

DEVELOPMENT PLAN STEERING GROUP

13 November 2007
9.40am –10.45am

Councillors Present: Reid (Chair), Blencowe, Durrant, Holness.

Also Present: Dave Roberts (Planning Policy Manager), Sara Cass (Urban Extensions Project Manager)

1. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on the 9 October 2007 were approved as a correct record.

2. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Ward, Baker.

3. Declarations of Interest

None.

4. Public Questions

None.

5. Cambridge Development Strategy (CDS also known as the Core Strategy)

The Planning Policy Manager introduced the strategy and emphasised that the CDS was a high-level strategic document akin to the old-style Structure Plan. Matters of detail concerning many policy areas and site proposals would be best addressed in follow-on, lower tier, local development documents. The key issues for consideration were set out in 3.6 to 3.8 which related to Cambridge Northern Fringe East.

The Chair suggested that each issue arising from the consultation and detailed at paragraph 3.5 of the officer report be addressed. Members made the following points to be addressed in the CDS or follow-on local development documents as appropriate:

- 5.1 The provision of all new homes to lifetime homes standards, would entail addressing the provision of lifts in each development. There would be a vital role for the sub-region in terms of employment opportunities. Members felt it was of paramount importance to recognise the role of the City Centre. They asked if the approach meant there would be a stronger leaning towards retail? The Chair felt that perhaps the text ought to be

more selective about what we say we are enhancing. Other Members felt the reference to the commercial role was important and that this provided more leeway.

The Policy and Projects Manager said the City Council were in the process of commissioning a study to see where retail should be located. There was no obvious site for extra capacity, although somewhere like the Mill Lane area may provide the possibility of more retail outlets, but this would be bars and restaurants.

5.2 Option 12a and b “Choice between a per-capita approach to emissions or an absolute approach”.

The Chair expressed the view that it was critical to develop policies relating to Cambridge with a view to absolute reductions in CO₂. What was needed was a more ambitious target with numbers. Would it be possible to put numbers in the Core Strategy? What were Milton Keynes doing? Did they have specific targets?

Cllr Holness put forward a suggestion of wording “ We are going to have an over-arching target relative to numbers now”.

The Chair suggested that this issue be brought back to the December meeting. She preferred Option 12b and was not convinced by Option 12a. She asked that the minute record her request that numbers be allocated to targets for this (if possible) before the strategy is published.

5.3 In response to a question from Councillor Blencowe about policies in relation to the Green Belt, the Planning Policy Manager said that the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) set a minimum target for the number of houses to be built up to the year 2021. It also states that there is no need for a further review of the Cambridge Green Belt although this issue may need to be visited in the review of the RSS after it is adopted in 2008 which review to be completed by 2011.

5.4 In relation to Option 28a and 28b Councillor Durrant raised the issue of what the policy would actually deliver for faith groups. He drew a comparison with the lack of adequate provision of churches in the nineteenth century expansion of the city. Could one of the urban extensions set aside land for faith groups?

The Planning Policy Manager responded that the Cambridgeshire Horizons study report was due soon on this issue. What was known already was that faith groups located in the local area wanted affordable land to develop new premises but that they could also be assisted by flexible development control policies. The Council if it chose could allocate

sites for this type of use. A permanent strategic policy would not be necessary; this could be pursued in the follow-on local development documents.

The Chair said that the issue of faith groups was often allied to transport issues. There are questions about how we deal with this. For example do we turn over employment land? Until the Horizons study has been done it is difficult to say. The Chair requested the Horizons Report be brought to Environment Scrutiny Committee.

The Chair said there seemed to be a global issue of viability. Members did not seem to accept the current definition of viability. There was a need to look at it in terms of whole life issues and sustainable construction. The Chair requested officers come back on the issue of sustainable construction in December.

6. Cambridge Northern Fringe East

The Planning Policy Manager informed Members that two main issues in relation to Cambridge Northern Fringe East were:

- The Network Rail utilisation study which highlighted the need to keep part of the sidings as a strategic rail head.
- The realism of relocating the Milton Waste Site to Honey Hill.

The City Council was working with the County Council and South Cambs on these issues. The best way of moving waste was by rail. They were currently searching for waste treatment sites for industrial as well as domestic purposes and more details may be available in December. Consultants were to be appointed to look at Northern Fringe East to review previous studies to help determine a robust way forward.

The Policy Planning Manager agreed to bring a further report to the December DPSG meeting.

6.1 Councillor Holness raised the following issues in relation to 3.7 relating to housing on the South of the sidings:

- There were people already living there- traveller community
- This area was environmentally sensitive- near the flood plain
- There were transport issues- a major problem with crossing the railway on Fen Road.

The Planning Policy Manager informed Councillor Holness that representations about these issues had been made to South Cambs in relation to their Local Development Framework and that the main King's Lynn to London railway lay between the CNF East site and the Fen Road area.

- 6.2 Councillor Blencowe referred to point 2 in paragraph 3.7 which referred to figures from the 2002 Urban Capacity Study which had “heavily discounted the notional 1,809 dwelling capacity on this site down to 905 dwellings”.

The Planning Policy Manager indicated that this showed that the residential impact of an employment led strategy for the area was less than might otherwise have been supposed.

Councillor Holness asked about point 4 in the paragraph which referred to brownfield sites.

The Planning Policy Manager said our 2002 Urban Capacity Study had discounted many sites including Northern Fringe East. He said that another similar study was under way and a report was due in the Spring 2008. One example of a brownfield site was the Council’s depot at Mill Road where there were no plans for development at present but that could change. Potentially it could relocate to the CNF East allowing it to be redeveloped for residential use. It was noted that the Council owned the depot site and land in the Northern Fringe East.

- 6.3 The Chair said what was needed was a Renewable Energy Spatial Strategy for the region.

Officers informed members that one was being developed. There was a Regional Study on Renewables commissioned by the East of England Regional Assembly which was due to report at the end of 2007. The Chair requested that this document go to the Environment Scrutiny Committee.

The meeting closed at 10.45am

Chair