

**ENVIRONMENT
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**27 June 2006
10am – 2.05pm

PRESENT: Councillors Ward (Chair), Bailey, Durrant, Herbert, Holland, Holness and Newbold.

Also present: Councillor Bradnack for minute number 06/ENV/41

ALSO PRESENT: Executive Councillor Reid (Planning and Transport)
Executive Councillor C Rosenstiel (Environmental Services)

FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL**06/ENV/36 Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting on 21 March 2006 and the Special Meeting on 25 May 2006 were agreed as a correct record.

06/ENV/37 Apologies For Absence

Apologies had been received from Councillors Baker, Kightley (alternate) and Shah.

06/ENV/38 Declarations Of Interest

Councillors declared the following personal interests:

Councillor Durrant in minute number 06/ENV/40 as Treasurer of East Barnwell Community Centre.

Councillor Herbert in minute number 06/ENV/50 as his partner worked for Cambridgeshire Horizons.

Councillor Holness in minute number 06/ENV/50 as she worked for the university and her department was one that might move to the new site.

06/ENV/39 Public Questions

Ms Glenys Malyon spoke as a member of Petersfield Area Community Trust (PACT) in relation to item 5, Annual Report on Planning Obligations 2005/2006. She referred to paragraph 3.5.3 which mentioned that a letter from PACT was attached to the report and said that the letter was not attached. She reiterated the request made in the letter that representatives of residents associations be included within the Steering Group in an advisory, non-voting capacity, given the level of community interest in the use of S106 contributions and the importance of the process of allocation of S106 monies to specific projects. PACT suggested representation by two residents, one from the north and one from the south of the city.

She emphasised that this was a legitimate interest due to the impact of the provision of facilities on any local area. In the past when PACT had requested information about the position for their area, no answers had been forthcoming. PACT thought that the system was unwieldy and led to the Council collecting the monies successfully but that the allocation and spending of the funds was not.

The Executive Councillor for Planning & Transport acknowledged the importance of the S106 funds and that the information about these needed to be clear, open and accessible. She explained that the new Steering Group would be meeting in public but that its work would be focused on improving the administrative systems and contributing to the review of the strategy which would come to Committee in November. She emphasised that no spending decisions would be made at the Steering Group. She also affirmed the important role of Area Committees as the forum where the Council reached out to and interacted with local residents. The intention was to use that forum in the future for finding out residents views on the S106 issues in their area.

The Chair affirmed the importance of openness, clarity and accessibility for councillors as well as the public and the work proposed was to contribute to this.

Ms Malyon thanked the councillors for their clear response and expressed the view that area committees were not an appropriate forum because they already had wide ranging issues they had to address. She said that residents needed to be at the centre where the decisions were being made rather than at area committees which were on the fringes of decision making.

The Executive Councillor for Planning & Transport further explained that other Executive Councillors were involved in the allocation of S106 funds, namely. the Executive Councillors for Community Development & Health and for Arts and Entertainment. A report was going to the July meeting of the Community Services Scrutiny Committee to agree how Area Committees would be involved. She affirmed that Area Committees were crucial to the process of involving local residents and that the Council did not see these as at the fringe.

06/ENV/40 NON KEY DECISION Annual Report on Planning Obligations 2005/2006

Before councillors discussed the report, the Director of Environment & Planning addressed the concerns raised by Ms Malyon which were common to many local authorities. He spoke about the legislation which required that community benefit be related to new developments. He emphasised that the Steering Group would be looking at technical issues. The meeting would be open to the public and the usual procedures would be followed to allow all parties to have their say. It was inappropriate to have residents associations as members of the Steering Group.

Councillors raised the following to which officers replied (A):

- Acknowledged the amount of work being currently done by the officer but requested that the issue of ensuring there were adequate resources be looked at. (Herbert)
 - There were significant value for money issues. (Herbert)
 - In addressing the issue of openness and transparency, the agenda of the Steering Group should be available to interested members of the public like Ms Malyon. (Herbert)
 - While the Labour Group would nominate two members to the Steering Group as permitted under the Terms of Reference and the Constitution, they would also like the third member they had also proposed to be sent the agenda. (Herbert)
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- As the person with the power, the Executive Councillor should be ensuring that members of the public come to the Steering Group meetings (Herbert)
- In Appendix 1 of the officer report (page 35 of 157), the amount of funding available for the Area Corridor Transport Plans was not easy to understand. The report did not make clear whether there was any money left. (Bailey)
- In relation to these funds which were transferred to the County Council, how was it going to be verified that the allocations they made represented good value for money? (Bailey)

A: The Special Projects and Implementation Officer said that she was working with colleagues at the County Council to obtain the answers to questions such as these last two. These were central to the review of the current Planning Obligation Strategy which was to take place over the next 12 months.

Councillor Bailey asked how members would be kept informed of this so that they could form a view.

The officer said that the officers were at present defining the scope of the work and once they had a view on that, members would be asked for their views.

Councillor Durrant as Chair of East Area Committee said he had no problem with reports coming to area committees on both the overall strategy and on individual schemes. However, it was the Executive that made the decisions. He thought that securing the funding was probably better than the allocation of it. He highlighted the complexities of partnership working and supported Councillor Bailey as to how this could be monitored by members. It was vital to address the need for more transparency about why the monies collected from developments in one area were then spent in another area as this was something that local residents did, understandably, feel was unfair.

The officers spoke about allocation in relation to affordable housing which was monitored annually and had been for the past 10 years via the developments which had been given planning permission and had reached completion. A report on this would be going to the July meeting of the Community Services Scrutiny Committee. The amount of affordable housing available in the city was increasing year on year.

The Executive Councillor for Planning & Transport responded to Councillor Herbert's points by saying that in her experience a small Steering Group was vital for effective work as its task was different to that of a Scrutiny Committee. She said that resources needed to be available at the places they were needed. She thought that most of the information that both the public and members wanted was available but was scattered in different departments of the Council. The Steering Group would be looking at how this could be collected together in one place. She affirmed that collaboration was vital not just with partners such as the County Council but within the City Council across departments and committees, across Executive portfolio holders and across parties. She said that for this reason, the relevant Executive Councillors would be encouraged to attend the meetings of the Steering Group *ex officio*.

Councillor Bailey proposed an amendment to recommendation 2.4 by adding at the end the phrase "and to programme a review of the Group after one year".

The Scrutiny Committee and the Executive Councillor agreed this amendment.

Councillor Durrant proposed a further amendment to recommendation 2.4 to change the Terms of Reference such that the composition of the Steering Group include 3 Labour members rather than 2.

On a show of hands, the amendment was lost by 3 votes to 1.

The Executive Councillor said that the Executive Councillors would be invited to attend which led Councillor Durrant to say that this was new information and that Spokes should be invited.

The Director of Environment & Planning clarified that there was a commitment to holding the meetings of the Steering Group in public at which the usual public speaking rights would apply. Similarly the Constitution allowed any member of the Council to attend a committee meeting of which they were not a member and to speak about particular issues which were on the agenda with the permission of the Chair. It was vital that the Steering Group be a focused group. He affirmed that agendas and minutes of the meetings would be publicly available.

The Scrutiny Committee agreed (by 4 votes to 0) the recommendations for the Executive Councillor as amended.

The Executive Councillor agreed the amended recommendations.

06/ENV/41 KEY DECISION Cambridgeshire Long Term Transport Strategy

Councillor Holness referred to paragraph 5.3 of the officer report concerning the County Council's TIF Study. She referred to the phrase "broadly fiscally neutral for the average motorist" and said that she thought that any measure that was fiscally neutral would be no incentive to a car driver to use other means of transport.

The Transport Manager advised members that the view expressed in the report was the government's view. The City Council had to decide what it wanted to achieve from a road user charging scheme.

Councillor Bailey said that she thought the City Council had no choice but to have a road user charging scheme. The City Council wanted people to continue to come into Cambridge, but not by car.

Councillor Bradnack agreed and said clarification of what fiscally neutral meant was required and the City Council's response to the County needed to be explicit eg in the way that Councillor Bailey had expressed it.

The Director of Environment & Planning said that the reference to the average motorist was what was misleading. He suggested the City Council make plain to the County Council that within the city, public transport, walking and cycling were what was wanted as happens in the rest of Europe and that they needed to distinguish between policies for the urban and for the rural contexts which had different requirements.

The Scrutiny Committee agreed that the wording of recommendation 1 "To indicate support to the County Council for its work on LTTS/TIF, subject to the views of this Committee" be amended and agreed by the Executive Councillor in consultation with the Chair and Spokes.

The Scrutiny Committee agreed (by 3 votes to 0) to amended recommendation 1 and recommendations 2 and 3.

The Executive Councillor agreed the amended recommendations.

Post Committee note: The wording of recommendation 1 was agreed by the Chair and Spokes on 6/7/06 as follows:

"The City Council supports the work being carried out by the County Council on the Long Term Transport Strategy and the associated TIF study into road user charging.

However, we query the County's view that any road user charging scheme should be "broadly fiscally neutral for the average motorist". We recommend that no conditions are put on any scheme at this early stage."

06/ENV/42 NON KEY DECISION Public and Community Transport in Cambridge

The Transport Planning Manager highlighted the tension between the desirability of using buses for public transport and the issues of the impact of unacceptable levels of CO₂ emissions. There were also the issues of the need for more Park & Ride stops and of more bus interchanges.

Councillor Newbold asked whether the Council could consider letting those residents with mobility problems who were eligible for a free bus pass use these on the Dial a Ride service as other local authorities were doing.

The Senior Transport Planner explained that the Council was currently funding half fares on the Dial a Ride and that this was coming out of Council reserves as there was no funding from central government for this service.

Several members were in favour of the County Council using some of the TIF funds for doing some market research on why people were not using the buses even more than they are.

The Transport Planning Manager said that the County Council planned to do a survey of bus users in early 2007 but that there were no plans for the kind of research members were suggesting.

The Director of Environment & Planning said that no one study would give the answer because there were too many variables involved. People's self-perception was one important but difficult to research element. Safety, reliability and cleanliness of buses were key and officers were working with the County Council on this. Discussions concerning the implications of the growth agenda on this issue were also taking place eg with Papworth Hospital which was planning to move to the Addenbrookes site and whose staff were used to travelling by car. Officers were

working with them on a green travel policy. The station interchange was also a focus of discussions with the developer of the Station Area.

The Executive Councillor agreed about the difficulties of research in this area. She also thought there were probably studies already done by others and recommended that some desk research might be done. She referred to the item about bus priorities which had been deferred on the agenda of the Cambridge Environment & Transport Area Joint Committee for months. She alerted members to the fact that there were difficult decisions ahead

She agreed that monitoring, measurement and data of current usage of buses was nevertheless valuable.

The Scrutiny Committee agreed (by 3 votes to 0) the recommendations for the Executive Councillor.

The Executive Councillor agreed the recommendations.

06/ENV/43 KEY DECISION Outstanding Environmental Improvements Budget Spending Strategy and Spending Strategy for Highways Related Budgets

The Urban Design Manager introduced the report and highlighted the need for the eligibility criteria to be reviewed if the decision to combine the Environmental Improvements budgets and the designated Highways budgets was agreed. He also said that means of handling the revenue and capital aspects of the combined budgets would need to be addressed. If the decision was to split the combined funds on the basis of population as indicated in paragraph 3.7 of the officer report then this would be included in the council's Medium Term Strategy for agreement at the Council meeting on 20 July. The funds for controlled crossings would need to be ring fenced.

The Chair asked if the review of the eligibility criteria could happen very soon. He proposed an amendment to recommendation 2.4 such that these revised criteria be agreed by the Executive Councillor in consultation with the Chair and Spokes.

The Scrutiny Committee agreed the recommendations for the Executive Councillor as amended.

The Executive Councillor agreed the amended recommendations.

06/ENV/44 KEY DECISION Cambridge Southern Fringe Draft Landscape and Open Space Strategy

The Executive Councillor thanked the officers for all the work on the Strategy and said that the absence of comment was attributable to the good work done by the officers as well as the Southern Fringe Member Reference Group.

The Scrutiny Committee agreed (by 3 votes to 0) the recommendations for the Executive Councillor.

The Executive Councillor agreed the recommendations.

06/ENV/45 KEY DECISION Southern Fringe Draft Community Facilities Strategy

The Head of Community Development introduced the report and highlighted the importance of thinking in innovative ways about the provision of community facilities in order to reduce costs and to issues about site priorities.

Councillor Holness referred to paragraph 5.2a of the officer report, specifically the BREEAM standards. She asked if the Council could aspire to the excellent rating under these standards.

Councillor Bailey supported this recommendation and mentioned the difficulties there had been in installing solar heating in the new Chesterton Community Centre, something that had still not been achieved.

The Executive Councillor for Planning & Transport emphasised the fact that there would be property revenue costs as well as capital costs.

The Chair said that a Member Reference process was desirable in deciding how the S106 funds should be spent.

The Head of Community Development acknowledged this and said how this issue was handled in the Southern Fringe would impact on how the matter was handled in other growth areas in the city.

The Director of Environment & Planning suggested that paragraph 5.2 be amended by the addition of the words "at excellent rating" after "and incorporate BREEAM standards".

The Scrutiny Committee agreed the recommendations for the Executive Councillor.

The Executive Councillor agreed the recommendations.

06/ENV/46 NON KEY DECISION Review of the First 8 Months of the Plastic Bottle Kerbside Collection Service

Councillors raised the following to which the officers responded (A):

- What is the difference in costs comparing kerbside collection with that from recycling centre collection points? (Herbert)

A: The Waste Strategy Officer said she would obtain these figures and circulate them to members. She said that the collection point capacity was being increased and members would be kept informed about this.

- What percentage of residents actually participate in the scheme by putting out the blue plastic bottle recycling box regularly compared to people using the recycling centre collection points? (Herbert)

A: The Waste Strategy Officer said that some people participated in the scheme but only put their box out on a monthly basis because of the level of plastic bottles they used. The evidence both from the public consultation and the figures kept by the collection teams was that the public preferred the kerbside collection to using the recycling centre collection points.

Action:
Waste
Strategy
Officer

Councillor Newbold proposed an amendment to the recommendation:

“ Insert at the end

But

Propose to the Executive member that a further report be prepared for the next Scrutiny Committee proposing the following improvements

- a) Dual collection of plastics kerbside with a second material from 2007
- b) More plastic banks given that their productivity and cost per tonne is improving
- c) Full publicity, including a major feature in “Recycling Matters”, to those areas of the city where different waste/ recycling collections are being offered to wheeled bins, including a clear policy provided to the Scrutiny Committee and available to local people.”

The officers said that a report was coming to the November meeting of the committee reviewing the first year of the fortnightly bin collection and it was possible to address the issues in the amendment in that report. The Head of Environmental Services alerted members to the fact that officers were always looking at the best way to achieve optimum results with value for money and that these had to take account of practical difficulties.

The Executive Councillor for Environmental Services affirmed the strong public support for the kerbside collection. He referred to section c) of the amendment and said that the different waste/recycling collections as between different parts of the city had to take account of the local environment such as whether there was rear access to terraced properties. He said that officers were currently talking to residents face to face about the recycling arrangements and seeking to find what problems residents experienced and that this was more likely to succeed than an article in “Recycling Matters”.

He acknowledged that he too was surprised that the rate at the recycling points had increased and thought it might have to do with residents from South Cambridgeshire going to the supermarkets on the perimeter of the city to do their shopping and taking plastic bottles at the same time as their council did not have a plastic bottle collection.

Councillor Herbert asked that the officer report in November include the points raised in the amendment along with some assessment of how the collection regime might be impacting on climate change indicators such as CO₂ emissions. He also asked for information to be included about the impact of the weight differences in the alternate weeks on the likely level of CO₂ emissions. He also requested that a map be included showing the location of the recycling collection points around the city including the perimeter.

The Scrutiny Committee endorsed the report which set out the improvements in the recycling service provided to residents in the city through the provision of the kerbside collection of plastic bottles and that the points raised in the amendment and in the discussion be included in the report coming to the November meeting of the committee.

The Executive Councillor concurred.

06/ENV/47 KEY DECISION Public Conveniences - Review of Charging Policy and Modernisation of the Facilities at Chesterton Road and Cherry Hinton Hall

Councillor Holness referred to paragraph 16 of the project appraisal concerning Energy Management and asked that obtaining energy from the sun, wind and water be acted upon and not simply explored.

The officer explained that action depended on whether there were significant on site constraints. In response to a request from Councillor Bailey, he confirmed that any proposal regarding use of alternative energy sources was always considered by the Council's Sustainable Construction Officer.

Councillor Durrant requested that there be a corporate approach to this issue and that every project appraisal/report contain what is desired in relation to use of renewable sources of energy.

The Executive Councillor for Environmental Services agreed and said that the Council's Annual Statement would be expressed in revised Medium Term Objectives which would address this.

Action
Comm
Mgr

The Scrutiny Committee agreed the recommendations for the Executive Councillor.

The Executive Councillor agreed the recommendations.

06/ENV/48 NON KEY DECISION Revenue and Capital Outturn for 2005/06

The Scrutiny Committee agreed the recommendations for the Executive Councillor.

The Executive Councillor agreed the recommendations.

06/ENV/49 NON KEY DECISION Appointments to outside body and City Ranger Steering Group

Additional nominations were tabled at the meeting - Councillor C Rosenstiel for the Cambridgeshire Councils Association Waste Forum and Councillor Baker to join Councillor Downham on the City Ranger Steering Group.

The Scrutiny Committee agreed the appointments.

The Executive Councillor agreed the appointments.

06/ENV/50 KEY DECISION North West Cambridge Area Action Plan

The Planning Policy Manager introduced the report and emphasised that the Issues and Options report was not an Area Action Plan. He tabled a document containing changes made by the North West Fringe Member Reference Group at their meeting on 23 June 2006 which were to be treated as additional recommendations for consideration by the Committee and for approval by the Executive Councillor.

Councillors raised the following to which the Planning Policy Manager responded (A):

- Councillor Holland referred to paragraph 4.4 of the officer's report, along with the comments in section 18 of the Issues and Options report regarding the use of renewable energy and those in section 10 regarding the green belt. She asked whether the City Council might request South Cambridgeshire District Council to consider, in relation to Option 18.2, the retention of some land in the green belt for renewable energy and water with a view to the long term sustainability of the development.

A: Members, the university and the public could make representations on any matter in the Issues and Options paper as it was not yet a plan. They could also give their views on the proportion of renewable energy to be recommended in Option 18.1 (currently 10%).

The Director of Environment & Planning said that the City Council's aspirations needed to be high and it was appropriate to encourage South Cambridgeshire District Council (South Cambs) to aspire to similar standards. This could be emphasised in the City Council's response to South Cambs for consideration at their meeting in July. This was an opportunity to adopt good practice and should be taken advantage of.

- Councillor Bailey agreed and said that the renewable energy sector was moving rapidly and that in 5 years time would be different to now. She thought it was important not to fix on one source of renewable energy but to push for the use of all alternatives. Developers needed to be able to choose what was most suitable for the location. District heating was one of the good options.
- Councillor Holland suggested that the benefit of maximising the use of renewable energy and being ambitious about this be linked to the benefits to the whole local community and South Cambs itself.

The Executive Councillor for Planning & Transport said that this development was a unique one because it was the university and it was essential to both push the raising of expectations about the level of provision of renewable energy and to encourage and inspire the university to push the boundaries.

- Councillor Herbert supported this and said that the affordable housing element was also a special element. He asked how the affordable housing was to be allocated eg would it be available for service personnel from the university and not just for students and academic staff.
- Councillor Durrant focused on how to translate this aspiration for application to the community facilities. The whole issue should be looked at as a whole. He suggested that the City Council talk to the university (who were attending the meetings of the North West Fringe Member Reference Group to hear the debate) outside of the committee framework to encourage them to work together with the District Councils on the issues of renewable energy and affordable housing.

The Executive Councillor agreed to take on board all the points being made and that Councillor Durrant as Spokesperson be included in any approach to the university.

The Planning Policy Manager responded to these points by affirming that the affordable housing provision would be determined by the terms of the S106 agreement and that there could be a range of types linked to level of income. He informed members that the university was a member of a joint officer working party. He also told members that new government guidance on the issue of renewable energy was expected later in the year and that it was now possible to amend the Local Plan in parts rather than wait to change the whole Plan as had previously been the case.

The Executive Councillor requested that leafleting be extended to addresses in Newnham and Arbury bordering the site. She also referred to Option 13.5 on page 34 of 50 of the officer report and requested clearer wording concerning the north facing access roads on the M11 to include the possible impact on Madingley Road and Histon Road so that the views of the public could be gauged.

The Scrutiny Committee agreed the recommendations as amended and the additional recommendations from the North West Fringe Member Reference Group.

The Executive Councillor agreed all the recommendations.

06/ENV/51 NON KEY DECISION Revenue and Capital Outturn 2005/06

The Scrutiny Committee agreed the recommendations for the Executive Councillor.

The Executive Councillor agreed the recommendations.

06/ENV/52 NON KEY DECISION Appointments to Steering Groups

The Scrutiny Committee agreed the appointments to the Steering Groups as per the agenda except that on the Members Planning Obligation Steering Group, Councillors Durrant and Herbert to represent the Labour Group (also see minute number 06/ENV/40).

The Executive Councillor agreed the appointments as amended.

06/ENV/53 NON KEY DECISION Appointments to Outside Bodies

The Scrutiny Committee agreed the appointments with the exception of the replacement of Mr Lacy Anderson on the Conservators of the River Cam. It was agreed to give until 30 June to see if a representative of the angling community was willing to be nominated. If not, agreed that Councillor Ward be appointed to the Conservators of the River Cam.

The Executive Councillor agreed the appointments as amended.

06/ENV/54 The Belvedere Site

The Director of Environment & Planning introduced the report and tabled supplementary papers concerning this item which had been requested by Councillor Durrant. These set out the circumstances and provided evidence of what had happened. Officers were satisfied that there would be no advantage in further

investigation. If members wished to scrutinise the policy further then that could be done as part of the work of the Members Planning Obligation Steering Group in their comments on the Planning Obligation Strategy.

Councillor Durrant explained how the request had come about. It was originally picked up during the scrutiny of Performance Indicators. He accepted the report papers as providing information on the process of what had happened. His view was that it was important to learn for the future from the mistakes made in good faith from this past example.

The Chair proposed that the matter be referred to the Steering Group and the Scrutiny Committee agreed (by 3 votes to 0).

06/ENV/55 Forward Plan

There was only one non key decision on the published Forward Plan - the Open Space and Recreation Strategy. The Scrutiny Committee decided to wait until nearer the November meeting to decide whether or not to scrutinise this decision.

CHAIR
