

## **SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

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**REPORT TO:** Council  
**AUTHOR:** Director of Development Services

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15<sup>th</sup> March 2005

### **SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK: CORE STRATEGY / DEVELOPMENT CONTROL POLICIES / SITE SPECIFIC POLICIES - FOR SUBMISSION TO SECRETARY OF STATE**

#### **Purpose**

1. A working meeting to consider the emerging content of the draft Core Strategy / Development Control Policies / Site Specific Policies development plan document. A final version will be brought back to Members at the Council meeting of 9<sup>th</sup> May, to determine the plan for Submission to the Secretary of State. Members are reminded to bring to the meeting the Preferred Options Reports for the Core Strategy and Rural Centres and also the Recreation Study, Urban Capacity Study and Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report, all published in October 2004.

#### **Effect on Corporate Objectives**

2.	High quality, accessible, value for money services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Assist the Council's objectives to deliver quality accessible development in the district.</li><li>• The provision of affordable housing and the effective delivery of sustainable development at Northstowe and other major developments on the edge of Cambridge and development of sustainable communities.</li><li>• Assist the delivery of the Community Strategy.</li><li>• Be used by Cambridgeshire Horizons (formerly the Infrastructure Partnership) to help the early and sustained development of the necessary services and infrastructure.</li></ul>
	Quality village life.	
	A sustainable future.	
	A better future through Partnerships.	

#### **Background**

3. The Council published Preferred Options Reports for a number of Development Plan Documents on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2004. Supporting Studies were also published for consultation. Public participation on the matters raised in these reports took place over a six-week period ending on 12<sup>th</sup> November.
4. The Preferred Options Reports covered:
  - Core Strategy and Development Control Policies
  - Rural Centres
  - Northstowe Area Action Plan
  - Cambridge Southern Fringe Area Action Plan
  - Cambridge East Area Action Plan (prepared jointly with Cambridge City Council)

The supporting studies published as consultation drafts were:

- Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report
- Urban Capacity Study

- Recreation Study, including Annexe 1 - the Village Results.
5. Some 5,500 representations to all the Preferred Options Reports and Studies were received in total, of which just over 1,800 related to the Core Strategy / Development Control Policies, 230 to the Rural Centres, 90 to the Urban Capacity Study, 47 to the Recreation Study and its Annexe and 30 to the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report.
  6. The Preferred Options reports were prepared under the “jumping the gun” regulations in the lead up to the new system of plan making which did not come into force until September 2004, after Council had agreed the reports. The new system requires the preparation of a Local Development Scheme which sets out the LDF documents that a local authority intends to prepare over the next three year period and a timetable for their preparation. On 9<sup>th</sup> December 2004, Cabinet agreed a draft Local Development Scheme which lists the documents (both Development Plan Documents and Supplementary Planning Documents) which the Council intends to prepare over the next 3 years. This will be submitted formally to the Government Office (GO-East) in March.
  7. Members considered responses to the Preferred Options Reports and background studies at a series of full Council Meetings. The Core Strategy / Development Control Policies, as well as the Rural Centres Preferred Options Report, were considered on 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> January 2005. Site-specific policies were also considered at the same meeting, as part of the Core Strategy Preferred Options Report. However, in response to the final version of the regulations, published after the preferred options were prepared, the site-specific policies will be drawn out into a separate section of the submission Development Plan Document.
  8. Although a Rural Centres Preferred Options report was published separate to the Core Strategy, the responses have made it clear that this is a matter which is so intertwined with the Core Strategy through a rural settlement strategy that it is considered that Rural Centres should not be a separate Development Plan Document and is therefore incorporated into the Core Strategy draft.

### **The Next Steps**

9. This is the first of a series of meetings of Council to consider the policy approach in the draft Development Plan Documents: Core Strategy / Development Control Policies / Site Specific Policies (15<sup>th</sup> March), Northstowe (23<sup>rd</sup> March), Cambridge Southern Fringe (8<sup>th</sup> April) and Cambridge East (15<sup>th</sup> April). A final meeting of Council on 9<sup>th</sup> May is programmed to deal with any amendments which need to be considered as a result of any of the previous meetings or the findings of the independent Sustainability Appraisal / Strategic Environmental Assessment, and determine the Local Development Framework for submission to the Secretary of State (20<sup>th</sup> May has also been reserved as a fall-back position if required).
10. The Cambridge East Area Action Plan is being prepared jointly with Cambridge City Council. As such, the programme takes account of the need to allow for meetings of the Joint Member Reference Group (21<sup>st</sup> February and 5<sup>th</sup> April) and also Cambridge City Council meetings (Environment Scrutiny Committee on 22<sup>nd</sup> March and 12<sup>th</sup> April and City Full Council Meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> April with a fall-back of 19<sup>th</sup> May).
11. LDF documents will be submitted to the Secretary of State in June 2005. They will then be subject to public participation for a six-week period. An additional participation period on objectors' sites is scheduled for October 2005. It is envisaged

that the Public Examination will start in February 2006, with the Inspector's binding report being received late 2006 with adoption end 2006/early 2007.

### **The Main Issues to be resolved**

12. Attached to this Agenda Item are the following Appendices:
- Appendix 1: Draft Core Strategy / Development Control Policies / Site Specific Policies Submission DPD
  - Appendix 2: Draft Inset Proposals Maps
  - Appendix 3: Sustainability Appraisal / Strategic Environmental Assessment of Draft Core Strategy / Development Control Policies Submission DPD
  - Appendix 4: Schedule of changes to Draft Sustainability Scoping Report October 2004
  - Appendix 5: Urban Capacity Study 2005

### **Approach to Drafting the Core Strategy / Development Control Policies / Site Specific Policies DPD**

13. Members provided a clear steer on the policy direction to be incorporated in the Core Strategy / Development Control Policies / Site Specific Policies DPD at the Council meetings on 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> January, when considering the representations received as a result of public participation on the Preferred Options Reports.
14. The Preferred Options Reports focused on key issues for the DPD and issues where there were choices to be made on the policy direction. They did not cover all issues to be included in the LDF. For example, there are a number of issues that are consistent with the Structure Plan and PPGs, or have been tested historically and have worked well in past Development Plans, and are rolled forward. In addition, revisions to Government guidance published after the Preferred Options Reports were prepared have been taken into account in drafting of the Core Strategy and Development Control Policies.

### **Sustainability Appraisal / Strategic Environmental Assessment**

15. Under the new system of plan making, a key aspect to the preparation of plans is the use of Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SA / SEA) to help test evolving options and policies and ensure that the most sustainable are pursued. It also provides valuable information for those considering policies through the participation process, enabling them to make an informed decision on their representations.
16. A Scoping Report was prepared by the Council, ahead of its preferred options reports, to identify relevant sustainability issues in the district, develop sustainability objectives, decision-making criteria and indicators to test the plan against. This report has already been subject to public participation at the preferred options stage, and Members agreed a set of changes to this report at the Council Meeting of 20th January 2005. A schedule is attached in Appendix 4, detailing the changes to the draft report.
17. The Draft Core Strategy / Development Control Policies have been subject to full SA / SEA appraisal by independent consultants, following the methodology approved in the Scoping Report. The sustainability assessments include an appraisal matrix for each policy, detailing how it scored against the sustainability objectives developed

through the Scoping Report. Testing includes consideration of potential short, medium and long term effects, secondary, cumulative and synergistic effects.

18. The Final Sustainability Report will be a complete report, explaining the process, and also including a publicly accessible summary. This will be put before members at the Council meeting of 9th May. The current report is effectively also a draft, to support Members' consideration of the draft policies. Any policy changes will require re-appraisal, with results put to Members at the Special Council meeting on 9th May.

#### **Draft Core Strategy / Development Control Policies /Site Specific Policies Submission Development Plan Document**

19. The document will effectively be a trio of documents, containing three distinct sections - a Core Strategy; Development Control Policies; and Site Specific Policies.

- **Introduction**

20. An introduction to the Local Development Framework, explaining its content, form and status, the preparation process, and links to other documents such as the Community Strategy. The introduction also sets out the process for public involvement following submission to the Secretary of State.

#### ***Part A The Core Strategy***

- **Strategy**

21. The Core Strategy sets out the overall approach to development in the District. In this first version of the Core Strategy it takes the strategy from the Cambridgeshire Structure Plan 2003, which is very locationally specific and determines the main spatial strategy for the District. The Core Strategy sets out the sequential approach to development and the Cambridge focus for significant levels of housing development to help redress the current imbalance between jobs and houses close to Cambridge. It therefore identifies the urban extensions proposed to Cambridge and the proposed new town of Northstowe for which Area Action Plans are proposed to be prepared.
22. It also establishes the strategy for development in the rural area. Focussed on larger, more sustainable villages, it identifies Rural Centres as required by the Structure Plan, and introduces a category of Minor Rural Centres to respond to the characteristics of South Cambridgeshire. The rural element of housing land supply in the Core Strategy has been adjusted from the preferred options report stage to take account of the revised Urban Capacity Study, and housing numbers developed around the base date of March 2004 as opposed to March 2003. The results indicate the strategy agreed in the Preferred Options Report remains sound, and that taking into account predicted windfalls and with the residual dwelling requirement being provided through operating current density policies on remaining land parcels at Cambourne, sufficient land supply has been identified that there is no need for additional allocations in the rural area.
23. Settlement policies for Rural Centres, Minor Rural Centres, Group Villages and Infill Villages have been developed, for the village categorisations agreed by Council. This is followed by details of current employment land supply. There is sufficient land supply not allocate additional sites except through Strategic Employment Allocations in Area Action Plans as required by the Structure Plan.

24. Finally a policy makes clear the need for monitoring and operation of a plan, monitor and manage approach to the Local Development Framework.

### ***Part B - Development Control Policies***

#### **• Development Principles**

25. Following support from the preferred options public participation detailed criteria based policies have been developed for Sustainable Development, Design of New Development, and Development Principles. A policy on the potential impact of Cumulative Development has been drafted to deal with concerns about making best use of sites and securing infrastructure requirements on parcels of land that could be regarded as forming part of a larger site.
26. A policy on Construction Methods has been developed following representations received on the Area Action Plans including from Go-East, where it was determined that the approach to these issues could actually apply to any development and not only the new town and urban extensions, and therefore covered in the district-wide Development Control policies.

#### **• Green Belt**

27. The Green Belt boundaries remain as adopted in Local Plan 2004, with the exception of changes resulting from strategic development sites, such as at Northstowe and Cambridge East. Where these changes have implications for land not covered by the Area Action Plans, the Inset Maps for settlements affected by these changes have been amended accordingly. The key area where this applies is the extension to the Green Belt around Northstowe.
28. Following support from the preferred options public participation, policies on Development in the Green Belt and Major Developed Sites have been developed according to the agreed approaches.

#### **• Housing**

29. Since the Council meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> January, Government has published several consultation documents, including updates to Planning Policy Guidance note 3: Housing. The latest draft guidance suggests that Local Development Frameworks (LDFs) should not prescribe a market housing mix by number of rooms because this is for the market to respond to, although they should plan for a mix of housing having regard to household composition. It also suggests that thresholds below 15 dwellings can be included for affordable housing if it can be justified in sustainability terms and the need cannot be met on larger sites.
30. On balance, it is considered that the LDF should continue to include market housing mix targets based on the number of rooms because monitoring, together with our Housing Needs Survey, shows that the market has not delivered against our identified needs. However, the policy has been worded to allow for flexibility on a site-by-site basis. Following the clear steer from Members, and in light of the high level of identified need, the Affordable Housing Threshold has been lowered to developments of two or more dwellings in all sizes of settlement. Clearly these are currently draft guidance, but they are likely to be finalised before the Public Examination in early 2006, and it is recommended these approaches are included in the draft Development Plan Document.

31. Policies on Housing Density and Affordable Housing Funding have been developed according the agreed approaches.

32. The government adopted PPS7 Sustainable Development in Rural Areas, which replaced PPG7, after the preferred options report had been agreed for public participation. PPS7 requires authorities to include criteria-based policies for conversion of rural buildings, including for residential purposes. Residential conversion is a last resort, with conversion for employment uses being the preferred option. However, an intermediate approach would be a live work unit, an employment use supported by a subordinate residential use. The policy creates a requirement for applicants to demonstrate first, that a building is unsuitable for pure employment use then, secondly that it is unsuitable for an employment unit with a subordinate residential use, and only then residential.

- **Economy & Tourism**

33. Policies on selective management of employment, support for clusters, policies on new and expansion of employment have been developed following the approaches agreed at the preferred options stage.

34. Where previously PPG7 included a number of tests to be used when considering conversion of rural buildings for employment, PPS7 requires Local Development Frameworks to include criteria-based policies. PPS7 places greater emphasis on the replacement of rural buildings where it would bring about an environmental improvement in terms of the impact of the development on its surroundings and the landscape, and a policy has been developed to that effect.

35. PPS7 also strengthens support for farm diversification. While the preference must be for re-use, or in suitable circumstances replacement of existing buildings, greater flexibility is provided for new buildings directly related to a farm diversification scheme. Any new development would have to be of an appropriate scale, and subject to the development principles and other policies of the plan. Policies are included on this basis.

36. Policies relating to tourism are also included, continuing the approach from Local Plan 2004.

- **Services & Facilities**

37. Policies on Protection of Village Services, Retail uses, Public Art, Telecommunications, and Recreation have been developed according to the agreed approaches.

- **Natural Environment**

38. A criteria-based policy on Renewable Energy has been drafted, to address concerns raised, although many relevant criteria are addressed in the Development Principles policies and have not been duplicated.

39. A single new policy on Sites of Biodiversity Importance has been drafted to protect all sites designated at the international and national level, as well as non-statutorily protected sites at the local level. These include Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, and County Wildlife Sites.

40. The Council will produce a Biodiversity Strategy, to be adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document, in due course. This will provide a lot of the detailed background for the implementation of many of the policies in the Natural Environment, where they relate to biodiversity and their habitats.
41. Policies on Energy Efficiency, Landscape Character Areas, Countryside Enhancement Areas, Natural Areas, Biodiversity, Flood Risk, Sustainable Drainage Systems, Water Conservation and Lighting Proposals have been developed according to the agreed approaches.

- **Cultural Heritage**

42. Policies on Historic Landscapes, Archaeological Sites, Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas, Protected Village Amenity Areas and Important Countryside Frontages have been developed according to the approaches agreed by Council.

- **Travel**

43. A policy on Cycling and Walking Provision, which incorporates the agreed Cycle Provision Prioritisation, has been drafted to deal with concerns relating to the development of the rights of way network and to ensure development is designed at the outset with the needs of pedestrians and cyclists in mind.
44. Policies on Planning for More Sustainable Travel, Mitigating Travel Impact, and Aviation-Related Development Proposals have been developed according to the agreed approaches. In addition, policies safeguarding road and rail infrastructure have been developed according to the agreed approaches and included in the Site Specific Policies, reflecting the Local Transport Plan.

- **10.1 - Standards For Car Parking Provision**

45. The standards for car parking provision are rolled forward from Local Plan 2004, with some minor amendments to the supporting text to provide more detail on their interpretation.
46. The standards are classified by land use according to the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes Amendment) Order 2005, which is proposed to take effect on 21st April 2005. The main change is the introduction of Use Classes A4: Pubs and Bars (previously part of Use Class A3); and the introduction of Use Class A5: Take-aways. Standards have been incorporated for these new classifications.

- **10.2 – Standards For Cycle Parking Provision**

47. The standards for cycle parking provision are largely rolled forward from Local Plan 2004, although there are a few minor amendments to ensure consistency with the Redeposit Draft Cambridge City Local Plan. Where changes have been made, the standards have become less stringent. In addition, further explanatory text has been added to aid their interpretation.
48. Cycle standards are also structured according to the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes Amendment) Order 2005 and new standards have been incorporated for the new Use Classes.

### ***Part C - Site Specific Policies***

49. Under the new system of plan making, Site Specific Policies must be kept separate to the Core Strategy and Development Control Policies.
50. This section sets out the housing and employment allocations not addressed in the Area Action Plans, and includes those allocations rolled forward from Local Plan 2004, including policies for the Cambridge Northern Fringe, and new policies for Cambourne reflecting the use of district-wide density policies in the remaining undeveloped areas of the new village. This section also includes a number of specific village policies, including relating to the Papworth Everard hospital and west central area redevelopment, developing the approach agreed by the Council.

### ***Proposals Map***

51. Draft inset proposals maps for all Villages are included for consideration. A draft large-scale district-wide map, covering the areas not covered by the inset maps, will be prepared for the Council meeting of 9<sup>th</sup> May 2005.
52. The Local Development Framework district-wide Proposals Map must include land designations from not only the Core Strategy / Development Control / Site Specific Policies, but also the Area Action Plans. At this time, the draft Area Action Plans have yet to be agreed, and will be considered by Council at future meetings. The maps in Appendix 2 indicate areas where land uses will be determined by the Area Action Plan.

### ***Urban Capacity Study***

53. Following public participation at the preferred options stage, Members considered responses to the Urban Capacity Study Consultation Draft 2004, at the Council meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> January 2005. A number of changes to the methodology were agreed. For the final version, the study has been updated to take account of the latest planning monitoring information available, and the draft policies in the draft LDF Core Strategy Development Plan Document. This moved the base date of the study forward from March 2003 to March 2004. The study continues to indicate that sufficient land supply is available to meet requirements up to 2016 without additional housing allocations in villages, through operating the latest housing density requirements within existing land parcels at Cambourne.

### ***Financial Implications***

54. The cost of progressing the LDF is set out in the Council's budget.

### ***Legal Implications***

55. The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 imposes a statutory duty to prepare a Local Development Framework and to keep it up to date.

### ***Staffing Implications***

56. The programme for the LDF has been compiled having regard to the staffing resources that the Council can commit to planning policy preparation in the context of wider pressures for the early delivery of the development strategy set out in the Structure Plan.



## **Risk Management Implications**

57. The Core Strategy is a key Development Plan Document within the LDF. Given the imperative from the Regional Planning Guidance and the Structure Plan that an early start must be made on the increased rate of development in the Cambridge Sub-region, it is important that the District Council, as the plan-making authority, is able to ensure that development takes place consistent with the LDF. If the LDF is not in place at an early stage there is the risk of developments being determined by the development control and appeal process.

## **Consultations**

58. The Preferred Options Reports that guided preparation of the draft documents have been the subject of extensive public participation.

## **Recommendations**

59. Council is recommended to:
- i. Agree the emerging policy approach for the Draft Core Strategy / Development Control Policies / Site Specific Policies DPD
  - ii. Agree the draft inset proposals maps (subject to any modifications resulting from points i);
  - iii. Agree the changes schedule to the draft Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report SCDC October 2004
  - iv. Agree to submit the independent Sustainability Appraisal / Strategic Environmental Assessment (subject to any modifications resulting from points i and ii above);
  - v. Approve the Urban Capacity Study 2005.

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

Core Strategy Preferred Options Report, SCDC, October 2004  
Draft Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report SCDC October 2004  
Rural Centres Preferred Options Report, SCDC, October 2004  
Northstowe Preferred Options Report, SCDC, October 2004  
Cambridge East Preferred Options Report, SCDC, October 2004  
Cambridge Southern Fringe Preferred Options Report, SCDC, October 2004  
Recreation Study Consultation Draft, SCDC, October 2004  
Urban Capacity Study Consultation Draft, SCDC, October 2004.  
Agenda & Minutes - Council 20-21st January 2005 (includes responses to Preferred Options Public Participation)  
Agenda & Minutes - Joint Planning Policy Advisory Group / Development & Conservation Control Committee 9th & 12th July 2004 (Recommendations considered by Council 22nd July) (Agreed Core Strategy Preferred Options Report and other documents for public participation, and considered results of Statutory bodies consultation)

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