

**DEVELOPMENT PLAN SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE**

16 April 2013  
4.30 - 7.08 pm

**Present:** Councillors Reid (Chair), Saunders (Vice-Chair), Blencowe, Price, Marchant-Daisley and Tucker

Executive Councillor for Planning and Climate Change: Councillor Ward

**Officers Present:**

Head of Planning - Patsy Dell

Head of Strategic Housing - Alan Carter

Senior Planning Policy Officer - Joanna Gilbert-Wooldridge

Planning Policy Transport Officer - Matthew Bowles

Senior Planning Policy Officer - Bruce Waller

Principal Conservation and Design Officer - Christian Brady

Cycling and Walking Officer - Clare Rankin

**FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL**

**13/21/DPSSC Apologies**

**13/22/DPSSC Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Saunders, and Councillor Reid	13/25/DPSSC	Member of Cambridge Past, Present and Future
Councillor Saunders and Councillor Reid	13/25/DPSSC	Member of Cambridge Cycling Campaign

**Chair's Announcement**

Councillor Reid proposed that the committee agree a work plan for the next meeting as there would be a very full agenda.

The Head of Planning suggested that the next meeting should start at 2.00pm with the business of the meeting split into two sections with an hours break between them. This was agreed.

A technical briefing in advance of the meeting was also agreed. This will be on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> May 2013 at 1.30pm.

### **13/23/DPSSC Minutes**

Minutes of previous meetings will agreed at the next meeting.

### **13/24/DPSSC Public Questions (See Below)**

Nigel Parry-Jones addressed the committee and made the following points:

- There is a conflict of interest in the needs to encourage major developments and the protection of heritage assets.
- The County Council's viewpoint on highways is missing from documents. Without this how can accessibility and sustainability be assessed?
- Reference is made to a formula to measure travel to work distances and this needs further clarification.
- Reference is also made to a 2 mile radius in regard to education. This is a fiscal rather than a planning matter.

Councillor Reid and Councillor Ward responded and stated that all policies seek to set priorities to enable good decision to be made. However, decisions on individual planning matters would need to be made using judgement call based in the individual circumstances.

Mr Parry-Jones asked a supplementary question on a matter outside the remit of this committee. Councillor Reid suggested that he seek technical advice from officers outside the meeting.

### **13/25/DPSSC Cambridge Local Plan -Towards 2031 - Issues and Options 2 consultation feedback**

#### **Matter for Decision:**

The current local plan was adopted in July 2006 and runs to 2016 and beyond. The committee report to 25th March 2013 Development Plan Scrutiny Sub Committee explained the background and next steps for preparation of the

new local plan. The committee was asked to consider and comment on the following sections:

- i. Section Three – Responding to Climate Change and Managing Resources (draft policies on Cambridge Airport Public Safety Zone and Air Safeguarding Zones, hazardous installations and protection of the Radio Astronomy Observatory at Lord’s Bridge);
- ii. Section Five – Providing a balanced supply of Housing (draft policy on Affordable Housing);
- iii. Six – Protecting and Enhancing the Character of Cambridge (draft policies on urban design and historic environment matters);
- iv. Section Seven – Services and Local Facilities (draft policies on community facilities, pubs and district and local shopping centres); and
- v. Section Eight – Providing Transport Infrastructure (draft policies on access to development, transport mitigation and parking management).

### **Decision of Executive Councillor for Planning and Climate Change:**

The Executive Councillor resolved to:

- i. Agree the tranche 3 draft plan sections to be put forward into the composite full draft plan;
- ii. Consider feedback from this committee on the accompanying policy justification documents for each draft policy, which will be published alongside the draft plan as an audit trail of how the policy was evidenced, consulted on and assessed; and
- iii. Agree that any amendments and editing changes that need to be made prior to the version put to Environment Scrutiny Committee in June and Full Council in June should be agreed by the Executive Councillor in consultation with the Chair and Spokesperson.

### **Reason for the Decision:**

As set out in the Officer’s report.

### **Any Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:**

Not applicable.

### **Scrutiny Considerations:**

The Committee considered the report section by section.

### Appendix A: Section 3

Policy 20: Members endorsed the approach suggested, but requested additional wording to clarify the site by site approach.

Policy 21: References to Manchester University / Jodrell Bank needed to be clarified.

#### Appendix B: Section 5

Policy 27: Members questioned the viability assessments expressed in the table on page 23 of the report. Officers confirmed that the viability assessments had been based on the viability work prepared by consultants. Members instructed officers to review the viability of a lower than 10 unit threshold to see if this could be achieved.

The following concerns were expressed regarding this policy:

- i. The wording regarding the provision of and negotiation on numbers of Affordable Housing units to be built was not considered robust enough.
- ii. It was suggested that the policy could ask for 75% of the Affordable Housing to be offered as social rented units.
- iii. The overall commitment to Affordable Housing needed to be more strongly expressed.
- iv. Not seeking the maximum number of Affordable Housing units on all developments would be a missed opportunity.
- v. The use of the phrase 'in perpetuity' was questioned.
- vi. Wording regarding the definitions of Affordable Housing were considered inconsistent and needed further editing.

The Head of Planning stated that her team would investigate viability issues further with the consultants and would keep members informed by e-mail. Whilst viability appraisals could be requested for any application, these were expensive and it was not considered reasonable to expect one for every small-scale development. The approach set out in the document had been suggested as this was a common approach taken by other authorities and offered clarity to officers and developers. A policy that rendered small developments unviable ran the risk that it might not be justified if challenged.

The Head of Strategic Housing confirmed that the first paragraph of page 28 could be amended to clarify the number of housing units the council would be likely to deliver in the next few years.

In response to questions the Head of Planning confirmed the following points

- i. Co-operative housing could be submitted for consideration as Affordable Housing.
- ii. The Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document would be redrafted as soon as possible to reflect the changes to the Local Plan.
- iii. Supplementary Planning Documents were used to flesh out the Local Plan and it was not possible to cover all details in the plan.
- iv. Whilst all social housing providers were encouraged to cap rents at 65% of market rates, the Council had no authority to enforce this.
- v. The inclusion of employment linked housing was intended to encourage land owning employers to consider small scale development of housing for their own work force.

### Appendix C: Section 5

The Senior Planning Policy Officer and Principal Conservation and Design Officer introduced this section of the report.

Member of the Committee made the following comments:

- i. Design standards appeared to be stronger in the existing Local Plan.
- ii. The pursuit of excellence should be emphasised.
- iii. The inclusion of 'responds to context' for all areas was welcomed.
- iv. The three key objectives of the existing Local Plan should be incorporated into the new plan.
- v. Concern was expressed that not enough weight was given to protecting open spaces.
- vi. Members expressed a desire to discourage gated communities whenever possible.
- vii. Policy 39 needed greater reference to public art.
- viii. Policy 40 required more on design quality.
- ix. Was the phrase 'positive impact' strong enough given the intention to aim high?
- x. Additional wording was needed regarding numbering schemes and external letterboxes.
- xi. Policy 41 lacks clarity on roof extensions and needs to give more importance to open spaces.
- xii. Members questioned tree protection measures. This would be covered at the next meeting.
- xiii. Policy 44 needed additional wording to address green spaces as heritage assets to give them more protection.
- xiv. Members suggested that contrasting buildings could enhance an area. The Principal Conservation and Design Officer confirmed that the policy

approach did not preclude contrasting buildings being brought forward, if they were of high design quality.

- xv. The inclusion of a reference to buildings of local interest in plan was suggested.
- xvi. Policy 46 and 47 were noted.

#### Appendix D: Section 7

The Head of Planning requested that members paid particular attention to the maps and feedback any errors they noticed as soon as possible.

Members noted the approach of encouraging retail diversity but were concerned that this might not offer enough protection.

Concerns were raised that Cambridge Leisure Park had become a small retail centre. This had allowed empty units to be filled, but limited future leisure uses on the site. The Head of Planning suggested that the retail units were valued by local residents. However, the boundary of the leisure area could be re-examined.

The Senior Planning Policy Officer advised members to consider the appendices alongside Policy 56 to add context.

Policies 57 and 58 were noted.

Members suggested that the table of public houses supporting Policy 59 needed to be re-ordered into ward order and the Fleur-de-Lys site would be investigated to confirm its status. In addition, further clarity was needed regarding the criteria for alternative commercial use.. An annual update of the list of public house sites would be needed.

#### Appendix E: Section 8

Policies 63 (Supporting Sustainable Access to Development) and 64 (Mitigating the Transport Impact of Development) were endorsed by Members.

Policy 65 (Parking Management):

The Planning Policy and Transport Officer introduced Appendix E and gave the following oral update on Policy 65 (Parking Management).

#### **Car Parking**

Option J1 (residential standards)

Supports: 4 Objects: 18 Comments: 2

#### Key Issues

- Still too much car parking in a city like Cambridge, more car free developments needed.
- Car free developments to be given more of a role in new policy.
- Concerns had been raised that not enough car parking pushes the problem elsewhere. However, it was counterproductive to provide more parking. Census shows right direction being taken
- The policy needed to be clearer for applicants.

Option J2 (non-residential standards remain)

Supports: 5 Objects: 5 Comments: 0

#### Key Issues:

- Policy seen as appropriate, with reasonable levels.
- Should be no Off-Street Parking for business developments in or near the Centre. However, dependant on use class, some essential.
- Must be flexible
- Inadequate provision – especially concerned about parking in Local Centres around Trumpington and community centres, surgeries etc.
- Businesses should provide adequate parking as miscalculations result in people parking on-street.

Option J4 (local circumstances criteria & garage dimensions)

Supports: 6 Objects: 6 Comments: 1

#### Key Issues:

- Some good support for this as it takes account of specific local issues, especially impact on surrounding streets.
- Needs to be clearer for applicants, and strays into County Council Highways Authority territory.
- County Council had been consulted and happy, and criteria made clearer in relation to transport assessments.

### **Cycle Parking**

Option K1 (cycle parking)

Supports: 7 Objects: 16 Comments: 1

#### Key Issues:

- Good level of support in principal.
- Wording does not provide certainty on number of cycle parking spaces required (staff numbers).
- Lack of cycle parking in Cambridge city centre needs addressing.
- The Transport Strategy for Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire helping to deal with this along with standards
- Cycle parking should more convenient than car parking.
- Cycle parking standards still inadequate, with more needed.
- Should refer to Cycle Parking in New Developments Guidance.
- Policy should specify exact design and layout standards

Member of the Committee noted the update and made the following comments:

- i. Members noted that the policy would be delivered predominantly by using the opportunities of new developments.
- ii. National and local good practice guidelines would be considered.
- iii. Members asked if car free developments could be checked post development to ensure car parking is not simply displaced to surrounding areas.
- iv. Requiring cycle parking to be more convenient than car parking was suggested.
- v. Members requested that double row cycle ranks only be used where unavoidable or where cycle parking is predominantly for students and Cambridge cyclists tended to be older than the national norm and /or often used heavier cycles.
- vi. Stronger encouragement for car clubs was suggested.

The Head of Planning reminded members that there were difficulties in reading the plan section by section.. However, when read as a complete document, those matters would be seen within the whole plan and that should clarify Members' concerns in May.

The Committee resolved by 3 votes to 0 to endorse the recommendations.

The Executive Councillor approved the recommendations.

**Conflicts of interest declared by the Executive Councillor (and any dispensations granted)**

Not applicable.

The meeting ended at 7.08 pm



**CHAIR**