

PLANNING AND TRANSPORT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

19 March 2024
5.30 - 7.40 pm

Present: Councillors Nestor (Chair), Baigent (Vice-Chair), Bick, Griffin, Porrer, Pounds, Swift and Tong

Executive Councillors: Thornburrow (Executive Councillor for Planning, Building Control and Infrastructure)

Councillor Bick left before the vote was taken for minute item: 21/14/PnT Statement of Community Involvement

Officers:

Joint Director, Greater Cambridge Shared Planning and 3C Building Control: Stephen Kelly

Deputy Director, Greater Cambridge Shared Planning and 3C Building Control: Heather Jones

Planning Policy Manager: Jonathan Dixon

Planning Policy and Strategic Planning: Stuart Morris

Planning Policy and Strategy Team Leader: Terry DeSousa

Senior Planning Policy Officer: Lizzie Wood

Committee Manager: Claire Tunnicliffe

Meeting Producer: Sarah Steed

FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL

24/9PnT Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillor Divkovic, Councillor Griffin attend as the alternate.

24/10PnT Declarations of Interest

Name	Item	Interest
Councillor Baigent	All	Personal: Member of Cam Cyle.
Councillor Thornburrow	24/14/PnT	Personal: Urban Cambridge Room was being set up as a charity and hoped to be a trustee.

24/11PnT Minutes

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

24/12PnT Public Questions

The following public questions were put forward:

Q1)

- i. Sabina Maslova and Gemma Burgess had an academic paper titled: *"Delivering human-centred housing: understanding the role of post-occupancy evaluation and customer feedback in traditional and innovative social housebuilding in England"* at <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/01446193.2022.2111694> on 23 Aug 2022.
- ii. In the abstract, they state: "The paper argues that UK housebuilding in the social housing sector can benefit from re-purposing post-occupancy evaluation (POE) from only measuring customer satisfaction and detecting defects, which is currently the case, to using it to improve housing design and construction quality."
- iii. Furthermore, Dinah Bornat of ZCD Architects gave evidence to the House of Commons Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Committee on Monday 26 February 2024 on Children, Young People, and the Built Environment. Specifically she outlined the shortcomings of post-occupancy evaluation. (Have a watch at <https://parliamentlive.tv/event/index/2a4c75a2-4f8e-43d4-9fb2-2d25ceaf8b2d?in=16:58:58> from 16h58m58s). You can also read her written evidence referenced CBE 0106 at <https://committees.parliament.uk/work/7981/children-young-people-and-the-built-environment/publications/written-evidence/>
- iv. Given their recommendations, please could you ask officers if it is possible to ensure that post-occupancy evaluation is:
 1. A mandatory component/condition of planning permission for all developments above a minimum - for example the number of properties where affordable housing must be included, along with commitments to share summaries of the evaluations,
 2. that copies of such evaluations are submitted to the council - even if on a commercial in confidence basis, and for formal archiving even if under restricted access for a long time period,
 3. that developments backed by council funding, the evaluations cover not just individual homes but also the wider urban design of

neighbourhoods (E.g. crime, wellbeing) and their suitability for children.

The Executive Councillor responded with the following:

- i. The Council were supportive of learning lessons for developments once completed. They were sometimes carried out, often informally by design teams and as an architect was aware of how important they were for every project.
- ii. The Cambridgeshire Quality Panel Steering Group's annual meeting recently highlighted the importance of these and explored whether the design recommendations implemented had effective outcomes.
- iii. It has been noted the RIBAs (Royal Institute of British Architects) had made recommendations on the issue. Unfortunately, the original architects were not always commissioned for the entirety of the procurement process.
- iv. However, it was an area that could be taken forward and considered through the new Local Plan process. This already had elements which sought to ensure proposed design standards were met upon completion, particularly on climate change requirements.

The following supplementary question was asked:

- i. There was rarely post occupation evaluation.
- ii. The hyperlinks included in the submitted question related to the evidence session for the parliamentary levelling up and housing committees, particularly the built environment and children. In South Cambridge there had been examples of children's facilities flooding due to poor drainage.
- iii. Noted the Place Alliance Housing Design Audit for England concluded (December 2020) that new housing design was overwhelmingly mediocre or poor. One in five of the audited schemes that they surveyed should have been refused planning permission and the design of many others improved.
- iv. What conversations had the Executive Councillor held with Daniel Zeichner MP, who had commented on the poor-quality design and build of schemes in Cambridge, and what could be in terms of enforcement, short term and the longer term.

The Executive Councillor said:

- i. Had spoken with Daniel Zeichner, MP, in relation to build quality issues in Trumpington, both had met with residents on this specific issue. Had also discussed the matter of cladding because of the Grenfell Inquiry.
- ii. If there was more post occupancy assessment the build quality would improve.

- iii. If there was a requirement that the energy efficiency had to be shown in use and not just hypothetically on every scheme, the build would be more considered, the same applied to water efficiency.
- iv. Officers were exploring with partners such as Cambridge University available data for energy in use on their schemes which could be used as a central resource.

Q2)

- i. Question is a follow-on to the question asked at this committee on 16th January, about item 11 on the Agenda of the Planning Committee meeting held on 10th January 2024: 22-02066-FUL Owlstone Croft Planning Process Overview Report and as reported at Pages 6 & 7 of the minutes in today's Agenda pack.
- ii. Grateful to the Executive Councillor for her response and reassurance about the Councillors' concerns.
- iii. This item was held in secret due the Judicial Review application made by Friends of Paradise.
- iv. Following the refusal by a High Court judge to allow the Judicial Review of the Inspector's decision to proceed, Friends of Paradise have sadly taken the decision that they are not able to fund an appeal against the judge's decision. The Judicial Review process is now at an end.
- v. There remains widespread concern among residents about this complete and catastrophic failure of the planning system and it now seems that the road is clear for residents and local organisations to provide details of their concerns about what went wrong that could feed into an open, transparent, and independent review of this planning process fiasco.
- vi. Could the secret report from 10th January now be published along with the minutes of the committee's discussion of that report?

In response the Executive Councillor said the following:

- i. The planning application had been assessed by Planning Officers including consultation with the Council's specialists and the recommendation framed by Officers accordingly.
- ii. Members of the Planning Committee disagreed with the planning balance that was struck by Officers, having regarded all material considerations and contrary to the Officer recommendation, refused the application. The applicant did not revise and resubmit the application but submitted an appeal against the decision to the Planning Inspectorate.
- iii. The Planning Inspector, following a public inquiry that rehearsed the planning arguments at length, reached a conclusion that, subject to refinement of the planning conditions, the proposal was broadly

- consistent with the original assessment process undertaken by Officers, and allowed the appeal.
- iv. The Planning Committee discussed the appeal process and decision in closed session on 10 March. At this point the judicial review had not occurred.
 - v. A legal challenge to the High Court of the Inspector's reasoning, based upon the assessment of the environmental factors was unsuccessful.
 - vi. At closure of the High Court application this resulted in the planning application having been scrutinised as a policy compliant application at three stages, namely, the City Council Planning Committee, a Public Inquiry led by an Inspector and a review of an Inspector's decision by a High Court Judge. The conclusion being that the High Court Judge refused permission for Friends of Paradise application to challenge the Inspector's decision.
 - vii. In this case, the appeal was upheld. All appeals are discussed whether upheld or not. Would ensure that the Planning Committee would be given the opportunity to discuss the application with members involved in the original discussion.
 - viii. The Council was acutely conscious of the challenges to our vulnerable ecosystems caused by climate change pressures and the potential impact from new development. The shared planning service regularly reviewed its processes as part of an ongoing response to such pressures and the feedback from residents.
 - ix. Was encouraged that, for example, the pre-application process now included provision for elected Councillors to raise any community concerns at the earliest stage.
 - x. Members and Officers would continue to take into consideration any contributions received as part of the planning process to inform any recommendation for the grant or otherwise of planning permission.
 - xi. Would be happy to discuss the issue further outside of this meeting.

The following supplementary was asked:

- i. At the Planning Committee on 6 March, the case officer recommended approval for an application which impacted on another important City and County wildlife site, the Adams Road Bird Sanctuary, supported by the Ecology Officer and 35 conditions.
- ii. The bats, bird and amphibians cannot speak for themselves but should fall to the Ecology Officers who are appointed to protect them. It was not clear why these Officers were reluctant to use the policies in the Local Plan to do so but chose to propose mitigation with unrealistic conditions.

- iii. Ward Councillor, Councillor S Smith presented to the Planning Committee an analysis of the inaccuracies and inconsistencies in the ecology officer's report.
- iv. Residents welcomed the vote of the Planning Committee against Officer recommendation and refused the application.
- v. Believed that Officers had not learnt from the review process. Could the Executive Councillor provide a time scale for a full call of evidence to be submitted and when and how these issues would be answered by the planning service.

The Executive Councillor responded:

- i. Had sat on the Planning Committee held on 6 March. The Committee had read through all the available documents, listened to the case officer and every other point put forward by the applicant and public speakers. The Committee's decision was not just based on the Officer recommendation.
- ii. Not yet aware if this application would go to appeal.
- iii. The pre-application process had the opportunity for committee members and ward councillors to raise issues much earlier in the procedure.
- iv. Would continue to work with officers to monitor the planning process to ensure it was as open and transparent as possible.

Q3)

- i. To make things marginally more straightforward for cyclists, the Greenways Project Team proposed to move the light-controlled Barton Road crossing by Grantchester Road closer to the junction.
- ii. This would require in addition moving the off-road bus stop outside Wolfson College on to the road, where it would considerably obstruct traffic, sometimes for a not insignificant period whilst a bus waits for its scheduled departure time.
- iii. Did the Committee consider this quite unnecessary plan acceptable?

The Executive Councillor responded:

- i. The Planning and Transport Committee were not the responsible Local Authority for this scheme, which had been approved by the Greater Cambridge Partnership Board (GCP) in 2022, therefore could not discuss in detail the transport scheme.
- ii. Sat on the GCP Assembly which was responsible for the scrutiny of proposed schemes before they went to the GCP Board for approval.
- iii. As a member of the GCP Assembly would investigate the issues that had been raised, where the scheme was in the development process and would highlight the points made with the Assembly.
- iv. Would also be happy to meet on site to discuss the issues raised further.

The supplementary raised the following points:

- i. Would be a disaster if the scheme went ahead.
- ii. To move the Barton Road crossing nearer the junction, the bus stop outside Wolfson College would have to be relocated on the road, currently it was off road where it did not block traffic.
- iii. Had shown a video to the GCP of a bus parking on the road outside of Wolfson College and the distribution to the flow of traffic it had caused.
- iv. The Director of the GCP responded that research had shown curb side stops increase mobility for passengers as the bus saves times by not turning into the layby or waits to enter the flow of traffic.
- v. Questioned whether research had been undertaken to the disruption, stopping of traffic. Was irrelevant if the bus could leave quicker as the interruption to the traffic should be more important.
- vi. Was advised that 'putting the crossing close to a junction makes it more attractive to users'. A factor that should not have been taken into consideration.
- vii. Does the Committee agree that the consultation was not carried out correctly and that due process would now be followed.

The Executive Councillor responded:

- i. The GCP was the Transport Authority responsible for this scheme and was not for this Committee to make comment.
- ii. Points raised with regards to lived experience, walking the roads and footpaths were valid in all aspects of place making.
- iii. Would be happy to meet at the site and take comments back to the GCP Assembly, if no changes could be made perhaps there could be improvements to recommend for the next scheme.

Q4)

- i. Often crossed the road at the end of Grantchester Road. The plan was to narrow the road and remove the pedestrian island (an essential safety feature).
- ii. A new raised crossing further down the road would simply not be used. Young people (many coming out of the language School situated right where the traffic island was now) would simply risk crossing at the end of the road where they currently do.
- iii. Did the Committee believe that the proposed changes to the Grantchester Road/Barton Road junction would make it safer for pedestrians?

In response the Executive Councillor said the following:

- i. Appreciated the detail put forward on what the public speaker had experienced, and the points raised.

- ii. This was not the correct forum to highlight concerns with the scheme as the City Council were not the Transport Authority.
- iii. Would like to meet to discuss the matter further and take the points raised to the GCP Assembly.

The following supplementary points were made.

- i. Had been advised by Cambridgeshire County Council that decisions over the permanent traffic regulation order, were this month, be delegated to the sole control of the GCP Transport Director and unnamed elected members.
- ii. This would deny residents the opportunity to make representations, present questions, or petitions to a Committee.
- iii. This was undemocratic and would further convince residents that the GCP, already widely distrusted, was an unaccountable out of control behemoth.
- iv. Cambridge City Council was represented on the GCP, therefore would ask if Councillors supported this delegation of power, if not, would they take steps to reverse this decision in the interest of democracy and transparency.

The Executive Councillor said the following:

- i. It was possible to collect and present petitions at the GCP Assembly. Any of the elected members, such as Ward Councillors, Parish Councillors, or members of the GCP Assembly could speak on behalf of residents.
- ii. Would advise residents to speak to their Ward Councillors, it was important that residents' voices were heard directly or through elected members.

Q5)

- i. The Fanshawe and Davy Neighbours Group, met with the Assistant Director and Project Manager of Development at Cambridge City Council and we seem dependent on their answers to our questions with regards to the Fanshawe Road development.
- ii. Was shocked and disturbed that no social rents were going to be provided at the new development, especially when twenty-two council tenants were moved out, presumably some or all of them paying social rents.
- iii. How could it be justified or ethical to move on social rent paying tenants to make room for affordable rent tenants who will be people of greater financial means?

- iv. Would ask if the same was being planned for Davy Road now? Shall we inform the tenants there that they won't be able to afford to move back in (if that is offered as a persuasive tactic as it was with the Fanshawe Road tenants)?
- v. In the context of building during a climate and ecological crisis, the Council had publicly recognised that the green spaces in front and behind the Fanshawe Road flats were protected, which means protected from development, so how is it possible that the Council themselves now propose to build on that protected green space?
- vi. Further, the Project Manager of the Development tells us that: "An ecology survey has been undertaken to assess the quality of the existing biodiversity. They use standard metrics to quantify what is at the site, and landscape designs were measured against this to assess the proposed net gain or loss. The proposal for this particular site is shown to provide a net increase of 35% compared with existing.
- vii. Expert advice was sought on biodiversity, including the assessment of existing species, how a development might impact them and how this can be managed."
- viii. We are still confused and upset by the lack of detail into the important local ecology and justification for removing established healthy trees and pouring concrete on green space. We are no clearer on how 'biodiversity net gain' is calculated and lack confidence in whatever it promises. Is it possible for said experts, the Ecology Consultants, to come and speak with the Fanshawe and Davy Neighbours Group to explain to us in detail what it means and how it can be used to justify building on protected green space?"

The Executive Councillor made the following points:

- i. The questions and concerns regarded a proposed development that had not yet been permitted for planning.
- ii. It was not for the Planning and Transport Committee to discuss planning applications or how schemes were being developed.
- iii. The Committee were concerned with the general planning process.
- iv. Concerns raised in the public question would be considered for discussion under material considerations when the application came to the Planning Committee for deliberation. The design and standards of new homes (including council homes) would also be reviewed against the relevant policies in the Local Plan, including landscape and open spaces, ecology, trees, how the rooms were set out, if they would be warm in the winter, cold in the summer. Consideration, if able, would also be given to the tenure and leasehold arrangements of the development.

The following supplementary points were raised:

- i. The Council's Development Team has indicated a target of building 1000 council homes by 2030 to reduce the Council's waiting list of 2729, as of 8 March 2024.
- ii. The number of families without a permanent home and in short-term housing stood 121,122 children nationwide according to data collated by the House of Commons Library.
- iii. Questioned how many of those on the Council's housing waiting list would have their needs met by the affordable homes that were proposed at Fanshawe Road; don't these people, especially those in temporary accommodation need social housing at social rent.
- iv. Affordable rent catered to a different income, employed professionals are the only people who were looking for affordable rent.
- v. None of the council housing built on Fanshawe Road would help those in desperate need and would do nothing to assist those at risk of and those who were currently homeless.
- vi. Questioned if the Fanshawe Road development would meet biodiversity requirements when it was proposed to remove the trees at the front of the development and new trees planted elsewhere.
- vii. Dealing with nature in economic terms would be a false economy as many of the newly planted trees in Fanshawe Road had perished due to the extreme weather in the last few years.
- viii. Through the process of development, the ground in the area would be churned up and compacted by heavy machinery and contaminated with concrete dust. Asked over what period would there be a net gain in biodiversity.
- ix. The development would eradicate the habitats of many species that had been found in the area around Fanshawe Road flats. Damaging the habitats of swifts and bats was illegal.

The Executive Councillor responded with the following:

- i. Was unable to talk specifically about the application.
- ii. All the points were raised were covered by planning policies, the Planning Committee would be made aware of any changes in legislation.
- iii. The Planning Committee was a semi judicial, non-political committee whose members had undertaken considerable training on relevant planning matters. An application had to be considered under material considerations and policies, not what the individual members believed or felt.
- iv. All issues raised would be considered by the Planning Committee down to the construction process; the application should be policy compliant and meet the expectations of good house keeping in City.

Q6)

- i. Following the complete removal of around 90 incorrectly constructed foundations and related underground services and structures built at Darwin Green BDW 2, in advance of the introduction of new Building Regulations on 15th June 2022, has Barratt David Wilson Homes confirmed the replacement dwellings will be built in accordance with the new regulations which provide for better ventilation, conservation of fuel and power and mitigation of overheating?

The Executive Councillor responded with the following.

- i. Barratt David Wilson have confirmed that the replacement dwellings would not be built to the new standards for ventilation, conservation of fuel and power and mitigation of overheating.
- ii. 3C Building Control, the Council's shared in-house Building Control service were in the process of taking legal advice as to next steps.

Q7)

- i. Was the Council's shared Building Control service, as the enforcing body, receiving the full co-operation and timely support of Barratts David Wilson Homes, in response to its requests to inspect and check whether the foundations of the thirteen dwellings to be retained at Darwin Green BDW 2 were built in compliance with the approved design?

The Executive Councillor said the following:

- i. Following the request from 3C Building Control several months ago, BDW invited the inhouse Building Control Service to inspect areas that had been exposed on three plots that were proposed to be retained. This happened last week.
- ii. 3C Building Control observed no discrepancies in the installation of heave precaution to the exposed plots against the design. However, the proposed retained plots are situated in three locations and the inspection was only carried out in two locations. Therefore, 3C Building Control still required one of the plots in the last area to be exposed for inspection. This would be arranged as soon as possible.

24/13PnT Greater Cambridge Local Plan Timetable**Matter for Decision**

This report provided an update regarding the Local Plan Timetable (previously called the Local Development Scheme (LDS)), of a new or revised development plan documents that set out the planning policy framework for Greater Cambridge.

The report also provided an update of the timetable for the North East Cambridge Area Action Plan (NECAAP), considering the latest timetable for the Cambridge Waste Water Treatment Plant (CWWTP) Development Consent Order (DCO) process seeking to relocate the CWWTP to Honey Hill.

Decision of the Executive Councillor for Planning, Building Control and Infrastructure

- i. Agreed that The Local Plan Timetable Update at Appendix 1 of the Officer's report be added as an Addendum to the Greater Cambridge Local Development Scheme 2022 and published on the Greater Cambridge Planning website.
- ii. Write to Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC), together with the Lead Member for Planning at South Cambridgeshire District Council, providing an update on the plan making timetable for Greater Cambridge reflecting the contents of this report.
- iii. Agreed that the Greater Cambridge local planning authorities should explore further with Government the opportunity to be a 'front-runner' pilot for the new plan-making process.
- iv. Agreed that a further report with a proposed specific timetable for both plans be brought to Members when there was clarity on the external dependencies of water, transport the CWWTP DCO, the new plan-making system and Cambridge 2040 Programme.

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 Planning Policy Manager.

In response to Members' questions the Planning Policy Manager, Planning Policy and Strategy Team Leader and Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development said the following:

- i. The Water Scarcity Working Group (WSWG) consisted of representatives from various organisations, such as the Environment Agency, Ofwat, Local Government officials and industry stake holders and was nonpolitical.

- ii. The WSWG were focused on finding practical solutions to mitigate water scarcity. Promoting water efficiency measures to reduce demand and collaborating on long-term infrastructure planning to ensure sustainable water supply.
- iii. The group were aware of the need to have tested schemes in place on all developments that reduced demand and would assist in changing water use habits.
- iv. Currently WSWG were exploring pilot schemes to test how these measures were applied and measure the impact over time.
- v. Was aware of other projects looking at evidenced solutions, for example Officers were working with water industry representatives exploring water recycling measures, the implementation practicalities and cost of the scheme. The evidence would be used for the Greater Cambridge Local Plan.
- vi. Discussions were being held with Cambridge Water regarding monitoring, particularly the efficient application of the delivery of smart meters. Monitoring data from a smart meter could identify 'constant flow' issues within a property which may be due to faulty equipment.
- vii. There had been work nationally on the proposed implementation of water labelling. This would allow consumers to make informed choices when purchasing water-using products. By understanding the water efficiency of these products, people could be encouraged to select options that saved water.
- viii. The WSWG were aware of common issues with dual flush toilets; that these did not necessarily save as much water as had originally intended.
- ix. Cambridge Water had recently published an updated draft of their Water Resources Management Plan. Believed there were more significant commitments in this plan such as the roll out of smart meters.
- x. Cambridge Water's latest draft Water Resources Management Plan sought to engage with concerns regarding what would happen if the measures for leakage reduction and water conservation were not effective, including the consideration of the supply for non-domestic water.
- xi. The Water Resources Management Plan would be reviewed by the Environment Agency amongst others and agreed by the Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA).
- xii. The Water Resources Management Plan highlighted an accelerated and enhanced campaign to promote effective water usage. Education was key to highlight that every drop of water mattered, and people should consider how it was being used.

- xiii. Anglian Water's Water Resources Management Plan outlined proposals to build a new reservoir in the Fens and to bring supply of water from Grafham Water reservoir to the Cambridge area.
- xiv. Agreed that there had been questions at how effective the monitoring of performance of water usage had been in the past.
- xv. Cambridge Water drew water from thirty-one abstraction points around the Greater Cambridge area. The Environment Agency closely monitored these points and were in many cases, imposing caps on the abstraction levels. These figures were compared to the level of commitment regarding the levels of abstraction of water from those resources.
- xvi. There was a much tighter focus in the Water Resources Management Plan on highlighting the trigger points for action during very hot summers such as when to impose a hose pipe ban.
- xvii. The Secretary of State's written ministerial statement allowed local authorities to establish tighter water usage standards, if justified.
- xviii. It would exceed a planning authority's power to limit water usage or shut off drinking water to a particular property. There may be additional requirements for washing, consumption of water for health or medical reasons, as each household's circumstances were different.
- xix. Noted the suggestion that a limit on water usage per household could be set and if exceeded, an increase in the cost of consumption should increase but pricing was a matter for Ofwat and not for a local authority to determine. Performance against the Water Resources Management Plan would be a matter for Ofwat as the industry regulator.
- xx. The resources required to monitor the water usage on the total number of homes in Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire would be significant with no obvious enforcement in the event of water usage being exceeded.
- xxi. Following the Greater Cambridge Partnership's decision not to pursue Making Connections, Officers had asked Cambridgeshire County Council to re-run the traffic model that underpinned the Local Plan First Proposals. The Planning Policy Team was waiting for the final report which would advise of the impact in terms of any quantification of percentages or trip numbers.
- xxii. Early findings from the model indicated that assumptions associated with the wider GCP City Access scheme would have effectively reduced the number of vehicles on the city road network. The effect of not introducing a scheme of this kind (that would suppress the number of trips) would accordingly lead to additional trips from existing traffic remaining. This would impact assessments of additional capacity as part of any re-run modelling.

- xxiii. One of the key elements of the emerging Local Plan was responding to climate change. This included reducing private car use by directing new development to locations that enable residents and workers to travel cycling around the city by sustainable means, including by public transport, walking and cycling.
- xxiv. If private vehicle trips were not reduced this would result in existing and proposed public transport solutions becoming less effective, since the buses would be held up in private vehicle congestion.
- xxv. Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) had committed to prepare a Greater Cambridge 'child' document to the wider Local Transport and Connectivity Plan that covered the entire area covered by the CPCA. This document was expected to sit alongside the emerging Local Plan.
- xxvi. With the proposed thirty-month deadline timescale for councils to produce their local plans there would be an element of risk in meeting those deadlines, as not all the details were yet known. However, a key benefit of the new system is a set six-month period for the examination process. In comparison, the examination of the current Local Plan had taken four and half years; within the current system there was no guarantee of the examination timetable to enable quick progression towards adoption.
- xxvii. Regulations for the new local plan process were still awaited from Central Government. Government has yet to confirm which Local Planning Authorities might be 'front runners' in this process. However, the Shared Planning service is already engaging positively with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUCH) on a range of topics including regarding digitising the plan-making system, on which the planning service which had been doing innovative work.
- xxviii. Officers were working on projects highlighted to DLUCH to improve the planning process and services, such as how representations could be processed quicker and had held discussions on how a templated approach to plan making would work.
- xxix. Suggested that as the changes to the local plan process became implemented, Officers would continue dialogue with DLUCH ensuring the system worked and a new plan produced as quickly as possible.
- xxx. Several sites in the Northeast of Cambridge were covered by an allocation in the adopted Local Plan for employment led use. Officers were using the evidence base that had been prepared in compiling the North East Cambridge Area Action Plan (NECAAP) to assist, where relevant, in the responses to the planning applications received for this area.

- xxxi. A team of Officers had been appointed and overseen by a senior officer to deal with the planning applications in NEC to ensure a consistent approach in the development to the area.
- xxxii. The Joint Development Control Committee were receiving an increase in developer presentations in the North East area to understand the connection of all these schemes.
- xxxiii. There were challenges of the delivery of a comprehensive infrastructure in the North East area and Officers were working with the County Council to resolve these issues. Work was being done to determine if this area was appropriate to bring forward a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) such as for strategic transport contributions.
- xxxiv. In pre-application discussions Officers referred to the NECAAP to provide guidance and to measure the achievement of the outcomes that the developers were bringing forward against the objectives in the action plan.
- xxxv. Officers were also tracking the variances between the NECAAP, and the proposals being brought forward, to “sense check” whether the schemes deviated or met the goals set in the action plan.
- xxxvi. Although the NECAAP held very limited weight as a planning policy document it outlined the Council’s clear ambition for the area.
- xxxvii. There had been a huge amount of material evidence used to underpin the NECAAP at the draft Plan stage but also Regulation 19 Proposed Submission stage. This evidence covered a range of issues from ecology, noise, infrastructure provision and mode share. Reiterated that Officers would stress the importance of NECAAP when discussing pre-applications with developers. The evidence would also be used as a reference point when planning applications came to committee.
- xxxviii. Agreed to the suggestion that there should be a reference to Central Government’s Cambridge 2040 Programme (likely to change to Cambridge 2050 programme) at the Officer’s recommendation point iv.
- xxxix. It would not be possible to bring a further update on both plans to the next scrutiny meeting scheduled for June.

The Committee voted **unanimously** to endorse the Officer recommendations.

The Executive Councillor for Planning, Building Control and Transport approved the recommendations.

The Executive Councillor informed the Committee that currently she would not recommend passing planning powers to a Development Corporation as referenced in the Government’s Cambridge 2040 programme. The planning process should remain as the democratic process that was currently followed.

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

None

24/14PnT Statement of Community Involvement**Matter for Decision**

This report referred to the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) which outlined how the Council would engage on planning matters and were obligated to review at least every five years.

Decision of the Executive Councillor for Planning, Building Control and Infrastructure

- i. Considered the main issues raised in the public consultation, agreed responses to the representations received and agreed proposed changes to the Statement of Community Involvement as set out in the Statement of Consultation (Appendix 1 of the Officer's report).
- ii. Agreed to adopt the amended Greater Cambridge Statement of Community Involvement (Appendix 2 of the Officer's report); and
- iii. Delegated to the Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development, in consultation with the Executive Councillor for planning policy and transport and the Chair and the Opposition Spokes for the Planning, Building Control and Infrastructure Scrutiny Committee, the authority to make any necessary editing changes to the SCI 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 Committee received a report from the Senior Planning Policy Officer who updated the Members on the following:

- i. Paragraph 4.13 would be amended accordingly as the Disability Review Panel merged into the Cambridge Design Review Panel as agreed at Planning Committee on 6 March.
- ii. Hayden in South Cambridgeshire District Council had been designated as a neighbourhood area with the purpose of preparing a neighbourhood plan on 15 March. Therefore, paragraph 3.14 would be amended to

stated that there was now eighteen neighbourhood area designated in Greater Cambridge.

In response to Members' questions the Senior Planning Policy Officer, Planning Policy and Strategy Team Leader and Joint Director of Planning & Economic Development said the following:

- xi. Believed that the Shared Planning Services had a good reputation in terms of public engagement and had tried to raise as much awareness regarding consultations events as possible.
- xli. The Council's social media was a powerful tool, and Officers did factor in community led social media platforms into the communications strategy, both at Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council, for consultation events.
- xlii. During the last consultation on the emerging Local Plan the Comms team had actively responded to some of the comments as they were received, which were then re-shared with local community groups.
- xlili. Officers worked hard to de-jargon the terminology and explain the planning process in simpler terms as it was a very technical process, the aim was to enable the public to feel empowered to be able to make comment on the consultations that were run.
- xliv. Non-internet engagement was just as important as digital engagement. Officers had held door to door consultation events with the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community, targeted college engagements, posters had been installed at bus stops and various notice boards, both in Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire.
- xlvi. Noted the suggested that shop notice boards could be used as part of public engagement, particularly in rural areas; however, this was when engagement with parish councils and ward councillors became important as they became a conduit to share, pass on the information and encourage residents to take part in the consultation process.
- xlvii. Would look at the suggestion to explore opportunities to embed the terminology to the glossary.
- xlviii. The Shared Planning Service had a long-term commitment to the youth engagement service. This was a positive tool to communicate with harder to hear communities or those who conventionally did not engage but had done so through young people.
- lix. Could strengthen the section in relation to developer engagement with the local communities.

The Committee voted **unanimously** to endorse the Officer recommendations.

The Executive Councillor for Planning, Building Control and Transport approved the recommendations.

The Executive Councillor informed Members there would be a new framework for the Pre-Application Process allowing Ward Councillors and members of the Planning Committee to integrate engagement at certain stages of the process. During the last consultation for the emerging Local Plan there had been 8,000 responses, usually a consultation would bring 300 to 400 responses. The results were a testament to the work and engagement of the Shared Planning Services.

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

None.

The meeting ended at 7.40 pm

CHAIR