

Councillors Present: Reid (Chair), Baker, Herbert, Holness, Ward

Also Present: Dave Roberts (Planning Policy Manager)
Glenn Burgess (Committee Manager)

1. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on the 11 December 2007 were approved as a correct record.

2. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Blencowe.

3. Declarations of Interest

None.

4. Public Questions

None.

**5. Cambridge Development Strategy (Core Strategy)
Cambridge Northern Fringe East (CNFE)**

At the request of the Chair, the Planning Policy Manager gave members a brief update on the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS):

It was noted that the draft target for Cambridge City had originally been set at a deliverable 14,700 dwellings between 2001 and 2021 but had subsequently been increased to 19,000. The City Council had objected to this revised figure but it had been included in the final RSS.

It was confirmed that the proposed development of Marshall's Site was included in this figure and houses built since 2001 would already be counted towards it.

The completed RSS confirmed that there was no need for a further review of Green Belt land in Cambridge and the Planning Policy Manager advised that a full briefing note on the RSS was being drafted for members.

The Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) – looking at existing as well as new sites – would be completed in the next few months and information reported back to a future meeting. The SHLAA will help us to understand whether the 19,000 dwelling target is achievable.

Cambridge Northern Fringe East (CNFE)

The Planning Policy Manager informed members that a full CNFE study had now been completed on behalf of all the key stakeholders and had recommended an employment led approach be followed. This was because of a number of reasons:

- A site for residential development would not be available. The high cost (£130M) of relocating the Waste Water Treatment Works (WWTW) means that it will remain on-site.
- Network Rail were now intending to utilise the sidings for the stabling of trains for improved rail services to London
- An alternative location for the aggregates depot could not be identified
- With the aggregates depot operating 24 hours a day, and increasing its business due to the widening of the A14, the residential environment would not be ideal.
- The County Council would prefer the proposed importation of London waste to be done by rail instead of road

It was confirmed that the relocation of the WWTW would not form part of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Plan consultation – due to start in September and last for six weeks. Members were also reminded of the important role the site plays for the transport infrastructure of Cambridge.

A proposed new railway station on the site forms part of the Cambridgeshire County Council's TiF proposals but would still be pursued if this funding did not materialise.

Councillor Holness raised the issue of traffic problems on Fen Road in Chesterton and the hope that S106 money from any proposed residential development at CNFE may help address this. The Planning Policy Manager confirmed that as residential development was no longer a viable option this would be difficult to progress.

In response to a question from Councillor Holness regarding Nuffield Road allotments (page 39 of CNFE Report) the Planning Policy Manager confirmed that this referred to previous studies and would no longer form part of the proposals. It was also noted that any proposed loss of allotment provision in the City would require significant justification.

Councillor Ward commented that whilst a new station would result in less traffic traveling through the City, the CNFE report stated improved commuter services to London as justification. In response the Planning Policy Manager stated that demographic studies did indicate an increase in people moving to the East of England and commuting to London.

The Chair commented that people commuting across the *County* is more of a problem and is an area that needs to be addressed.

In response to a question from Councillor Ward regarding alternative funding for the relocation of the WWTW, the Planning Policy Manager stated that this had been investigated but no outside sources found. The £130 million to move the WWTW is also only an estimate and it is thought that this could increase significantly.

Councillor Herbert suggested that it would seem logical, with the proposed new railway station, to have at least part of the site used for housing. It was felt that more work needed to be done to investigate this.

In response the Planning Policy Manager stated that with the current recommendations there would be very limited space for any residential housing – it would also have poor access and be very isolated. However residential development would not be ruled forever as each plan has its own ‘shelf life’.

The Planning Policy Manager informed members that whilst the original RSS target of 14,700 new dwellings was achievable, the revised figure of 19,000 was challenging. The RSS had however stated that there would be no need to review the use of Green Belt land – this could provide some comfort if we were unable to meet the target because of a shortage of land rather than due to the credit crunch impacting on house building activity.

It was also stated that whilst there is a lot of funding attached to *new* affordable housing there is not enough emphasis by the Government on using the current housing stock better.

Councillor Holness asked how the Fen Road travelers site would be affected by any changes to CNFE and in response the Planning Policy Manager stated that whilst there would be an impact, activity from the WWTW etc was already taking place on the site. Environmental Officers would also obviously keep this in mind when looking at changes to the aggregate works.

In response to a question from Councillor Baker the Planning Policy Manager confirmed that the proposed employment led approach would include office space and light industrial units. The Chair highlighted the importance of this and stated that the Council could not continue to produce housing at the expense of employment.

Councillors raised issues regarding increase in traffic and congestion and the Planning Policy Manager stated that a lot of money had been already been spent on improving access into Cowley Road and the Park and Ride and the guided bus would service the new station.

The Meeting closed at 10.40am

Chair