

## **1. Attendance**

**Present:** Roger Crabtree, Michael Bond, Clive Brown, Ann Mullinger, Ron Clifton, Morcom Lunt (Chair)

**Apologies:** Jane Singleton, Nicky Morrison, and John Hipkin (withdrawing from the committee)

## **2. Meeting of August 16<sup>th</sup> 2011**

The notes from the meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> August were accepted as issued.

All matters therein were either completed or covered by the meeting agenda.

## **3. Cambridge North Area Pilot**

So far the North Area pilot is not operating significantly differently from past practice. Pivotaly, there is no evidence of any transfers of power. There is however evidence of “silo operations” within the council offices.

The early “café style” meetings have not been entirely successful. The North Area Committee has dealt with planning applications in the first part of the meeting for some time now to avoid the problems that have arisen at many Area Committee meetings with the planning applications not being addressed until 9:30 pm or later.

Tim Bick, Executive Councillor for Community Development, has not been involved in the meetings since May.

There is evidence that the County Council expects local groups to pay to operate facilities that the County decides to close down (eg libraries), we were told at a meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2011 that if Milton Road Library were to come under local community control there would be no transfer of revenue funding for it. Indications are that the City Council will do the same.

In summary, “the jury is still out”.

## **4. Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment**

Michael advised that most of the sites identified in the SHLAA are “hardy perennials” and include many pubs and car parks. (He noted that the Pike and Eel - aka the Penny Ferry – application to replace it with five houses has now gone to appeal.)

Roger believed that the threats from the sites included in the assessment should be less of a concern than the proposals from South Cambs. The Oakington and Waterbeach sites seem to be particular threats, in spite of the A14 issues. Developments on this front should be monitored. It was very important to retain green space between the City and the necklace villages.

Regarding the possibilities of a “Greater Cambridge” Council and/or revision of the City boundary, Michael advised that, initially, the South Cambs Council was happy for the City to accommodate business developments if the related housing developments were in South Cambs. With the new Government’s proposals regarding business rates, the South Cambs Council is reported to be switching its position. Also, the City Council has decided that the possible benefits from pursuing change are not worth the hassle.

### **Actions**

1. Michael to issue his notes on his submission to the Department for Communities and Local government on the Draft National Planning Policy Framework. **Michael**
2. From Michael’s notes, Ron will produce a first draft of a briefing document for circulation to the FeCRA contact list. **Ron**

## **5. Consultation on Skyline / Tall Buildings**

Those who had viewed the consultation paper were agreed that it is potentially a useful document and worth drawing to the attention of all RAs.

Given the length of the paper, the meeting agreed that RAs would be greatly helped by an overview and signposting to key sections.

The aim should be a brief that is as short as practical, with an overview (based on Roger's draft) followed by more information and "pointers" (ie URLs and specific page numbers in the LP) to specific pages containing the "meat".

**Roger**

## **6. Localism & Local Plan**

All the indications are that Localism will be very different to the picture painted by the politicians a year ago. However, the new planning regulations will, advised Michael, be just as strong as the current legislation and guidelines, **provided** the Local Plan adequately identifies what is important to the community.

The draft Local Plan is due to go out for consultation around mid-2012. However there might be a problem since the Council staff do not always keep relevant people informed of plans and developments,

It is important for residents to identify "local treasures", and declare their importance – eg local public open spaces regardless of how designated. So, school playing fields, where children play, where dogs are walked, etc., should all be identified in the plan as "designated open spaces".

The meeting discussed whether bits relevant to a neighbourhood in the next Local Plan could be made more accessible. For example the plan might be partitioned by Ward.

The Local Plan would be a suitable topic for a public meeting incorporating the FeCRA AGM (see below).

### **Actions**

1. All FeCRA contacts to be informed of the Local Plan (LP) timetable, its importance, and the consultation process. **Morcom**
2. Patsy Dell to be contacted to see how far she can assist FeCRA aims of getting RAs & Residents involved with the development of the LP by:-
  - a. Having a discussion with the FeCRA Committee about engaging RAs and residents, including the possibility of early issue of a statement of "Issues and Options", and the partitioning of parts of the LP.
  - b. Determining if the Council can assist with the arrangements for the proposed public meeting and AGM – assuming that it will be an evening meeting beginning around 6 pm.

FeCRA can continue to work with CPPF, not least as a communication channel.

### **Action**

**Morcom and Roger**

Michael should act on any opportunity he has to raise the above with Sarah Dyer.

**Michael**

## **7. Heat Seeker Initiative**

In the absence of Nicky Morrison, Roger gave a brief outline of the Heat Seekers initiative that is being discussed by the City Council. He had circulated two Council papers provided by Nicky. The meeting discussed the possible involvement of FeCRA and Nicky's idea that FeCRA could run a Teach-in.

The key points that emerged were:-

- The proposal from the "Energy Saving Partnership" (ESP) is one designed to deliver commercial benefits to ESP with unquantified benefits to the City.
- The proposal aims, through the Council's support, to give a near monopoly to ESP on house insulation largely funded through "Government" support schemes (then to be recovered through energy bills on consumers).

- Monopolies and near monopolies are unhealthy and generally do not serve consumers well. Crucially, competition should be promoted, not limited.
- Council support may make those receiving sub-standard service less likely to complain.
- An analogous scheme, Warmfront, has generated many complaints, largely through the use of inadequately qualified and supervised contractors.
- The Council Home Energy Officer, Justin Smith, has queried the performance of the ESP group with other local authorities that have worked, or are working with ESP. While the feedback is generally reasonable, there have been problems.
- some members of the committee felt, despite assurances to the contrary, that the proposed exercise would be intrusive, and that it would provide the Council with information about individual homes that it was not necessary for it to have.
- FeCRA does not seek to guide, let alone direct RAs. For this project there appears to be nothing that FeCRA can do that cannot be done more effectively by the Council.
- FeCRA does not carry any public liability insurance and does not have the resources to do any validation of the track record of, and processes used by, the Energy Saving Partnership.
- The FeCRA capacity to organise public meetings is very limited and as noted above, a meeting around the City Local Plan is very likely in the late spring.
- FeCRA is far less able to make effective contact with residents than is the Council – not least for this project, since the Council would appear to have an employee available.

The meeting concluded *nem con* that there is no sensible role for FeCRA in the promotion of the HeatSeeker initiative.

**Action**

**Roger to inform Nicky**

## **8. CPPF Vision 2030 Project**

Roger reminded members that there is a seminar on “Business and Retail” on 21<sup>st</sup> November at the Institute for Mathematical Sciences. There will not be any breakout groups at this meeting.

Peter Landshoff and Peter Carolin have issued a paper summarising the outputs to date. It should be available on the CPPF website and Roger can email a copy on request.

## **9. Contact List**

The meeting decided that there is no current reason to undertake another rigorous refresh of the contact list.

However, steps are to be taken to establish a single list with controlled Committee access.

**Morcom**

## **10. Any Other Business**

### **10.1 AGM**

The meeting agreed that the AGM should be coupled with a public meeting aimed at briefing RAs and residents about the Local Plan and its vital importance to the preservation of the City’s qualities.

In order to minimise costs, the Council to be asked for support. See section 6, bullet (2)(b) above

**Roger and Morcom**

### **10.2 Love Cambridge Meeting**

In the absence of Nicky, Michael gave a brief report on the recent Love Cambridge AGM.

Of particular interest was the presentation on improving awareness among residents of the City’s museums.

### 10.3 Federation of Bath Residents' Associations

Morcom reported that he would be having a meeting with the Chairman of FoBRA in Cambridge on Saturday, 3<sup>rd</sup> December.

End