smith	
BR Burling	RMA Manning	Mrs DSK Spink	
Mrs PS Corney	RB Martlew	RT Summerfield	
Mrs J Dixon	MJ Mason	Mrs VM Trueman	
Ms J Doggett	Mrs JA Muncey	RJ Turner	
SM Edwards	Mrs CAED Murfitt	Mrs BE Waters	
Mrs A Elsby	CR Nightingale	DALG Wherrell	
R Hall	A Riley	Dr JR Williamson	
SA Harangozo	Mrs DP Roberts	NIC Wright	
Mrs SA Hatton	NJ Scarr	SS Ziaian-Gillan	
JA Hockney			<b>40</b>

**Against the amendment**

SJ Agnew	Mrs JM Healey	Dr JPR Orme	
Dr DR Bard	Mrs EM Heazell	EJ Pateman	
NN Cathcart	DC McCraith	Dr SEK van de Ven	
			<b>9</b>

**Abstention**

DH Morgan			<b>1</b>
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Councillor SM Edwards clarified that the reference to “re-evaluation” in the amendment circulated would be satisfied by stating that the options would be presented as equals, and on his amendment, seconded by Councillor SJ Agnew, Council

**RESOLVED** that Council present the three site location options for Northstowe as equal options, A, B and C, in order that the public may be consulted in a fair and unbiased way.

Names were requested and the voting was as follows:

**For the amendment**

SJ Agnew	Mrs HF Kember	J Shepperson	
RE Barrett	SGM Kindersley	Mrs GJ Smith	
JD Batchelor	DC McCraith	Mrs HM Smith	
EW Bullman	RMA Manning	RGR Smith	
BR Burling	RB Martlew	Mrs DSK Spink	
Mrs PS Corney	MJ Mason	RT Summerfield	
Mrs J Dixon	Mrs JA Muncey	Mrs VM Trueman	
SM Edwards	Mrs CAED Murfitt	RJ Turner	
Mrs A Elsby	CR Nightingale	Dr SEK van de Ven	
R Hall	Dr JPR Orme	Mrs BE Waters	
SA Harangozo	EJ Pateman	DALG Wherrell	
Mrs SA Hatton	A Riley	Dr JR Williamson	
MP Howell	Mrs DP Roberts	NIC Wright	
HC Hurrell	NJ Scarr	SS Ziaian-Gillan	
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**Against the amendment**

Dr DR Bard	NN Cathcart	Mrs JM Healey	
RF Bryant			<b>4</b>

**Abstention**

DH Morgan

Mrs EM Heazell

JA Hockney

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Council then turned to the recommendations contained in the report enclosed in the agenda and

**RESOLVED** that

- (a) the following Local Development Framework Preferred Options reports, incorporating the amendments set out in the schedule of changes (Appendix F to the report), be published for the purpose of public participation:
- Core Strategy and Development Control Policies Development Plan Document
  - Rural Centres Development Plan Document
  - Cambridge East Area Action Plan
  - Cambridge Southern Fringe Area Action Plan
  - Northstowe Area Action Plan (incorporating the amendments agreed above)
- (b) the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report and Initial Sustainability Appraisal for each of the preferred options papers be published for public participation;
- (c) the following documents be authorised for public consultation:
- Urban Capacity Study
  - Audit and Assessment of Need for Outdoor Play Space and Informal Open Space in South Cambridgeshire
- (d) minor editing and refinement of the Preferred Options public participation papers prior to publication be delegated to the Development Services Director and that any material amendments be agreed by the Planning and Economic Development Portfolio Holder.

**5. POLICY AND FINANCIAL REVIEW 2005-06**

The recommendations of Cabinet on the 20th July 2004 supporting the need for a five year strategy and a basis for public consultation were circulated at the meeting. The Resources and Staffing Portfolio Holder apologised for the short time available for consideration but emphasised that the Strategy was not being put forward for approval but, rather, for a process for public consultation. He advised that 4% savings were being requested in order to achieve 2% overall since some proposals would not be acceptable. Councillor Summerfield confirmed that Cabinet had found Appendix E to the report too detailed and was to revisit it.

At the request of Councillor Mrs GJ Smith, it was **AGREED** that there should be at least one public meeting (paragraph (f)). Councillor Mrs Smith also asked that each parish council should be invited to send at least one representative.

The Leader reported that the steering group was to meet the following Tuesday and invited all Members to lobby the group with ideas.

Council

**RESOLVED** to

- (a) support the need for the development of a five year strategy combining service, financial and workforce elements, including the identification of priorities, with a draft going to Cabinet on 14<sup>th</sup> October 2004;
- (b) approve the revised annual process for Continuous Improvement Plans (CIPs) and budget preparation as indicated in report paragraph 3.3 and Appendix B;
- (c) agree that the authority wishes to remain debt-free and confirm the following financial policies to form part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy:
  - reduction of the working balance to £1.5 million;
  - debt-free status; and
  - use of capital receipts to fund General Fund capital expenditure in addition to the HRA and ICT, subject to the impact on the HRA being acceptable
- (d) agree to conduct public consultation for the Council's future financial strategy, with flexibility in the use of capital receipts;
- (e) indicate a preferred maximum budget option of setting the Council Tax at the shire district average to keep within possible capping criteria, as indicated in Appendix D to the report, adjusted for all capital expenditure to be financed from capital receipts such that a higher level of revenue expenditure is supported; both for the purpose of consultation and to enable officers to start budget planning, but on the clear basis that the final decision will be subject to the results of consultation;
- (f) authorise a *South Cambs Magazine* survey as the most appropriate vehicle for public consultation, with at least one public meeting at the Council offices and a web-based survey; a member/officer steering group being the appropriate means of steering the consultation;
- (g) request portfolio holders to discuss with their lead officers realistic options for savings of 4%, including an indication of the likely amounts, for presentation as part of the public consultation and with a view to savings in 2005/06; and agree that a percentage of savings is to be found from support services.

## 6. 2004-05 PAY AWARD

Cabinet's recommendation of a 4.2% pay award was circulated at the meeting, together with details of the changes to terms and conditions of employment agreed with Unison. The Resources and Staffing Portfolio Holder outlined the background to local pay negotiations, arising from recruitment and retention difficulties, and Council

**RESOLVED** that a pay award of 4.2% be applied from 1st April 2004 and that budgets be increased by £98,000 to address the resultant shortfall.

Councillor NJ Scarr declared his interest as a Unison official and took no part in the vote.

## 7. POLICY ON TRAVELLER ISSUES

Cabinet on 20th July had recommended the adoption of the policy on Traveller Issues with an amendment to encourage the advance submission of planning applications. The Leader, commending the policy, asked for a further amendment to paragraph 3, adding to point D “engage with the traveller community to make available...”. This amendment arose from discussions with the portfolio holder for traveller welfare.

The Leader commented on the meeting with other similarly affected councils at the Local Government Association annual conference, the aim of which had been to get together to lobby the Government rather than to discuss policies. The Head of Policy and Communications added, in reply to a question, that the Parliamentary Select Committee on travellers had made it clear that they wanted comments only from the Local Government Association, which was the reason for the meeting at the conference.

In response to concerns about the proposed amendment to point D, the Community Development Portfolio Holder explained that it arose from issues coming out at the current planning enquiry on land at Cottenham and the need to involve travellers in decisions affecting them. She confirmed that there was to be a joint group including travellers and that the assessment of their needs was progressing. Councillor Mrs Roberts thanked the Head of Policy and Communications for his invaluable help and the Cottenham and Histon Members for their support. The Leader pointed out that local residents were covered in point A.

It was confirmed that retrospective planning applications had to be properly considered; the aim in this document was to encourage travellers to talk to the planners in advance of setting up a site.

Council

**RESOLVED** that the policy on Traveller Issues be adopted as presented, with the following revised wording in paragraph 3:

- D. engage with the traveller community to make available appropriate and authorised traveller sites – identifying suitable additional sites, where necessary, and accommodating the service needs of travellers, wherever possible;
- E. give full consideration to proposed sites when travellers approach the Council in advance about their proposals;

## 8. DURATION OF MEETING

In accordance with standing Order 9 (Duration of Meetings), Council **AGREED** to continue the meeting beyond the four hour limit.

## 9. APPOINTMENTS

Council considered the need for more appointees to the Licensing Committee (to a maximum of 15) in order to spread the workload expected when the provisions of the Licensing Act 2003 came into force on 7th February 2005, and

**RESOLVED** that for 2004/05 the following additional Members be appointed to the Licensing Committee:

Mrs SA Hatton  
JA Hockney  
A Riley  
Dr JR Williamson  
One further appointee required

Council further

**RESOLVED** that the following appointments be made:

<b>South Cambs Magazine Editorial Panel</b>	Mrs CAED Murfitt Dr SEK van de Ven
<b>Cambridge Southern Fringe Member Reference Group</b>	Chairman Development and Conservation Control Committee Mrs EM Heazell (Haslingfield) Mrs HF Kember (Shelford) CR Nightingale (Shelford)
<b>Cambridge East Member Reference Group</b>	Planning & Economic Development Portfolio Holder Ms CA Hunt (Teversham) RJ Turner (Fen Ditton) Ms SJO Doggett or NJ Scarr (Fulbourn) <i>[Ms Doggett is to be the representative]</i>

#### 10. CHAIRMAN'S ENGAGEMENTS

The Chairman's engagements since the last meeting were **NOTED**.

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**The Meeting ended at 6.07 p.m.**

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