



EAST
CAMBRIDGESHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL

AGENDA ITEM NO 5

MEETING OF THE ELY MASTERPLAN/GROWTH DELIVERY WORKING PARTY

Notes of a meeting held in the Council Chamber,
The Grange, Nutholt Lane, Ely on Thursday
2nd April 2009 at 10.33am

PRESENT

Councillor Peter Moakes (Chairman)
Councillor Sheila Friend-Smith
Councillor Bill Hunt – Co-opted Member,
Cambridgeshire County Council
Councillor Mike Rouse

OFFICERS

David Archer – Executive Director, Development Services
Shirley Blake – Principal Sustainable Development Officer
Ann Caffall – Infrastructure & Project Officer
Giles Hughes – Head of Planning and Sustainable Development
Janis Murfet – Democratic Services Officer

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE

Councillor Ian Allen
Councillor Brian Ashton
Councillor Tony Cornell
Councillor Philip Read
(6 members of the public)

Dr Nicholas Falk – Urban and Economic Development Ltd (URBED)

80. **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

No questions were received.

81. **APOLOGIES**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Richard Hobbs –
Co-opted Member, City of Ely Council.

82. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Hunt declared a personal interest, as he part owned the
freehold of two properties in Ely; he was also a member of Cambridgeshire
County Council.

83. **ELY MASTERPLAN/GROWTH DELIVERY WORKING PARTY NOTES**

Further to Minute No 77 (Ely Masterplan – Work Programme), page 6, paragraph 5, Councillor Hunt said that his comments needed to be worded more strongly; he wished the minute to reflect that he was totally opposed to the idea of development on Ely Golf Course.

Further to Minute No 76 (Presentation from Dr Nicholas Falk “Lessons for Ely from Dutch New Communities”), page 4, paragraph 5, Councillor Friend-Smith noted the incorrect spelling of “Witney”. She also felt that the wording of the paragraph did not capture the proper sense of her remarks, as the fencing around the water area had made it seem like a “no go” area.

It was agreed:

That subject to the agreed amendments, the notes of the Ely Masterplan/Growth Delivery Working Party meeting held on 25th February 2009 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

84. **CHAIRMAN’S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman announced that Agenda Item No 8, Ely Transport Modelling Study, had been withdrawn, and he invited the Executive Director, Development Services to make comment on this.

The Executive Director explained that the Transport Study was still very much a work in progress and had yet to be signed off. A decision had been taken to withdraw the report from the agenda because there were still a number of outstanding issues to be resolved, and he was mindful of the need for Members to be given the proper advice, and to realise the full implications of the impact of growth scenarios on Ely and to capture appropriate transport initiatives as part of the Masterplan proposals.

It was noted that careful consideration was being given to an alternative route for the Southern Bypass and it would be important to conclude discussions with English Heritage regarding this matter. They had objected to the original preferred route on the grounds of visual impact, and the Council wished to secure their support before bringing forward any scheme.

The Chairman then permitted Members to speak.

Councillor Rouse felt that, for residents of Soham, the situation with the railway crossing was getting worse, and the station interchange/Angel Drove area was dangerous. It was his view that even if no more houses were built in Ely, this issue must be separated out from everything else and resolved.

Councillor Comell disagreed with English Heritage's objection, believing that there were no problems with sight lines; the view from Stuntney showed the Cathedral being well to the right. The only thing to be obscured would be the trading estate.

Councillor Hunt also commented on the problems with congestion around the area of the station, and drew Members' attention to a report (Heavy Commercial Vehicles in East Cambridgeshire) which had been received at the last East Cambridgeshire "In Your Patch" meeting. He reiterated some of the concerns raised and suggested that the report should be included in the Transport Study.

Councillor Allen reminded the Working Party that views of the Cathedral were 360° and not just for motorists. He suggested that the traffic problems at the railway bridge could be alleviated by means of a tunnel under the river. The Chairman reminded him that he had raised this point at the last meeting and it was captured in the agenda.

Councillor Allen continued by asking whether the Transport Study could be made available well before the next meeting, as it would be critical that people, and especially Members, had sufficient time to digest its contents. He also wondered whether the Study should be the subject-matter of a special meeting because it would have such an impact on the Masterplan.

The Executive Director agreed that the Study document could be sent out in good time. However, before doing so, it would be necessary to review assumptions and make revisions according to what the public had said about the consultation. The next stage would bring forward key transport initiatives to mitigate traffic generation around Ely. From this, key strategic decisions would be made regarding future growth.

Councillor Allen replied that a key phrase within the Masterplan was "subject to transport work", and he reiterated the need for the work to be completed. Dr Falk concurred, adding that he had raised the issue of the impact of a quality bus corridor along the Lynn Road. It had always been his thinking that if implemented correctly, there could be an integrated service. He thought that views should be sought as to whether such a scheme could work.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor Ashton addressed the Working Party. He said that when the work came to be reviewed the demographic changes already inherent should be examined and also it should be ensured that there was a review of employment retention in the growing community within the context of Ely's relationship with the A10.

The Chairman concluded by assuring Councillor Ashton that these matters would be addressed.

85. **ELY MASTERPLAN WORK PROGRAMME**

The Working Party received an update on progress with the Ely Masterplan Work Programme.

The Principal Sustainable Development Officer tabled an amended timetable at the meeting, adding that the dates were provisional and subject to confirmation.

It was noted that, due to slippage regarding the Transport Study, there was more time in April/May to consider the transport implications and this had the knock on effect of putting the consultation back into the autumn.

The Principal Sustainable Development Officer asked the Working Party to review the draft revised timetable and let her know of any issues. Whereupon,

It was agreed:

That the revised provisional timetable be noted.

86. **DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY SITES**

The Working Party received a report on the workshops and public consultation undertaken in respect of the potential Development Opportunity Sites for the draft Ely Masterplan. Tabled at the meeting was additional information to supplement Appendix 2 of the report.

The Infrastructure & Projects Officer introduced the report and reminded Members that during February 2009 a series of three technical workshops were held to discuss the development opportunity sites in Ely and the future uses which could be made of these areas.

The workshops focussed on the following areas:

- The Northern Extension proposals
- The Riverside Corridor
- The Historic City Centre

Participants included both local landowners and those with professional expertise in specific areas. Introductory presentations on best practice were made and participants were then asked to discuss a vision of what they thought the development sites should be like and how they could be developed. The ideas generated were then summarised into visual graphics to demonstrate the conclusions of the workshops and these were used as the basis of a public exhibition held at the Lamb Hotel on 12/14/15 March 2009. It was noted that 449 people attended the exhibition and 133 questionnaire were returned.

Referring to additional comments from questionnaires, as set out in the main body of the agenda, the Infrastructure & Projects Officer said that she had since heard from Paul Hickey of Anglian Water. He felt that there was merit in

having a new sewage works to the north of Ely, as it might pick up flows currently treated at the existing treatment works within Ely, and this in turn might allow for the decommissioning of at least one works. However more detailed investigations would need to be carried out once there is greater certainty on the development options and infrastructure needs.

Having summarised the tabled information, the Infrastructure & Projects Officer stated that further developmental work would be carried out in respect of the suggested options:- environmental impact, transport study, and stakeholder and consultation responses. The Chairman then invited Members to make comments and ask questions regarding the report and additional paper.

Councillor Hunt felt that the statement “Ely should be expanded” was poor; he said that it should be made clear that people wanted to see leisure and community facilities expanded.

Councillor Friend-Smith spoke of the exhibition, saying that she was very disappointed because she thought the first question had been misleading. It was her opinion that many people had said they had no view because they could not adequately answer the questions due to the way they were worded. She also thought that the exhibition had been sited in too small a space, and this should be borne in mind for the future.

The Head of Planning & Sustainable Development said he was pleased with the number of people attending the exhibition and the length of time they spent there. With reference to the “no view” responses, he felt that people were interested but did not necessarily want to respond. He reiterated that the questions covered a huge range of complex issues, and if condensed too much, would lose their essence.

The Chairman reminded the Working Party that there would be further public consultation in the autumn. Councillor Friend-Smith repeated her comments about a more suitable venue, adding that care should be taken regarding the visual impact of the displays (in relation to disability awareness). The Principal Sustainable Development Officer responded by saying that she would try to use The Maltings.

Councillor Rouse said he had found the exhibition interesting and was impressed by the level of serious interest and concern. The number of new houses to come for Ely would be crucial for the Council and Members should now look for analysis, direction, initiative and leadership in order to inform the wider public how the Masterplan would proceed.

Councillor Allen asked whether all the information, once put together, would be at variance with the transport work. The Chairman replied that this would absolutely not be the case; transport was fundamental and all issues had to be unified, otherwise the finished document could not be called the “Masterplan”. The document would sit within the broad parameters of the Local Development Framework (LDF), along with other issues such as housing and

economic development; it would provide an analysis of the current state of affairs and make suggestions regarding how to proceed.

The Executive Director, Development Services noted the points raised regarding the exhibition and the display material, adding that as the Work Programme timetable had now been changed, this would offer an opportunity to consider how to address the concerns that had been raised. He suggested and Members agreed that a standing exhibition might be an option; Councillor Friend-Smith added that models could be a very helpful display tool.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Dr Falk addressed the Working Party. He reminded everyone that the process was not just scientific, but also an art comprising a series of inspired ideas. Once the process had been explained, people would see the logic behind it. Members should not fall into the trap of believing that views expressed gave them a mandate. However, if everything was properly explained, then the public might well welcome the Council's leadership.

Returning to Councillor Allen's last query, in relation to the LDF process, the Executive Director stated that the issue was to be resolved at the next meeting of the Strategic Development Committee. Members would be able to see how masterplans would dovetail into the LDF process.

The Principal Sustainable Development Officer concluded the discussion by informing the Working Party that if models were to be used in a public display, the City of Ely College would be interested in helping to produce them, and this could be linked into the revised timetable.

It was agreed:

That the report be noted.

87. **ELY TRANSPORT MODELLING STUDY**

The Working Party noted that this item had been withdrawn from the agenda.

88. **ELY MASTERPLAN DOCUMENT PRODUCTION UPDATE**

The Working Party received a report, appended to which were the latest drafts of the Ely Masterplan proposals.

The Principal Sustainable Development Officer summarised the main points of her report and reminded Members that Appendix 1 was only an initial draft, produced for discussion purposes. She stated that work was still in progress on the section relating to "Opportunity Sites", and proposals were awaited in respect of the "Implementation" chapter.

It was noted that the second element of her report related to the design drafts for the Masterplan document. A number of different ideas for the front

cover were tabled and circulated at the meeting, and Members were invited to make comment.

Councillor Rouse liked the design, style and approach of the draft front covers, and said he was very impressed with what he had seen.

Councillor Friend-Smith agreed adding that the illustrations of Jubilee Gardens showed the mix and position of housing in relation to Ely Cathedral. She considered the drafts to be very well put together, but cautioned that everything would be in the wording.

Councillor Hunt echoed Councillor Friend-Smith's comments but thought that the photographs should not give precedence to the child, as set out in one of the examples.

Dr Falk thought that the finished document should have a freely available summary; he also wondered what the title would be, saying that the inclusion of "City of Ely" would bring out its distinctiveness. The Head of Planning & Sustainable Development agreed, adding that he wanted the Masterplan to have a summary so that people would have the gist of the document.

Dr Falk then raised the issue of spatial diagrams, saying that he was very cynical of architect's impressions. He considered images of real places to be much more useful, and they could also be used for inspiration.

Councillor Friend-Smith drew Members' attention to the penultimate paragraph on page 11 of Appendix 1. She was unhappy with the wording and said that it should be made clearer that Cirencester and Witney were two separate places. She disagreed that Cirencester had a target population of 26k; the town was smaller and therefore the statement was misleading.

Councillor Rouse concurred, saying that the wording should concentrate on Ely and the area it served – not just the City but also the surrounding villages. He continued by saying that some of the text within the draft document was superb and was progressing along the right lines, but care must be taken to draw all the threads together.

Councillor Friend-Smith next highlighted the sections "Ely at Work" and "Ely at Play". She reiterated the importance of shopping as a source of income to the District and asked that further thought be given to the wording of these two sections.

Councillor Allen noted that Cambridgeshire Horizons had been mentioned as a co-optee to the Working Party, and sought clarification as to whether this was correct. The Chairman confirmed that this was indeed an error; the organisation was just acting in an advisory capacity.

Councillor Cornell said that there had been criticism from the parish councils as they had not yet been given the opportunity to participate in the

consultation process. The Principal Sustainable Development Officer replied that this would be addressed in the forthcoming round of consultation, and she asked for any further comments to come to her. Whereupon,

It was agreed:

That progress made to date, be noted.

The meeting concluded at 11.47am.