

1. INTRODUCTION TO THE SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE LDF

WHAT IS A LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK?

1.1 The Local Development Framework (LDF) for South Cambridgeshire will replace the existing Local Plan which was adopted in February 2004. It is being prepared under the new government legislation for development plans. The LDF sets out policies and proposals for the development and use of land in the District for the period to 2016. It includes a vision for the future of South Cambridgeshire and objectives and targets, which developments must meet to secure that vision. Once adopted, planning applications and other decisions will be made in accordance with it.

1.2 The Local Development Framework:

- Takes account of national, regional and strategic planning policies;
- Identifies sites for, and requirements of, major development;
- Provides the framework of policies for assessing all planning applications;
- Enables infrastructure and service providers to bring forward their services when needed by new development;
- Enables the public to be fully involved in developing local policies and proposals.

1.3 The Local Development Framework will form part of the Development Plan for South Cambridgeshire. The Development Plan is made up of those plans which have been statutorily adopted and which cover the District. The other parts of the Development Plan are currently:

- The Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Structure Plan (2003)
- The Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Waste Local Plan (2003)
- The Cambridgeshire Aggregates (Minerals) Local Plan (1991)

These are all 'saved plans' under the new plan making system.

1.4 The East of England Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS14) will replace the Cambridgeshire Structure Plan when it is published in its final form by the Secretary of State (expected to be mid 2006). A number of policies will be 'saved', and remain valid until at least 28th September 2007, under the transitional provisions of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. The RSS identifies specific Structure Plan policies that remain saved even once it is adopted.

FORM AND STATUS

1.5 The LDF for South Cambridgeshire will be made up of a number of Local Development Documents (LDDs):

- Statutory plans (Development Plan Documents or DPDs) which carry the full weight of the development plan:
 - A Core Strategy with Development Control Policies (together with Site Specific Policies) which apply across the whole of South Cambridgeshire.
 - A number of Area Action Plans which detail proposals for each of the major development areas in the District.
 - Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) which, although not statutory, have been consulted upon and will be taken into account (as a material planning consideration) when determining planning applications.
- 1.6 The composition of the Local Development Framework as a series of documents allows it to be kept up to date, as those parts of the plan that require review or replacement can be changed without requiring a review of the entire plan. However, it is important that the documents that make up the Local Development Framework are read alongside each other, for example, the Area Action Plans set out locationally specific issues, whilst the Core Strategy provides district-wide policy.
- 1.7 Details of the Local Development Framework can be found in the South Cambridgeshire Local Development Scheme (LDS). The LDS sets out how the Council will move from the previous development plan system to the new development plan system. It lists current planning policy and guidance documents applicable to development proposals in South Cambridgeshire, and which new local development documents are to be produced and when. It will be reviewed annually to keep it up to date except where it needs to be updated more urgently.
- 1.8 The documents being prepared in an initial tranche are:
- Core Strategy, Development Control Policies, and Site Specific Policies Development Plan Document (DPD).
 - Cambridge East Area Action Plan (AAP) (being prepared jointly with Cambridge City Council).
 - Cambridge Southern Fringe AAP.
 - Northstowe AAP.

~~1.9 The timetable for the LDF preparation process is as follows:~~

- ~~1. Statutory Bodies Consultation (April – May 2004)~~
- ~~2. Preferred Options Public Participation (October – November 2004)~~
- ~~3. Submission of Draft LDF to Secretary of State (June 2005)~~
- ~~4. Consultation on objectors' sites (Autumn 2005)~~
- ~~5. Independent Examination (February 2006)~~
- ~~6. Adoption (Winter 2006).~~

CONTEXT

- 1.9 South Cambridgeshire is located centrally in the East of England region at the crossroads of the M11 / A14 roads and with direct rail access to London and to Stansted Airport. It is a largely rural district which surrounds the city of Cambridge and comprises 101 villages, none currently larger than 8,000 persons. It is surrounded by a ring of market towns just beyond its borders, which are generally 10–15 miles from Cambridge. Together, Cambridge, South Cambridgeshire and the Market Towns form the Cambridge Sub-Region. South Cambridgeshire has long been a fast growing district and in 2003 had a population of over 130,000 persons (bigger than Cambridge itself) and has become home to many of the clusters of high technology research and development in the Cambridge Sub-Region.
- 1.10 The regional context is set out in the Regional Planning Guidance for East Anglia (RPG6), which was approved in November 2000. It aims to focus a higher proportion of Cambridgeshire's growth into the Cambridge Sub-Region and proposes a sequential approach to planning development – with much of the development concentrated into and on the edge of Cambridge (subject to a review of the Cambridge Green Belt), including development in South Cambridgeshire, and into a new town beyond the outer boundary of the Green Belt.
- 1.11 The LDF will enable the step change in growth required in the Regional Spatial Strategy and Structure Plan, particularly in the rate of housing development. South Cambridgeshire will be experiencing an almost 40% increase in housing development between 1999 and 2016. In the past much of the housing development in the Cambridge area has been directed to the villages and towns beyond the city. Whilst there has been employment growth elsewhere, Cambridge has remained the dominant centre of employment. As demand has outstripped the supply of housing close to Cambridge, people have located further from Cambridge increasing commuter flows through the District. Most of the new development in the District (on sites not yet committed) will take place on the edge of Cambridge and in a new town near to Longstanton and Oakington, named Northstowe.
- 1.12 The national context is set out in Planning Policy Statements (the replacement to Planning Policy Guidance Notes), Circulars and other advice from Government. Whilst some of those national policies will require local interpretation, a great number do not. The Local Development Framework will not repeat that advice which must also be taken into account in determining planning applications.
- 1.13 RPG6 informs the strategy in the Cambridgeshire Structure Plan 2003. This will be the last of its kind and will be superseded by a new Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS14). Until it is superseded, the LDF must be in conformity with the Structure Plan. The housing requirement set out in the Structure Plan is detailed in the Core Strategy.

COMMUNITY STRATEGY

1.14 The Local Development Framework will be a key mechanism for delivering the South Cambridgeshire Community Strategy. All local authorities are required by the Local Government Act 2000 to "prepare a community strategy for promoting the economic, environmental and social well-being of their areas and contributing to the achievement of sustainable development in the UK." A Community Strategy has been prepared for South Cambridgeshire to meet the following three objectives:

- Allow communities to articulate their aspirations, needs and priorities;
- Co-ordinate the actions of the Council, and of the public, voluntary, community and private sector organisations that operate locally;
- Focus and shape existing and future activity of those organisations so that they effectively meet community needs and aspirations.

1.15 The Community Strategy has four key components:

- A long-term vision for the area focusing on the outcomes that are to be achieved;
- An action plan identifying shorter-term priorities and activities that will contribute to the achievement of long-term outcomes;
- A shared commitment to implement the action plan and proposals for doing so;
- Arrangements for monitoring the implementation of the action plan and for periodically reviewing the community strategy.

1.16 The Strategy is the result of a partnership between the district and county councils, working with the health services, the police, parish councils, the business and voluntary sector. These groups have come together in the South Cambridgeshire Strategic Partnership to produce the Community Strategy. The Strategic Partnership will continue to develop a joint approach to the important issues, whenever possible, and will oversee the delivery of the Strategy. The Local Development Framework will be important in securing those parts of the Community Strategy which involve the development or use of land and buildings.

CORNERSTONE OF SUSTAINABILITY

1.17 The LDF aims to improve the overall quality of life for residents of South Cambridgeshire in a way which will also benefit future generations. Taking a sustainable approach to economic, social and environmental issues will be at the heart of the plan and will be closely related to the national strategy for sustainable development which has four objectives:

1. Social progress which recognises the needs of everyone;
2. Effective protection and enhancement of the environment;
3. Prudent use of natural resources; and

4. Maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth and employment.
- 1.18 European Directive 2001/42/EC requires an 'environmental assessment' of plans and programmes prepared by public authorities that are likely to have a significant effect upon the environment. This process is commonly known as 'strategic environmental assessment' (SEA), and covers relevant plans and programmes whose formal preparation begins after 21 July 2004. Among the documents to which this requirement will apply are land use plans that cover a wide area, such as the LDF.
- 1.19 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of all emerging Development Plan Documents and Supplementary Planning Documents. As the draft guidance explaining this requirement makes clear, SA and SEA are similar processes that involve a comparable series of steps. If there is a difference between them, it lies in the fact that SEA focuses on environmental effects whereas SA is concerned with the full range of environmental, social and economic matters.
- 1.20 A Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report has been prepared, and been the subject of public participation. This highlights economic, social and environmental issues relevant to the area, and objectives to test the plan against. A Sustainability Report, incorporating an 'Environmental Report' has been prepared to accompany this Plan.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- 1.21 South Cambridgeshire District Council will prepare a Statement of Community Involvement. Production is proposed to begin mid 2006. Consistent with Government guidance it will set out how the District Council intends to involve the community in the preparation of Local Development Documents. In the meantime, the plan will be tested against the minimum requirements of the Town & Country Planning (Local Government) (England) Regulations 2004, although the Council has already gone beyond these minimum standards during the plan preparation process to this point.
- 1.22 Consultation with the community on the future planning of South Cambridgeshire began at the end of 2001 with the publication of an Issues Report seeking views on 60 issues covering strategy, the future of the Green Belt, housing, employment, shopping, transport, sports, open space and recreation, environment and conservation, environmental standards and the proposed new town. 3,019 response forms were received by the District Council and have been taken into account in preparing the Preferred Options papers.
- 1.23 During Autumn 2003, a number of workshops took place which included representatives of the communities most affected by the major development proposals for the Cambridge Southern Fringe and the new town of

Northstowe. The outcome of those workshops were taken into account in the preparation of the Preferred Options Reports.

- 1.24 A further workshop was held in January 2005 jointly with Cambridge City Council, on the Cambridge East proposals as part of the production process to assist the Councils in deciding the policy approaches for the Area Action Plan.

STATUTORY BODIES CONSULTATION

- 1.25 The Council carried out an initial consultation with statutory bodies, as required under the new system of plan making, to ensure that it was aware at an early stage of any programmes and plans that would affect the LDF. This took place between 14th April and 12th May 2004 under 'jumping the gun' procedures. The responses received were taken into account in the preparation of the Preferred Options Reports.

THE PREFERRED OPTIONS REPORTS

- 1.26 ~~Formal p~~Public participation on preferred options gave people the opportunity to comment on how the local planning authority should approach the preparation of a particular development plan document. 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 / PPSs, or have been tested historically and have worked well in past Development Plans, and are rolled forward. ~~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.~~ The Preferred Options Reports were published in October 2004 and were subject to a six-week long public participation period, during which over 5,500 representations were received.
- 1.27 The representations to the Preferred Options were considered at a series of meetings of Council between January and March 2005. The decisions made at these Council meetings have guided the preparation of ~~the pre-submission public participation~~ Draft LDF documents. 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~~ Plan Documents.

~~PRE-SUBMISSION TO SECRETARY OF STATE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION~~

- 1.28 The ~~pre-submission draft~~ LDF ~~submitted to the Secretary of State in June 2005~~ consists of the following documents:

- Core Strategy, Development Control Policies and Site Specific Policies Development Plan Document (DPD).
- Cambridge East Area Action Plan (AAP) (being prepared jointly with Cambridge City Council).
- Cambridge Southern Fringe AAP.
- Northstowe AAP.

1.29 In addition to the Draft LDF documents, the following supporting documents have also been produced, and ~~will be submitted to~~ support the LDF documents:

- Urban Capacity Study;
- Recreation Study: Audit and Assessment of Need for Outdoor Playspace; and Informal Open Space in South Cambridgeshire;
- Strategic Flood Risk Assessment;
- Rural Centres Preferred Options Report;
- Housing Needs Survey;
- Research into Key Worker and Affordable Housing in the Cambridge Area;
- ~~Statement of compliance, which will indicate how the Council has addressed the main issues raised in the representations received;~~
- Final Sustainability Appraisal, incorporating the 'Environmental Report' and Sustainability Scoping Report.

THE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS

- 1.30 As part of the ~~pre-submission~~ public participation process, the LDF is now being published for public consultation, providing the opportunity for individuals and organisations to consider the policies and proposals that are put forward.
- 1.31 Representations in support or objecting to the documents are invited during a six-week period running from 17th June to 29th July 2005.
- 1.32 Wherever possible, representations should be made on the Council's website (www.scambs.gov.uk) via the interactive form. This will help to speed up the process of registering representations.
- 1.33 Alternatively representations may be made in writing using the appropriate form and sent to the Council as follows:

Director of Development Services
South Cambridgeshire District Council
South Cambridgeshire Hall
Cambourne Business Park
Cambourne
Cambridge
CB3 6EA

- 1.34 The Council must receive representations by noon on ~~XX-XXXX~~ 29th July 2005. In addition to the interactive form, copies of the form are available to download from the website, from the District Council's offices at Cambourne and in Cambridge, and from public libraries in the District.
- 1.35 The representations received will be considered by the Council and taken into account in finalising the draft Development Plan Documents that will be submitted to the Secretary of State in early 2006. At that time there will be a 6 week period during which representations can be made on the submitted documents.
- 1.36 The new legislation also allows for a further six-week consultation on any alternative sites put forward by objectors. ~~This further period of consultation is programmed for Autumn 2005.~~ There will then be an Independent Examination, ~~which is anticipated will be held in early 2006,~~ conducted by an Inspector appointed by the Planning Inspectorate to consider the "soundness" of the plan and objections received during both of the consultation periods, i.e. on the draft plan and objection sites. This independent Inspector will subsequently produce a report which may include changes to the plan to meet objections and other matters. These changes will be binding on the Council who could then proceed to statutory adoption. ~~It is anticipated that the Inspector's Report will be received in Autumn 2006 and the Council will adopt the LDF in late 2006 / early 2007.~~