

DEVELOPMENT PLAN STEERING GROUP

11 December 2007
9.30am –10.15am

Councillors Present: Reid (Chair), Blencowe, Ward, Baker, Holness.

Also Present: Dave Roberts (Planning Policy Manager),
Eithne Flanagan (Sustainable Construction
Coordinator)

1. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on the 13 November 2007 were approved as a correct record.

2. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Durrant

3. Declarations of Interest

None.

4. Public Questions

None.

5. Cambridge Development Strategy (Core Strategy) Appendix 1 – Scope for Cambridge Northern Fringe Study

The Planning Policy Manager and the Sustainable Construction Coordinator gave a further update on the strategy to members

5.1 Reduction of Carbon Emissions

Option 2a – a reduction in per capita carbon emissions – continues to be the preferred option for the reasons set out in the report.

The Chair expressed agreement with this view and highlighted that Option 2b – overall reduction of carbon emissions – would be more difficult because of the projected population increase in the City.

The Chair wished two points to be made in relation to this topic:

1. She referred to point 3.10 and said that this needed to influence ongoing work such as the Cambridge Climate Change Strategy and actions must be fed into the Local Development Framework. The Core Strategy needed to set out clearly what our main ambitions and targets will be in relation to reduction of carbon emissions.
2. She wanted it to give a conceptual framework and to spell out what actions could be influenced by the strategy. For example by recognizing the extent of the Council's ambitions such as aspiring to national and/or international standards. She mentioned that influence could be had over not only the building of new properties but also in relation to older properties. Uttlesford District Council had introduced a system whereby home extensions would only be authorised if the owners first reduced their CO2 emissions – therefore reducing their carbon footprint. The Planning Policy Manager said that not all of the desired planning policies would be brought forward through the Core Strategy, many would be introduced through other Development Plan Documents such as Area Action Plans, and the Development Control Policies DPD.

5.2 Whole Life Viability

In response to a question by the Chair about the Government's consultation on its Sustainable Construction Strategy, the Sustainable Construction Coordinator said that the Council had made a formal response. One response related to the targets for public buildings and whether S106 money could be used to attain good standards in community facilities.

The Planning Policy Manager informed members that all policies had to be consistent with higher level plans. If more was wanted, then a robust evidence base was needed to ensure that other things such as housing construction were not adversely affected.

Councillor Holness commented on 3.12 with regard to PPS22 and the 'Merton rule' stating that policies "should ensure that requirements to generate on-site renewable energy is only applied to developments where the installation of renewable energy generation equipment is viable given the type of development proposed, its location and design". Was this not a get out clause and could it not be reworded so that the design of building *had to* take this into account?

The Planning Policy Manager informed Members that it was Government policy that required us to take viability into account and that this principal was embedded into many policies operating in Cambridge plans and in the plans of

South Cambridgeshire, some expressly introduced by the Inspectors binding reports into draft plans.

The Sustainable Construction Coordinator mentioned that some aspects of renewable energy requirements were expected to be part of the design and developers were already being advised of that.

Responding to a question from Councillor Holness regarding the lack of a time limit specified under 3.14 (economic and technical viability) the Sustainable Construction Coordinator said that this was again being addressed through the Urban Design policies. However, dealing with the impact on capital costs for developers required more thought.

The Planning Policy Manager mentioned that many design aspects regarding whole life viability can be built in at an early planning stage resulting in no increased cost to the developer, for example the use of shading.

Councillor Ward commented on the large number of poorly constructed office blocks in Cambridge, which resulted in cheap capital design costs but high ongoing heating and cooling costs. The Chair agreed and felt that this needed further investigation.

The officers confirmed that further research was needed now so that either practical and fair planning policies could be put in place or some other means be found to address these concerns. For example Photovoltaic cells had a pay back period of 10 years and ways needed to be found to allow developers to benefit from installing such a technology.

In response to a suggestion by Councillor Ward the Planning Policy Manager said that officers were already exploring what other local authorities were doing in this regard and would do more research as a result of this meeting.

5.3 Cambridge Northern Fringe East (CNFE)

The Planning Policy Manager informed Members that officers attended the Examination in Public of the South Cambridgeshire Local Development Document. One issue to be addressed by the Inspector was whether a stand alone development in Chesterton Sidings would be allowed or whether that would prejudice development in the rest of the city. The County Council also wanted to safeguard the provision of aggregates. They were also working with Network Rail on the need for a strategic rail head at the site. A report on that was expected in February/March 2008.

There was no update on the relocation of the sewage works other than to say that

The local authorities and Cambridgeshire Horizons were commissioning a further consultants' report which would be available in January/February 2008

and

A letter had been received from Savills acting for Anglian Water that morning. The letter said that, after a meeting with Network Rail and consultants on 3rd December, further research had been commissioned on the proposed relocation and the realistic prospects of residential development which Anglian Water favoured. Full feedback would be submitted to the Council in January 2008 or later to schedule with the outcome of the further consultants report referred to above.

The Chair requested a copy of this letter

The Planning Policy Manager said that the Council should make no decisions until these various reports had been received and considered.

Councillor Blencowe raised concerns regarding the possible duplication of this research work with that of the Cambridgeshire Horizons Viability Study.

The Planning Policy Manager commented that it was not practical to just rely on the Anglia Water/Network Rail research as they were interested parties; the Council needed to ensure that its plans for the site were deliverable and soundly based.

The Chair agreed and stated that this was now a very complex matter with more stakeholders involved such as Network Rail.

The Chair questioned why all landowners were not involved with the Project Team as Anglian Water was. It was suggested that individual roles seemed 'merged' and this could need further investigation to avoid possible conflicts of interest.

It was agreed that the Planning Policy Manager would investigate this further and feedback to members at a future meeting

The Meeting closed at 10.15am

Chair

