

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Planning Portfolio Holder's Meeting held on
Tuesday, 9 September 2014 at 2.00 p.m.

Portfolio Holder: Robert Turner

Councillors in attendance:

Scrutiny and Overview Committee monitors: Kevin Cuffley

Also in attendance: David Bard, Anna Bradnam, Alison Elcox,
Lynda Harford and Tumi Hawkins

Officers:

Nigel Blazeby	Development Control Manager
Jonathan Dixon	Principal Planning Policy Officer (Transport)
Caroline Hunt	Planning Policy Manager
Jo Mills	Planning and New Communities Director
David Roberts	Principal Planning Officer
Ian Senior	Democratic Services Officer
Alison Talkington	Senior Planning Policy Officer

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

2. MINUTES OF THE PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PORTFOLIO HOLDER MEETING HELD ON 11 JUNE 2014

The Planning Portfolio Holder noted the Minutes of the Planning and Economic Development Portfolio Holder meeting held on 11 June 2014, which would be signed by the Economic Development Portfolio Holder after 10 September 2014 as Councillor Nick Wright had previously been the Planning and Economic Development Portfolio Holder.

3. SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE LOCAL PLAN: MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL AND SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL - GREATER CAMBRIDGE HOUSING TRAJECTORY

The Planning Portfolio Holder considered a report seeking his agreement to a Memorandum of Understanding with Cambridge City Council that, as part of the two Local Plan examinations, the housing trajectories for the two areas should be considered together as a joint trajectory for the purposes of housing supply, including 5-year land supply.

The Planning Policy Manager said that such a document would promote a joint strategy focusing on *when* development was going to take place, rather than *where*. Such an arrangement would help both Cambridge City Council, whose Local Plan envisaged more development in the early part of the Local Plan period, and South Cambridgeshire District Council, where development was expected to be concentrated in the later years. The effect of a joint trajectory would be to balance out the numbers of new dwellings throughout the Local Plan period, and thus make sure that both Councils were able to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply.

The Planning Policy Manager reported that the Joint Strategic Transport and Spatial Planning Group had recommended that the Memorandum of Understanding be adopted.

The Planning Portfolio Holder welcomed the fact that the same Planning Inspector would be examining the draft Local Plans of Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council, and said that it was important to be able to send out a clear message to developers. He added that there was a definite benefit for both Councils to work together in this instance and that, in the meantime, speculative applications would still have to go through a rigorous process, despite the District Council's policies having been deemed "out of date" by virtue of it not being able, for the time being, to demonstrate a five-year land supply.

The Planning and New Communities Director reported that officers had sought Counsel's Advice, and been informed that such a Memorandum of Understanding, though never tried before, was unlikely to be dismissed by an Inspector. Counsel had also endorsed the Council's decision not to challenge the two recent Appeal decisions in Waterbeach.

Councillor David Bard was hopeful that the Memorandum of Understanding would succeed, given the relatively high number of major developments currently taking place and in the pipeline.

The Planning Policy Manager explained that the Memorandum would be reviewed every five years to make sure the joint approach remained robust and realistic, and announced that the 'City Deal' committed Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council to developing a joint Local Plan from 2019 onwards.

The Planning Portfolio Holder **approved** the Memorandum of Understanding between Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council as attached as Appendix 1 to the report from the Planning and New Communities Director.

4. LOCAL PLAN: MEMBER LIAISON DURING THE EXAMINATION

The Planning Portfolio Holder considered a report focussing on Member Liaison during the Local Plan Examination.

There was some discussion as to whether or not the Portfolio Holder should be consulted about everything relating to the Examination, but it was stressed that the most important thing was to minimise disruption of the process.

The Planning Policy Manager explained what that process was, being a hybrid of the processes involved in the two previous Plans. In response to a query from Councillor Dr. Tumi Hawkins, it was confirmed that, should the Inspector propose any significant changes to the Plan, a further round of public consultation would be needed. The Planning Policy Manager said that the Inspector had not indicated that there were any major problems with the draft Local Plan.

The Planning Portfolio Holder **confirmed** the methods of liaison with Members during the Local Plan Examination, as follows:

- (a) Regular Updates and Briefings –
 - (i) Weekly email updates to all Members outlining the matters to be examined the following week, and providing a summary of the previous week's hearings. This will be issued each Friday, unless circumstances arise which necessitate a change, in which case Members will be kept informed.

- (ii) The Portfolio Holder will have monthly informal meetings with Group Leaders to provide a regular opportunity for feedback and discussion.
 - (iii) The Portfolio Holder will be kept informed of progress throughout the Examination and ensure other liaison as appropriate, for instance, an All Member Briefing.
- (b) Formal Portfolio Holder meetings arranged each month for the duration of the Examination hearings. These will be held as necessary or cancelled if not needed.

5. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANS: HISTON & IMPINGTON AREA DESIGNATION

The Planning Portfolio Holder considered a report inviting him to make a decision regarding the application to designate part of the parish of Histon and Impington as a Neighbourhood Area.

The Planning Portfolio Holder

- (a) gave the Planning and New Communities Director **delegated powers to approve** the Histon and Impington Area Designation following the closure of the consultation on 12 September 2014, subject to there being no objections received; and
- (b) **agreed** that, should objections be received before the end of the consultation period, he make a decision without holding a meeting, such decision being subject to call-in.

6. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANS - WORKING WITH PARISH COUNCILS

The Planning Portfolio Holder considered a report inviting him to agree for public consultation a proposed protocol that South Cambridgeshire District Council will follow when working with Parish Councils within the district that wish to produce neighbourhood plans for their areas.

The principal consideration was that of resources, which were limited and had already been used up in 2014-15. While it was known that costs were significant, it was extremely difficult to assess in advance what they might actually be.

One solution might be for groups of Parish Councils to work together, thus saving costs.

The Planning Portfolio Holder

- a) **Approved** for consultation with parish councils the Service Level Agreement as set out in Appendix B to be used as a model agreement between South Cambridgeshire District Council and Parish Council/s within the district who are preparing neighbourhood plans for their areas. The results of the consultation to be reported back to the next Planning Portfolio Holder Meeting.
- b) **Agreed** that a review of the approach for neighbourhood planning is taken by the Council in a year's time

7. ST NEOTS NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN - RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION

The Planning Portfolio Holder considered a report seeking his agreement to the draft response to the pre-submission consultation on the St Neots Neighbourhood Plan 2014-2029.

Those present noted the need to address a number of issues relating to the A428 in order to prepare for possible future pressure along that corridor.

The Planning Portfolio Holder **endorsed** the following response to the St Neots Neighbourhood Plan:

1. **Support Policy PT1.** As St Neots is within the A428 corridor and car traffic generated from within this area will impact on the road network used by people who live and work in South Cambridgeshire the Council is welcomes this policy. The successful implementation of this policy should reduce car traffic on the wider road network.
2. **Support Policy PT1 – Railway station improvements** - The railway station in St Neots is for many who live or work in the west of the district their local station so the Council would welcome the positive support shown in the neighbourhood plan to improvements to the facilities at the station. However the Town Council may wish to include in the policy consideration of improving sustainable travel links to the station e.g. cycle paths.
3. **Support Policy PT4- part (d).** South Cambridgeshire DC welcomes the inclusion of the Town Council being willing to work with Huntingdonshire DC and Cambridgeshire County Council about dualling the A428. Improving the traffic flow on this road by dualling from the A1 to Caxton Gibbet would help the road network within the district to move more efficiently. It is one of the critical corridors for development within the county with planned development at St Neots, West Cambourne and Bourn Airfield. The Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire Transport Strategy recognises the A428 corridor as one that needs improvement to accommodate planned growth.

8. GOVERNMENT TECHNICAL CONSULTATION ON PLANNING

The Planning Portfolio Holder considered a report seeking his endorsement of a draft response to the Government's wide-ranging consultation on reforming the planning system. The consultation addresses changes to planning processes including neighbourhood planning, permitted development rights, use of planning conditions, consultation with statutory consultees, environmental impact assessment thresholds and nationally significant infrastructure schemes.

Those present were keen to stress that the proposals should be realistic. Their principal concern related to the following:

“...The Government seeks to provide increased flexibilities on the high street by making amendments to the permitted development order:
Combining the existing A1 (shops) and A2 (financial and professional services) use classes and introducing a new A2 use class for betting shops and pay day loan shops...”

They said there should be acknowledgement of the special needs of villages and similar settlements in rural areas such as South Cambridgeshire.

The Planning Portfolio Holder **endorsed** the response to the consultation set out in

Appendix 1 to the report from the Planning and New Communities Director, subject to expressing concern regarding the suitability of these changes for rural areas, and the need to protect local shops and services.

9. WORK PROGRAMME

The Planning Portfolio Holder and others present noted the Work Programme attached to the agenda.

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Planning Portfolio Holder and others present noted that the next confirmed Planning Portfolio Holder meeting would be on Tuesday 18 November 2014 at 10.00am.

A provisional Planning Portfolio Holder meeting had been scheduled for Friday 19 December 2014 at 10.00am.

Further confirmed and provisional Planning Portfolio Holder meetings would be announced as soon as possible.

The Meeting ended at 3.25 p.m.
