

## **SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

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**REPORT TO:** Northstowe & New Communities Portfolio Holder

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**AUTHOR/S:** Executive Director (Operational Services) / Corporate Manager (Planning & New Communities)

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### **SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME**

#### **Purpose**

1. The purpose of this report is to update the Local Development Scheme, which will set out the timetable for the preparation of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan for the duration of the review period to 2015.
2. This is not a key decision because the decision to undertake a review of planning policies was taken last year, nevertheless:
  - it is likely to result in the Council incurring expenditure which is significant having regard to the Council's budget for the service or function to which the decision relates, which is included in the Council's budget.
  - it is likely to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working across the District.
  - it raises new issues of policy, or is made in the course of developing proposals to amend the policy framework.

#### **Recommendations**

3. That the Northstowe & New Communities Portfolio Holder agrees that the Local Development Scheme be revised to show a single South Cambridgeshire Local Plan being prepared incorporating a review of the Core Strategy Development Plan Document (DPD), Site Specific Policies DPD and the Development Control Policies DPD to the timetable set out in Appendix 1. The Gypsies and Travellers DPD will no longer be prepared separately and any policies and proposals for gypsy and traveller accommodation will be included in the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan.

#### **Reasons for Recommendations**

4. The progress achieved on the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan over the last year means that there is no longer any advantage in progressing a separate Gypsies and Travellers DPD. The recommended approach of combining DPDs has advantages in that it is consistent with current government thinking on plan-making, enables savings to be made on consultations and examinations, and the Policy Team would be better able to resource the key stages in the plan making process which will incorporate all key issues together.

#### **Background**

5. The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires all local planning authorities to maintain a Local Development Scheme (LDS), which sets out its timetable for preparing Development Plan Documents (DPDs) over the forthcoming 3-year period. The scheme is a useful tool for project managing the preparation of planning documents and its publication ensures that those with an interest in plans for the District can find information about how and when they can get involved.

## Considerations

6. Work began in earnest on the review of the Council's planning policies during 2011. The Council still needs to carry out the review of its Core Strategy and Site Specific Policies DPDs in order to be able to demonstrate a 15-year supply of deliverable housing land and to provide a strategy more tailored to the period of recovery from the recent recession. The adopted Core Strategy currently provides for 4 years to March 2016, albeit that the adopted Area Action Plans for major new developments at Northstowe and on the edge of Cambridge do include substantial provision beyond 2016. It is also a strategy produced in different economic times than will prevail for the foreseeable future and needs revising accordingly. Work on the first stage of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan is well advanced with Issues and Options consultation programmed to commence in July.
7. The Council has also been progressing the preparation of a separate **Gypsy & Traveller DPD** over a longer timeframe. This plan has generated considerable public interest and slippage in the timetable has occurred. Work on preparing the Gypsy & Traveller DPD also slowed down as the Council considered the implications of the Government's proposed changes to the plan-making system through the Localism Bill that was published in December 2010, the proposed revocation of the Regional Spatial Strategy and the proposed replacement of Circular 01/2006: Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites. More recently agreeing an updated Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment (GTANA) - a key evidence base study - has further delayed the Issues and Options consultation for this plan.
8. The timetables for the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan and the Gypsy & Travellers DPD will now come together in the summer of this year and there is therefore no advantage in progressing these plans separately. Combining these plans has the added advantage of treating all sections of the community equally.
9. The timetable for the preparation of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan is set out in full in Appendix 1 but can be summarised as follows:
  - 2011-12: Evidence gathering
  - 2012-13: Consultation on issues & options and draft plan
  - 2013-14: Finalising and submitting plan to Secretary of State
  - 2014-15: Examination and Inspector's reporting
  - 2015-16: Completing the Inspector's reporting and adoption.
10. There may be some scope to shorten the programme during 2014-15 and 2015-16 when the plan is with the planning inspectorate for examination but this will very much depend on the manner in which the inspector manages the examination and reporting process.
11. The evidence gathering stage for the new Local Plan will come to a conclusion by May. The sustainability appraisal scoping and policy scoping work is nearly completed which will inform the matters to be addressed in the new plan. Main areas of work to be completed are:
  - the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) which will help with the identification of development options for the Issues & Options consultation in the summer.
  - updating the housing and jobs forecasts – the most recent forecasts agreed by the Council were produced for the Cambridgeshire Development Study in

2009 and broadly concluded that the effect of the recession would be to substantially extend the life of the Council's existing plans. Since that time, Cambridge Airport has fallen out of the strategy. These two factors mean that some 10,000 additional dwellings are likely to be needed in the new plan.

- completing consultations with Council and external service/infrastructure providers about those aspect of their investment programmes and the Council's corporate priorities which need to be included in the Local Plan.
- the County Council to have made progress on updating the transport strategy for the Cambridge area.
- discussions with the County Council about the use of the Cambridge Sub-Region Model (CSRM) to test development options
- finalising the Gypsy and Travellers Accommodation Needs Assessment.

12. There is also the need now that the evidence base is coming together to provide the means for effective engagement with members and parishes as part of identifying the issues and options for public consultation. The intention is to hold a workshop or series of workshops drawing on the key issues that are emerging from the evaluation of issues confronting the District as well as ensuring that members have the opportunity to raise any issues that they consider should be addressed in the new Local Plan. The programme will be issued shortly through the Weekly Bulletin.

### Options

13. The key issues addressed in this report are the updating of the overall timetable for preparing the Local Plan and incorporating policies and proposals for meeting gypsies and traveller accommodation needs into this single plan.
14. There is not much scope for reducing the timetable. Additional resources might be a way of speeding up the process but there are statutory procedures and Council approval processes which inhibit the scope for progressing much faster. Earlier in the report the possibility of moving more quickly than currently programmed through the examination process is raised but whether this will be possible will be largely outside the control of the Council.
15. The option of keeping the Gypsy and Traveller DPD as a separate plan is no longer really available. Last year, when Council agreed this option it also agreed extra manpower resources that would be necessary to do so. The slippage that has occurred with this plan means that this would not be a good use of resources and this option is therefore no longer desirable. Additional manpower will not now result in getting a plan in place for gypsies and travellers any more quickly. There are equalities reasons for now producing a single Local Plan.

### Implications

16.	Financial	The single plan approach has considerable cost savings for the Council in future years.
	Legal	None
	Staffing	The recommended approach is within existing resources with the addition of 1 of the 2 temporary posts agreed by Council last year.
	Risk Management	The Council's project management toolkit is being used to manage the preparation of the Local Plan with oversight being provided by the Council's Executive Management Team.
	Equality and Diversity	The single plan approach will include Gypsies and Travellers as a part of mainstream plan making.

Equality Impact Assessment completed	No
	The South Cambridgeshire Development Plan will be subject to Assessment.
Climate Change	No direct implications for Climate Change but this will be a key consideration in plan making.

### Consultations

17. Consultation with lead members and the Council's Executive on priorities.

### Consultation with Children and Young People

18. None

### Effect on Strategic Aims

19. **We are committed to being a listening Council, providing first class services accessible to all:** The plan making process includes a number of stages where the Council engages with a wide variety of stakeholder including the local community.
20. **We are committed to ensuring that South Cambridgeshire continues to be a safe and healthy place for you and your family:** A key aim of the South Cambridgeshire Development Plan will be to meet this objective.
21. **We are committed to making South Cambridgeshire a place in which residents can feel proud to live:** A key aim of the South Cambridgeshire Development Plan will be to meet this objective.
22. **We are committed to assisting provision of local jobs for you and your family:** The South Cambridgeshire Development Plan will include a review of employment policies to ensure that appropriate policies are included to meet the needs of the area in the current economic climate and moving forwards.
23. **We are committed to providing a voice for rural life:** The plan making process includes a number of stages where the Council engages with a wide variety of stakeholder including the local community.

### Conclusions / Summary

24. It is a high priority for the Council to review the Core Strategy, Site Specific Policies DPD, Development Control Policies DPD and put in place policies and proposal to secure accommodation for gypsies and travellers as soon as possible in view of the anticipated abolition of the East of England Plan, a shortfall in housing land supply and changes in the economic climate since the plans were adopted. Producing a single South Cambridgeshire Local Plan encompassing policies and proposals for all sections of the community will ensure that all of South Cambridgeshire's residents are treated equally and is the most reliable means of having in place a comprehensive set of policies and proposals adopted as quickly as possible.

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

PPS12: Local Spatial Planning

Localism Act 2011

South Cambridgeshire Local Development Scheme 2011

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