

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Planning Policy and Localism Portfolio Holder's Meeting held on
Tuesday, 17 September 2013 at 2.00 p.m.

Portfolio Holder: Pippa Corney

Councillors in attendance:

Scrutiny and Overview Committee monitors: Bridget Smith

Scrutiny and Overview Committee monitors
and Opposition spokesmen:

Opposition spokesmen: Janet Lockwood

Also in attendance: Alison Elcox, Tumi Hawkins, Peter Johnson and
John Williams

Officers:

Gemma Barron

Partnerships Manager & Interim Sustainable
Communities Team Leader

Jonathan Dixon

Principal Planning Policy Officer (Transport)

Clare Gibbons

Development Officer

Jane Green

Head of New Communities

Keith Miles

Planning Policy Manager

Ian Senior

Democratic Services Officer

6. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

7. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Planning Policy & Localism Portfolio Holder signed, as a correct record, the Minutes of the meeting held on 11 June 2013.

8. CAMBRIDGE LOCAL PLAN: RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION

The Planning Policy & Localism Portfolio Holder considered a report relating to consultation on the Cambridge Local Plan Proposed Submission 2014.

Referring to paragraph 12 of the report, Councillor John Williams said that, in order to reflect policies within the draft Local Plan recently published for consultation within South Cambridgeshire, Cambridge City Council should be urged to make sure that the high quality design proposed should include "environmental standards". He also voiced a political opinion that the Cambridge Airport site should be returned to the Green Belt.

The Portfolio Holder advised those present that a planning application had already been received in respect of the railway station forming part of Cambridge Northern Fringe East.

The Planning Policy & Localism Portfolio Holder **agreed** the following response to the Cambridge Local Plan Proposed Submission 2014 consultation, which supported the strategy included in the Cambridge Local Plan.

- a) Support the spatial strategy included in the Cambridge Local Plan 2014 Proposed

Submission, which complements the strategy in the South Cambridgeshire Proposed Submission Local Plan and provides an appropriate strategy for the wider Cambridge area to 2031;

- b) Support the commitment to meet the objectively assessed needs for the City of Cambridge identified in the Cambridge Sub Region Strategic Housing Market Assessment within the City Council area;
- c) Support the site development allocations in Worts Causeway and near ARM in Fulbourn Road as they are consistent with the joint Green Belt study and review of site options on the edge of Cambridge;
- d) Support the proposal for a joint area action plan to address Cambridge Northern Fringe East, which has also been included in the Proposed Submission South Cambridgeshire Local Plan. The station will form an important new gateway to Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire and it is essential that the development is of high quality design and environmental standards to maximise the benefits to the wider area
- e) Support the allocation of a small are of land north of Newmarket Road and a more substantial area north of Cherry Hinton, which adjoin the area included in the Proposed Submission South Cambridgeshire Local Plan for residential development, and which were included in the jointly prepared Cambridge East Area Action Plan. The safeguarding of the Cambridge airport site as a long-term strategic reserve maintained outside the Green Belt is also supported.
- f) Support the allocation of residential moorings on Chesterton Fen Road, forming part of a larger site in combination with an area proposed to be allocated in the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan.

9. DRAFT TRANSPORT STRATEGY: CAMBRIDGE AND SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION

The Planning Policy & Localism Portfolio Holder considered a report on the Council's proposed response to the consultation on the Draft Transport Strategy for Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire.

While he supported paragraph 20 of the report in principle, Councillor John Williams regretted the lack of emphasis on modal shift. He noted that South Cambridgeshire had one of the highest levels in the country of both car and cycle use, but said the Transport Strategy appeared to focus on the city of Cambridge. Councillor Williams urged officers to impress on Cambridgeshire County Council the importance of cycling to South Cambridgeshire.

Councillor Alison Elcox understood that proposals for segregated bus lanes referred to in paragraph 14 of the report had now been withdrawn. She said that transport infrastructure was of major importance and should be at least funded before development takes place.

The Planning Policy Manager explained briefly the basis, upon which the modelling had been carried out, He said that a number of factors had been taken into account but that that the overall objective had been to forecast, as accurately as possible, future demand rather than simply to project historical use.

The Planning Policy & Localism Portfolio Holder **agreed** the modified response to the consultation set out below:

1. Support the Transport Strategy in so far as it takes a long term view of the needs of the wider Cambridge area and seeks to address the transport implications of the sustainable development strategies set out in the local plans
2. Support the Transport Strategy as supporting evidence for the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan and in particular for the strategic site allocations and the preference for new settlements rather than dispersed village development in terms of maximising use of public transport;
3. The District Council will continue to work closely with the County Council to support the delivery of Local Plan allocations, including enabling the provision of major off-site transport infrastructure, particularly for Waterbeach new town and Bourn Airfield new village/Cambourne West, (e.g. through City Deal) to ensure transport infrastructure is available when it is needed.
4. The transport links between villages not on transport corridors, including to settlements outside the district should also be examined and addressed by the Strategy. For example, Gamlingay has important links with Sandy and Potton, which are not addressed, including on the cycle networks map (figure 4.11 in the draft Strategy).

10. GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION ON GREATER FLEXIBILITIES FOR CHANGE OF USE

The Planning Policy & Localism Portfolio Holder considered a report the Government's consultation of greater flexibility for change of use.

The Principal Planning Policy Officer highlighted the conflict between the proposals and the Council's adopted planning policies. The Portfolio Holder observed that the Government's proposals might work in an urban setting but were not appropriate in a rural district such as South Cambridgeshire

Councillor Bridget Smith focussed on agricultural buildings, and wondered whether conversion of these (especially where they had become redundant) was a problem. In reply, officers highlighted Council policy, which was to seek employment (or other economic) use first and then, only if that failed, consider conversion to residential instead. Councillor Smith maintained that the proposal also conflicted with localism measures such as the register of assets of community value and community right to bid, and could reduce the ability to protect valuable local shops.

The Planning Policy & Localism Portfolio Holder agreed the following modified response:

Change of use from shops to residential

1. The consultation document focuses on considering of impacts on primary retail areas, and secondary retail areas, with a distinctly urban flavour. It does not directly address the potential impact on rural areas, where maintaining rural shops is of key importance to the sustainability of small communities.
2. South Cambridgeshire comprises over 100 villages, varying in size from Rural Centres with over 8000 population, to small villages with under 100 residents. In many smaller villages public transport services are limited. Village services and facilities perform a vital function in rural communities, particularly for the less mobile. Once a facility is lost, it may be lost forever, as alterations to the building

make it difficult to restore to its previous use.

3. Through successive development plans South Cambridgeshire District Council has sought to protect this resource, requiring planning applications for change of use to demonstrate that a shop is no longer viable (having been appropriately marketed), or that there are sufficient alternatives available. Such policies have received local support, and a policy is included in the adopted Local Development Framework, and in the Proposed Submission Local Plan 2013.
4. Including change of use of shops to residential as permitted development, with a prior approval process, implies that the starting point is an assumption in favour of its loss. It is vital from a sustainability perspective that Local Planning Authorities are able to continue to consider the impact of the loss of shops on rural communities as well as in prime retail areas.
5. The consultation document states that the prior approval process will include consideration of Local Plan policies, impact of the loss on a town centre, and adequate provision of essential local services. If Local Plan policies can be taken into account it is hard to see that this is generally permitted development. A prior approval process would not allow the public to comment on the significance of the loss to a local community.

Re-use of existing redundant agricultural buildings for a dwelling house

6. The South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework (and Proposed Submission Local Plan) sets a preference for employment use of redundant rural buildings. This is more sustainable than allowing the proliferation of residential units across the countryside. The proposed permitted development would allow up to three additional residential units per agricultural unit, which could have a substantial impact in a rural district, and be contrary to the sustainable development principles which are central to the National Planning Policy Framework.
7. The prior approval process would require the consideration of a wide range of issues, including siting and design to ensure physical development complies with local plan policies on design, materials and outlook, transport and highways impact, noise impact, contamination and flooding risks to ensure that change of use takes place only in sustainable locations. It would also cover new replacement buildings as well as conversions. This implies detailed consideration of a range of issues will remain, but for a lower fee than a planning application.

General

8. The proposal also conflicts with localism measures such as the register of assets of community value and community right to bid, and could reduce the ability to protect valuable local shops

11. COMMUNITY AWARDS 2013/14

The Planning Policy & Localism Portfolio Holder considered a report on the proposed format and timing of the Community Pride and Village Hero Awards 2013/14.

The Partnerships Manager & Interim Sustainable Communities Team Leader reported that the cost of operating this scheme was minimal, perhaps £500 excluding officer time). The Portfolio Holder commented that, given the positive publicity for the Council and the feel-

good factor generated within local communities, this figure represented excellent value for money.

The Planning Policy & Localism Portfolio Holder **approved** the proposed timeline (paragraph 11) for the Community Pride and Village Heroes Awards 2013/14 and agrees the inclusion of the following award categories for nominations:

- (a) Village Hero
- (b) Young Village Hero
- (c) Community Pride: Local Services Award
- (d) Community Pride: Environment Award
- (e) Community Pride: Health and Wellbeing Award

12. MILTON: PARK LIFE - REVIEW OF 2013 AND DECISION FOR 2014

The Planning Policy & Localism Portfolio Holder considered a report reviewing the Park Life 2013 event and seeking a decision as to whether or not the Council should host similar events in 2014, 2015 and 2016.

The Partnerships Manager & Interim Sustainable Communities Team Leader reported that feedback from the public had been very positive.

The Portfolio Holder said that the 2013 event had been very successful and that, with improved branding next year, could deliver even greater benefits for the Council and local sports clubs. Park Life represented excellent Value for Money.

Those present noted that the Tour de France cycle race would be passing through Cambridgeshire in early July 2014, and urged the Portfolio Holder to exploit that fact to the full given the significance of cycling in Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire.

The Planning Policy & Localism Portfolio Holder

- (f) **agreed** to host a Park Life (or similar) event every year for the next three-years, subject to an annual review following each event,
- (g) **agreed** that the theme and timing of each event (if agreed) should be agreed when the previous event is reviewed: Park Life 2014, themed around cycling, would be on Saturday 12 July, and
- (h) **agreed** in principle sponsorship / income targets for the event for the next three-years: £2,500 in 2014, £5,000 in 2015 and £7,500 in 2016. The target would be re-confirmed each year when the previous event is reviewed.

13. COMMUNITY RIGHT TO BID: PROCESS

The Planning Policy & Localism Portfolio Holder considered a report on a proposed South Cambridgeshire District Council Community Right to Bid process.

Those present discussed a number of issues, including the implications for local communities faced with the loss of valued facilities and the impact of Asset of Community Value (ACV) listing on the commercial value of that land or building. When asked who can contest a listing, the development officer stated that the legislation only allowed for an owner to appeal a decision to list an ACV at Internal Review and no other party. The current process, however, alerts ward councillors to every stage in the listing process, allowing ward councillors the opportunity (and likewise parish councils, if not the nominating body) to comment on the nomination. This remains unchanged in the

amended process..

The proposed amendments to the process were

- (i) The decision to list an Asset of Community Value is made by an officer.
- (j) The Portfolio Holder be informed when a nomination and decision is made.
- (k) Internal Reviews would be carried out by an officer of appropriate seniority.

The Planning Policy & Localism Portfolio Holder **agreed** the following listing and Internal Review process:

Procedure when considering listing

<p>WITHIN 8-WEEKS OF A NOMINATION BEING RECEIVED BY THE COUNCIL</p>	<p>A Development Officer (Sustainable Communities Team) is the point of contact for all Assets of Community Value nominations.</p>
	<p>The Development Officer considers whether all the information provided by the nominator is present and correct and directs the Resource Officer to follow up any missing information, as required.</p>
	<p>The Development Officer decides whether a site visit may be necessary, or additional information required, in order to substantiate the building/land has community value, contacting the Parish Council, if this is not the nominating eligible body.</p>
	<p>The Development Officer writes to owner/leaseholder/Parish Council/Ward Cllrs informing them the nomination is under consideration.</p>
	<p>The nomination is entered onto the Assets table.</p>
	<p>The Development Officer reaches a view as to whether the nominated land/building meets the criteria and cross checks this with the Senior Lawyer. A decision should be reached within 8-weeks of receiving the nomination.</p>
	<p>The Sustainable Communities Team Leader signs off the entry into the Asset table, either as listed or nominated and not listed.</p>
	<p>The Owner/Leaseholder/Parish Council /Ward Councillors and Nominating body are notified of the outcome.</p>
	<p>The Owner is advised of his right to Internal Review (within the standard letter of notification), the legislation affords an 8 week window during which the Owner can make a written request for the decision to be taken to internal review.</p>
	<p>The Asset table is updated, a Members bulletin report generated and the Communications team alerted.</p>

Procedure for internal review

REQUEST FOR REVIEW WITHIN 8-WEEKS OF LISTING, REVIEW WITHIN 8-WEEKS OF REQUEST	The owner has 8-weeks to request in writing an internal review of the listing, from the point at which the owner was notified of the decision to list.
	The review will be carried out by the Head of New Communities and the Manager of Legal and Democratic Services. This is in agreement with the guidance which states only that the review should be carried out and determined by an officer of "appropriate seniority" uninvolved with the original decision.
	The owner may appoint a representative to act on their behalf, to whom the LA must send any relevant documentation.
	The LA will notify the owner of the review procedure within a week of receiving a request for a review, this will also available on our Community Right to Bid web page.
	The LA Internal Review panel will meet in person to undertake the review process, whether or not an oral review is requested. By opting to routinely include an oral hearing all discussion relating to the review can be minuted and made available on request.
	The owner or their representative may make representation to the review panel, both orally and in writing (co-ordinated by the Development Officer).
	The review will take place within 8-weeks of the written request for a review being made.
	The owner and the local authority will each bear the costs of the review.
	The owner will be notified of the decision either immediately following consideration, or as early as is practicably possible after the review meeting, giving reasons for that decision.
	Where the request to remove the asset from the register is upheld, this will be done as soon as is practicably possible, moving it into the list of unsuccessful nominations, informing all parties, publishing the asset table on the Community Right to Bid webpage and reporting the outcome in the Member Bulletin.
The local authority will give a written copy of the reasons for the removal from the list to the nominator.	

14. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

While the Planning Policy & Localism Portfolio Holder noted that no further Portfolio Holder meetings had been scheduled, officers would strive to develop a programme of meetings, possibly focussing on January, March, June and September 2014.

The Meeting ended at 3.25 p.m.
