

Minutes of Meeting with South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC)

6th November 2017, 11.30am to 1pm

Present: Representative from SCDC, Alison Talkington and David Roberts.

Members of the Steering Group (SG) Martin Livermore (ML), Ken Winterbottom (KW), Ashley Arbon (AA), Tim Stone (TS), Rob Foden (RF), Pamela Freeman (PF), Arthur Greaves (AG), Sophie O'Hara Smith (SOS), Emma Powlett (EP), Jo Denny (JD) Administrative Assistant

Introduction

AT – They have read through the draft plan and will give guidance today as well as in writing within the next 2 weeks. They advise to also now get a planning expert involved. SCDC also offer to pay for a single health check once plan finalised. On right track, but needs refining.

ML – Gave an overview of the draft plan, we have policies drafted, maps now need to be added. We would like to know whether we are as far forward as we think, is there are lot more work to be done?

AT – The draft policies need to be tested to see if they comply with guidance such as the National Planning Policy Framework and the Strategic Policies in the Local Plan (LP)

DR – The LP has been with the examiner for a number of years, but they hope to hear in the next couple of weeks of any modifications required. These modifications will be consulted on and any responses will be reviewed by the examiner and taken into account in the final report.

PF – Queried whether the result would be delivered at the same time as the Cambridge City LP

DR – Yes, likely.

ML – Will the LP be reviewed almost immediately bearing in mind it has taken so long?

AA – He was concerned it had taken so long to review as there are lots of new planning laws and there has not been the chance to review any issues that may arise from these laws in the LP.

DR – The inspector is very thorough and there are many large sites for consideration. As to the question of when the LP will be reviewed, it lasts 5 years so it is likely they will start to prepare a new plan by 2019 with some work in 2018.

General Comments on Whittlesford Neighbourhood Plan (NP)

DR – The NP needs to comply with the basic conditions. It is Whittlesfords NP so the amount of detail is up to you. Gt Abington NP which had now had its first consultation only has 4 policies, will be quicker to review.

AT – Thoughts:

- one of the overarching issues when a developer submits a planning application, what difference does the NP make?
- The draft could be crisper in terms of the Whittlesford element
- Don't repeat in NP anything in guidance
- If a developer looks at the NP can they easily see what it adds?

EP- Is our NP the first port of call for a planner?

DR – A planner will look at everything at the same time.

AT – Think about what is specific to Whittlesford. It reads well so far, a really good start.

Comments on Housing and Rural Development Section

DR and AT

- Put yourselves in position of not knowing Whittlesford ensuring everything explained, for example HRD2 refers to Scutches Farm
- Home working policy. This is covered by LP, is there anything specific to Whittlesford?
- Be clear on words using, need to be specific and clear what is meant
- It is good to look at other NP that have been approved. The Planning advisory website (central government) gave money to local authorities to give extra guidance. The guidance from Cornwall very good and worth a read.
<https://www.local.gov.uk/pas/pas-topics/neighbourhood-plans/dclg-neighbourhood-planning-case-studies/engaging-local-5>.
- No plans in South Cambs approved yet. Great Abington furthest ahead with first official consultation
- Query, room sizes in LP, what do we mean by managing development, efficiency level, what do we mean?
- Highways Depot. Be more specific, it is currently a bit vague, what do we want from site if developed? Commercial, aspiration for a local shop? Talk to them too.
- Policies in plan need to be achievable. Talk to landowners.
- Affordable housing exception sites refers to Nicholas Swallow Trust. It cannot be that specific. Can mention them, but not in policy itself.

Comments on Environment & Heritage Section

AT and DR comments:

- Agricultural Land already covered in a policy in LP
- Is view worthy of protection? Do views provide any areas for a developer to use? View of church over fields, is definitely a view. Ensure protection of view not covered by anything else. You may want to avoid development that is detrimental to views. It would help to explain the character of the village.
- Try and get a balance of what is specific to Whittlesford and not when considering protecting.

- Priority Nature Site, Priority Amenity and Heritage Sites. Make terminology more local. What makes it a priority site? There is a danger in trying to protect too much. What makes it more local to Whittlesford?
- EG 2/2 A bit onerous. Is the level of protection going further than national guidance?
- Theme 5 The Great Crested Newt. Give evidence of where newts are. Bear in mind newts do not stop development
- Full ecology report requirement, consider is this required on all developments?
- Maps required where specific sites mentioned

We have maps referring to specific sites.

SOS can produce a description of village.

AA believes report required with planning applications and need to take into account Wildlife and Countryside Act.

SOS South Cambs guidance does not say if landscape and visual assessment needed. AT – At moment the LP policy is more overarching rather than detail. For their next plan they will consider whether a separate document required.

SOS takes point that we need to look at views and make them more specific

Additional General Comments and Responses;

- SOS – How do we approach the Whittlesford Bridge area? DR – The plan could have a policy on the area, to include a master plan. Consider though the more information/detail that is put in the less flexibility there is.
- Consultation important, advertise well and sufficiently in advance
- DR – not everything needs to go in the NP because like the LP it will be reviewed every 5 years
- KW – Queried if there was any mixed housing in exception sites at the moment?
- DR – This is starting to happen. The City Deal wants more exception sites, but this is not currently in Cambridge LP, it is a developer's proposal. Fulbourn Road proposal not in LP and they do not expect examiners to include it
- DR- Whether more Greenbelt area should be used for development will only be reconsidered when LP reviewed again. Ten years ago, South Cambs took land out of Greenbelt following central government policy, but he does not think government will change process and there will still be a high hurdle to remove. You can't currently put in NP that you want to develop along Duxford Road as has been suggested before by residents. This would need to be looked at in the next LP
- PF – Consider what people want from housing, not as much large gardens? EP – Do need infrastructure to support this such as large green spaces.

The groups to now review their drafts based on the advice given and a Steering Group Meeting to be arranged following this.