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Planning and Transport Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday, 27 June 2023

PLANNING AND TRANSPORT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

27 June 2023
5.30 - 6.20 pm

Present: Councillors Nestor (Chair), Baigent (Vice-Chair), Bick, S. Davies, Porrer, Swift and Thornburrow (Executive Councillor)

Officers Present:

Deputy Director of GCSP & 3C Building Control
Planning Policy Manager: Jonathan Dixon
Strategic Policy Manager: Caroline Hunt
Principal Policy Planner: Stuart Morris
Planning Policy Officer: Charlotte Morgan-Shelbourne
Committee Manager: Claire Tunnicliffe
Meeting Producer: James Goddard

FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL

23/19PnT Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillor Divkovic.

23/20PnT Declarations of Interest

Name	Item	Interest
Councillor Baigent	All	Personal: A Member of Cam Cycle

23/21PnT Minutes

Councillor Porrer advised she was employed by Anglia Ruskin University not Cambridge University as referenced in the minutes of 17 January 2023 (23/2/PnT). Councillor Thornburrow stated she was present at the meeting of the 17 January 2023, but this was not shown in the attendance list.

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 January, 21 March and 25 May were then approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

**Committee Manager note: The electronic version of the minutes for the meeting 17 January 2023 have been corrected.*

23/22PnT Public Questions

There were no public questions.

23/23PnT Adopted Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire Local Plans 2018: Five-year review of Strategic Policies**Matter for Decision**

The report referred to the five-year review of the adopted Local Plan (LP). The key purpose of the review was to assess whether there were any relevant changes in national policy that might have a bearing on the weight accorded to adopted policies in determining development proposals, prior to the adoption of the emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan (GCLP).

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

- i. Agreed the Local Plan Five Year Review Covering Report and appendix regarding the Cambridge Local Plan 2018
- ii. Agreed that any subsequent material amendments be made by the Executive Councillor for Planning, Building Control and Infrastructure, in consultation with Chair and Spokes
- iii. Agreed that any subsequent minor amendments and editing changes that do not materially affect the content be delegated to the Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development in consultation with the Executive Councillor for Planning, Building Control and Infrastructure, in consultation with Chair and Spokes.

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 Policy Planning Manager.

In response to Members' questions the Planning Policy Manager and Strategic Policy Manager said the following:

- i. In providing a general overview of a change of use for buildings commented that there were several uses within Class E including retail and offices. In certain circumstances a change of use could be permitted without planning permission this included a change to residential use. However, if sufficient alterations were made to a building for a change of use then planning permission would be required.
- ii. An article 4 direction could be issued by the Local Authority to place a restriction on change of use that needed permission. The national guidance was clear as to when this could be used and had to be approved by the Secretary of State. There would be a cost to the Council to follow this process.
- iii. The outcome of the five year policy review was that most policies in both adopted plans (LP) remained consistent with national policy and, therefore, could be given full weight until replaced by policies in the GCLP. The small number of exceptions related to those policy areas identified as not fully addressing the requirements of updated national policy.
- iv. The introduction of Class E did change the way that some of the policies could be interpreted, such as policy 11 which outlined how to deal with a proposal for a new shop in the town centre, as an example. The decision maker could determine that it was still reasonable to impose a condition on a change of use; however, there were strict rules on what conditions could be applied. The flexibility of Class E was considered by central government to have benefits, so it had to be considered very carefully.
- v. The LP provided guidance that 70% retail ground floor frontage in key areas should be retained. This would be a material consideration for any such planning application, but class E provided certain flexibility to change uses without permission being needed.
- vi. It would be difficult to create new policies ahead of the GCLP. Supplementary planning documents (SPD) had to relate to the LP.
- vii. Producing new SPD's could create additional expenditure for developers without going through the plan making process.
- viii. Cambridge City Council would consider its city centre strategies which could be looked at outside of the remit of the LP.
- ix. Noted the comment that it was important to keep the vibrancy and active street frontages amongst the shopping areas that remaining retail premises needed to keep the foot fall; would an SPD do this.

- x. Careful thought would have to be given to consider if a new SPD would provide sufficient additional value to the decision-making process to warrant an additional SPD. Agreed to look at the case and would respond to the Committee outside of the meeting.
- xi. Agreed that local retail centres should be considered, it was important not to lose the purpose of the small retail hubs, should not apply just apply to the city centre.
- xii. Where planning permission was required the policies in the LP would be considered. Both policies for the city centre and for district and neighbourhood centres would also be taken into consideration. Therefore, there were opportunities to consider the impact on the change of use to the local environment and if these applications should be approved or not.
- xiii. Noted the comments that Class E did not allow a complete log on what all units were being used for in the city, due to those change of use which did not require planning permission. There was a certain amount of data which was retained from various avenues but was not as easily accessible as having a list of applications.

The Committee **unanimously** endorsed the Officer recommendations.

The Executive Councillor for Planning, Building Control and Transport approved the recommendations. They went on to thank officers as a vast amount of time had gone into producing the document.

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

No conflicts of interest were declared by the Executive Councillor

23/24PnT Response to Huntingdonshire Local Plan Issues consultation

Matter for Decision

The report sought agreement of a proposed response to the Huntingdonshire Local Plan Issues Engagement Paper (Regulation 18) Consultation.

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

- i. Agreed the proposed joint response to the Huntingdonshire District Council Issues Engagement Paper (Regulation 18) Consultation.
- ii. Agreed that any subsequent material amendments be made by the Executive Councillor for Planning, Building Control and Infrastructure in consultation with Chair and Spokes
- iii. Agreed that any subsequent minor amendments and editing changes that do not materially affect the content be delegated to the Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development in consultation with the Executive Councillor for Planning, Building Control and Infrastructure, in consultation with Chair and Spokes

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 Principal Policy Planner.

In response to Members' questions the Planning Policy Officer said the following:

- i. Agreed that it was important to aim for the highest possible biodiversity standards and to work with neighbouring authorities to address water issues.
- ii. There would be opportunity for ongoing dialogue with Huntingdonshire District Council regarding the issues raised in the proposed response as its local plan process progressed.

The Deputy Director stated they supported the officers who were trying to maintain an open dialogue with neighbouring councils.

The Executive Councillor informed the Committee that Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC) Councillors had been in contact with them due to the evidence that officers had collated, and the ambition shown in the Local Plan (LP), as they had similar aspirations. HDC Councillors would be encouraged to read the document and to engage with City Councillors to find out how they worked with officers to achieve such an outcome.

The Committee **unanimously** endorsed the Officer recommendations.

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

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

No conflicts of interest were declared by the Executive Councillor.

23/25PnT To Note Record of Urgent Decision Taken by the Executive Councillor for Planning, Building Control and Infrastructure

23/25/PnTa ROD Response to Consultation on Anglian Water's Draft Water Resources Management Plan.

The decision was noted.

23/25/PnTb ROD Greater Cambridge Housing Trajectory and Five-Year Housing Land Supply

The decision was noted.

23/25/PnTc ROD Responses to Cambridge Water's Water.

The decision was noted.

23/25/PnTd ROD Response to Technical Consultation on the Infrastructure Levy (department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities).

The decision was noted.

23/25/PnTe ROD Adoption of Street Naming and Numbering Policy to cover all three councils.

Before the decision was noted the following comments were made:

- i. Officers should encourage developers to look/ use wayfinding for all new developments. The street numbering could be problematic and not obviously particularly for delivery drivers.
- ii. Wayfinding should be considered at the early stage of the design panel.

The Deputy Director welcomed the feedback and advised this would be taken into consideration.

The decision was then noted.

The meeting ended at 6.20 pm

CHAIR