

Joint Strategic Growth Implementation Committee

Minutes from the Committee Meeting of Wednesday, 6th February 2008 (10 am – 2 pm) The Council Room, New Hall, Cambridge

Committee Members Present:

Sir David Trippier, Chairman

Cllr Dr David Bard, South Cambridgeshire District Council
Cllr Nichola Harrison, Cambridgeshire County Council
Cllr Lewis Herbert, Cambridge City Council
Cllr Sebastian Kindersley, South Cambridgeshire District Council
Cllr Ray Manning, South Cambridgeshire District Council
Cllr Ian Nimmo-Smith, Cambridge City Council
John Onslow, Cambridgeshire Horizons
Cllr Roy Pegram, Cambridgeshire County Council
Alex Plant, Cambridgeshire Horizons
Cllr Sian Reid, Cambridge City Council
Cllr John Reynolds, Cambridgeshire County Council

Also in attendance:

Graham Hughes, Cambridgeshire County Council
Sally Hutchinson, Cambridgeshire Horizons (Minutes)
Gareth Jones, South Cambridgeshire District Council
Paul Mumford, Cambridgeshire Horizons (Minutes)
Simon Payne, Cambridge City Council
Brian Smith, Cambridgeshire County Council
Peter Studdert, Director for Joint Planning (Cambridge Growth Areas
and Northstowe)

Apologies:

No apologies received

PART 1 (Public)

(i) Actions

Item 1 – Welcome and Apologies

- 1.1 The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting of the Joint Strategic Growth Implementation Committee.
- 1.2 No Apologies had been received.

Item 2 – Minutes of the Joint Strategic Growth Implementation Committee – 17 October 2007

- 2.1 The Minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting of Tuesday, 4 December 2007.

Item 3 – Matters Arising

- 3.1 Item 3.3, innovative ways of funding, this would be covered under agenda Item No. 8 – Development of the Regional Infrastructure Fund.
- 3.2 Item 3.9, position statement from Marshall Aerospace and Defence Estates would be covered under agenda item no. 12 in the closed part of the meeting.

Item 4 and Item 5 – Housing Growth Fund Prioritisation and Major Development Sites Progress

- 4.1 John Onslow presented the paper, commenting that the Senior Officer Board had met to consider the Strategic Risk Register and pointing out that red, amber and green status is now in place for each element of risk mitigation.
- 4.2 John Onslow explained the Housing Growth Fund (HGF) allocation for the County, and said that CLG have held back some of the total HGF at this stage. A Steering Group has looked at allocating funds and will report to the Founder Members meeting and then to the Horizons Board on 5th March.
- 4.3 John Onslow reported that CLG had allocated an initial £8m to the Rolling Fund. All authorities have now approved the Section 29 Committee, which was a requirement of Government for releasing the Rolling Fund money. It was agreed at the last Horizons Board meeting that the Addenbrooke's Access Road Phase 2 should receive Rolling Fund in the first instance.
- 4.4 Cllr Pegram commented that County Cabinet has agreed to seek prudential borrowing up to £10m, which is subject to ratification by full council. Cllr Reynolds and Alex Plant added that this will be subject to all debt and costs being repaid in full from developer contributions, and County's debts being repaid first.
- 4.5 Cllr Reynolds asked about the process for securing additional funding. Alex Plant explained that the process for allocation of additional funds is yet to be clarified by CLG, but would follow a consultation exercise into the new funding system planned for Spring/Summer. Agreed to confirm process once more information available.

**Chief
Executive**

- 4.6 Discussion around level of award. The Chairman commented that for the 1st year of HGF, Cambridgeshire received almost everything it asked for in terms of capital funds.
- 4.7 Cllr Reid commented on the emergence of a joint local authority Urban Design Team and that it might be useful to feed back to Government that this is a good example of the local authorities working together in a positive way. A team is also to be set up at the City Council to address communicating the growth agenda. The Chairman commented on the importance of coordinating this work and that Horizons were looking to appoint a new communications officer.
- 4.8 Cllr Harrison suggested a new risk be added to the register to cover the challenges posed by eco-towns and other distractions to delivering growth. Alex Plant commented on the apparent contradiction in Government pushing eco-towns to speed up delivery of housing numbers when, for Cambridgeshire at least, this might compromise delivery of existing sites. **Director for Development**
- 4.9 The Chairman commented that other sites may come forward, for example at market towns, that would deliver increased numbers of dwellings. Peter Studdert commented on the importance of providing jobs at any new sites and finding sustainable transport solutions.
- 4.10 Cllr Herbert asked for clearer mapping out of all posts engaged in the growth agenda. John Onslow agreed to prepare a 'map' of posts. **Director for Development**
- 4.11 Cllr Reynolds raised concern over the planning process for eco-towns. Discussion around the importance of the RSS review and that JSGIC should consider if a joint approach is required.
- 4.12 John Onslow commented that CH is composing a letter to CLG, following the recent meeting on eco-towns.
- 4.13 Cllr Kindersley suggested a risk be included around the resource implication of dealing with eco-towns, adding that there is currently a grudging acceptance of the growth agenda, but this may evaporate if new sites come forward. **Director for Development**
- 4.14 Discussion around how planning policy is joined-up at a regional and sub-regional level. Cllr Reynolds reported that local authorities are collectively considering how to respond to the sub-national review. Brian Smith commented that there was ongoing officer work in this area.

4.15 Discussion around engaging with communities and that some good work is ongoing, for example parish meetings at Bar Hill. The Chairman reported that Horizons intended to re-run public perception surveys (first undertaken late 2005); Alex Plant added that Horizons' should up its game in communicating the growth agenda, and in community engagement.

4.16 Cllr Harrison asked for education matters to be included on the agenda for next JSGIC.

Chairman

4.17 Cllr Bard asked for confirmation that the Cambridgeshire Guided Busway was on schedule. Brian Smith confirmed that it was.

4.18 Cllr Reynolds commented on the Strategic Risk Register, that it would be useful for each risk to have one owner and that discussion should be focussed on an exception basis. Specifically on the risk around a slow-down in the housing market, commented that the challenge of bringing forward affordable housing should be addressed.

Director for Development

Item 6a – Government Agencies - Update from the Highways Agency

6a.1 The Chairman presented a report from David Abbot of the Highways Agency.

6a.2 Cllr Dr David Bard was pleased to see that contractors had been appointed for the design phase but slightly concerned that the Highways Agency (HA) was not beyond the design process with appointing contractors.

Cllr Dr David Bard referred to item 2.1 of the paper and asked if the wording of 'nil detriment on the A14' means that there may be an impact on the Local Authority roads surrounding Northstowe. What is the co-ordination between the HA and Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC)? Is the Scoping Study to go ahead on B1050 – Willingham?

6a.3 Brian Smith confirmed that the Scoping report for Willingham is in progress, he also confirmed that there had been and continues to be close liaison between the HA and CCC to address the issues surrounding Northstowe and the A14. Any issues will be fed into the Risk Register but comfortable that the A14 is taking its course. He went on to say that the Government have said that they will formally confirm funding when through to the next stage of the process.

6a.4 Alex Plant confirmed that he has reiterated to the HA on a number of occasions that the upgrading of the A14 is of critical importance and the number one priority for the Growth Agenda. The HA say they recognise this. But need to work effectively with HA on Northstowe and interim measures to avoid the risk of an article 14 direction.

- 6a.5 Cllr Sebastian Kindersley asked if the dualling of the A428 between Caxton and St Neots and alternative public transport modes on this route could be discussed at a future meeting. John Onslow confirmed this would be discussed at the next meeting.

**Agenda Plan/
Director for
Development**

Item 6b – Government Agencies - Update from the Environment Agency

- 6b.1 The Chairman presented the report from the Environment Agency.
6b.2 The Committee noted the report.

The Chairman asked the Committee to consider which Government Agencies or other organisations they would like to receive report updates from at the next meeting. It was agreed that it would also be helpful to have progress reports from the major utilities.

**Director for
Development**

It was agreed to ask the Primary Care Trust (PCT) and EDF Energy for update reports for the next meeting.

**Director for
Development**

Item 7 – Planning Bill Community Infrastructure Levy/Tariff

- 7.1 Alex Plant presented the paper and explained how a Levy/tariff could capture more value as it can apply to every house built, rather than just large developments, and provide more certainty for developers and local authorities and greater flexibility. It is expected that Councils can use the new CIL powers from 2009. He went on to say that further work would be taken forward by Cambridgeshire Horizons on this issue over the next few months, and he would report back to this Committee when completed.
- 7.2 Chairman thought this was a sensible way forward.
- 7.3 Cllr Bard commented that Housing Corporation funding was not available for Affordable Housing provision on small rural sites so would not want a levy that makes this policy non-viable.
- 7.4 Cllr Nichola Harrison welcomed the piece of work and asked for confirmation that the outcome would come to this Committee. This was confirmed by the Chairman.
- 7.5 Peter Studdert felt there was a danger that we could make too much of this. Will obviously affect the smaller sites and large sites have enough trouble covering own costs. He went on to say that we have a lot of knowledge in this area already so this piece of work needs to review existing processes. Alex Plant acknowledged this but responded by saying that the work would explore the option of a smaller sites only tariff.
- 7.6 Cllr Ian Nimmo-Smith commented that much of the focus in the Cambridge Sub-region is on large sites but this is an area where we can look at alternative options for smaller sites. Although cannot necessarily scale up from small to large sites.

- 7.7 Cllr Sian Reid asked if the process could be evaluated as currently it is not evidence based. Existing processes are in place, consistency can sometimes be best. CIL may not be the answer. Alex Plant responded by saying that the piece of work would look at existing processes and other areas of the country where tariffs are already in place. This would then provide a base for further discussion with partners to decide whether or not CIL or another tariff system would be the best way forward in the Cambridge Sub-region. Cllr Reid suggested that this was a policy issue, Alex Plant responded by saying that this is very much an infrastructure funding issue. Cllr Reid asked if the Cambridgeshire Horizons could look at existing processes first and then look at a broader tariff. Alex Plant confirmed the work would cover all of the points raised by Cllr Reid.
- 7.8 Cllr Ray Manning commented that this is a very big and delicate issue which needs to be handled sensitively.
- 7.9 Cllr Sebastian Kindersley thought the Levy/Tariff option needs to be explored. S106 is not perfect and needs to be evaluated.

Item 8 – Development of the Regional Infrastructure Fund

- 8.1 The Chairman presented the paper on the development of a Regional Infrastructure Fund (RIF) and welcomed Steve Cox's (EEDA) commitment to set up an East of England Regional Infrastructure Fund.
- 8.2 Cllr Sebastian Kindersley would like to see relationships formed between competing authorities in the East of England. The Chairman agreed with this. Cllr Kindersley asked whether this should be a Cambridge Sub-region fund?
- 8.3 Cllr John Reynolds – Where is the joined up thinking across Government? The Chairman replied by saying that we also have our own Sub-regional Rolling Fund, but explained that the difference between the Rolling Fund and RIF is that RIF will also give one-off grants.
- 8.4 Cllr Nichola Harrison commented that although this paper outlined another imaginative and innovative source of funding for the East of England, this Committee is most interested in the needs and where the funding shortfall will come from for the Cambridge Sub-region and that is not addressed by this paper. Must not get by-passed into regional discussions.
- 8.5 The Chairman responded to Cllr Harrison by saying that although this funding would be for the East of England it could be used for instance for the upgrading of the A428 between Caxton and St Neots which is not currently forthcoming in other funding stream. Alex Plant also responded by saying that it could be one part of a solution to the shortfall of S106/Private Sector funding.
- 8.6 Cllr Nichola Harrison went on to say that she has pressed for this debate to have a practical approach and select individual projects eg Chesterton Sidings to see how this could be funded. Accepts the broader context but would like to see how it addresses individual projects.
- 8.7 Chairman confirmed that Horizons would look again at this issue.
- 8.8 Cllr Sian Reid would like to see the Long Term Delivery Plan (LTDP) and asked if the work on low carbon appraisal had been commissioned. The Director responded by saying that the work had been commissioned and as part of the study a workshop was being held on 26 February, Committee Members would be invited. He went on to say that a summary of the LTDP had been discussed at the Committee meeting in October and that the findings of the low carbon appraisal work would be reported to the Committee in April.

Chairman

Chief Executive

Item 9 – Agenda Plan and Any Other Business

- 9.1 The Agenda Plan was noted by the Committee.
- 9.2 In addition to the agenda items already scheduled, the

following items would be put on the Agenda Plan for the meeting on Wednesday, 9 April 2008 :-

- A428 between Caxton and St Neots
- Long Term Delivery Plan and Sustainability Appraisal

9.3 The Chairman reported that Cambridgeshire Horizons Annual Conference will be held on Friday, 13 June 2008 at Hinxton Hall. The Chairman has invited Hazel Blears MP to be the keynote speaker at the Conference.

9.4 The Chairman asked Cllr Reid to consider with him ideas for an appropriate speaker to be invited to speak on Public Transport at the Conference.

Chairman

Item 10 – Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday, 9 April 2008 at 10am in Committee Room 1, The Guildhall, Cambridge City Council.