

PLANNING AND TRANSPORT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

28 June 2022
5.30 - 7.58 pm

Present: Councillors S. Smith (Chair), D. Baigent (Vice-Chair), S. Davies, Porrer, Scutt, Smart and Swift

Executive Councillors: Thornburrow (Executive Councillor for Planning and Infrastructure)

Also present (virtually) Councillors Bick and Herbert.

Officers:

Director of Planning and Economic Development: Stephen Kelly

Built and Natural Environment Manager: Jane Green

Planning Policy Manager: Jon Dixon

Strategy and Economy Manager: Caroline Hunt

Natural Environment Team Leader: John Cornell

Committee Manager: Claire Tunnicliffe

Meeting Producer: Boris Herzog

FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL

22/14PnT Apologies for Absence

No apologies were received.

22/15PnT Declarations of Interest

| Name | Item | Interest |
|--------------------|------|--|
| Councillor Baigent | All | Personal: Member of Cambridge Cycle Campaign |

22/16PnT Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 January 2022 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

22/17PnT Public Questions

There were no public questions.

22/18PnT Interim Approach to Biodiversity Net Gain

Matter for Decision

The report referred to the introduction of the requirement for 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) above baseline conditions for all developments in England from November 2023 as outlined in the Environment Act.

The Executive Councillor was asked to approve an interim approach for Greater Cambridge to proposed offsite BNG to ensure that applicants and decision makers are clear on what is expected by the Council when considering offsite BNG proposals, prior to November 2023. This includes a sequential approach starting with BNG provision on site wherever possible, before considering offsite strategic habitat banks and then more local solutions to fulfil this need encompassing the principles already set out in the Environment Act around BNG, and emerging best practice.

Decision of the Executive Councillor for Planning and Infrastructure

- i. Endorsed the interim approach to siting biodiversity net gain for developments across Cambridge, and noted and welcomed the emerging habitat banks in Greater Cambridge, with delegated powers given to the Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development to make minor changes to the technical note at Appendix A of the Officer's report.

Reason for the Decision

As set out in the Officer's report.

Any Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

Not applicable

Scrutiny Considerations

The Natural Environment Team Leader introduced the report.

In response to comments made by the Committee, the Natural Environment Team Leader and Built and Natural Environment Manager said the following:

- i. Further regulations / are awaited from DEFRA; officers did not have a complete set of guidance yet but are taking soundings and advice from peers in Natural England, the Planning Advisory Service, and other Local Authorities.
- ii. Nature reserve sites in private ownership that were in poor condition which may be suitable for BNG contributions for enhancement, but

- equally could be eligible for other revenue streams. Officers would look carefully at any proposals for these sites.
- iii. The achievement of BNG was a component of sustainable development as confirmed by central government through the National Planning Policy Framework. Therefore, members of the planning committee could consider the delivery of the objectives of the interim approach. However, 10 % or the aspiration for 20% BNG was not yet part of the emerging Local Plan policy framework and Committees could not at this point insist upon these figures in making planning decisions.
 - iv. It was the intention to encourage on-site BNG as a priority. Training and briefings would be provided to officers and planning committee members to outline the aim and intended outcome of this interim approach.
 - v. It would be made clear to developers the Council's commitment to BNG within the planning application process and what could and should be achieved.
 - vi. When the Environment Act obligations became mandatory this would give weight to planning applications being approved or refused on the basis that 10% BNG would or would not be delivered amongst other material planning considerations.
 - vii. The current legislation states BNG has to be delivered but there is no actual figure; in simple terms developers have to put back more than they take out.
 - viii. The changes to the Environment Act introduced the requirement for 10% BNG above baseline conditions for all developments in England from November 2023 which would be a considerable increase.
 - ix. All developments in Greater Cambridge should aim to deliver high quality green infrastructure as best practice.
 - x. The expectation was that after thirty years of good management of BNG on sites, the site should be in such good condition they would be seen as valued biodiversity locations and would not be appropriate for any kind of built development.
 - xi. Larger strategic habitat banks delivered greater benefit to BNG securing significant improvements at a landscape scale. In addition, these sites could be managed more effectively for BNG and could be monitored by the local authority over a 30-year period more easily than a vast number of smaller sites.
 - xii. The emerging local plan identified large sites in Greater Cambridge for habitat and landscape enhancement.
 - xiii. Carbon sequestration was an important part of vegetative growth but was not the primary benefit of BNG, that was biodiversity.
 - xiv. BNG would be fully funded by the developers.

- xv. Community led solutions to BNG provide smaller opportunities due to the size of land available in the city compared to the land available owned by various parishes in Greater Cambridge.
- xvi. There are several ways officers could verify BNG being delivered during the local authority's management such as aerial photography and Google maps. There would be standard approach nationally to measure the uplift, using the Defra metrics.

The Executive Councillor for Planning and Infrastructure referenced six council houses that had been built on Wadloes Road. This had produced BNG of 35% overall through an offsite community project and onsite biodiversity. Small projects could be beneficial to biodiversity and community.

The Committee

Unanimously endorsed the recommendations as set out in the Officer's report.

Conflicts of Interest Declared by the Executive Councillor (and any Dispensations Granted)

No conflicts of interest were declared by the Executive Councillor.

The Executive Councillor for Planning and Infrastructure approved the recommendations and thanked the officers for all their hard work on this matter which would benefit the city of Cambridge and Greater Cambridgeshire significantly.

22/19PnT Greater Cambridge Local Development Scheme and Greater Cambridge Local Plan First Proposals representations

Matter for Decision

The report provided an update on the results of the consultation on the Greater Cambridge Local Plan First Proposals (Preferred Options) held in late 2021 and the representations received, and sought agreement to a revised timetable for future stages of the Local Plan, and of the North East Cambridge Area Action Plan, as set out in an update to the Greater Cambridge Local Development Scheme.

Decision of the Executive Councillor for Planning and Infrastructure.

- i. Noted the representations made to the Greater Cambridge Local Plan First Proposals (Preferred Options) consultation and the report on the consultation at Appendix 1 of the Officer's report.

- ii. Agreed to adopt the updated Local Development Scheme for Greater Cambridge included at Appendix 2 of the Officer's report, to take effect from Monday 1st August 2022.
- iii. Agreed to grant delegated authority to the Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development, in consultation with the South Cambridgeshire District Council Lead Cabinet member for Planning and the Cambridge City Council Executive Councillor for Planning and Infrastructure (in consultation with chair and spokes), to make any minor editing changes and corrections identified to the updated Local Development Scheme for Greater Cambridge included at Appendix 1 of the report prior to publication.

Reason for the Decision

As set out in the Officer's report.

Any Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

Not applicable

Scrutiny Considerations

The report had been split into two parts with the Planning Policy Manager presenting the Greater Cambridge Local Plan First Proposals and the Strategy and Economy Manager leading on the Local Development Scheme.

In response to comments made by the Committee on the Greater Cambridge Local Plan First Proposals, the Joint Director for Planning and Economic Development and Planning Policy Manager said the following:

- i. In the consultation there was a clear theme on 'great places' which looked to expand ideas on design policy.
- ii. Noted the Committee's comments on specific feedback and views in the document. All feedback would be looked at which would help outline the design policy and make it work for places.
- iii. There had been a lot of work undertaken on the future need for homes and the increase in population as the emerging plan had been developed.
- iv. Officers were aware that new information on population growth was constantly emerging; the latest results from the Office of National Statistics had just been published.
- v. The most up to date information would be considered regarding housing needs and jobs growth as examples; further work on this had been recently commissioned.

- vi. Acknowledged there would be a huge amount of content for members to reflect upon. This Committee did not meet frequently enough to consider reviewing the responses to the document on a topic-by-topic basis.
- vii. A programme of engagement was being considered for the Joint Local Planning Advisory Group; this meant the document could be broken down into smaller themes for consideration. This would also give access to deeper analysis of all the published comments received.
- viii. All details of the consultation and each proposal could be found on the Greater Cambridge planning services website. Full detailed comments could also be viewed including any documents submitted. The website also provided details of new sites with a link to the details and an interactive map. The relevant plan could be found at the following link: [Greater Cambridge Local Plan](#)
- ix. Noted that Members welcomed the comments made by the public to discourage car travel on new sites. The issue of energy, water efficiency and where children played was a high priority and was noted.
- x. With regard to individuals who disagreed with the need of building additional new homes each year, all feedback would assist officers when exploring the evidence and would be viewed as part of the overall package. Both negative and positive comments were taken into consideration.
- xi. The age profile information submitted was a voluntary part of the submission forms and therefore members should be aware that this data was not a complete picture of all respondents.
- xii. Noted the comments that it was important to capture the views of younger people; the plan was for future generations.
- xiii. Welcomed suggestions on where to leave hard copies of future consultations / documents in the local community.
- xiv. Was keen to explore ways to improve digital means and engagement for all, including non-digital and digital users.
- xv. Acknowledged the request to show a geographical breakdown of responses and which groups had commented such as residents, businesses, and developers, that that this would be explored as issues were summarised and explored further.

Councillor Smith reminded the Committee there would be an opportunity to update the emerging local plan when it came to the draft plan stage and any new evidence would be considered.

In response to comments made by the Committee on the revised timetable of the future stages of the emerging Local Plan and North East Cambridge Area Action Plan, the Joint Director for Planning and Economic Development and Strategy and Economy Manager said the following:

- i. Updates to the Local Plan need to follow the local plan process. To give weight to the development plan there are no shortcuts and could not be updated rapidly. The procedure officers are currently undertaking had to be followed.
- ii. When making planning decisions, the NPPF would trump a five-year-old plus Local Plan unless it could be evidenced that it was up to date. Wanted to safeguard that local policy making was retained rather than national policy, so the proposed policy review of the adopted Local Plan in 2023 would be an important process.
- iii. Policy standards in the current plans could not be changed before the local plan process is complete but could make sure the development strategy, housing trajectory, the protection of space and greenbelt etc had priority in planning making decisions.
- iv. Officers would be keeping up to date with any changes to the NPPF and statutory changes to the planning regime which might assist Members with their planning decisions.
- v. As the emerging Local Plan progressed though the latter stages some consideration could be given to emerging policies as they potentially gain weight as a plan reaches later stages of the review process.
- vi. Recognised the economy in Cambridge was vibrant; changes in consumer behaviour and the housing market were also an element that Officers had to take into consideration.
- vii. Officers were continually working with various utilities providers, statutory agencies including the Environment Agency and Cambridge Water to look at a range of issues such as water consumption, climate change, carbon net zero. Planning was however only one part of the regulatory framework used to advance changes necessary in infrastructure.
- viii. Welcomed cross party working and agreement through the process.

The Committee

Unanimously endorsed the Officers recommendations.

The Executive Councillor for Planning and Infrastructure approved the recommendations.

Conflicts of Interest Declared by the Executive Councillor (and any Dispensations Granted)

No conflicts of interest were declared by the Executive Councillor.

22/20PnT Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Local Transport and Connectivity Plan: draft plan consultation response**Matter for Decision**

The report referred to a proposed joint Greater Cambridge response with South Cambridgeshire District Council to the current Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP): draft plan consultation

The draft LTCP set out the vision, goals and objectives which would define the strategic approach up to 2050, and the policy themes and transport schemes to deliver those objectives.

Decision of the Executive Councillor for Planning and Infrastructure.

- i. Agreed the proposed response to the draft Local Transport & Connectivity Plan consultation as set out in appendix 1 of the Officer's report.
- ii. Would consider and agree any material changes to the response to the draft Local Transport & Connectivity Plan consultation proposed by South Cambridgeshire District Council, in consultation with the Chair and Spokes for the Planning & Transport Scrutiny Committee, and in liaison with the South Cambridgeshire Lead Cabinet Member for Planning.
- iii. Agreed to grant delegated authority to the Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development, in liaison with the South Cambridgeshire Lead Cabinet member for Planning and the Cambridge City Council Executive Councillor for Planning and Infrastructure, to make any minor editing changes to the response to the draft Local Transport & Connectivity Plan consultation.

Reason for the Decision

As set out in the Officer's report.

Any Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

Not applicable

Scrutiny Considerations

The Committee received a report from the Principal Planning Officer.

The Chair advised that as the item had not been requested for scrutiny and debate the Committee would go straight to the vote.

The Committee

Unanimously endorsed the Officer's recommendations.

The Executive Councillor for Planning and Infrastructure approved the recommendations.

Conflicts of Interest Declared by the Executive Councillor (and any Dispensations Granted)

No conflicts of interest were declared by the Executive Councillor.

22/21PnT Neighbouring Local Plan consultation responses

Matter for Decision

The report sought agreement to key responses to one current and one imminent Local Plan consultations in districts neighbouring or near to Greater Cambridge

Decision of the Executive Councillor for Planning and Infrastructure.

- i. Agreed the proposed response to the West Suffolk Local Plan Preferred Options (Regulation 18) consultation as set out in Appendix 1 of the Officer's report, and the proposed response to the Bedford Borough Local Plan 2040 Plan for Submission (Regulation 19) as set out in Appendix 2 of the Officer's report.
- ii. Agreed that any material changes to the responses to the West Suffolk Local Plan Preferred Options (Regulation 18) and the Bedford Borough Local Plan 2040 Plan for Submission (Regulation 19) arising from consideration by South Cambridgeshire District Council, will be agreed via an out of cycle decision by the Executive Councillor for Planning and Infrastructure in consultation with the Chair and Spokes for the Planning & Transport Scrutiny Committee, and in liaison with the South Cambridgeshire Lead Cabinet Member for Planning.
- iii. Agreed to grant delegated authority to the Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development, in liaison with the South Cambridgeshire Lead Cabinet member for Planning and the Cambridge City Council Executive Councillor for Planning and Infrastructure, to make any minor editing changes to the responses to the West Suffolk Local Plan Preferred Options (Regulation 19).

Reason for the Decision

As set out in the Officer's report.

Any Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

Not applicable

Scrutiny Considerations

The Chair advised that as the item had not been requested for scrutiny and debate the Committee would go straight to the vote.

The Committee

Unanimously endorsed the Officer's recommendations.

The Executive Councillor for Planning and Infrastructure approved the recommendations.

Conflicts of Interest Declared by the Executive Councillor (and any Dispensations Granted)

No conflicts of interest were declared by the Executive Councillor.

22/22PnT To Note Record of Urgent Decision Taken by the Executive Councillor for Planning Policy and Infrastructure**22/23PnT Emerging Water Resources Regional Plan Consultation Response**

The decision was noted.

22/24PnT DEFRA consultation on Biodiversity Net Gain

The decision was noted.

22/25PnT Greater Cambridge Housing Trajectory and Five-Year Housing Land Supply

The decision was noted.

22/26PnT Cambridge Waste Water Treatment Plant Relocation (CWWTPR) Phase 3 Consultation

The decision was noted.

22/27PnT Greater Cambridge Brownfield Register 2021

The decision was noted.

The meeting ended at 7.58 pm

CHAIR