

ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

9.30am –11.35am

PRESENT: Councillors Ward (Chair), Armstrong, Durrant, Kightley, Shah, Upstone and Slatter (alternate for Baker).

ALSO PRESENT: Executive Councillor Reid (Climate Change and Growth)
Executive Councillor C Rosenstiel (Environmental and Waste Services)

FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL**08/ENV/14 APOLOGIES**

Apologies had been received from Councillors Baker, Holland and Newbold.

08/ENV/15 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following personal interests were declared:
Councillor Upstone in minute number 08/ENV/27 as a member of the Car Club.

08/ENV/16 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

Mr George Winch spoke on behalf of the Northern Area Fringes Residents' Association (NAFRA) in relation to minute number 08/ENV/20 to request that members bear in mind the impact of the proposed development on the properties whose boundaries adjoin it. He made the following points:

1. The residents were not NIMBYs and they understood that the development would take place.
2. They were concerned to ensure that it met the requirements of the Local Plan and other related policies. Would there be steps taken to preserve the natural environment of the site as development proceeded especially in relation to trees and hedges? The area was an important wild life sanctuary especially for deer.
3. Protection was needed for the burial ground and its access road.
4. He urged as a point of principle that a 30metre gap be provided between the houses in the development and those that adjoined it. Residents had concerns about the permeability of the site in terms of the number of proposed access points eg easy access to be provided for cycling and walking. Would firm guidelines be laid down now to avoid the site being too accessible to all in order to deter incidents of crime. Research showed that crime was linked to points of access to properties. He therefore requested that there be no cycle tracks/public footpaths behind the properties in Huntingdon Road.
5. Residents also had concerns that properties in Huntingdon Road might be purchased in order to provide access points to the development.
6. There were concerns about the built form of the buildings which the proposed amendments went some way to address. However, residents wanted more low rise properties near the boundary with Huntingdon Road and higher ones nearer the centre of the site.

The Chair said that what was built at the bottom of the gardens was part of the Master Planning stage. He told Mr Winch that at that stage on the NIAB site, residents joined

in workshops with the developers and, as a result, there were low rise buildings at the boundary and no paths for burglars.

The Planning Policy Manager referred to Appendix 4 of the report which indicated that there would be low rise buildings. In addition, it had never been suggested that additional access points be created on to Huntingdon Road other than those indicated in the plan. Details of pedestrian and cycle routes would be determined at the Masterplanning stage. The conservation area also had an impact on what was allowed in development terms. With regard to permeability, the plan identified where these were to be - cycle ways on Storey's Way, through Madingley Rise and the University Observatories. He understood that the University had purchased properties in Huntingdon Road but the Area Action Plan did not include options of access from those. Trees and hedges were to be protected. It was not appropriate for the AAP to look at the detail of the development; that would come later at the Masterplan and Development Control stages.

Mr Michael Bond spoke just before the item on the Conservation areas.

08/ENV/17 **NON KEY DECISION Improvements to **Arbury Court Public Toilets**** (*see also record of decision 08/ENV/10*)

The Street Services Project Officer introduced the report and outlined the need to prioritise this improvement work within in the programme agreed in 2005 due to the current closure of the facilities.

Councillor Durrant asked where this work had been scheduled in the original programme and requested a briefing paper on progress across the entire planned schedule of work.

It was agreed that a short briefing note would be circulated to members.

Action: Bob Kerry

The Scrutiny Committee agreed (by 6 votes to 0) the recommendations for the Executive Councillor.

The Executive Councillor for Environmental & Waste Services agreed the recommendations.

08/ENV/18 **NON KEY DECISION **Estimated revenue and capital outturn, carry forwards and significant variances for 2007/08**** (*see also record of decision 08/ENV/11*)

The Executive Councillor for Environmental and Waste Services explained that stray dogs were no longer a Police responsibility but the responsibility of the local authority. It was not clear how this would impact on future budgets. However, the Police would continue to receive dogs out of hours and this would reduce the financial burden. An update would be required at an appropriate point in the future.

The Scrutiny Committee agreed (by 6 votes to 0) the recommendations for the Executive Councillor.

The Executive Councillor for Environmental & Waste Services agreed the recommendations.

08/ENV/19 **KEY DECISION Environmental Improvements Programme 2008/09** (see also record of decision 08/ENV/12)

Councillor Durrant asked what was the rationale behind the £3,000 limit to discretionary spending rather than the £5,000 that would match other discretionary spending powers within the Council. He also raised the issue of the new cycle bridge at Riverside which was not mentioned in the report, its impact on budgets and the cross boundary nature of this area as a facility enjoyed by residents from other areas of the City.

Councillor Ward suggested there was a reluctance to delegate too much spending power and raised fears of a perception of 'budget raiding' with regard to cross boundary issues.

The Executive Councillor said that the £3,000 figure would be reviewed in 12 months and there was scope within the existing policy for individual items to have the limit raised to £5,000. Riverside would be considered as part of the long term view.

The Principal Landscape Architect stated that Riverside was not in the report because it had not yet been considered at the area committees and discussions were still on-going with the County Council.

Councillor Slatter welcomed the idea of nominated councillors taking responsibility for overseeing projects and working with residents so that ideas from all interested parties could be considered.

Councillor Kightley suggested that the approach taken with the Riverside cycle bridge project where problems had been thoroughly considered could be used as a model for other large environmental improvement projects.

Councillor Durrant argued that when making decisions area committees and members needed to fix budgets and to ensure that Riverside was included and implemented subject to funding.

Councillor Upstone agreed that Riverside was an amenity enjoyed beyond the East Area. He suggested there should be more discussion about cross boundary funding of this type of environmental improvement. Decisions should not be left with one area committee. He was supported by Councillor Blair.

Councillor Slatter reminded the committee that a precedent had been set for cross area funding with the potential to bring City residents together namely with disabled access, mobility and cycle paths.

The Executive Councillor said she welcomed the feedback from the Committee about how to manage these large projects. There was a large project proposed for Burleigh Street which had been considered by West/Central Area Committee and she now thought that other area committees should be consulted as it was another part of the city accessed by residents from across the city.

The Scrutiny Committee agreed (by 6 votes to 0) the recommendations for the Executive Councillor.

The Executive Councillor for Climate Change & Growth agreed the recommendations.

08/ENV/20 KEY DECISION **NW Cambridge AAP** (see also record of decision 08/ENV/13)

The Chair ruled that under 100B(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972 the North West Cambridge Area Action Plan be considered despite not being made publicly available five clear days prior to the meeting.

The reason why this report had not been available beforehand was because it had been discussed at the meeting of the North West Fringe Member Reference Group on 17 March and changes suggested at that meeting needed to be incorporated and Appendix 7: Climate Change and Sustainable Design and Construction Paper needed to be finalised.

The Urban Extensions Project Manager introduced the report. A total of 590 representations had been received in the consultation period of which 460 were objections and 130 in support. She guided the Committee through the various appendices and their purpose. She informed the Committee that the Draft Submission Document would be submitted to the Secretary of State on 19 May after which there was a further period of consultation. An Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State would convene an Examination in Public in November/December 2008.

She tabled some minor wording amendments agreed by South Cambridgeshire District Council when they approved the Submission Draft Area Action Plan at their Council Meeting on 7 April 2008:

Paragraph 9.2: Revised sentence to read (changes in bold): 'new development will need to **be adaptable for** unavoidable changes.....'

Paragraph 9.10: Revised penultimate sentence to refer to 'water **use** reduction'.

Members raised the following:

Councillor Slatter said that the provision of allotments accessible to any citizen should be provided within the site and that it was important for clarity from the beginning as to what was meant by allotments.

The Planning Policy Manager agreed to add a reference to allotments in the glossary.

Councillor Kightley reiterated a point made by County Councillor White at the meeting of the NWFMRG, a point with which his fellow Castle ward councillors agreed. Adherence to the 20metre contour line down to the M11 was not a priority for the City Council because any development there would be invisible except from motorists on the M11. Development down the hill was acceptable if it led to less housing and more open space provision.

The Planning Policy Manager pointed to the report paragraphs and associated documents dealing with this matter which had been thoroughly explored. An extra 4

hectares had been added to the development footprint arising from further examination of the site.

The Chair asked the officers to clarify what South Cambridgeshire had agreed with regard to the footprint in their area.

The Urban Extensions Project Manager referred to page 307 of the agenda where the proposed footprint was seen to cross the 20metre contour line.

The Director of Environment & Planning said that considerable progress had been achieved in the discussions with South Cambridgeshire and members should be encouraged by the outcome.

Councillor Durrant said that a site visit had convinced him that it was a defensible footprint.

The Executive Councillor acknowledged that this had been a long process and thanked the officers for their considerable work in achieving the outcome. She said that it was now a question of waiting to see whether the University would find the AAP one that they could work with.

The Scrutiny Committee agreed (unanimously) the recommendations (including the amended wording) for the Executive Councillor.

The Executive Councillor for Climate Change & Growth agreed the recommendations (including the amended wording).

08/ENV/21 **KEY DECISION Quality Charter for Growth in Cambridgeshire**
(see also record of decision Quality Charter)

The Head of Planning Policy & Projects tabled the Record of Decision that had been taken by the Executive Councillor outside the Committee process in order that the budget which was available to print the Charter up to 31st March funding would not be lost. In view of the broad consensus around the Charter, the involvement of members in its preparation and the consideration by Committee on 9th January 2007 approval for the charter was considered justified to meet the March 31st deadline.

The Chair and the Spokes of the Scrutiny Committee had been consulted before the decision was taken.

The Executive Councillor affirmed that she considered this to be an important step in trying to ensure that the city achieved the best possible quality in new developments.

08/ENV/22 **KEY DECISION Regional Spatial Strategy - Gypsy & Traveller**
Single Issue Review (see also record of decision 08/ENV/14)

The Planning Policy Manager outlined the proposal and explained the recommendation that if the Regional Spatial Strategy maintained the 15 permanent pitch requirement, the search for a transit site should be abandoned. However, the 15 pitches should be seen as a minimum and additional places should be provided if at all possible.

Questions were asked about the space requirements of each pitch and the officers explained that the density would be less dense than standard housing construction. This was because it was single storey and needed space for vehicles and manoeuvring.

Councillor Durrant asked whether East Pit as a possible site had now been excluded for certain.

The Planning Policy Manager responded that this has been ruled out as a future site.

The Scrutiny Committee agreed (by 5 votes to 0) the recommendations for the Executive Councillor.

The Executive Councillor for Climate Change & Growth agreed the recommendations.

08/ENV/23 NON KEY DECISION **Conservation Area Appraisal Programme**

(see also record of decision 08/ENV/15)

Mr Michael Bond on behalf of Chesterton Residents' Association addressed the committee. He strongly supported the recommendation. He emphasised that open space in the form of general amenity space was at a premium as a requirement in the city.

The Executive Councillor responded with sympathy for the views expressed and, in her role as a Newnham ward councillor, she would be supporting residents' concerns for Madingley Road.

Councillor Blair spoke as an East Chesterton ward councillor and highlighted the fact that buildings of local interest were not protected under the legislation and that two such buildings had been lost. She made a plea that the conservation area be extended even further than proposed as there was pressure for considerable development in East Chesterton.

Councillor Durrant agreed about East Chesterton and asked what was planned in terms of extending the conservation area legislation to the suburbs of the city.

The Head of Planning Policy & Projects indicated that the table on page 87 of the agenda indicated that this was exactly what was envisaged with regard to the suburbs. Paragraph 4.2 on page 85 also addressed this.

Councillor Kightley welcomed the recognition of the pressures on Madingley Road and Huntingdon Road but asked for clarification of what was meant by the sentence "These may be subject to character appraisals leading to the development of guidance to manage change."

The Head of Planning Policy & Projects said this would be done via the planning process. Robust policies were needed to identify where development could contribute to housing needs but where local character could also be preserved.

Councillor Slatter asked how realistic it was to think it was possible to preserve all open spaces. Might it be possible to include in the public consultation asking residents which open spaces they wished to preserve. She referred to "Town Greens" in this context.

The Head of Planning Policy & Projects said that the concept of conservation places rather than areas was appropriate. The Planning Policy Manager said that the 2006 Local Plan did protect open space.

Councillor Holness said that the setting in which a building sat was important. Leafy suburbs for beauty and to provide wildlife corridors were important to preserve rather than densifying development.

Councillor Upstone asked whether conservation area status could protect against development in gardens.

The Head of Planning Policy & Projects said that was a key issue. The legislation did not protect back gardens. It was going to be necessary to work with land owners, developers and residents to stop development in back gardens.

Councillor Shah asked whether in relation to Romsey mentioned in paragraph 4.2, the allotments would be included in the new conservation area and would be preserved.

The Head of Planning Policy & Projects said that allotments were dealt with under the Local Plan rather than conservation area rules.

The Executive Councillor welcomed the comments from the Committee. She thought it was right to use savings delivered from the budget process to fund the proposed work. She referred to the concerns about green spaces and said that the legislation regarding Commons was powerful and she agreed that there was a need to care for all types of housing which contributed value. Rapid appraisal techniques were tools that would eventually be used to make decisions.

The Scrutiny Committee agreed (by 6 votes to 0) the recommendations for the Executive Councillor.

The Executive Councillor for Climate Change & Growth agreed the recommendations.

08/ENV/24 **NON KEY DECISION *Storey's Way Conservation Area Appraisal* (see also record of decision 08/ENV/16)**

The Head of Planning Policy & Projects outlined the issues and the two options available: to fight the Judicial Review or to accept the change to the conservation area to accommodate the college's concerns.

The Chair clarified the legal position.

Councillor Durrant felt the rationale was weak but accepted the pragmatic approach.

The Executive Councillor for Climate Change and Growth summed up and agreed that the Officer's stance was pragmatic and defensible.

The Scrutiny Committee agreed (by 5 votes to 0) the recommendations for the Executive Councillor.

The Executive Councillor for Climate Change & Growth agreed the recommendations.

08/ENV/25 NON KEY DECISION **Estimated revenue and capital outturn, carry forwards and significant variances for 2007/08** (*see also record of decision 08/ENV/17*)

The Committee discussed the reasons behind the variance. The changes were accepted as being the result of changes to income due to changing parking patterns following the development of the Grand Arcade rather than to increased expenditure.

The Scrutiny Committee agreed (by 6 votes to 0) the recommendations for the Executive Councillor.

The Executive Councillor for Climate Change & Growth agreed the recommendations.

08/ENV/26 NON KEY DECISION **Cambridge Environmental Framework – Consultation on Scope and Basic Principle** (*see also record of decision 08/ENV/18*)

The Head of Planning Policy & Projects outlined the shortcomings with the current system and the proposal to investigate a more robust environmental framework. One option was the ISO 14001 which was currently used by some authorities and appeared to work well. Any framework adopted would need to align with the organisation's broader corporate performance framework.

Councillor Durrant expressed satisfaction at the discussion and the decision.

The Scrutiny Committee agreed (by 6 votes to 0) the recommendations for the Executive Councillor.

The Executive Councillor for Climate Change & Growth agreed the recommendations.

08/ENV/27 NON KEY DECISION **Car Club Steering and Implementation Group** (*see also record of decision 08/ENV/19*)

The Transport Planning Officer outlined the issues.

The Executive Councillor said that members would be appointed to the Steering Group in the new municipal year.

Councillor Slatter raised issues of disabled access to the scheme.

The officer suggested these would be better addressed when the scheme grew and at that point one in 10 cars would be automatic.

Councillor Upstone felt that the scope of the project was rather narrow and suggested it could include business users.

The Executive Councillor for Climate Change & Growth said that the initial target was residential use. Streetcars' role was to facilitate the scheme rather than sell it to business users.

The Scrutiny Committee agreed (by 6 votes to 0) the recommendations for the Executive Councillor.

The Executive Councillor for Climate Change & Growth agreed the recommendations.

The meeting ended at 11.35am.

Chair
