

HEMINGFORD ABBOTS PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Extra-ordinary Meeting held on Wednesday 16th August 2017 at 7:30pm at the Hemingford Abbots Village Hall

Present: Erika Brown (Chairman)
Councillors: Bridget Flanagan (Vice Chairman)
Alun Jones
Pearl Muspratt
Christine Nicol
John Peters
Marcus Whewell

Clerk: Carole Pollock

County and District Councillors: None present

Members of the Public: One members of the public joined the meeting at 8:25pm

52 To receive and approve Apologies for Absence
None received

53 Councillors' Declaration of Interest
None declared.

54 Public Participation Session
None present

55 Huntingdonshire District Council - Consultations
Responses to the following consultations were considered:

- a** Huntingdonshire District Council - Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment 2017
- b** Huntingdonshire District Council - Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036: Draft Final Sustainability Appraisal 2017
- c** Huntingdonshire District Council - Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036: Consultation Draft 2017
- d** Huntingdonshire District Council - Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036: Call for Sites 2017

RESOLVED to submit the following observations in response to the consultation draft 2017 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036:

Distribution of Growth

Hemingford Abbots Parish Council supports the broad policies of **LP1** but queries whether its aims *to concentrate development in locations which provide, or have the potential to provide, the greatest access to services and facilities*, are achievable in the locations allocated for growth in the spatial planning areas of Huntingdon and St Ives.

The two market towns of Huntingdon and St Ives share similar access problems; restricted river crossings and medieval town street plans (exacerbated in Huntingdon by the stranglehold of a mid C20 ring road) which cannot facilitate C21 traffic demands. The proximity of the two towns and their expanded neighbourhoods compound these problems as evidenced by the Transport Study. Access to Huntingdon is already severely limited due to pressure on its services – train station, hospital, administrative services, businesses and retail to name but a few examples. Nor has Huntingdon fared well in the *protection of the character of [its] existing settlement* due to C20 and C21 pressure on the central core of the town and its roads. Thus the proposed growth at

Alconbury and Stukeley with minimal retail facilities on site, but instead a reliance on those of Huntingdon, appears to be completely at odds with the aims of 4:12 to offer people the greatest levels of access to services and facilities within Huntingdonshire and [these] will be further enhanced during the plan period. Hemingford Abbots Parish Council asks whether this template for distribution of growth, relying on the 4 market towns for 70% of total housing growth is sustainable – especially in the Huntingdon and St Ives area where there are the greatest access problems and scant solutions offered for improvement. Hemingford Abbots Parish Council asks if Huntingdon and St Ives are currently close to an optimum size? Hemingford Abbots Parish Council suggests that further expectations that these towns can cope with increase are misplaced – and is moreover concerned that the increases will lead to a deterioration in services and access. Should therefore more services and facilities be provided in the locations for development – e.g. in Alconbury – so that Huntingdon and St Ives can retain viability to function effectively.

RAF Wyton

Hemingford Abbots Parish Council is very concerned that the Local Plan continues to support the development of the RAF Wyton site in the long term despite the evidence of the Transport Study. The clear intention in 4.22 that should it be possible to overcome transport infrastructure challenges, ... The Council will work positively with the promoters of the site to secure appropriate sustainable, viable reuse of the site subject to resolution of the transport infrastructure challenges.

Hemingford Abbots Parish Council considers that the development of RAF Wyton, with the potential for 4000+ homes, will create an unacceptable area of urban sprawl in a coalescence of Alconbury, Stukeley, Huntingdon, Wyton and St Ives. This would be contrary to all policies that seek to protect the nature of existing settlements and surrounding countryside. It would firstly overwhelm these areas north of the river and secondly necessitate a third river crossing which has been identified as at Hartford. LP2 describes how any proposal will be expected to protect and enhance existing green infrastructure, but the development of RAF Wyton with a river crossing at Hartford contradicts this. The Great Ouse Valley is identified as a Priority Area of green space – although unfortunately there is insufficient detail given to its meadows which are of national significance both for their landscape qualities and their flora, fauna, and habitats. Such meadows are also a diminishing feature of the countryside nationally due to development. A river crossing at Hartford, with costings given in the Transport Study for either a single or dual lane road, would destroy this irreplaceable natural heritage that Chapter 8 seeks to protect. 8.26 The policy seeks to protect areas of open space of public value from development that would lead to their partial or complete loss.

Strategic Transport Study

4.18: The Strategic Transport Study commissioned by the District Council did not consider an obvious solution to the road infrastructure requirement – that is a provision of a new route from Wyton Airfield to the north and then to the east of St Ives, parallel to but separate from Harrison Way, to join to the existing A14 at or to the east of Junction 26. This route is shorter to A14/J26 and hence to Cambridge and destinations south and east than that suggestion of a river crossing to A14 /J24 and has the benefit of enabling a bridging of the notorious Guided Busway/Harrison Way junction as well as Meadow Lane. Northbound traffic from Wyton would, in any case, use the shorter route via A141 to Spittals.

The Strategic Transport study does not identify any of the mitigation measures proposed to alleviate the congestion forecast at the numerous junctions described as 'critical'. The analysis only refers to 'localised capacity enhancements' and presumably assumes that any mitigation will be successful. Solutions previously adopted have led to increased congestion, journey times and, consequently, air pollution; for example, Edison Bell Way junction with Brampton Road which often causes congestion back to Godmanchester.

Infrastructure Delivery Plan/Schedule

Section 5.1.5 of the HDC Infrastructure Delivery Plan sets down requirements to improve the road network. The road infrastructure in St Ives and Huntingdon is already at capacity. The additional traffic which will be caused by the extensive development at Alconbury, plus the proposed new

developments in and around these two market towns will create further congestion and pressure on a system already stretched. Implementation of the plan to improve the road network should be of the highest priority.

Listed in Table 1 of the district wide infrastructure requirements is a worrying number of 'unknowns' relating to some requirements categorised as critical and essential. In particular upgrades to the waste water treatment works 'critical for delivery from 2021' and the East West Rail project stated as essential with a completion date 9 year ahead - and neither have been scoped. None of the Transport – Highways Infrastructure Requirements described as critical have delivery phasing, instead stated as 'unknown'. For a Plan covering 19 years there should be some indication as to when elements considered critical to its success will be delivered.

Heritage Strategy

Hemingford Abbots Parish Council supports the outlines of **LP34** but has great concern that Houghton Mill is not included in the list of heritage assets in **8.36**. This needs to be rectified. Houghton Mill is Listed Grade II* and is a building of significant national historic interest and an important tourist attraction for the district. It is one of only 2 National Trust sites in the District – the other being the relatively small site of the Gatehouse of Ramsey Abbey. Houghton Mill attracts over 150,000 visitors per year to the Mill, campsite (54 caravan & 15 tent pitches) and Water Close Meadows. (Figures supplied by National Trust). Houghton Mill is a major tourist 'hub' for the villages of Houghton and the Hemingfords and the town of St Ives, and its visitors support a wide economy of shops, pubs, restaurants and boat hire etc. Its value and relevance should therefore be understood in the context of **LP22** and **6.51** and **6.52**. Houghton Mill is of course dependent upon its setting in the meadows of the Ouse Valley, and thus is directly challenged by any river crossing necessitated by development at RAF Wyton in **4.22**

Other

Provision for electric car charging points should be a requirement for town centre car parks as well as key strategic facilities – train stations, hospital, tourist attractions etc.

RESOLVED to submit Hemingford Abbots Golf Course located at Cambridge Road, Hemingford Abbots PE28 9HQ as a potential site for hi-tech industrial units.

56 Planning

a New Applications

- i Sedges, New Road – 17/01465/HHFUL** – Two storey front extension, remove carport and add new detached garage, pitched roof above front flat roof, new aluminium windows and doors throughout.

RESOLVED to make no observations for or against the application.

57 Matters for Future Consideration

Meeting closed 8:29 pm