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Planning and Transport Scrutiny Committee

PnTCm/1

Tuesday, 21 March 2023

PLANNING AND TRANSPORT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

21 March 2023

5.30 - 7.45 pm

Present: Councillors S. Smith (Chair), D. Baigent (Vice-Chair), Copley, Page-Croft, Pounds, Scutt, Smart and Swift

Executive Councillor for Planning Policy and Infrastructure, Councillor Thornburrow

Officers:

Director of Planning and Economic Development: Stephen Kelly

Assistant Director, Planning and Building Quality: Heather Jones

Delivery Manager (Strategic Sites): Philippa Kelly

Committee Manager: Claire Tunncliffe

Meeting Producer: Boris Herzog

FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL

23/11/PnT Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillors Bick, S Davies, Herbert and Porrer.

Councillors Copley, Page-Croft and Pounds attended as alternates.

23/12/PnT Declarations of Interest

Name	Item	Interest
Councillor D Baigent	All	Personal: Member of the Cambridge Cycle Campaign

23/13/PnT Public Questions

There were no public questions.

23/14/PnT Updated Planning Compliance Policy

Matter for Decision

The report referred to combining the enforcement policies of Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council into one united Compliance Policy for Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Services.

Decision of the Executive Councillor for Planning Policy and Infrastructure

- i. Adopted the unified Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Compliance Policy.

Reason for the Decision

As set out in the Officer's report.

Any Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

Not applicable.

Scrutiny Considerations

In response from comments from the Committee, the Assistant Director for Planning and Building Quality and Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development said the following:

- i. The policy centred upon the Planning Legislation and the policy included all the available provisions within the Planning Acts. There was other non-planning legislation which had not been referred to within the policy, but this did not stop officers from considering with colleagues other legislation where appropriate to address compliance matters.
- ii. Where an investigation identified a breach of planning control had occurred, the Town and Country Planning Act provided a range of measures that could be taken by the officers as outlined in Appendix A of the Officer's report.
- iii. A review of the Councils planning portal was being undertaken to identify ways to improve labelling/identification of applications and the mapping systems to support complainants in the early stages of the process.
- iv. Had expected a larger response to the public consultation than the nine received. The consultation had been published on various platforms, circulated to all members and other interested parties and the deadline for response had been extended. Hard copies had also been made available for written responses on request.
- v. The enforcement policy EQIA had regard to potential effects on those with protected characteristics. The action and emphasis aimed to ensure a consistent approach based on material planning considerations.

- vi. The Shared Planning Service (SPS) did not currently collect data on enforcement and protected characteristics due to General Data Protection Regulations. But would look to see if there could be some form of monitoring which could be undertaken.
- vii. Could not comment on individual cases but would be happy to discuss with members outside of the meeting.
- viii. Each case was treated individually. Early intervention was key, which was what officers want to achieve.
- ix. When made aware of planning breaches the objective would be for officers to work with the relevant parties to reach a resolution by consent rather than using formal enforcement measures.
- x. Where there was a sense that the applicant was deliberately breaching planning permission or simply did not engage with the compliance process, the policy would allow the service to move more quickly to undertake formal action.
- xi. With the new system in place, if enforcement breaches were reported on the electronic e-form this automatically created a case in the back-office system and can be allocated to an officer to deal with and respond to on a timely basis.
- xii. If the service had concluded it was not expedient to undertake enforcement, then that would be the decision unless new evidence had been put forward. The enforcement of planning breaches is discretionary and the decision to determine whether action is taken or not rests with officers based upon the evidence in each case.
- xiii. Service standards relating to time scales for response and actions are included but the government is currently consulting on national performance measures for enforcement. The Compliance Policy provided for five working days to respond upon receipt of high priority cases, with ten- and twenty-day response times for medium and low priority cases.
- xiv. Enforcement notices and other formal enforcement actions were shown on the Council's planning portal. Work was being undertaken to enter historic information from both Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire on to the portal.
- xv. Another new feature of the Council's planning portal would be the automatic update of information on the compliance issue the individual had submitted online. This would supply the name of an allocated officer and updates when any work or changes had been made.
- xvi. Members of the public could also register on the planning portal to receive notifications of new planning information in a defined search area to help them stay informed.

The Committee

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

The Executive Councillor and Chair thanked the Assistant Director Planning and Building Quality and the team for all hard work and the improvements that had been made.

The Executive Councillor highlighted the considerate contractor scheme which she hoped contractors would sign up to; this allowed residents to work with contractors at an early stage, and Ward Councillors to raise issues.

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

No conflicts of interest were declared by the Executive Councillor.

23/15/PnT Briefing on Greater Cambridge Partnership Infrastructure Projects

Matter for Decision

To give Members an opportunity to ask questions about the officer's progress with applications for the Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP) projects, this report provided an overview of the projects, (for which the Director for Planning and Economic Development has delegated authority) together with a high-level programme for the projects.

The GCP projects covered by the delegation were as follows:

- i. Cambourne to Cambridge Rapid Transport Route (C2C) public transport corridor project.
- ii. Cambridge South-East Transport Route (CSET) public transport corridor project Phase 2.
- iii. Cambridge Eastern Access public transport corridor project.
- iv. Waterbeach to Cambridge public transport corridor project.
- v. Greater Cambridge Greenways (various routes).

Decision of the Executive Councillor for Planning Policy and Infrastructure

- i. Noted the update report in respect of the GCP projects identified in criteria (i) to (v) of Paragraph 1.3 of the Officer's report (as shown above).

Reason for the Decision

As set out in the Officer's report.

Any Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

Not applicable.

Scrutiny Considerations

In response to Member's comments and questions the Strategic Sites Delivery Manager and the Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development said the following:

- i. The Shared Services response and input was determined by the project programmes that were being led by the GCP which were at various stages.
- ii. The dialogue at pre-application stage was not publicly available. These conversations were based around technical advice around planning matters/evidence resting with the Planning Authority. GCP was the project promoter and drew upon SPS advice as required.
- iii. Conversations involving planning policy officers working on the emerging Local Plan had been held. The LPA had referred GCP to its technical studies on the Local Plan and assisted with understanding and interpretation.
- iv. In terms of the Waterbeach to Cambridge public transport corridor project there was a phase one series of interventions that were required before 1600 dwellings approximately had been completed. Officers could not confirm whether the Waterbeach Public Transport Corridor was part of those phase 1 works but would advise further. Until there was a substantive number of residents, the trip effects and the transport mitigation were not required immediately. However, the cycleway enhancements along the A10 had been completed (one part of the mitigation proposals).
- v. Noted the statements read out by Councillor Copley on the projects referenced in the Officer's report.
- vi. Welcomed members views, whether individually or collectively on these projects, which would be taken into consideration as part of the preparation of the Council's responses
- vii. The Council's formal position at the point of statutory consultation would be formed either through the Out of Cycle decision process, approved by the Executive Councillor, in consultation with the Chair and Opposition Spokes or if possible through the Committee – but timelines for responses are fixed and not within the Control of the Council.

- viii. Noted the comment that shared space cycle/pedestrian facilities were not favoured by members - there should be separate pedestrian and cycles ways with clear signage
- ix. Welcomed the comments that good bridle ways should also be considered.

The Committee

- i. By a show of hands (6 votes to 0) to note the update report in respect of the GCP projects identified in criteria (i) to (v) of Paragraph 1.3 of the Officer's report.

The Executive Councillor thanked Councillor S Smith for chairing the committee during the municipal year 2022/23, who had been rigorous in their reading of the emerging Local Plan and committee items. Members appreciated all the input made as Chair.

The Chair thanked all Members for their work for the Committee.

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

No conflicts of interest were declared by the Executive Councillor.

23/16/PnT To Note Record of Urgent Decision Taken by the Executive Councillor for Planning Policy and Infrastructure

23/16/PnTa ***ROD Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority Bus Strategy Consultation Response

The decision was noted.

23/16/PnTb ***ROD: Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill: reforms to national planning policy

The decision was noted.

23/16/PnTc ***ROD: Huntingdonshire Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report consultation response

The decision was noted.

The meeting ended at 7.45 pm

CHAIR