

DEVELOPMENT PLAN SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE

14 June 2011
9.30 - 10.40 am

Present: Councillors Nimmo-Smith (Chair), Saunders (Vice-Chair), Herbert, Marchant-Daisley, Stuart and Znajek

Executive Councillor for Planning and Sustainable Transport: Tim Ward

Officers present:

Patsy Dell (Head of Planning Services)
Sara Saunders (Planning Policy Manager)
Stephen Miles (Planning Policy & Economic Development Officer)
James Goddard (Committee Manager)

Others present:

Chris Green (SQW Consultant)

FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL

11/21/DPSSC Apologies

None.

11/22/DPSSC Declarations of Interest

Name	Item	Interest
Councillor Nimmo-Smith	11/26/DPSSC	Personal – Sits on NHS Research Ethics Committee to review drug trials.
Councillor Ward	11/26/DPSSC	Personal – Job requires some competition with migrant workers.
Councillor Znajek	11/26/DPSSC	Personal – Is an East Chesterton resident.
Councillor Herbert	11/27/DPSSC	Personal – Delivers some training on planning to Councillors.

11/23/DPSSC Minutes

The minutes of the 22 March 2011 meeting were approved and signed as a correct record.

11/24/DPSSC Public Questions (See Below)

None.

11/25/DPSSC Discussion on Timing of Future DPSSC Meetings

The committee discussed a proposal to move meeting start times. It was agreed that DPSSC would start at 4:30 pm for future meetings starting from 12 July 2011.

11/26/DPSSC Cambridge Cluster at 50: The Cambridge Economy Retrospect and Prospect**Matter for Decision:**

In May 2010 East of England Development Agency (EEDA) commissioned the Cambridge Cluster at 50 study to analyse existing data and consult with businesses and other key stakeholders about the Cambridge economy, 50 years on from the development of the Cambridge Cluster phenomena.

The Cluster Study would provide an evidence base for developing policies and allocating sites in the review of the Local Plan and would also be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

Decision of Executive Councillor for Planning and Sustainable Transport:

Endorsed the content of the "Cambridge Cluster at 50: The Cambridge economy: retrospect and prospect" for use as an evidence base for the review of the Local Plan and as a material consideration in planning decisions.

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 & Economic Development Officer regarding the Cambridge Cluster at 50.

The SQW Consultant summarised points from the Cambridge Cluster at 50 report to EEDA and partners.

The committee made the following comments in response to the report.

- (i) Sought clarification concerning expected numbers of jobs to be created in the next ten years as set out in the report. Was the potential trend for growth still positive.
- (ii) Discussion of points to be raised in the response to the Government's consultation on the relaxation of planning laws for change of use consultation at the end of June 2011.
- (iii) Discussion of points concerning competing demands of companies attracted to the Cambridge area, and the need to balance their needs with other stakeholders such as tourists.
- (iv) Sought clarification on the benefits of addressing transport gaps identified by the Cluster report.

The SQW Consultant and Planning Policy Manager responded:

- (i) The report was based on research undertaken in 2010 using existing data sources. The report reflects some, but not all economic trend changes. The report was also based upon interviews with stakeholders. The Cambridge Cluster economy was not in the same positive position as previously expected, due to anticipated public sector funding and job cut implications, but the economy is expected to remain healthy.
- (ii) There is pressure for commercial land to become residential. The Local Plan has to balance competing needs of jobs/economy/growth, housing and transport. It would be more difficult to balance these needs if the planning laws were relaxed.
- (iii) Research showed that as hi-tech companies mature from research to manufacturing, the range of their activities broadens. Companies attracted to the Cambridge area for reasons such as research, should be encouraged to stay and undertake other activities such as manufacturing, or locating their corporate head quarters here. The availability of premises and the existing policy in the greater Cambridge area will limit the potential for this. As the hi-tech cluster and related sectors mature, hi-tech companies could be encouraged

to locate to Cambridge and existing companies should be encouraged to remain.

There was synergy between the needs of market towns and Cambridge Cluster, with research taking place in and close to Cambridge, plus manufacturing taking place in the market towns and surrounding area.

There was high demand for companies to locate in Cambridge City centre. The 5 roles of the Cambridge economy aimed to reflect the competing demands of economic drivers such as tourists and the hi-tech sector. The Cambridge Cluster report reflected these competing demands. Companies wished to locate to the city centre due to the perception that peripheral locations were too remote. Companies may prefer peripheral locations if this perception was addressed, reducing pressure on the centre. Therefore the City could support a number of economic activities and so balance the needs of tourists (eg retaining historic city centre), industry etc.

- (iv) Companies would be happy to locate to peripheral locations around Cambridge that have good local, regional and national transport links (particularly with London). The potential for growth around railway stations has not been exploited as well in the UK as in other countries.

Councillor Ward sought clarification that the committee was not making planning policy. The Planning Policy Manager responded that the study would only be relevant as a material consideration for certain planning applications, and would support current policy/emerging policy development as background evidence. It was not new policy at this stage, its weight and applicability as a material consideration in the determination of planning applications would need to be determined in relation to the specific circumstances of each case/situation. This was not a back door way of overturning local plan policies, it was evidence that needed to be weighted in the balance with existing policy, emerging policy and other material considerations at the time when decisions are made. This would apply in a limited number of circumstances.

The Committee resolved unanimously to adopt the recommendation.

The Executive Councillor approved the recommendation.

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

Not applicable.

11/27/DPSSC MEMBER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME 2011/2012**Matter for Decision:**

Officers sought Member's feedback on a programme of development activities for the coming year.

Decision of Executive Councillor for Planning and Sustainable Transport:

Agreed the implementation of a Member development programme for 2011/12.

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 Head of Planning regarding Member development.

The committee requested the following additions be included in the programme of Member development activities:

- (v) Training on how to read plans.
- (vi) Inclusion of relevant local case studies in training sessions.
- (vii) On-going training concerning the Localism Bill to reflect changes in policy.
- (viii) Guidance on avoiding the perception of pre-determination in light of Secretary of State comments and new flexibilities.
- (ix) Building control.
- (x) Permitted development and links to building control, specifically for 'green' buildings.

The Committee resolved unanimously to adopt the recommendation.

The Executive Councillor approved the recommendation.

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

Not applicable.

The meeting ended at 10.40 am

CHAIR