

# Public Document Pack

Council

Cncl/1

Monday, 30 November 2015

## COUNCIL

30 November 2015

6.00 - 7.30 pm

**Present:** Councillors Abbott, Ashton, Austin, Avery, Baigent, Benstead, Bick, Bird, Blencowe, Cantrill, Dryden, Gawthrop, Gehring, Gillespie, Hart, Herbert, Hipkin, Holt, Johnson, McPherson, Meftah, Moore, O'Connell, O'Reilly, Owers, Perry, Pippas, Pitt, Price, Ratcliffe, Reid, Roberts, Robertson, Sarris, Sinnott, C.Smart, M. Smart, Smith, Todd-Jones and Tunnacliffe

### FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL

#### 15/115/CNL Mayor's Announcements

##### 1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors Holland and Sanders.

##### 2. Declarations of Interest

| Name              | Item       | Reason  |
|-------------------|------------|---|
| Councillor Ashton | 15/117/CNL | Personal: Chair of Cherry Hinton Residents Association  |
| Councillor Dryden | 15/117/CNL | Personal. Member of Cherry Hinton Residents Association |

#### 15/116/CNL Public Questions Time

Members of the public made a number of statements, as set out below.

- 1) Mr Michael Carpenter made the following points:
  - i. Paragraph 21 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires Local Plans “to identify and plan for new or emerging sectors likely to locate in the area and to plan positively for the location, promotion and expansion of clusters or networks of knowledge driven, creative or high technology industries”. To be found sound, the Local Plan must be based on up to date and robust evidence to satisfy the requirement to meet the need in specific employment sectors.

- ii. Since the Local Plans submitted in 2013 were based on an Employment Land Review, dated 2012, that was itself based on some key data from 2010, the land available for the specific sector of bio-medical healthcare and life-sciences requiring a specific location in close proximity to CBC and Addenbrooke's Hospital has reduced from 16.43 (table 5.2 of CCLP) to 3.2 hectares. With the addition of a provisional allocation in the proposed modifications of 8.91 hectares the total land available for this sector, based on current take up rates would last 3.9 years from today.
  - iii. While we welcome the attempt by the Council to identify the potential for land to meet an obvious need, should the requirement to ensure a sound plan not be supported by a more robust review of that part of the Employment Land Review dealing with the specific sector where the shortfall is most marked and immediate and should there not be greater clarity that there is a realistic prospect of delivery?"
- 2) Mr Michael Carpenter then put forward the following:
- i. Evidence showed that sites around the urban fringe of Cambridge have delivered 40% affordable housing (Trumpington Meadows, Glebe Farm, Clay Farm, Bell School and Darwin Green) in compliance with planning policy. However, the level of affordable housing provided in new settlements in South Cambridgeshire is significantly lower with percentages as low as 20% (Phase 1 Northstowe). The urban fringe sites have a track record of achieving a high level of affordable housing.
  - ii. The recently prepared Viability Update considered the 'pot' of money available for Section 106 obligations and site infrastructure at Bourn and Cambourne West and it is clear that factors such as unidentified abnormal costs may affect the results.
  - iii. Given the historic record of affordable housing delivery, together with the recently prepared viability work and the previously developed nature of the site, there was no evidence to show that Waterbeach will deliver 40% affordable dwellings.
  - iv. Given the substantial need for social housing within Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire, and the impact that the right to buy changes proposed by Central Government could have on the housing stock in the Cambridge area, why have the Councils chosen not to allocate urban fringe sites, such as Cambridge South, that had a proven track record of delivering 40% affordable housing?

The Executive Councillor for Planning Policy and Transport responded:

- i. The City Council's Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) (2008) outlined the Council's objectives to deliver affordable housing in Cambridge. Housing must meet housing needs and contribute to the creation and maintenance of sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities. 40% of the buildings in new housing developments over a certain size should be classed as 'affordable'. It was important to maintain the figure of 40% for sites that had been designated for future development as demonstrated by the policies that were currently being set. An equivalent policy was also held by South Cambridgeshire District Council.
- ii. While it had been demonstrated that there are issues with Northstowe and the affordable housing quota, it was not possible to comment on any other up and coming sites as it was impossible to predict the future.
- iii. Development on phase one & and a sizeable part of phase two on land around Addenbrookes Hospital had been agreed. The City Council were currently consulting on modifications of phase three.
- iv. The Local Plan covered all development sites across the City, taking into account employment land, not just the land around Addenbrookes Hospital. It was important to look at the Local Plan overall.

Mr. Carpenter raised the following supplementary points:

- i. Sites at Waterbeach and Bourn had high infrastructure costs with monies from the City Deal already spent. All policies on affordable housing were subject to viability. It was widely agreed throughout the industry that such sites could not be relied upon to deliver 40% of affordable housing if infrastructure costs were high.
- ii. Many external organisations such as the University of Cambridge, the Medical Research Council, AstraZenca and Addenbrookes Hospital had all agreed a need for sufficient land close enough to the Hospital and the Biomedical Campus to allow a cluster effect for professionals and medical practitioners living and working in close proximity. It was not the case that other allocations in the City or beyond the City boundaries would perform the same function.

The Executive Councillor for Planning Policy and Transport responded with the following:

- i. The City Deal and others provisions would contribute with the cost of infrastructure which would assist with viability.

It was important to maintain a balance in terms of which employment sites were allocated, subject to a number of options such as sustainability.

- 3) Mr Robin Pellow of Cambridge Past Present and Future (PPF) raised the following:
- i. CambridgePPF welcomed the additional evidence that the City and South Cambridgeshire District Councils had provided in response to the comments from the Inspectors in May 2015. We believe that these independent reviews would greatly strengthen the spatial strategy proposed by the Councils in their submitted Local Plans and reinforce their arguments against the robust challenge that the developers would no doubt mount when the hearings are resumed.
  - ii. CambridgePPF signed a Statement of Common Ground with both Councils in October 2014 supporting the overall spatial strategy of keeping Cambridge a compact city with its historic setting protected by its Green Belt and with new residential development concentrated in new settlements beyond the Green Belt in South Cambridgeshire. This spatial strategy is sound only if the new settlements can be shown to be sustainable, especially with regard to their public transport services, compared with the alternative of more urban extensions. The additional evidence strengthens the case for the new settlements as sustainable developments.
  - iii. CambridgePPF particularly welcomed the review of the inner boundary of the Green Belt undertaken by LDA Design. We had been critical of the 2012 study done by the Councils on the grounds that the purposes of the Green Belt against which the importance of different sectors were assessed did not conform to the National Planning Policy Framework, and that the methodology itself was inconsistent and opaque. This new study is a more robust exercise which answers our criticisms. We believe it provides a sound basis for assessing the harm to the Cambridge Green Belt purposes that would arise if further land around the city fringe was to be released for development.
  - iv. Although we are in general agreement with the changes made by the Councils we would have expected both Councils to have produced a list of all brownfield sites in accordance with the DCLG's instructions. We believe such sites should be given priority in the development sequence and should certainly be taken before any further Green Belt land is released for development, as is still proposed at GB1 and GB2.

- v. CambridgePPF had already proposed a number of brownfield sites to the City Council, and was disappointed that these have not been placed in a register.
- vi. If a register was not available at what stage would it be available?
- vii. If the City Council intended to integrate such as register into the emerging Local Plan this should have been done before any amendments to the Plan were submitted. These sites should be a priority.

The Executive Councillor for Planning Policy and Transport responded:

- i. Planning Officers at City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Planners had looked at brownfield sites first, with 900 sites identified as part of the Strategic Housing Plan Availability Assessment.
- ii. When Central Government issued clear detail on brownfield registers the City Council would be able to respond formally and accordingly on the subject.

As a supplementary point Mr Pellew raised the following:

- i. Acknowledged the value of the Council's investigation of brownfield sites but it was four years ago at the start of the Local Plan investigations and should be readdressed.
- ii. There could be possible sites in the City which could now be brought forward for determination as brownfield sites and should be considered as priority.

The Executive Councillor for Planning Policy and Transport responded with the following:

- i. A presentation on suggested Brownfields sites for investigation had been presented at a meeting of the Full Council the previous year. These sites had been assessed and any new sites would be investigated accordingly if brought forward.

4) Mr Allan Brigham raised the following:

- i. The Cambridge Evening News had recently reported that 'hundreds of student flats being built in Cambridge were currently restricted to house students attending either at the University of Cambridge or Anglia Ruskin in the first instance. However proposed changes to the City Council's Local Plan would lift this restriction, potentially opening them up to

Cambridge's much talked about 'crammer colleges', which offer intensive and often extensive tuition to select band of colleges. Planning Officers said there was an argument to be more flexible with these arrangements and that developers of schemes approved under the old system would have a chance to appeal as and when the new rules came into place'.

- ii. Why was the City Council making changes which would weaken the emerging Local Plan when the volume of planning applications for student accommodation was already threatening the balance of local communities?
- iii. Additional student accommodation would lessen the opportunity for local residents to live in the City and the opportunity for affordable housing. Was this change in the best interests of local residents?

The Executive Councillor for Planning Policy and Transport responded:

- i. Applications would always be assessed on an individual basis
- ii. It could be argued that these modifications broadened how student providers were acknowledged and would welcome the recognition that they deserve.
- iii. The City had a strong academic tradition which should be recognised.

As a supplementary point Mr Brigham raised the following:

- i. Local residents had queried why students seemed to be offered a preference to live close to their place of work.
- ii. Local residents had to drive to their place of work as they could not afford to live in the City due to a lack of housing available and affordability.

The Executive Councillor for Planning Policy and Transport responded with the following:

- i. The policy had not yet been scrutinised by the Planning Inspectors.
- ii. There would be an opportunity for the public to make comment.

**15/117/CNL To consider the recommendations of the Executive for Adoption**

**15/117/CNL a Cambridge Local Plan: Consideration of Further Work and Consequential Modifications**

**Resolved (unanimously) to agree:**

- i. the consultation document with proposed modifications (Appendix A) as amended by the supplementary report (dated 27 November 2015) and sustainability appraisal (Appendix B), for public consultation between 2 December 2015 and 25 January 2016;
- ii. that any amendments and editing changes that need to be made to the consultation material with proposed modifications (Appendix A) and sustainability appraisal (Appendix B) be agreed by the Executive Councillor in consultation with the Chair and Spokes of Development Plan Scrutiny Sub Committee;
- iii. that the documents attached to this committee report as Appendices C to J are noted and submitted as part of the evidence base for the Local Plan;
- iv. That delegated authority be given to the Director of Environment to make any subsequent minor amendments and editing changes, in consultation with the Executive Councillor for Planning Policy and Transport.

The meeting ended at 7.30 pm

**MAYOR**

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