

## **SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

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**REPORT TO:** Planning Policy & Localism Portfolio Holder

13 December 2012

**AUTHOR/S:** Director of Planning and New Communities

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### **SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE LOCAL PLAN ISSUES AND OPTIONS 2 REPORT FOR CONSULTATION**

- **PART 1 – JOINT CONSULTATION ON DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY AND SITE OPTIONS ON THE EDGE OF CAMBRIDGE**
- **PART 2 – SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE FURTHER SITE OPTIONS**

#### **Purpose**

1. The Portfolio Holder is invited to approve the two parts of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan Issues and Options 2 Consultation Reports for public consultation from 7 January to 18 February 2013 and to agree to publish new evidence base documents supporting the plan, having considered the recommendation made from the Joint Strategic Transport and Spatial Planning Group (JSTSPG) in respect of the Part 1 joint consultation document produced with Cambridge City Council.

#### **Executive summary**

2. The Council has started the process of updating the current Local Development Framework documents that were adopted between January 2007 and January 2010 with a new Local Plan covering the period to 2031. The Local Plan is a key document for South Cambridgeshire. Following on from consultation on the first Issues and Options Report, which took place between July and September 2012, this consultation will include:
  - Part 1 – Joint consultation on Development Strategy and Site Options on the Edge of Cambridge;
  - Part 2 – Further Site Options in South Cambridgeshire arising from the first Issues and Options consultation.
3. The Issues and Options 2 consultation has been split into two parts. The Part 1 document is a joint consultation between South Cambridgeshire District Council and Cambridge City Council on options for the development strategy for the wider Cambridge area and for site options for housing or employment development on the edge of Cambridge on land currently in the Green Belt. It also includes options on sub-regional sporting, cultural and community facilities including site options for a community stadium. It builds upon the Issues and Options consultations that the Councils have already consulted on and provides updated information in relation to the housing and employment needs for the area as a whole, as well as outlining what that means for the future development strategy. The Part 2 document includes further site options and designations for other parts of the district that were put forward through the 2012 consultation.

4. This report provides the draft Part 1 and Part 2 consultation documents for consideration, and sets out the broad arrangements for consultation, which will take place for 6 weeks between 7 January to 18 February 2013.

### **Recommendations**

5. The Portfolio Holder is recommended to:
  - agree the joint Part 1 document (Appendix A) and supporting evidence base (Appendices B, C, D, E and F) for consultation;
  - agree the Sustainability Appraisal of the Part 1 document for consultation (Appendix G);
  - agree the Part 2 document (Appendix H) and supporting evidence base (Appendix I) for consultation;
  - agree the Sustainability Appraisal of the Part 2 document for consultation (Appendix J);
  - agree the consultation arrangements sets out in paragraphs 32 to 35; and
  - agree that any minor amendments and editing changes, including to make more publicly accessible documents, that need to be made should be agreed in consultation with the Portfolio Holder.

### **Background**

6. The current Local Development Framework (LDF) suite of documents was adopted between January 2007 and January 2010. They set out a vision, policies and proposals for development and land use in South Cambridgeshire to 2016 and beyond for some longer term proposals, e.g. Northstowe. The LDF gives effect to a sustainable development strategy taken from the last Structure Plan and East of England Plan, and proposes a sequence of development in South Cambridgeshire with:
  - (a) development on the edge of Cambridge on land removed from the Green Belt
  - (b) the new town of Northstowe
  - (c) development in the larger and better served villages designated as Rural Centres and Minor Rural Centres.
7. The primary objective of this strategy is to locate more new homes close to the main concentration of jobs and jobs growth in and close to Cambridge. This approach involved a review of the inner boundary of the Cambridge Green Belt. This included Cambridge Airport where 12,000 new homes (7,500 in South Cambridgeshire) were expected to be built, most after 2016. This strategy is a reversal of previous plans which constrained the growth of Cambridge and dispersed housing development to the villages and market towns.
8. Whilst the current Local Development Framework is an effective set of documents and good progress is being made in terms of the delivery of its proposals, a number of factors come together to mean that an update is timely. Planning policies need to

be kept up to date and the Council agreed in 2011 to review its plans, with adoption of a new Local Plan by early 2015.

9. The Localism Act received royal assent in November 2011 providing for the abolition of Regional Spatial Strategies (RSS) and the introduction of Neighbourhood Planning. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) came into effect on 27 March 2012. The NPPF gives a 12 month period for Councils to update their plans to ensure consistency with the framework. Weight can be given to policies in emerging plans as they progress through the review process, and but for the supply of immediately deliverable housing land the current LDF is considered to be in general conformity with the NPPF. The Council will have a draft Local Plan by summer 2013.

### **2012 Issues and Options consultation**

10. The 2012 Issues and Options consultation documents were agreed by the Portfolio Holder at the meeting of 3 July. Consultation on the Issues and Options Report took place over ten weeks between 12 July and 28 September 2012 on 116 issues and questions in the consultation document with an accompanying 10 question leaflet to encourage participation, which was included in the South Cambs Magazine. A total of almost 20,100 comments were made, of which over 6,600 were to the questionnaire.

### **Duty to Co-operate**

11. The NPPF places a duty to cooperate on planning authorities for issues that cross administrative boundaries. This is one of the tests of 'soundness' that the Planning Inspector will apply at the Examination of the Local Plan. Councils are required to work collaboratively to ensure that strategic priorities across local boundaries are properly co-ordinated and clearly reflected in individual Local Plans, although the NPPF is not prescriptive about how Councils work together or how evidence of co-operation should be presented.
12. At a County level, arrangements have been put in place to facilitate the duty to co-operate with the establishment of a Joint Strategic Planning Unit and a joint Member Group to consider cross strategic planning and transport issues.
13. The close relationship with Cambridge means that joint working with the City Council and the County Council is also well established. The City Council and South Cambridgeshire have jointly commissioned much of the evidence base to support Local Plan preparation. The Cambridge City, South Cambridgeshire and County Council Strategic Transport and Spatial Planning Group was established earlier this year to provide a senior member sounding board throughout the Local Plan review process.
14. Whilst Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council are preparing separate plans, this does not prevent a comprehensive approach being developed and sound arrangements have been put in place in order to ensure this. Given the close functional relationship between Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire, the Councils are working jointly to ensure that cross boundary issues and relevant wider matters are addressed in a consistent and joined up

manner. The Councils have been working together throughout the preparation of the Issues and Options consultations on the Local Plans, and also the parallel consultation on issues for a new Transport Strategy for Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire.

15. The Councils took a co-ordinated approach to joint issues in the recent Issues and Options consultations (summer 2012). Each of the Issues and Options consultation documents took a common approach to the questions asked about the Green Belt on the edge of Cambridge, the future planning of Cambridge East and Northern Fringe East, and to sub-regional sporting, cultural and community facilities. Each document also highlighted the corresponding consultation by the other Council.

### **Part 1 – Joint Consultation on Development Strategy and Site Options on the Edge of Cambridge**

16. The Councils continue to work jointly as plan preparation progresses. Part 1 of the second stage of Issues and Options consultation is a joint consultation on options for the development strategy for the wider Cambridge area and for site options on the edge of Cambridge on land currently in the Green Belt. It builds on the Issues and Options consultations that the Councils have already undertaken this summer and provides background information in relation to the housing and employment needs for the area as a whole as well as outlining what that means for the future development strategy.
17. Appendix A includes the Part 1 document for consultation. The document includes the following:
  - Chapter 1: Introduction
  - Chapter 2: Joint Working and Duty to Co-operate
  - Chapter 3: The Current Development Strategy
  - Chapter 4: Sustainable Development
  - Chapter 5: Development Needs in Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire
  - Chapter 6: Continuing a Sustainable Development Strategy
  - Chapter 7: Green Belt
  - Chapter 8: A Sustainable Development Strategy for Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire to 2031
  - Chapter 9: Site Options
  - Chapter 10. Sub Regional Sporting, Cultural and Community Facilities
18. In order to assist with the preparation of this document, the following evidence based work has been undertaken:
  - Review of the Inner Green Belt Boundary Study November 2012 (Appendix B)
  - Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire Sustainable Development Strategy Review November 2012 (Appendix C)
  - Site Assessments for Edge of Cambridge Sites November 2012 (Appendix D)
  - Cambridge Sub Regional Facilities Review (Appendix E)

*Sustainable Development Strategy*

19. The current development strategy for Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire marked a step change in the way housing development took place in and on the edge of Cambridge, by looking to provide homes as close as possible to the jobs, in a move away from the previous dispersed village development strategy to help reduce commuting and the congestion and emissions it causes. The change in position of Cambridge East as a development site for up to 12,000 homes on the edge of Cambridge in the period to 2031, means that the current development strategy for Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire will not be fully implemented. However, good progress in relation to the current strategy must be recognised, with development on the fringe sites underway and progress being made in relation to Northstowe.
20. The Councils have worked with the Joint Strategic Planning Unit to undertake a review of the current Sustainable Development Strategy to explore how the new Local Plans can continue to provide for sustainable development whilst also protecting what is special about Cambridge, including the purpose of the Cambridge Green Belt. The Review concludes that the current strategy remains the most sustainable, subject to striking the right balance between meeting the needs for new homes and jobs, with other environmental infrastructure and quality of life factors. However, the work in the new plans must consider what a sustainable development strategy could look like now, given the changes in circumstances since 2003 when the current strategy was put in place.
21. Given this context, it is important that the review of the Local Plan explores whether there are further sites on the edge of Cambridge that could be released from the Green Belt for development without fundamental harm to its purposes. A review of the inner boundary of the Green Belt has therefore been undertaken, which has identified a small number of sites that could be released for development of approximately 680 homes without fundamental harm to Green Belt purposes. Those sites have been considered as part of a comprehensive assessment process (see site options section below).

*Site Options for consultation*

22. A technical assessment of a range of sites on the edge of Cambridge has been undertaken to inform the selection of the site options for consultation, including sites submitted to the Councils as part of their Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments and sites coming through the Green Belt review. The assessments have had regard to the comments submitted in response to the summer 2012 consultation on ten broad locations in the Green Belt on the edge of Cambridge (see Appendix F). A wide range of constraints, policy designations and matters important to sustainability have been taken into account in the technical assessments including flood risk, Green Belt significance, site access, deliverability, Cambridge Airport safety zones, distance to services and facilities, open space, transport accessibility, air quality, noise, and biodiversity. The technical assessment process involved completion of a standard site pro-forma, which looked at the impact and significance of development. The full technical assessments are contained in Appendix D.
23. The results of the assessments are summarised in an appendix to the Part 1 consultation document. The traffic light assessment highlights those sites that may have potential for development as green or amber, where negative impacts are

considered capable of mitigation in an appropriate scheme. Those sites have been identified as site options for consultation. 6 sites in 3 locations have been identified, as illustrated in the table below.

| Site Number     | Location   | Development type   |
|-----------------|--|--|
| Site option GB1 | Land North of Worts' Causeway                        | 250 dwellings  |
| Site option GB2 | Land South of Worts' Causeway                        | 230 dwellings  |
| Site option GB3 | Fulbourn Road West (1)                               | 75 dwellings. Alternatively, this could be considered for employment.                  |
| Site option GB4 | Fulbourn Road West (2)                               | Employment development   |
| Site option GB5 | Fulbourn Road East                                   | Employment development   |
| Site option GB6 | Land between Huntingdon Road and Histon Road (NIAB3) | Up to 130 dwellings with employment (see also Site Option CS4 for a Community Stadium) |

*Sub regional Sporting, Cultural and Community Facilities*

24. Through the previous Issues and Options consultations, both Councils sought views on whether there is need for major new cultural and sporting facilities in the Cambridge sub-region. Previous studies had identified gaps in provision for some types of major sub-regional facilities, including a community stadium, ice rink and concert hall. Further work has now been undertaken to review the evidence for such facilities and consider options for dealing with them in the new Local Plans in the Cambridge Sub-Regional Facilities Review (Nov 2012) (see Appendix E).
25. The Review concludes that no specific objective need can be quantified requiring the provision of a community stadium. However, the Review identifies that the right package of uses in a suitable location could deliver benefits for the wider sub-region. In the light of the latest work, the consultation asks whether there is considered to be a need to plan for a community stadium. 9 site options have been identified for consultation, which are either within the urban area of Cambridge, in the Green Belt on the edge of Cambridge, or to provide a facility as part of a new settlement. None of the site options are perfect and there are issues which may mean that some of the sites may not be capable of being delivered in a satisfactory way. The consultation document highlights the advantages and disadvantages of each option to inform comment. The site options are:

| SITE NUMBER     | LOCATION  |
|-----------------|---|
| Site Option CS1 | The Abbey Stadium and adjoining Allotment Land, Newmarket Road, Cambridge |
| Site Option CS2 | Cowley Road Cambridge (former Park and Ride and Golf Driving Range)       |
| Site Option CS3 | North of Newmarket Road, Cambridge East                                   |
| Site Option CS4 | South of the A14 and west of Cambridge Road                               |

|                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| Site Option CS5 | Land south of Trumpington Meadows, Hauxton Road               |
| Site Option CS6 | Land between Milton and Impington, north of A14 (Union Place) |
| Site Option CS7 | Northstowe  |
| Site Option CS8 | Waterbeach New Town Option                                    |
| Site Option CS9 | Bourn Airfield New Settlement Option                          |

26. The Part 1 document was considered at the Joint Strategic Transport and Spatial Planning Group on 30 November. The Group agreed to advise Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council to:

- Support the joint Part 1 document for consultation;
- Endorse the supporting evidence base;
- Support the consultation arrangements; and
- Endorse that any minor amendments and editing changes that need to be made prior to publications be agreed by both Executive Councillors.

27. Amendments to the report in relation to NIAB 3 and the question relating to the sustainable development strategy were also agreed. In addition, the Group asked for further clarification in the Part 1 document to be made in relation to why the sites relating to the community stadium were being consulted on. This included Trumpington Meadows and land North of Newmarket Road. Further clarification has therefore been provided in paragraph 10.9 of the Part 1 document as well as in the site descriptions for Trumpington Meadows and North of Newmarket Road.

**Part 2 – Further Site Options in South Cambridgeshire arising from the first Issues and Options consultation**

28. The Council will be considering all the representations made to the 2012 consultation as work progresses on a draft Local Plan over the coming months. However, a number of representations have been made putting forward new sites for either development or to be protected. In these cases, assessments have been carried out in a similar way as for the summer consultation and it is advisable that public consultation on any reasonable options is undertaken before the draft Local Plan is prepared.

29. In addition to the main Local Plan work, the District Council has also been exploring with Parish Councils how best to bring forward community aspirations in light of the new localism approach to planning and many Parish Councils are indicating to us that they would find preparing neighbourhood plans too much of a burden for them. The District Council has therefore offered the opportunity to include community-led proposals in the Local Plan where possible.

30. A number of proposals have been put to us by Parish Councils during the 2012 consultation. Where they are consistent with the approach being taken in the Local Plan, they are included with the District Council's options for consultation. However, a number of proposals from Parish Councils are not consistent with the detailed approach for the Local Plan. Nevertheless they are likely to be proposals that are capable of being included in a neighbourhood plan where the test is that they must

generally conform with the strategic policies of the Local Plan. The consultation document therefore includes Parish Council proposals separately under each topic for those proposals not consistent with the normal Local Plan approach. These have not all been tested in any detail by the District Council but are put out for consultation and will help parish councils to gauge public opinion and develop their proposals further. This will help those communities that prefer not to prepare their own neighbourhood plans to still be able to deliver their local aspirations.

31. Further site options in addition to those already consulted on are included in Part 2 for a range of issues. The site options cover a range of types of built development, potential changes to village frameworks that affect where development might be permitted, and areas to be protected from development such as important open areas at villages under the following chapter headings:

- Housing
- Employment
- Mixed Uses
- Village Frameworks
- Community Facilities and Infrastructure
- Recreation and Open Space
- Protecting Village Character

32. Parishes affected by site options for development for housing, employment, mixed use development and a marina option and options for changes to village frameworks where there could be implications for development are as follows: Bourn, Caldecote, Cambourne, Comberton, Cottenham, Great Abington, Guilden Morden, Hardwick, Histon & Impington, Little Gransden, Melbourn, Meldreth, Pampisford, Sawston, Toft, Waterbeach (including Chittering) and Whaddon. A number of other parishes are also affected by options relating to village protection policies. All the site options are shown on maps by village in Chapter 9, in alphabetical order.

### **Sustainability Appraisal and Other Assessments**

33. Sustainability Appraisal (SA) has been carried out for both Part 1 and Part 2 documents. For the Part 1 document, a joint SA has been prepared with Cambridge City Council. This considers the impact of the site options on the sustainability objectives identified in the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Reports of both Councils. For Part 2, an Initial Sustainability Report has also been prepared. It also includes within it technical annexes that provide additional information to support the issues and options contained in the Part 2 consultation report. The Sustainability Appraisal of the Part 1 document is included at Appendix G while the Appraisal of the Part 2 document is included at Appendix J.

### **Consultation Arrangements**

34. In accordance with the Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement, consultation arrangements for the Issues and Options 2 reports include:

- Consultation for 6 weeks from 7 January to 18 February 2013.



- Letters and emails informing consultees of consultation dates and how to view and respond to the consultation material.
- A public advert.
- All documents available on the Council's website and an exhibition in the foyer of the Cambourne offices (the joint Part 1 document to be hosted on the City Council's website with a link from the South Cambridgeshire website).
- Libraries to receive electronic or hard copies as agreed.
- An article has already been placed in the winter edition of South Cambridgeshire News which goes to every household in the district advertising the forthcoming consultation;
- Publicity through the Council's Facebook page and Twitter as well as blog
- Posters for distribution to Parishes with new development site options.

35. A series of exhibitions will be held across South Cambridgeshire focussing on those locations where there are options for development. Some of these will be joint exhibitions with the City Council for the Part 1 site options on the edge of Cambridge, which have already been advertised in each Council's magazine and will be attended by officers of both Councils. Additional exhibitions will be arranged in South Cambridgeshire to cover the Part 2 sites and will be advertised on the website and in the local area. Dates and venues of the confirmed joint exhibitions are shown below:

| Day   | Date         | Venue  | Exhibition Time |
|-------|--------------|--|-----------------|
| Mon   | 7th January  | Grantchester – Village Hall                  | 2.30pm – 7.30pm |
| Wed   | 9th January  | Fulbourn, The Swifts                         | 2.30pm – 7.30pm |
| Thurs | 10th January | The Hub, Camborne – Main Hall                | 2.30pm – 7.30pm |
| Sat   | 12th January | Trumpington Village Hall – Jubilee Room      | 12– 4pm         |
| Wed   | 16th January | Great Shelford – Memorial Hall               | 2.30pm – 7.30pm |
| Fri   | 18th January | Meadows Community Centre, Cambridge – Room 2 | 2.30pm – 7.30pm |
| Tue   | 22nd January | Histon & Impington Recreation Ground         | 2.30pm – 7.30pm |

36. Officers have also made contact with Parish Councils that have put forward development proposals to explore those in more detail with them. There are also a small number of parish councils that were not able to respond in time for the summer consultation but are working up local proposals and we will explore with them whether their proposals can be subject to local consultation in parallel with the Issues and Options 2 consultation so that we can bring them into a community-led part of the Local Plan over the coming months.

### **Next Steps**

37. This Issues and Options 2 consultation is the second phase in developing the new Local Plan for South Cambridgeshire. Once consultation has finished, the

representations received will be considered by the Council together with those for the 2012 consultation, using them to refine site options and policies that will be included in the new Local Plan.

38. The Council, will then draft the new Local Plan, which will be subject to a further round of public consultation in summer 2013 prior to being submitted to the Secretary of State for examination around the end of 2013. During the final stage, an independent planning inspector will consider the ‘soundness’ of the Local Plan at a public examination. This will involve the inspector considering whether the plan has been positively prepared, and that policies are justified, effective and are in conformity with the NPPF. Following this, the inspector will produce a report of findings, and if found to be sound, potentially with modifications, the Council can formally adopt the Local Plan. The Cambridge Local Plan will proceed through an identical process and allowing for any dependencies between the two plans to be considered.

### Implications

|                                      |   |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Financial                            | There are no direct financial implications arising from this report, the cost of preparing a Local Plan is significant but is included in the Medium term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and has been budgeted for over the duration of its preparation. Preparing one single Local Plan rather than three separate Development Plan Documents (Core Strategy, Development Control Policies and Site Allocations) and a separate Gypsy and Traveller DPD will mean that cost and time savings can be achieved. |
| Legal                                | There are no direct legal implications of this report.  |
| Staffing                             | There are no direct staffing implications arising from this report.   |
| Risk Management                      | The preparation of the Local Plan is a major project for the Council. Full project and risk management procedures are being employed.   |
| Equality and Diversity               | There are no direct equal opportunities arising from this report.   |
| Equality Impact Assessment completed | Yes<br>An Equalities Impact Assessment has been undertaken as part of preparing the Issues & options report.  |
| Climate Change                       | The SA of the Issues & Options report considers the implications of the options for climate change.   |

### Consultation

39. Consultations undertaken and arrangements for the forthcoming public consultation are set out in the report.

### Effect on Strategic Aims

40. **Aim 1:** “We will listen to and engage with residents, parishes and businesses to ensure that we deliver first class services and value for money”. The Issues and Options Consultation provides the opportunity for all stakeholders in the future of South Cambridgeshire to influence the policies and proposals for new Local Plan

before the Council makes any decisions and specifically includes a number of parish council proposals.

41. **Aim 2:** "We will work with partners to create and sustain opportunities for employment, enterprise and world leading innovation." The Issues and Options Report considers forecasts for the growth of the local economy and possible additional employment site options.
42. **Aim 3:** "We will make sure that South Cambridgeshire continues to offer an outstanding and sustainable quality of life for our residents." The Council has a duty to secure sustainable development. This lies at the heart of the options set out in the Issues and Options Report and covers all three aspects of sustainability – economic, social and environment. The options have a focus on sustaining and enhancing the qualities of South Cambridgeshire that in national surveys consistently identify the District as one of the best places to live in the UK.

### **Conclusions/Summary**

43. See Executive Summary paragraphs 2-4.

### **Background papers**

Local Plan Issues and Options Consultation documents July 2012

Localism Act 2011

National Planning Policy Framework 2012

### **Appendices**

#### **PART 1 DOCUMENT:**

- Appendix A: Issues and Options 2, Part 1 – Joint consultation on Development Strategy and Site Options on the Edge of Cambridge;
- Appendix B: Review of the Inner Green Belt Boundary Study November 2012
- Appendix C: Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire Sustainable Development Strategy Review November 2012
- Appendix D: Site Assessments for Edge of Cambridge Sites November 2012
- Appendix E: Cambridge Sub Regional Facilities Review, November 2012
- Appendix F: Summary of Issues and Options 2012 comments on Broad Locations in the Green Belt
- Appendix G: Sustainability Appraisal of Part 1 document

#### **PART 2 DOCUMENT:**

- Appendix H: Issues and Options 2, Part 2 – Further Site Options in South Cambridgeshire;
- Appendix I: South Cambridgeshire Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment – December 2012 Update

- Appendix J: Initial Sustainability Report – Supplement to Accompany Issues and Options 2 (Part 2)

**Inspection of papers:** To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact:

**Contact Officer:**

**Keith Miles (Planning Policy Manager)**

**Telephone: 01954 713181**

**E-mail: [keith.miles@scams.gov.uk](mailto:keith.miles@scams.gov.uk)**