

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Conservation & Design Advisory Group. 7th November 2006
Conservation, Sustainability & Community
Planning Portfolio Holder.

AUTHOR/S: Executive Director / Conservation & Design Manager

A PROPOSED SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE, 'DRAFT CAMBRIDGE SOUTHERN FRINGE LANDSCAPE AND OPEN SPACE STRATEGY' (CSF L&OS STRATEGY).

Purpose

1. To present for consideration and recommendation a 'Draft Landscape and Open Space Strategy' (CSF L&OS Strategy), to inform the development for the Cambridge Southern Fringe. The draft strategy is intended to act as detailed guidance only, to expand Policy CSF/12 Landscape Principles, of the Cambridge Southern Fringe Area Action Plan, January 2006.

Executive Summary

2. The approved Cambridge Southern Fringe Area Action Plan Development Framework (January 2006) notes the need to develop landscape, biodiversity and open space strategies as it relates to the major areas of the landscape in Cambridge Southern Fringe, both in the City and within South Cambridgeshire. The strategy now presented and commended to members (*the draft CSF L&OS Strategy*) is considered to offer the direction and focus required for the development of the structure of the public open space and landscape of the southern fringe, as outlined in the AAP. It will, therefore, offer a basic planning tool for the development of these significant parts of the Green Infrastructure Strategy within the growth area. It will specifically contribute to the direction of the green corridor between Hobson's Brook and the London-Cambridge rail line (mainly in the City Council area) and the planned "country park" south and west of the Trumpington Meadows site, known also as the Monsanto site (within South Cambridgeshire).
3. Cambridgeshire Horizons, on behalf of the South Cambridgeshire District Council and the City Council commissioned consultants, *The Landscape Partnership*, to prepare the strategy. The work commenced in January of this year, and consultation has taken place on the draft of the strategy through out the year by the City Council officers. This report is the first opportunity to present the completed draft for members detailed consideration prior to proceeding to adoption as 'detailed guidance'.
4. A copy of the written report and accompanying plans, (as prepared by The Landscape Partnership), are included as an appendix to this report (**A3 paper versions in members pigeon holes**) and are available on the SCDC website (see *Conservation Pages*).

Background

5. The Draft Cambridge Southern Fringe Draft Landscape and Open Space Strategy (Draft CSF L&OS Strategy) has been prepared in an effort to provide clear steer from the local authorities to the formulation of more detailed landscape and open space plans, for the key open spaces within the Cambridge Southern Fringe. The two large

areas of open space in the Southern Fringe are privately owned lands which will form part of future planning applications for future housing and other supportive uses.

6. Consequently, developers will be expected to prepare more detailed landscape and open space strategies, as part of their planning application submissions for local authority scrutiny and approval. The strategy develops the policies and objectives of the Area Action Plan (outlined below) and will help provide local authority guidance for preparation of those more detailed strategies by developers. For that reason, the written strategy and plans forming part of the attached report is not final or definitive, but rather more conceptual and indicative in its approach and level of detail. Hence, the use of the word “draft” in the title of the strategy.
7. ***Proposed status of the strategy.***
The official status of the Draft CSF L&OS Strategy is for use as detailed guidance only. However, members approval is sought in order that it may be adopted and carry the weight of Council as a material consideration against which planning applications can be assessed and more detailed plans can be prepared and executed by the developers of these areas.
8. The draft strategy also outlines the public nature of the country park and the importance of the spaces to the delivery of the *Green Infrastructure Strategy* and explores options for greater local authority involvement and steer in future as to the ownership, access, management and maintenance of such spaces. Management options for the wider network of such strategic open space within the development area will need to be subsequently considered.
9. ***Relationship to the CSF Area Action Plan – Jan. 2006***
The Draft Cambridge Southern Fringe Landscape and Open Space Strategy will contribute to the delivery of the following adopted AAP policies.
10. ***CSF/ 1 - The Vision for the Cambridge Southern Fringe (CSF)***
The CSF Area Action Plan outlines its vision in Policy CSF/1 of a, “modern, high quality, vibrant and distinctive urban extension to Trumpington which will complement and enhance the character of the city”. Further it outlines the need to, “secure a Countryside enhancement strategy comprising landscape, biodiversity and public access enhancements in the surrounding countryside which will complement the existing landscape character and protect and enhance the setting of Cambridge”.
11. ***Policy D6 Landscape***
The AAP outlines the objectives of the countryside enhancement and public open space strategy, these are summarised as :
 - a. creation of a high quality, legible urban area
 - b. integrated green spaces for wildlife and people.
 - c. extensive network of greenspaces
 - d. mitigation of adverse impact on wildlife and enhanced biodiversity.
 - e. contribution to provision of informal recreation space.
 - f. enhancement of local landscape character
 - g. retaining and enhancing tree resources
 - h. development of an appropriate management strategy.
12. ***Policy D7 - Biodiversity***
The landscape policies are complemented with the following biodiversity objectives, which aim to :
 - a. raise public awareness of existing biodiversity
 - b. minimise any adverse impact on species and habitats

- c. utilise existing ecological features
- d. maximise the biodiversity value of green spaces
- e. enhance connectivity
- f. provide for the management, maintenance and monitoring of habitats.

Considerations

13. **Summary of Trumpington Meadows country park plans.**
The Draft CSF L&OS Strategy plans for this location are largely within the administrative boundary of South Cambridgeshire District Council, and as such it is to the discretion of members and officers of South Cambridgeshire to further the work done by The Landscape Partnership, in the consideration of any actual development proposals.
14. However, in an effort to co-ordinate the planning of the “country park” on the Trumpington Meadows site the strategy has been prepared to include the lands both within the City boundary as well as in South Cambridgeshire. The country park will straddle both sides of the M11 motorway. The extreme northerly end of the country park e.g. approximately 10 Hectares, sits within the City Council boundary. The City Council’s Area Development Framework suggests an informal “kick about” space in this location.
15. Members will be aware that an outline planning application has been submitted covering this area, within both the City and SCDC boundaries. The Draft strategy will, therefore, assist in the future consideration of this proposal.
16. A summary of the principal features of the plan for the Trumpington Meadows area and country park include the following :
1. An informal kick about area to the north of the site.
 2. Footpaths linking green fingers within the urban and public open space areas and to locations outside the development site.
 3. Cycles paths across the site and linking to Hauxton.
 4. Pasture bound by hedges.
 5. Informal recreation areas adjacent to the river corridor as dry meadow.
 6. A balancing pond.
 7. Ground modelling/noise barrier adjacent the M11.
 8. Countryside enhancement south of the M11 including recreational walks, and new tree/shrub plantings.
17. **Summary of Hobson’s Brook Open Space**
The Draft CSF L&OS Strategy plans for this location are largely within the administrative boundary of the City Council. A summary of the principal features of the landscape strategy for the Hobson’s Brook Open Space, approximately moving in order from north to south, are as follows :
1. Senior sized football pitches between Hobson’s Brook and the guided bus route.
 2. An area of allotments adjacent Long Road.
 3. A car park and overflow area to serve the northerly section of the open space.
 4. An area of play for children, or NEAP (Neighbourhood Equipped Area of Play).
 5. Sustainable Urban Drainage features (detention and retention purposes).
 6. Informal youth recreation e.g. BMX tracks.
 7. Cycle and pedestrian routes.
 8. A park entrance/gateway adjacent the split of the guided bus routes
 9. Neutral wildflower rich grassland
 10. New woodlands and plantings of trees

11. Pasture areas for grazing.
12. Art and play opportunities.
13. Natural grasslands and wetland/pond features to enhance Hobson's Brook

18. **Cost & Funding implications of the Draft Landscape Strategy**

The Draft CSF L&OS Strategy sets out a *partial*, preliminary summary of costs, both for capital construction, as well as estimated annual maintenance costs, to guide consideration of future development proposals or options. The partial indicative costs may be summarised in general terms as follows below, but exclude significant funding requirements for : Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) construction; topsoil; lighting; spoil removal; design fees and other similar costs. The partial figures should, therefore, only be considered as an indicative basic minimum cost :

(a) Trumpington Meadows country park:

- £2.9 million implementation cost.
- £225 000 annual maintenance.

(b) Hobson's Brook Open Space:

- £2.75 million implementation cost
- £245 000 annual maintenance

19. The funding for both implementation and maintenance costs is expected to be negotiated as part of the S.106 planning obligations from potential southern fringe developers. The details of specific contributions will need to be considered, in the context of actual development proposals and negotiations concluded prior to the consideration of any outline planning applications.
20. It must be made clear at this stage that the costs outline in the Draft CSF L&OS Strategy are **indicative only** and presented simply for the purpose of obtaining a minimum idea of what the open spaces in the southern fringe might cost if developed in the fashion presented in this draft strategy. The costs are not to be taken as definitive figures of either the final agreed costs or an endorsement of this or any final landscape or open space strategy.
21. **Management and maintenance implications options**
A variety of options may be available to manage and maintain these large open spaces. As these will influence and S.106 negotiations and may have implications for other major development sites, these will need to be further explored by officers and members. It is, therefore, proposed that a specific 'workshop' is held before the end of 2006, to consider the alternatives with potential partners and specialist stakeholders, including the City Council.
22. The Draft CSF L&OS Strategy draft strategy recommends a few possible *management and maintenance* options, which are outlined below. Such options may form the basis of future detailed considerations by both SCDC and the City Council, and potentially form part of a recommendation on planning applications. The Draft CSF L&OS Strategy options are, therefore, outlined *for example only* at this stage in order to determine the direction for future negotiation and are summarised as :
1. Developers construct, manage and maintain the sites.
 2. Developers construct the sites and then pay commuted lump sums to the local authority and local authority manages/maintains.
 3. Developer constructs and appoints an established management company.
 4. Developer constructs and then a new charitable trust is created to manage/maintain.

5. Developer constructs and then negotiates with an existing Trust or body to take on management/maintenance
23. In terms of *ownership*, the Draft CSF L&OS Strategy also presents options, but again further discussion is required to select which option would be preferable:
1. Developer gifts lands to local authority.
 2. Developer gifts lands to local authority, who in turn provide long term lease to a managing body.
 3. Developer leases land to local authority or managing body.

Options

24. The Conservation & Design Advisory Group are requested to consider the Draft CSF L&OS Strategy and either :
- (a) express support and approval of the “*Draft Landscape and Open Space Strategy for Cambridge Southern Fringe - June 2006*” (as prepared by The Landscape Partnership), as it relates to lands within the administrative boundary of South Cambridgeshire, and recommend that the Conservation, Sustainability & Community Planning Portfolio Holder presents the strategy to Cabinet for adoption as non-statutory Council policy and a basis for the development of future management options.

Or

- (b) decline to express support and approval of the “*Draft Landscape and Open Space Strategy for Cambridge Southern Fringe - June 2006*” (as prepared by The Landscape Partnership), as it relates to lands within the administrative boundary of South Cambridgeshire, and require that amendment and further consultation is undertaken on the strategy, prior to it being presented to the portfolio holder and Cabinet for potential adoption

Implications

25. Issues yet to be resolved include the funding and management of the created public open space. However, these will be subject to further examination once the direction of the strategy has been confirmed by the adoption of the CSF L&OS Strategy.

26.	Financial	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The cost of the production of the CSF L&OS Strategy has been met by Cambridgeshire Horizons. 2. The delivery of the CSF L&OS Strategy will be via developer’s contribution relating to the development and implementation of future planning proposals for the site. The strategy is only in draft, but helps serve the purpose of identifying costs, management options, and further work that needs to occur if these spaces are to be successful. The development of open spaces of this scale will have to occur over several years, and matters such as resources, budgets, and management will have to be further considered alongside the review and consideration of outline and detailed planning applications later this year and beyond. At this stage, it is not possible to fully detail the full extent of these implications.
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Legal	The CSF L&OS Strategy will form detailed Council Policy which will support the delivery of the LDF and specifically the Area Action Plan for the Cambridge Southern Fringe.
Staffing	Existing staff within Planning Services and Community Development will take forward the development of the CSF L&OS Strategy.
Risk Management	The CSF L&OS Strategy is considered to be a basic planning tool which will help direct and inform the development of the Cambridge Southern Fringe. The strategy was adopted by the City Council in June 2006. Failure to confirm the direction and status of the strategy by SCDC could undermine future negotiation and development of the landscape and open space areas.
Equal Opportunities	None specific.

Consultations

27. **Stakeholder and public consultation**

To date no specific consultation has taken place by SCDC on the strategy. However, given the location of the site the City Council undertook broad consultation in respect of the summary plans of Trumpington Meadows Country Park and Hobson's Brook Open Space throughout 2006 as follows:

- a. April 26 Cambridge Southern Fringe Landscape and Open Space Topic Group (which included SCDC officers and representation)
- b. May 17 City Council Disability Panel
- c. May 24 Cambridge Southern Fringe Members Reference Group
- d. May 31 Trumpington Residents Association, Cambridge Preservation Society, Trumpington Environmental Action Group, Hobson's Conduit Trust.
- e. June 27 - Cambridge City Council – Environment Scrutiny Committee.

28. One of the key areas of concern from the City Council Members Reference Group was the concept of an electricity substation with the Hobson's Brook Open Space, a concern expressed by other groups consulted. Given the strength of such concern, the proposed draft strategy no longer includes the substation. In addition to comments provided at consultation meetings, written comments have also been provided from several of the groups consulted.

29. In addition, copies of the plans have been presented to the two potential principal affected developers and/or their consultants, specifically Countryside Properties and Grosvenors and their comments have been invited and considered alongside all other comments received.

30. Comment has also been provided by the County Council, who are members of the Landscape and Open Space Topic Group.

31. Comments received from parties to date on the draft strategy as circulated by the City Council in May can be briefly summarised as follows:

32. **Trumpington Meadows Country Park**

1. The need for a defined location for allotments.
2. Resolution of the type and form of noise barrier adjacent the M11.
3. Further consideration to the future uses of the farm house required.

4. Connection required to Byron's Pool via footpath and/or bridge.
 5. Surface treatment of footpaths should allow for access for all.
 6. Consideration should be given to separate paths for pedestrians and cyclists.
 7. Restricted access should be made for areas along the River Cam and areas south of the M11 to enhance biodiversity.
 8. Develop agri-environment schemes to complement biodiversity enhancement.
 9. Concern expressed by prospective developers regarding : mounding adjacent the M11; use of land for parkland immediately west of Hauxton Road/north of the M11; and extent/form of planting buffer to the south of the development site.
 10. Sensitive protection/integration of the Scheduled Ancient Monument is required.
33. ***Hobson's Brook Open Space***
1. Strong concern over any proposal to locate an electricity sub-station.
 2. Ensuring ease of access throughout the entire corridor.
 3. Need to clarify public/secondary school access and use of playing fields.
 4. Suggest all active uses take place north of the guided bus crossing, including any climbing features.
 5. Need for a buffer between Hobson's Brook and playing fields.
 6. Protection required to both water quality and biodiversity in Hobson's Brook to ensure it is not degraded.
 7. Need for protection of Nine Wells, and suggestion of expansion of the LNR boundary.
 8. Consider management under agri-environment schemes.
 9. Need to show boundaries of the school site within the green corridor.
 10. The mix of uses and access to playing fields, if in the remit of the Education Authority, needs to be further considered.
 11. Further work and detail is required in relation to the relationship of uses, crossings, etc. with the guided busway.
34. Comments received have been considered changes made to address issues raised in preparing the final draft CSF L&OS Strategy. Where major concerns or issues were raised throughout consultation, amendments have been made to the strategy e.g. the electricity substation has been deleted from the Hobson's Brook Open Space. Where minor points are raised or clarification sought, either changes have been made to the text or maps, or further work will be required by the developers and/or local authorities as the detailed planning of these spaces progress later in 2006 and beyond.
35. As outlined above additional consultation with several agencies and groups (including youth and sports groups) is suggested as part of the development of the detailed plans for the open spaces, and the finalisation of their future management. The approval of the CSF L&OS Strategy in its current form will inform the direction of those future discussions.

Effect on Annual Priorities and Corporate Objectives

36. Affordable Homes	The strategy is part of the delivery of the LDF strategy for the future housing needs of the district, specifically by contributing to the delivery of the AAP for the Southern Fringe.
Customer Service	None specific
Northstowe and other growth areas	The draft CSF L&OS Strategy is a fundamental part of the delivery of the AAP for the Southern Fringe Growth area.
Quality, Accessible Services	The draft CSF L&OS Strategy will enable the planning service to focus on the delivery of high quality development schemes on the city edge.
Village Life	The draft CSF L&OS Strategy will open new opportunities for wider public access to the countryside which will enhance village life in city edge villages.
Sustainability	The draft CSF L&OS Strategy is fundamental to the achievement of sustainable development both creating space for biodiversity/wildlife mitigation and by contributing to a high quality new housing development area.
Partnership	The draft CSF L&OS Strategy has been developed in partnership with a variety of stakeholders including the City Council, Cambridgeshire Horizons and prospective developers.

Recommendations

37. That the Conservation & Design Advisory Group consider and express support and approval of the *“Draft Landscape and Open Space Strategy for Cambridge Southern Fringe - June 2006”* (as prepared by The Landscape Partnership), as it relates to lands within the administrative boundary of South Cambridgeshire, and recommend that the Conservation, Sustainability & Community Planning Portfolio Holder presents the strategy to Cabinet for adoption as :
- (c) non-statutory Council policy guidance to assist in the preparation, review and determination of planning applications for the area within South Cambridgeshire boundaries.
 - (d) non-statutory, material planning consideration to assist in the preparation, review and determination of planning applications for the areas within the City Council boundaries.
 - (e) a guide to the local authorities and partners in the development of future ownership, management and maintenance options of all major open spaces within the Cambridge Southern Fringe.

Appendix :

Draft Landscape & open space strategy for the Cambridge Southern Fringe – Cambridgeshire Horizons – June 2006 (copy in members pigeon holes and on web site).

Background Papers: the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

1. South Cambridgeshire District Council – Cambridge Southern fringe Area Action Plan. January 2006
2. Cambridge City Council - Cambridge Southern Fringe Area Development Framework
3. Cambridge City Council - Minutes of meetings as noted under sections 3.14-3.16
4. Cambridge City Council - Minutes of Environment Scrutiny Committee – 27th June 2006

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