

## **Development Plan Steering Group – 16 December 2008 @ 9:30am**

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

**Also present:** David Roberts (Head of Policy & Projects)  
Sara Cass (Planning Policy Manager)  
Glen Richardson (Head of Joint Urban Design Team)  
Nadine Black (Senior Arts and Urban Designer)  
Jo White (Planning Officer)  
Myles Greensmith (Research & Information Manager)

### **1. Minutes**

The minutes from the 9<sup>th</sup> December meeting were not available but will be available in paper form for the next meeting.

### **2. Apologies**

Apologies were received from Cllr Blencowe.

### **3. Declaration of Interest**

None were made.

### **4. Public Questions**

None.

### **5. Cambridge Public Art Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)**

GR – Provided a brief introduction to the SPD highlighting that it is a replacement for the 2002 Public Art Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG). A number of minor formatting errors were outlined along with the need to amend the Sustainability Appraisal to reflect changes made to the SPD Objectives. Reference was also made to the decision to bring the draft SPD to DPSG for approval prior to consultation in order to maintain the proposed timetable for production and adoption of the SPD.

Cllr Herbert questioned whether the draft SPD strengthens the current % for art policy and whether the SPD applies to all development sites. Concerns were raised over the delivery and implementation of public art due to its complexity. There were also some concerns as to how “good art” is defined as some public art resonates with the public while other public art does not. There is also need to consider the maintenance of public art as this is not always factored in (with some projects the appearance of the work was more important to the artist as opposed to its durability and long-term maintenance).

GR noted that with regards to the current % for art policy, the draft SPD seeks to enable the implementation of this policy. With regards to any strengthening of the policy, this would need to be brought forward in future development plan documents in order to for it to be subject to scrutiny and examination. With regards to the types/size of development to which the % for art policy applies, the criteria is set out in paragraph 8.6 of the draft SPD. It was agreed that the mechanisms for delivery of public art need to be strengthened (Appendix 4 sets out the development control process). There have been various discussions with developers and DC officers to try and resolve this issue. There is a need to engage with the public art process at a much earlier stage in the development process.

With regards to the question of “what is good public art”, work is underway with the Public Art Steering Group to formulate a set of criteria – the process needs to be more objective with more thought given to context. Maintenance of public art is recognised as another issue, and is dealt with in paragraph 8.8 of the draft SPD. Maintenance monies can be provided through the S106 process, with money also available from the Public Art Initiative Fund.

Cllr Herbert requested that some additional wording was added to the draft SPD to clarify the value in getting a more proactive approach from developers to provide a sense of ownership of public art. **GR agreed to clarify this in the draft SPD.**

A discussion then ensued with regards to issues with regards to the location of public art in relation to schools, with St Bedes School being cited as an example by Cllr Herbert. There has been the issue of the full application of the % for art policy and also regarding whether the piece of work could be sited in the school grounds. Cllr Reid raised the concern that strict adherence to the location of public art was leading to inadequate provision of public art on the periphery of school sites and that the draft SPD could usefully consider exceptions to the location of public art, for example it being acceptable in school playgrounds rather than on the periphery of sites. NB noted that schools are different in terms of public art requirements and that this had not been reflected in the draft SPD. Public art in schools can be used to allow children to engage with art and artists and can add value to the school community. **Agreed to look at additional wording for this.** There was a further point raised by Cllr Ward as to whether a similar approach could also be applied to colleges. GR noted that if the work was invisible to the public it would cross the line in terms of the definition of public art and that each case would need to be judged on its own merits.

A further discussion then ensued with regards to the process of delivery of public art and the role of planning committee in the process. Cllr Baker observed that the current process was unsatisfactory and that the draft SPD fails to adequately address this issue. It was felt that the draft SPD was not clear about the role of the Public Art Panel and its terms of reference. It was felt that there needs to be a greater role for planning committee and that public art needs to form part of the application discussions so that it can be considered directly up-front. Cllr Reid made reference to the drafting of the

terms of reference of the Public Art Panel, and that it was hoped that these would have been available for this meeting. A request was made that these be circulated to members ahead of Environment Scrutiny Committee on the 13<sup>th</sup> January 2009 and **officers agreed to do this**. GR agreed that the terms of reference for the panel were out of date and that it does not function well at present. The thinking, as discussed with development control officers, is that it should function like the Design and Conservation Panel, with an advisory rather than decision-making role. Cllr Baker observed that he would like to see the reports of the Public Art Panel come to Planning Committee with application reports in the same way as the reports of the Design and Conservation Panel. **GR agreed to take this decision back to the Head of Development Services.**

GR noted that it is a struggle to get developers to give consideration to public art at an early enough stage. Consideration has been given to a mandatory requirement for public art strategies to be submitted as part of planning applications but this would prove difficult to implement. As such, public art is currently implemented through the S106 negotiations post Planning Committee. Conditions have been placed on some applications (e.g. Station Area) requiring public art strategies to be brought back to Planning Committee for consideration and Cllr Reid did query whether this could become normal practice. Cllr Ward did raise the concern that if consideration of public art was rushed too early in the process this could lead to the provision of public art of questionable quality, although it was agreed that the current process takes too long.

Cllr Reid noted that she was under the impression that Appendix 4 of the SPD made provision for Ward Members to be consulted on all public art strategies and as a result, they had the powers to 'call in' applications. It was felt that this could be made clearer in the SPD and that additional wording setting out Councillors ability to call in applications to be added to Appendix 4, Stage 9 (32). DR also suggested that reference to reports of the Public Art Panel being submitted to Planning Committee could also be added to Stages 4 and 10 in Appendix 4 of the SPD. It was noted that in this context the term Planning Committee also should mean the Joint Planning -Committee and Area Committees where appropriate.

It was agreed that the draft SPD should be made available for public consultation in line with the current timetable subject to clarification of the following points:

- Needs to be clearer as to the ability to refuse planning applications on public art grounds;
- It needs to provide more clarity to the role of Members and Planning Committee in the public art process.

The revised SPD will need to be agreed with Chair, Vice Chair and Labour Spokes and Cllr Baker as chairman of Planning Committee prior to consultation.

With regards to the list of Consultees, requests were made to include everyone who had responded to the Issues and Options consultation, County Council's Education Department, all Private Schools and Sixth Form Colleges in Cambridge, the Cambridge Open Studio and all commercial art galleries in the City.

## **6. Local Development Framework – Annual Monitoring Report 2008 (AMR)**

JW provided a brief introduction to the AMR, making reference to a number of minor errors that had been identified in the report since it had been sent to DPSG. It was highlighted that of the developments currently underway, the developers at the Simoco Site and Accordia had indicated their commitment to continuing with development as planned.

There were some concerns that the projections included in the Housing Trajectory were overly optimistic and did not give sufficient consideration to the current economic climate and the impacts that this is having on delivery. Population figures derived from the County Council were also called into question. DR and MG did point out the statutory nature of the document and the need for it to provide a 'snapshot' in time (primarily looking back rather than forwards). Reference had been made in the AMR to the uncertainties of the current economic climate although it was agreed that this would be strengthened. It was **agreed** that officers should add a paragraph to explain that in relation to the housing trajectory, the main uncertainty relates to the timing of development and not to its extent, or location. This paragraph would explain how we had assembled the trajectory and indicate that its implementation in the immediate future would be subject to the length and depth of the economic recession.

Cllr Reid wished to highlight the progress that had already been made with regards to housing delivery, with 3,800 of the required 6,500 dwellings in the urban area of the City having been achieved to date.

Cllr Reid requested that amendments be made to paragraph 4.19 of the AMR, which deals with the Quality Charter, amending the 1<sup>st</sup> sentence to read "expressed key aspirational principles" and to replace "major new housing developments" with "major new communities". It was also requested that reference to "voluntary" organisations be removed and for the following to be inserted at the end of the paragraph: "A lot of work still needs to be done to embed the quality charter into the development process". **Agreed.**

Cllr Holness wished to see clarification as to the 1% figure referred to at the end of paragraph 6.19. DR confirmed that officers would investigate and correct this and that there were also a number of other minor factual errors in the AMR that would be remedied before its publication.

