

Councillors Present: Reid (Chair), Baker, Blencowe and Ward

Also Present: Dave Roberts (Head of Policy and Planning)
Stephen Miles (Planning Officer)
Glenn Burgess (Committee Manager)

1. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on the 13 May 2008 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair

2. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Herbert

3. Declarations of Interest

Cllr Baker – Association with Emmanuel College
Cllr Reid – Association with Cambridge University Press
Cllr Ward – Wife works at Cambridge University Press

4. Public Questions

None.

5. Cambridge Development Strategy: Issues and Options Report

The Planning Officer introduced the report and alerted members to the potential shortfall in housing figures as set out in the East of England Plan. It was felt that the target might be difficult to meet on the basis of current planning assumptions

The Planning Policy Team had started a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) to identify land to meet the target but it was noted that there could be pressure to release green belt land if the figures were not met

An error was highlighted in paragraph 3.6 (and also noted in Appendix of the report) – *‘initial finding of the SHLAA are that there is capacity for 17068 dwellings to be built up to 2021’* (not 17,148 as noted)

The Head of Policy and Planning confirmed that meetings had been held with the County Council to discuss land availability but the majority of this was unsuitable due to being either farmland or situated in the green belt

Letters had been sent out to stakeholders, landowners and developers in May inviting the proposal of sites with residential potential – and examples of the responses were distributed to members for information

Members requested some initial views on the viability of the proposed sites:

- Ridgeons Ltd – Cromwell Road: good site but had some potential access issues
- Bidwells - 1 Ditton Walk: good site that is not in the protected industrial area but is next to green belt
- Bidwells – Land East of Hauxton Road: not a good site as currently in the Green Belt
- Bidwells – 72-76 St Andrew’s Road: good site but potential flood plain issues and the findings of the Employment Land Review
- Bidwells – Wilberforce Road: sensitive site due to current low density housing in the area and the issue relating to loss of protected open space - would therefore need some further work
- Bidwells – Cambridge Railway Sidings: has potential but needed clarification on how it fitted in with current and emerging station area proposals, also issues of residential amenity
- Savills – Grange Farm: partially already allocated in the Local Plan and extends into the green belt
- Savills – land at Wilberforce Road: not a good site as currently in green belt

In response to a question from Councillor Baker regarding the implications of not meeting the 19,000 house target the Head of Policy and Planning stated that further meetings would have to be arranged with Go East to discuss the ongoing options. It was felt that before looking at green belt sites capacity throughout the whole sub-region would be better investigated at a regional level through the review of the East of England Plan

It was also confirmed that if figures were not met the City Council would come under increasing pressure from developers to fill the gap. It was also noted that due to the credit crunch there was uncertainty over some existing developments

When asked whether the City Council would be forced to reassess its density proposals the Head of Policy and Planning confirmed that at present the Council had no fixed density standards, each scheme had to be satisfactory in terms of amenity, access and design.

In response to a question regarding the Cambridge University Press site the officers confirmed that as this was identified as land to be protected for employment use in the Employment Land Review

In response to general discussion the Head of Policy and Planning confirmed that in general student accommodation and flats with shared facilities could not be counted in the proposed housing figures in the East of England Plan

It was confirmed however that self-contained flats *did* count and members highlighted some areas that may have been missed when the figures were compiled

Councillor Baker suggested that the benefit of this type of accommodation should be considered when the Planning Department and the Planning Committee looked at applications – many of which recently have been for student accommodation. The Head of Policy and Planning agreed that this could aid the process and said that it was worth further investigation

After some discussion around intensification the Planning Officer confirmed that Policy PPS3 did not allow windfall sites to be counted in the first 10 years

The Chair questioned whether any proposed sites had been put forward by the City Council and in response the Head of Policy and Planning confirmed that a site on Auckland Road, a site to the North of Barnwell Road and the Mill Road Depot would be considered

Councillor Blencowe informed members about a proposed 3 year rolling program (for identifying Council housing sites for development or redevelopment) that would be discussed at the Housing Management Board on 8th July and the Community Services Scrutiny Committee on 24th July. The Head of Policy and Planning confirmed that joint discussions with the Housing Department were ongoing and that members would receive regular updates on progress

The Chair highlighted the importance of transport consideration when looking at proposed sites and members and officers agreed

In response to a question regarding the assessment criteria on the proposed sites the Head of Policy and Planning confirmed that they would be assessed against existing policy and progress continually fed back to members through the SHLAA

The Meeting closed at 10.35am

Chair