

South Cambridgeshire Local Plan

Member Workshops

Workshop 2 – Key Policy Issues

27 March 2012

Attendees

Cllr David Bard	Cllr Tumi Hawkins	Jean Hunter
Cllr Richard Barrett	Cllr Janet Lockwood	Jo Mills
Cllr Val Barrett	Cllr Mervyn Loynes	Alex Colyer
Cllr Trisha Bear	Cllr Ray Manning	Mike Hill
Cllr Tom Bygott	Cllr Mick Martin	Keith Miles
Cllr Nigel Cathcart	Cllr David McCraith	Caroline Hunt
Cllr Pippa Corney	Cllr Cicely Murfitt	Jonathan Dixon
Cllr Simon Edwards	Cllr Bridget Smith	Jenny Nuttycombe
Cllr Alison Elcox	Cllr Hazel Smith	
Cllr Sue Ellington	Cllr John Williams	
Cllr Stephen Harangozo	Cllr Tim Wotherspoon	
Cllr Lynda Harford	Cllr Nick Wright	

These notes are a record of points raised in open discussion sessions by those attending the workshop, where a wide variety of views and ideas were put forward. The notes capture the range of issues and views identified, sometimes by individual Members, and do not necessarily reflect the view of the Council. They do not represent any specific decisions made.

Discussion 1: Rural Strategy

- Create village clusters that can support sustainable development – growth is allowed within the cluster.
- Need a settlement hierarchy but not focussed on individual villages.
- Development within villages should be sustainable by encouraging mix of housing and employment uses, promoting economic development within the village, preserving existing amenities, increasing jobs within the village, reducing the need for commuting out of the village, avoiding the creation of dormitory villages, and creating vibrant villages.
- Acknowledge that shops, schools and businesses make a village attractive and desirable to live in.
- Parish Councils need to buy in to the idea that allowing development increases their community's sustainability and independence.
- Ensure that the right mix of housing tenures is delivered to create sustainable communities – not all executive homes.

- District council should be taking the lead as they understand 'sustainability'. Parish Councils can be influenced by minority pressure groups working to a different agenda.
- Be realistic about how much development is needed to make a difference to services and facilities e.g. a development of 5 dwellings is unlikely to help retain services and amenities, but a development of 100 dwellings might. Parish Councils need to be fully aware of this.
- Do we need a settlement hierarchy at all? Categories constrain development, especially in Infill villages where the current policy restricts development to gaps within existing development framework, and results in the village being 'filled up'.
- The Group village category contains a wide range in size of village. Should the settlement hierarchy categories be based on size of the village?
- Encourage live – work developments and home working to create sustainable communities. Allow Infill villages to grow by encouraging live – work developments, but how is the work element enforced?
- Allow villages to elect whether they want development to facilitate new infrastructure or retain existing services and facilities. Some Infill villages would like development to retain existing services. Undertake a survey of Parish Councils to understand which villages want development – but the view of the Parish Council might not be the same as that of the village residents.
- Allow mixed tenure sites outside village development frameworks – change exception site rules e.g. 60% affordable housing, 40% market housing. This will bring forward housing developments and be more acceptable to existing village residents. Would help to create balanced communities rather than ghettos.
- Less exception sites are coming forward – what are the reasons?
- If you allow more mixed tenure developments then there will be less affordable housing provided, so less attractive to registered providers who prefer a cluster of affordable houses, therefore will need to increase the size of the site to provide more affordable housing.
- Why is development in Group villages so restricted? More flexibility should be allowed relating to the size of new housing developments.
- Current strategy has worked fairly well – add an extra category for villages wishing to grow?
- How many exceptions to policy are allowed within development frameworks based on size of development (i.e. developments allowed over the size suggested in the policy) – if a lot then this questions the policy.
- Things have changed since 2007, therefore the settlement hierarchy needs to be reviewed.
- Encourage every village to have a neighbourhood plan – but not enough time for parishes to do this in time to inform the Local Plan. Parish Councils will have their opportunity to

inform the Local Plan through workshop on 29 March 2012 and public consultation on Issues & Options in Summer 2012.

- Should villages be telling the district council what they want rather than the other way round? Possibility that too many villages would say no to development.
- Need to maintain integrity of villages – don't allow villages to merge together.
- All existing Rural Centres are within the Green Belt, except Cambourne.
- Need to consider flood plains, and the impact of development on them.
- Has the Guided Bus changed the sustainability of villages north west of Cambridge? Will the new Chesterton Station reinforce this?
- Will Northstowe have a positive impact on the surrounding villages? Cambourne has had a negative impact on the surrounding villages. Need to encourage use of services in smaller villages by residents of bigger villages.
- Should the radial public transport routes from Cambridge be used as focus for development?
- Have two settlement categories only: (i) Rural Centres – which would include existing Minor Rural Centres as well; and (ii) Group villages – which would include Infill villages as well.
- Should the strategy be based on Rural Centres being at the centre of a hierarchy of villages within their orbits, and that the services and facilities are shared between the villages in the orbit as well as the Rural Centre.
- Development framework boundaries should be moveable.
- Development frameworks have remained largely unchanged since 1993, is it time for change now that many villages are 'full up'.
- Is it time to include all parts of the village within the development framework boundary e.g. clusters of dwellings separate from the main village should be within the development framework boundary.
- Have a grey area around all villages where low density development would be allowed.

Discussion 2: Design, Heritage and the Natural Environment

- Raise the profile of the District Design Guide SPD and refine it – currently too long. Make it usable and relevant for 'real people' to help them decide on design and avoid being over prescriptive.
- Need to develop a design guide for each cluster of villages.
- Create opportunity for debate on what is good design.

- Design and quality of development should be considered from the start.
- Floor area is more important than the number of rooms i.e. ensure that rooms are suitable size for their purpose.
- New housing developments are very boring. Seek variety of design in large developments, so that they don't all look the same. Villages typically include a variety of buildings from different periods and design, this should be replicated in new developments.
- Look at the sustainability of buildings e.g. how will they weather over time, seek to achieve lower running costs, use of 'passivhaus' design.
- Design of buildings should take account of advancing technologies – this can be a problem within existing conservation and heritage policies, need to make the policies more flexible.
- Encourage better sustainable design features in buildings. Ensure that market housing and affordable housing are built to the same standards. Will this prevent development as the additional requirements may make the development too expensive?
- Our new large developments have an 'urban' design to them, need to ensure that the design of a development reflects the rural surroundings.
- Undertake more work to research quality vs. cost, and dispel the myth that good quality is expensive.
- Good design costs money but good design is important.
- Villagers should have a say on design, but localism may lead to NIMBY attitude.
- Review Conservation Area legislation to ensure that it allows for Lifetime Homes.
- Retain stock of listed buildings but allow them to be altered to be 'fit for life'. Allow more flexibility in changes to listed buildings e.g. allow improvements to non-residential listed buildings that make them fit for purpose and encourage the retention of the facility e.g. shop.
- Retain integrity of listed buildings.
- Encourage preservation of non listed buildings that are important to the community.
- Conservation is too focussed on preservation, need to conserve in a modern way.
- Important that we retain the high standards of conservation that is sought in the existing planning policies.
- Inappropriate application of existing policies is the issue rather than the policy.
- Need to integrate conservation more.

- Public art is necessary, need to encourage community involvement.
- Build public art into the design of new buildings and developments.
- Ensure that local communities are very involved in public art choices and the creation of public art e.g. Melbourn glass screen.
- Public art must serve a purpose and be practical e.g. create gates, benches that include art. It can also help to orientate people within a development e.g. Cambourne lampposts are different throughout the villages. Holding ourselves open to criticism if we require all art to be practical.
- Do we need art, would the money be better spent on something else? 1% requirement is too high for a rural area.
- Promote a 'best landscape' policy which includes preservation of trees.
- Retaining access to the countryside and encourage more footpaths and cycle paths between villages. Will need to work with farming community.
- Need to ensure balance between retaining landscapes and renewable energy generation.
- Green infrastructure means farmland and hedgerows not just pristine parks.
- Encourage public / private partnership working on nature conservation.
- Most new developments enhance biodiversity and ecology e.g. Cambourne.
- Keep promoting inclusion of green spaces, including orchards.

Discussion 3: Travel

NOTE: SCDC is not the highways authority and therefore can only encourage different travel behaviours through the location of new developments and ensuring access to opportunities to use sustainable forms of transport.

- Work with other local authorities to link communities with transport hubs (e.g. stations in Royston, Sandy, Huntingdon) through cycle ways.
- Include cycle ways to transport hubs in s106 agreements.
- Ensure cycle racks are provided at transport hubs. Ensure shower facilities are provided by organisations for use by people who choose to cycle to meetings.
- Park & Ride sites should be able to be used by more than just the bus users. Allow them to be used as base for cyclists. Lobby Cambridgeshire County Council for free parking for cyclists at the Park & Ride sites.
- Work with supermarkets to run shopping minibuses.

- Locate development near existing transport corridors e.g. rail, high quality bus services, Guided Bus. Create feeder services to existing public transport services.
- Develop separated cycle ways alongside existing radial transport corridors to encourage cycling. Cycle way alongside the Guided Bus is well used as it is separated from vehicles.
- Produce cycle way design that is affordable and safe e.g. needs lighting to make cyclists feel safe.
- Pooling of s106 monies within village clusters to deliver 'spider web' of cycle ways, to allow local residents to access services and facilities in other villages. E.g. cycle ways to Cambourne from surrounding villages.
- SCDC to promote recreational cycling.
- Look at Dutch sustainable transport model.
- Reinstate railway routes and roman roads for use by cyclists.
- Deliver cluster focussed community transport to allow access to services and facilities.
- Encourage Park & Ride sites within large new developments.
- Subsidies should only be used for pump priming.
- Promote 'fast' bus service – by making bus routes shorter and more direct, and adding more feeder services.
- Need more Park & Ride sites on the Guided Busway e.g. Swavesey, Oakington.
- Tension between concentrating development in sustainable locations and concentrating development into areas where it will support existing public transport routes, especially marginal subsidy routes.
- Better partnership working with Cambridgeshire County Council to ensure s106 monies are sought for the right projects. Develop a list of projects before seeking s106 monies so clear what money can be used for.
- Look at reopening stations on existing rail lines (e.g. Six Mile Bottom, Fulbourn) or create new stations along existing rail lines.
- Encourage linking up of sustainable forms of transport.
- Use s106 monies to fund physical infrastructure rather than services.
- Will need some subsidised services to allow Infill villages to have opportunities to use sustainable forms of transport e.g. bus services. Parish Councils could fund services?

- Allow more parking spaces within high density residential developments through underground or multi-storey car parks. If you try to limit parking it encourages use of roads and pavements for parking and creates safety problems.
- Inconsistency between promotion of use of sustainable forms of transport (e.g. cycling, walking, public transport) and allowing provision of more parking spaces.
- Do not need more garages or driveway parking spaces as these are not used by people, need to make streets that include parked cars safer e.g. wider streets, Dutch 'shared space' model. Need to make streets safe for children playing.
- Should the number of parking spaces be linked to the number of bedrooms? More parking spaces for bigger properties to accommodate teenagers with cars, but this is in conflict with encouraging use of sustainable forms of transport and best use of land.
- Make sure parking spaces are big enough for self-employed van drivers – linked to encouraging live – work developments.
- Less need for parking spaces in the future as cars will be less affordable and therefore there will be fewer cars per household.
- Some current bus services do not fulfil the service that is required therefore not used. People want regular and reliable services.
- Car pooling could work well where there is a cluster of villages around a sustainable transport hub.
- How is the money from s106 agreements distributed? Is it specifically ring fenced for the project listed in the s106 agreement? s106 monies should only be spent on the purpose they are collected for, although the money will be held until enough has been collected to pay for the project.

Discussion 4: Services and Facilities, Water and Drainage

- Services and facilities must be delivered alongside the housing.
- Need services and facilities ready from the start so that people are attracted to the development.
- Facility needs to be viable, therefore need enough houses occupied to support it.
- Bringing forward services and facilities earlier in the development could be a problem for developers as they need money from the sale of houses to pay for services and facilities. Might need to consider reducing affordable housing requirement to allow developers money to bring forward services and facilities earlier.
- Policies need to be flexible so that in the current economic climate when viability is less certain, the policy is more flexible, but when the economic climate is good the development provides more.
- s106 trigger points need to be carefully thought out.

- Create s106 trigger points that are based on value of sales rather than number of houses, will create better link with housing market.
- A meeting place should be provided from the outset to help create the community within a new development e.g. Orchard Park.
- Flexible buildings are needed that can be used for alternative facilities over time as population within the development (and nationally) changes e.g. schools that can be converted to care homes.
- Ask communities what they need as a result of the new development. Listen to community leaders ('catalyst influencers').
- Ensure buildings are future proofed e.g. include opportunities for additional infrastructure to be provided over the lifetime of the building.
- Maintain rate relief in rural areas.
- Need to protect village services by ensuring there are no loopholes that allow services and facilities to be lost through permitted development e.g. loss of pub to antiques shop possible without planning permission, resulted in loss of community facility in West Wickham.
- Encourage shops to be provided in early phase of development through low rents.
- Use CIL to pump-prime services and facilities.
- Encourage innovative multi-use of buildings – locate multiple facilities within one building, especially early in the development. Can expand to separate buildings later when the facility is established and viable.
- Future proof local villages.
- A policy for allotments should be included. There is a current demand for allotments in villages.
- Require provision of allotments on developments of specific size.
- Allotments should be considered separately to public open space and should be provided where gardens are small.
- Open space should be less urban and less sterile. Need to encourage a more rural, naturalistic design of open space.
- Open space should include community woodlands and orchards or community growing schemes.
- Clustering of allotments into one location for a collection of villages.
- Need to provide more informal open space.
- Green corridors should provide links between open space.
- Public composting should be encouraged.

- Children's play areas should be made of natural materials.
- Should the district council retain control of financial contributions for open space and to develop open space for cluster of villages? Some Parish Councils are not spending their s106 monies.
- Encourage rainwater harvesting and grey water recycling in all new developments.
- Minimise non-porous ground cover in new developments and redevelopments to reduce surface water runoff. Surface water runoff after construction of a new development should be no more than from the previous use.
- Promote drought mitigation and Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) - ensure that are of good effective design and designed in from the start.
- Provide large grey water storage schemes serving communities rather than individual households.
- Promote partnership approach to flood management e.g. Northstowe development will have an impact on its surroundings, including areas within neighbouring authorities.
- Dual use of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) for drainage and open space.
- Ditches for drainage should be maintained for that primary purpose. Wildlife is a secondary consideration.
- New crematorium necessary – encourage link to CHP.
- Develop new off grid energy sources e.g. anaerobic digestion plants.

Conclusions / Cross Cutting Themes

- Joining up – clusters of villages, linking transport modes, partnership working with other local authorities.
- Awareness of heritage and conservation but desire for more flexibility to allow buildings to be adapted to include new sustainable technologies and to accommodate modern living.
- Strong mood for change – expanding development frameworks, revising settlement hierarchy.

Next Steps

- Workshops for other stakeholders are being held over next few weeks and other evidence gathering is being undertaken. This will inform the preparation of the Local Plan Issues & Options report.
- Agreement to consult on the Local Plan Issues & Options report will be sought at the Northstowe & New Communities Portfolio Holder Meeting in June 2012, which will be preceded by a special full council meeting.
- Public consultation will be held from July – September 2012.