



**West/Central Area Committee
(City Councillors representing Castle, Market
and Newnham Wards)
6 April 2006 7:30pm – 9.38pm
Minutes & Actions**

Present: Councillors: John Hipkin (Chair), Marie-Louise Holland, Simon Kightley (Castle Ward), Mike Dixon, Colin Rosenstiel, Joye Rosenstiel (Market Ward), Rod Cantrill, Sian Reid and Julie Smith (Newnham Ward)

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06/11 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been received from County Councillors Alex Reid (Newnham Ward) and Gaynor Griffiths (Market Ward) and David White (Castle Ward)

06/12 OPEN FORUM

The theme of the Open Forum was the Planning Process.

Simon Payne, Director of Environment & Planning (DEP) gave a short presentation to set the scene. He said that the scale of growth in the city meant that there would be a significant increase in the population of the city, and this would be equivalent to a 40%

increase given the development proposed within the urban area and surrounding areas. It was important that this growth would be guided by the vision expressed in the new Local Plan which is due to be adopted in the summer. He said that the Development Services section at the Council was committed to high standards of service with effective and extensive public consultation. However, the Council was not completely master of its own destiny as the authority had to follow planning guidance provided by national government.

The Chair invited members of the public and councillors to ask questions.

The Windsor Road Residents' Association had submitted some questions in advance and these were raised by Resident 1 and addressed first. Other residents added their questions.

Resident 1:

RE: MINOR PLANNING APPLICATIONS

1. Is there a legal requirement to inform local residents by a notice on the property? If not, how would local residents know of the intention?

DEP: The Planning Officer would identify those residents most affected by a proposed development and would write to them inviting comments on the application. If the application was considered to be controversial then a site notice would also be posted. This approach is consistent with statutory requirements.

Resident 1: This question related to the application to demolish a house.

DEP clarified that the definition of a minor application has to do with its scale and not with its importance to residents and the procedure outlined above would be followed.

The Chair added that ward councillors were given the list of new applications on a weekly basis and part of their role was to inform residents of any they might be concerned about.

(Note: The weekly list of new applications is also available on the Council's Website at

<http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/ccm/navigation/environment/planning/development-control/weekly-lists-of-planning-applications-and-decisions/>)

Resident 2: Is the yellow site notice required for an application for a Tree Preservation Order or a Listed Building or a small garage?

DEP: Different categories of application have different requirements. The government has required all councils to provide a Statement of Community Involvement and this council has published one in draft on which members of the public will be invited to comment. The criteria for how different categories of application are dealt with are listed in that document.

Resident 1: Is the period of objection 3 or 6 weeks?

DEP: The period for residents to make comments on any planning application is 21 days.

Resident 1: Once an application has been approved, how are local residents informed and is there a period for appeal?

DEP: Any resident who has made comment on an application is written to with a copy of the notice of decision letter sent to the applicant which lists the decision and any conditions attached to an approval and reasons given if the decision was to refuse the application. The only person who can appeal against a planning application decision is the applicant or their agent.

Resident 1: With large development planning applications, should the negotiations between developers and local residents be carried out by independent appointees of the council? On the NIAB site the developers have appointed Green Issues to carry out this task. Has the Council always appointed negotiators in past large developments?

DEP: The Council is keen for developers to talk to planning officers to improve their knowledge of the issues that might arise in relation to the site under consideration and, ultimately, to ensure a successful outcome. Officers recommend that developers consult local residents about their proposals although officers cannot compel developers to do this in advance of a formal application. In the case of the NIAB site the developer has chosen Green Issues to carry out the consultation. The government sets councils targets for the determination of applications and, in the case of large developments, the target is to have a decision 8 weeks after the application is received. Councillors can also talk to residents about proposed developments but if those members are likely to be on the planning committee to determine the application, then the councillors need to be careful not to express an opinion about the application until the formal meeting that makes the decision.

Resident 1: Once these large applications have been approved, how are they monitored during construction?

DEP and the Chair advised residents that while the Council does have enforcement officers, they have to prioritise their work. So copies of the decision notice with the conditions imposed are sent to residents who have made representation on an application and it is therefore helpful for residents to report any breaches of these conditions. The Enforcement Officer would then act.

(Note: Developments also needed building control approval and are inspected to see that they comply with building regulations.)

Resident 1: What is the council's timetable for consultation with residents on the NIAB development plan?

DEP: The consultation with key stakeholders happened on 10 March. The application is expected in about November and when it is lodged with the Council, then residents will be invited to comment in the usual way.

The Chair said that it was understood that the developer had sent out letters to residents including Windsor Road consulting about a date for a workshop (12 or 13 May). The morning would be for stakeholders and the afternoon there will be a "design your own community centre" session which residents are encouraged to attend. The developers are also planning an exhibition in the

summer.

Resident 1: The Lib-Dem newsletter said the planned crossing in Windsor Road has been abandoned. Could you explain why?

Chair: The crossing was part of a wish list for the whole programme for the area. The City Council has a small annual budget for pedestrian crossings throughout the city and, at a meeting on 10 January this year, the Executive Councillor for Planning & Transport, with advice from Environment Scrutiny Committee, decided which requests would be given priority. This year the proposal for this crossing was not high enough in the priority list. Councillor Colin Rosenstiel added that all pedestrian crossings were a matter for the Cambridge Environment and Transport Area Joint Committee (AJC) and that there was a particular annual budget for the city which was prioritised each year as the Chair had explained. Although this request had not been granted this year, it did not mean that it might not be agreed in another year. Councillor Holland explained that a critical criterion for deciding on priorities was whether there had been accidents at a proposed site. In the case of the Windsor Road request there was not a history of accidents.

Resident 1: It has been suggested flats will be built at the Texaco Garage site - if so, how tall will they be?

Chair: The Planning Officer says that the proposed development is 6 storeys high and that the height from ground level to general roof level (it is a flat roof) is 18.5 metres.

Resident 2: With a large scale development like this one, would the relevant Residents' Associations be informed?

DEP: Yes

Resident 3: With the City Council's own large developments, Residents' Associations are informed. Other residents who do not have access to the internet, rely on the informal network to learn about such applications. Sometimes they find out too late as happened a few years ago in relation to an application for a skateboard park.

Resident 2: The city is planning to build 13,500 homes and with 10,000 at Oakington and even possibly 12,000 at the Marshalls Airport site can the city sustain all this growth?

Resident 3: The planning process is reactive. The Local Plan provides the framework. Nevertheless, each individual planning application is considered on its own merits as has happened with the several applications around the railway station. Is it possible to have more joined up thinking with other district councils about this growth agenda?

DEP: The growth agenda is a challenge. Officers from the City Council have regular meetings about infrastructure with their counterparts in the adjacent District Councils and the County Council (which ultimately has responsibility for all highways matters).

The joined up thinking mentioned by resident 3 is addressed in the new Local Plan to be published in 2 weeks time as it shows where the growth areas are to be and what supporting infrastructure is required. The development planned in the Southern Fringe of the city near to Addenbrookes Hospital is an example of how the local community can be involved in influencing what is provided. Consultation with residents led to acknowledging the importance of green spaces for that community so these are built in to the Area Development Framework which is the guiding planning document that developers are required to follow. The local community has influenced the overall masterplanning and also more specific issues like what kinds of community facilities are desirable. Councillor S Reid said that Cambridge was unique in the region in that it was expected to provide 50,000 jobs and 40,000 homes. The challenge was to provide the homes near the jobs so that people did not have to commute into the city from the necklace of villages surrounding Cambridge and that the mistakes of Bar Hill and Cambourne were not repeated.

Resident 4: I have just returned from Perth in Western Australia where with any new development they build the railway first, then the roads, then the schools and finally they build the houses. Is there any way that this could happen here?

DEP: With the Northstowe development, the key infrastructure will be built first and the same principle applies to the other growth areas in the city.

Resident 5: Where does the Planning grant money go?

DEP: The grant is given to councils by the Government for performance against the Government's targets. So the grant money received is reinvested by the City Council to continue to improve performance in the planning service.

The Chair then introduced Inspector Martin Gregory from Cambridgeshire Constabulary who in turn introduced Sergeant Ted Hawkins who is the new Sergeant for the West/Central area wards. Inspector Gregory explained that, as part of introducing the police plans for Neighbourhood Policing in Cambridge, a trial would take place in the North Area. Depending on the outcome of that trial, the plans would then be implemented in all 4 areas of the city.

Councillor Holland mentioned 2 issues that she had asked Sergeant Hawkins to help with. One is the problem of car parking in Warwick Road which is hazardous to school children and disabled residents. The second is the problems caused by the unlicensed kebab van in Huntingdon Road.

Sergeant Hawkins said he was working with both Neighbourhood Watch and the Headteacher of the school over the parking problems as they were in many instances caused by parents dropping their children off at school and parking irresponsibly.

The Engineering Client Officer responded to the question about the kebab van. The Council's Street Trading Regulations only cover the historic core of the city centre. So the only control over this van

would be if it caused an obstruction when the police could act. There are plans in place to extend the boundary of the city centre trading controls and a decision on this is expected in June. Councillor C Rosenstiel said that if the van was trading late at night and did not have a licence then it could be controlled.

The Chair then introduced the two City Rangers who were present - Jim Varney and Sue Fletcher.

The Chair asked if the Rangers were having any success in removing the illegal flyposting notices in the city centre. Jim Varney said that the problem was not as acute as it had been. The problem was that some of the churches did not wish the notices to be removed from their railings.

Resident 2 made a plea that the notices of musical events posted on the railings at All Saints Gardens not be removed too soon as they provided valuable information for the public.

The Engineering Client Officer said that the Council had powers to take enforcement action against illegal notices and A-Boards. As had been mentioned already, the Enforcement Officers were not able to deal with all the issues that needed enforcing and the Rangers were providing a valuable support by using persuasion and when necessary seeking enforcement officer support.

The Chair asked about the regulations for cafes to place tables and chairs on the pavement.

Jim Varney explained that the Markets Manager dealt with this in the Market Square.

The Engineering Client Officer reported that 12-15 licences had been issued for tables and chairs on the highway. These can be placed to a distance of 1.8 metres or 6 feet from the premises with the consent of the licensing authority. In response to a question from the Chair, he confirmed that any premises which had a licence should have it available on the premises for inspection by the Police and Council officers.

06/13 MINUTES AND ACTION SHEETS

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 February 2006 were amended as follows (amendments in bold and strike through): On page 3 first paragraph: "The AJC also agreed a number of measures to mitigate the effects of ~~the long distance coaches~~ **all buses and coaches** parking on Parkside. The amount of time any one **bus/coach** may park there is to be ~~reduced~~ **limited** and the parking times monitored regularly."

And the first sentence of the third paragraph:

Councillor S Reid said that the ~~kiosk had only been given a temporary planning permission~~ **County Council would apply only for temporary planning permission for the kiosk.**

They were then signed as a correct record:

06/14 MATTERS ARISING

None

06/15 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Kightley declared a personal interest in relation to minute number 06/12 Open Forum when the discussion touched on the proposed planning development at the National Institute of Agricultural Botany (NIAB) site as he is employed at NIAB.

06/16 UPDATE ON ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS PROGRAMME

The Committee had a full discussion of the recommendations during which several members expressed their frustration that this programme had been in discussion for more than a year and that progress towards implementation needed to be made before the next meeting. Members preferred option B in recommendation 2.2 and requested that this be costed before the next meeting so that the final decision about it could be made. Officers were also asked to ensure that any permissions from the Cambridge Environment & Transport Area Joint Committee (AJC) were obtained.

The Committee clarified that the bin referred to in recommendation 2.5 was in Barton Road and not Grange Road.

Resolved (unanimously)

- 2.1 To proceed with reconstruction of the “cut through” path between Windsor Road and Richmond Road at a cost of £9,700.
- 2.2 To proceed with a more long-term and comprehensive scheme for Windsor Road and Oxford Road incorporating traffic calming features; namely a single lane gateway and priority chicane replacing the existing pinch point and bollards in Windsor Road; a speed hump in Windsor Road near the T-junction with Oxford Road; a gateway feature in Oxford Road and measures to protect the area around the Co-op service access. Full costings of this to be provided at the next meeting. A proposed workshop encouraging residents to respond further to the landscape and the proposed traffic calming, will clarify any other issues, before the scheme is brought back to this Committee for final approval.
- 2.3 to get costs for resurfacing the verge on Windsor Road where lorries turn, at the back of the Co-op and bring back to the next meeting.
- 2.4 To get costs for resetting or removing some of the granite setts on Sussex Street which are potential trip hazards or missiles. Also to get costs for putting seating slats on the Obelisk, after having consulted with Conservation on design and materials and bring back to the next meeting.
- 2.5 To install a bin near the Wolfson College bus stop on Barton Road like the one used on Newnham Road and obtain permission for its maintenance.

Members then referred to particular items under Approved Scheme and Recently Proposed Schemes:

Councillor C Rosenstiel re lamps in Burleigh Street: Experience had shown that when one light failed they all failed at once so he requested that the Landscape Architect obtain a contribution towards the maintenance of the new lights from the County Council.

Councillor S Reid re Grantchester Meadows fencing: Requested that a better quality fence be installed.

Councillor S Reid re Lammas Land Hut: The hut in question is the one in the middle of Lammas Land which is the responsibility of the Parks & Recreation section at the Council who have already been contacted about doing something about it.

Councillors then made suggestions about possible new projects:

Councillor S Reid re King's Lane. This is the only safe way to cycle from Newnham to the city centre but it tends to attract rough sleepers. She requested that consideration be given to making the Lane less attractive to rough sleepers.

Councillor C Rosenstiel re Lighting on Parker's Piece: Could the stretch from Hobbs Pavilion to the University Arms Hotel be lit.

Councillor J Rosenstiel re Lighting on Mud Lane to its junction with Parkside.

Councillor J Rosenstiel re improving thin patches of grass on Jesus Green.

The meeting ended at 9.38pm.

Chair