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15 June 2011

To: Councillor Tim Wotherspoon, Portfolio Holder

Trisha Bear
Lynda Harford
Tumi Hawkins
Clayton Hudson

Mike Mason

Bunty Waters

Opposition Spokesman
Opposition Spokesman
Opposition Spokesman
Scrutiny and Overview Committee
Monitor
Scrutiny and Overview Committee
Monitor
Scrutiny and Overview Committee
Monitor

Dear Sir / Madam

You are invited to attend the next meeting of **NORTHSTOWE AND NEW COMMUNITIES PORTFOLIO HOLDER'S MEETING**, which will be held in **JEAVONS ROOM, FIRST FLOOR** at South Cambridgeshire Hall on **THURSDAY, 23 JUNE 2011** at **2.00 p.m.**

Yours faithfully
JEAN HUNTER
Chief Executive

Requests for a large print agenda must be received at least 48 hours before the meeting.

AGENDA

	PAGES
PROCEDURAL ITEMS	
1. Declarations of Interest	
2. Minutes of Previous Meetings	1 - 8
The Portfolio Holder is asked to sign the minutes of the following meetings as correct records:	
• Northstowe Portfolio Holder meeting, 13 April 2011	
• New Communities Portfolio Holder meeting, 19 May 2011	
DECISION ITEMS	
3. Government consultation on draft PPS Planning for Traveller Sites	9 - 22
4. Government consultation on relaxation of planning rules for change of use from commercial to residential	23 - 38
5. Performance Measures 2011-12	39 - 42

INFORMATION ITEMS

6. **Financial Monitoring Report 2010-11 - Final** **43 - 48**

STANDING ITEMS

7. **Forward Plan** **49 - 50**

8. **Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Northstowe and New Communities Portfolio Holder has been scheduled for Tuesday 20 September 2011, starting at 2.00pm.

OUR VISION

- We will make South Cambridgeshire a safe and healthy place where residents are proud to live and where there will be opportunities for employment, enterprise and world-leading innovation.
- We will be a listening Council, providing a voice for rural life and first-class services accessible to all.

OUR VALUES

We will demonstrate our corporate values in all our actions. These are:

- Trust
- Mutual respect
- A commitment to improving services
- Customer service

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SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Northstowe Portfolio Holder's Meeting held on
Wednesday, 13 April 2011 at 2.00 p.m.

Portfolio Holder: Tim Wotherspoon

Councillors in attendance:

Scrutiny and Overview Committee monitors: Bunty Waters

Also in attendance: Lynda Harford and Alex Riley

Officers:

Patrick Adams	Accounts Assistant
Edward Durrant	Senior Planning Officer
John Garnham	Principal Accountant (General Fund and Projects)
Tracy Mann	Development Officer
Jo Mills	Corporate Manager, Planning and New Communities

30. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

31. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 March 2011 were agreed as a correct record subject to the following amendments:

- In the first sentence of Minute 24, the date was amended to 16 December 2010.
- In the first sentence of Minute 25, the last word "Holder" was removed.
- In the first sentence of the second paragraph of Minute 27 the phrase "three by three group" was amended to "three plus three group".
- In the first sentence under the heading "Uttons Drove drainage works" the words "Councillor Mason" were amended to read "A Councillor, other than the Portfolio Holder,".

The comments from Councillor Mason that had been circulated before the meeting regarding Uttons Drove were noted.

32. SERVICE PLANS 2011/12: FINAL

Councillor Wotherspoon stated that he had no concerns regarding the Northstowe elements of the two Service Plans.

Councillor Wotherspoon endorsed the Communications section of the Community & Customer Services Service Plan 2011/12 and the Northstowe element of the Planning and New Communities Service Plan.

33. STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER QUARTERLY REPORTS 2010/11: END OF YEAR

The Principal Accountant (General Fund and Projects) presented this report which invited the Northstowe Portfolio Holder to review and approve the Strategic Risk Register. It was noted that the Register was reviewed quarterly and this report had been due to go to the previous Portfolio Holder meeting in March which was cancelled. The Principal

Accountant (General Fund and Projects) explained that amendments made by the Executive Management Team in February were highlighted in the report.

Lack of development progress

It was noted that this authority was partly reliant on the County Council to provide some controls / assurances; liaison would continue with the County Council on this issue.

Welfare reform

It was recognised that this risk might have to be re-evaluated once the effects of the Government's reforms became apparent.

Alternative scoring matrix

Councillor Alex Riley suggested an alternative scoring system to the matrix shown in Appendix B of the report, where instead of both impact and likelihood being scored 1-5, likelihood could be expressed as a percentage and impact scored in thousands of pounds. Councillor Wotherspoon welcomed discussion on an alternative scoring system but concluded that the current system was fit for the purpose of deciding which risks were above the tolerance line and so merited special attention. Nevertheless he instructed officers to consider the merits of an alternative matrix on the basis proposed by Councillor Riley.

The Northstowe Portfolio Holder

AGREED The Strategic Risk Register and Matrix.

34. NORTHSTOWE UPDATE

The Corporate Manager (Planning and New Communities) introduced this report which updated the Portfolio Holder on progress being made with the Northstowe Joint Promoters, on improvements to the A14 and on the proposed demolition of former airfield buildings.

Demolition of airfield buildings

There had been no complaints regarding the proposed phased removal of a number of the former RAF Oakington buildings and structures. It was noted that English Heritage had recommended that none of the buildings on site should be listed.

A14 Improvements

Concerns were raised regarding the adequacy of the plans to increase the capacity of the A14 with variable speed limits and traffic lights on slip roads following the Government's decision not to fund the proposed substantial improvements. Councillor Riley expressed concern on how the 1,500 homes that could be constructed without the A14 upgrade would be delivered and in which developments.

Plan for Phase 1

Concerns were expressed that construction planned in Phase 1 could be agreed to without any guarantee that the promised infrastructure improvements would also be delivered. It was hoped that a secondary school would be constructed as part of Phase 1.

Consultation with local members

It was suggested that local councillors be invited to attend meetings with partners on Northstowe as observers, as these were currently only attended by the Council's executive members. This would improve communication as local Councillors would be able to inform their residents with first-hand knowledge, instead of having to rely on a secondary source. If necessary the Chairman of these meetings would be able to draw on

the local knowledge of the observers present. It was noted that there was broad agreement amongst executive and non-executive Councillors on how Northstowe should be developed. Councillor Wotherspoon explained that such an arrangement would need the agreement of the Council's partners and he agreed to explore this option further.

Consultation with developers

The Corporate Manager (Planning and New Communities) stated that there had been little progress on Northstowe for the last two years and this explained why the Council had not pressed for a response from the developers to correspondence from Peter Studdert. She added that it had been agreed jointly that the Partnering Agreement between Gallagher and HCA should be extended to include the District and County Council.

It was noted that the location of Northstowe town centre had not yet been agreed.

Councillor Wotherspoon **NOTED** the report.

35. RAMPTON DRIFT RETROFIT SCHEME

The Development Officer presented this report, which updated the Northstowe Portfolio Holder on the progress being made on the project.

It was noted that 13 homeowners were participating in the project and a facebook page had been set up to allow residents to comment on the process. A formal launch event had been scheduled for 25 June and thermal images would be taken, with the agreement of the homeowners, before the work took place.

Councillor Wotherspoon expressed his pride in the project and **NOTED** the report.

36. SUPPLY CHAIN RISKS

The Principal Accountant (General Fund and Projects) presented this report summarising the main points raised in the risk management briefing given to Councillors on 28 March by Tilden Watson of Zurich Risk Engineering. It was noted that Cabinet and Corporate Governance Committee members had attended the briefing.

Councillor Wotherspoon **NOTED** the report.

37. FORWARD PLAN

Councillor Wotherspoon **NOTED** that there was no Forward Plan for 2011/12.

38. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Thursday 26 May at 10am.

The Meeting ended at 4.00 p.m.

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SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the New Communities Portfolio Holder's Meeting held on
Thursday, 19 May 2011 at 11.15 a.m.

Portfolio Holder: David Bard

Councillors in attendance:

Scrutiny and Overview Committee monitors and Opposition spokesmen: Bridget Smith

Opposition spokesmen: Lynda Harford

Also in attendance: Nick Wright

Officers:

Jane Green	Head of New Communities
Richard Hales	Team Leader (Communities)
Keith Miles	Planning Policy Manager
Jo Mills	Corporate Manager, Planning and New Communities
Jennifer Nuttycombe	Planning Policy Officer
Ian Senior	Democratic Services Officer

58. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor Sebastian Kindersley was unable to attend the meeting as he had intended to do.

59. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Bridget Smith declared a personal interest as a former teacher at Gamlingay Village College. Her husband was currently a Governor at the school.

60. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The New Communities Portfolio Holder accepted, as correct records, the minutes of the meetings held on 8 March 2011 and 31 March 2011.

61. FEN DRAYTON: LAND SETTLEMENT ASSOCIATION (LSA) SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT (SPD)

The New Communities Portfolio Holder considered a report summarising the results of further discussions relating to the classification of buildings at 54 Park Lane and 33 Cootes Lane, and seeking adoption of the Fen Drayton Former Land Settlement Association (LSA) Estate Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).

The Portfolio Holder noted that, once adopted, the SPD would form part of the Local Development Framework and be a material consideration when determining planning applications.

The New Communities Portfolio Holder considered an email from David Mead (Partners in Planning) acting on behalf of the landowner of 54 Park Lane, commenting on the officer

conclusions and recommendations in relation to the building at 54 Park Lane.

Councillor Nick Wright (a local Member) thanked officers for their recommendation that the converted water tank at 33 Cootes Lane be classified as eligible. However, he had misgivings about the recommendation that the building at 54 Park Lane be classified as non-eligible. Councillor Wright based such concern on the perception of fairness, adding that it appeared as though the landowner of 54 Park Lane had been penalised for tidying up his holding even though the land could easily be brought back into agricultural use.

The New Communities Portfolio Holder acknowledged this concern but highlighted that the SPD needed to take a consistent approach and that any case for an exception to the approach would more properly be considered as part of any future planning applications.

The New Communities Portfolio Holder:

1. **agreed** the classification of building 97 at 54 Park Lane as non-eligible and the classification of the converted water tank at 33 Cootes Lane as eligible; and
2. **agreed** the adoption of the Fen Drayton Former LSA Estate SPD as included in Appendix 2 to the report.

62. GAMLINGAY: EDUCATIONAL PROVISION

The New Communities Portfolio Holder considered a report seeking his formal response to Cambridgeshire County Council's consultation on the future of Gamlingay Village College.

He stressed that South Cambridgeshire District Council's principal concern related to the established dual-use policy, and the Village College's value to the local community as a whole. Educational matters were the responsibility of Cambridgeshire County Council as local Education Authority.

Councillor Bridget Smith (a local Member) outlined the factors giving rise to the current consultation exercise, and commented on the differences between the Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire educational structures. She urged the Portfolio Holder to support Cambridgeshire County Council.

Councillor Nick Wright also expressed concern concerns and said the main consideration must be to develop facilities that would benefit those living in and around Gamlingay.

Those present discussed a number of alternative options for improving the situation. The Planning Policy Manager said that the robustness of bus routes should be a major consideration.

Emphasising South Cambridgeshire District Council's principal interest in protecting and developing the community aspect of Gamlingay Village College, the New Communities Portfolio Holder **agreed** that the District Council's response to consultation by Cambridgeshire County Council on the future of Gamlingay Village College should be as follows

1. Retain the current three-tier structure of Gamlingay First School and Gamlingay Village College, feeding into Stratton Upper School, in Biggleswade.
2. Establish very close working links between the First School and the Village College for the primary year groups; and with Stratton Upper for the secondary year groups.
3. Develop formal federation proposals, aimed at improving educational performance and cost-effectiveness, including the possibility of a hard federation with Stratton Upper School.

63. CAMBRIDGE FRINGES ALLOTMENT POLICY

The New Communities Portfolio Holder considered a report seeking his endorsement of

the Cambridge Allotments Management Policy, which should be applied to the growth sites along the Southern and North West Fringes of Cambridge.

The New Communities Portfolio Holder **endorsed** the Cambridge Allotments Management Policy.

64. MINERALS & WASTE DEVELOPMENT PLAN - RESULTS OF INQUIRY

The New communities Portfolio Holder **noted** a report outlining the outcome of a recent examination into the Core Strategy (CS) of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Development Plan Document (MWDPD). This report highlighted how South Cambridgeshire district might be affected by the changes to the Core Strategy as a result of the inspector's report.

65. SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS & PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2010/11: END OF YEAR

The New Communities Portfolio Holder received and noted a report on progress made by the New Communities and Planning Policy teams for the period from 1 January 2011 to 31 March 2011.

66. FORWARD PLAN

Those present noted the Forward Plan attached to the agenda.

Councillor David Bard announced that he had decided to stand down as New Communities Portfolio Holder. Councillor Bridget paid tribute to Councillor Bard and, in particular, to the inclusive manner in which he had conducted his meetings. Councillor Lynda Harford endorsed these sentiments.

67. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Those present noted the scheduled date of the next meeting, subject to any changes requested by the new Portfolio Holder.

The Meeting ended at 12.15 p.m.

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SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Northstowe and New Communities Portfolio Holder 23 June 2011
AUTHOR/S: Executive Director (Operational Services) / Corporate Manager (Planning and New Communities)

RESPONDING TO GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION ON NEW PLANNING POLICY STATEMENT: PLANNING FOR TRAVELLER SITES**Purpose**

1. To agree the Council's response to the Government's consultation on a draft new Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 'Planning for Travellers'.

This is not a key decision because it is responding to a consultation
It was first published in the April 2011 Forward Plan.

Recommendations

2. That the Portfolio Holder responds to the consultation with the comments set out in appendix 1 of this report.

Reasons for Recommendations

3. This is an important consultation as the new PPS will set out the Government's Gypsy and Traveller planning policies, which will affect planning for Gypsy and Traveller sites in South Cambridgeshire, both in terms of the emerging Development Plan Document and decisions on planning applications.

Background

4. The Government is carrying out consultation on a Planning Policy Statement which would replace the current planning circulars regarding Gypsy and Traveller Sites (01/2006) and Travelling Showpeople sites (04/2007). It will become a material planning consideration. It will be incorporated into the new National Planning Policy Statement in due course.
5. Alongside the PPS, other measures to be introduced are the inclusion of Gypsy and Traveller sites in the New Homes Bonus scheme, and the resumption of the Gypsy and Traveller site grant funding from April 2011. The Government also intends to limit the opportunities for retrospective planning applications, in relation to any form of development, and provide stronger enforcement powers for local planning authorities to tackle breaches of planning control.
6. The draft PPS states that, 'Preparation of Development Plans should not be delayed to take the policies in this statement into account'. Following consultation the Government intends to adopt the final PPS in Summer 2011.

Considerations

South Cambridgeshire Gypsy and Traveller DPD

7. The proposed policy changes in the draft PPS have significant implications for planning for Gypsy and Traveller site provision in the District, and preparation of the Gypsy and Traveller Development Plan Document. At the New Communities Portfolio Holder Meeting in December, it was decided to review the way forward on the Gypsy and Traveller DPD in light of changing Government policy. Whilst the current document is only a consultation draft, the final PPS is likely to be published prior to the publication of the draft Gypsy and Traveller DPD and submission to the Secretary of State, and will therefore be a consideration when assessing the soundness of the plan.

Summary of Issues and Implications

8. The table below provides a summary of the key proposals of the draft PPS, and a summary of the proposed response. The consultation is framed around 13 questions on which the government is seeking views. A full detailed response is proposed in appendix 1 of this report.

Key Issue in Draft PPS	Implications and Summary of Proposed Response
The PPS proposes to provide 'Light Touch policy', consolidation and streamlining previous guidance, putting provision into the hands of elected local Councils.	It is difficult to describe this set of detailed policies as light touch guidance, as they would create very specific requirements for planning and plan making.
The key message of the draft PPS is to make planning for travellers more consistent with planning for housing. The consistency theme includes clarifying traveller sites as inappropriate development in the green belt, and stating that windfall sites away from settlements should be strictly limited whilst acknowledging that some rural areas may be suitable for some forms of travellers sites reflecting local considerations.	In general the move to make planning for travellers sites more consistent with the approach to planning for housing is supported, including clarifying the status of traveller sites as inappropriate development in the green belt, and that windfall sites in open countryside away from settlements should be strictly limited whilst acknowledging that some rural areas may be suitable for some forms of travellers sites reflecting local considerations. This is broadly consistent with the approach taken in the emerging Gypsy and Traveller DPD. It also noted that stronger enforcement powers are being addressed separately, and this is also supported.
Local Planning Authorities must set pitch targets through development plans which address the likely permanent and transit site accommodation needs in light of historical demand. This must be based on robust evidence, but it doesn't prescribe to Local Authorities what type and volume of evidence is required.	The draft PPS provides more flexibility in identifying what evidence is required to establish the local need for Gypsy and Traveler sites. The Draft PPS and supporting document do not provide any reasoning or justification for the addition of the phrase 'in light of historical demand'. Whilst this provides flexibility for local interpretation, it is unclear what interpretation will be found sound by inspectors through the development plan examination process.

	<p>The increased flexibility is supported. However, in reality, if evidence is robust it will make little difference, and it is likely that areas with the highest existing provision will continue to identify the highest levels of need whilst those areas who have previously made no provision will identify low levels of need.</p>
<p>Local planning authorities must work collaboratively to develop fair and effective strategies to meet need. This is part of the Localism Bill's Duty to Cooperate.</p>	<p>The Council is supportive of more permanent sites being planned and delivered in order to meet established needs appropriately. However, it is important the responsibility of providing sites is not focused on only a small number of local authorities, particularly those where extensive provision has already been made.</p> <p>Localism's Duty to Cooperate is highlighted as the solution for areas with an existing high level of provision where as a result a high level of need has been identified. Identifying suitable deliverable sites is not an easy process and there is a risk of a few authorities being overburdened unless surrounding authorities take responsibility for meeting some of the need. This was the approach taken in the East of England Plan following detailed consideration through independent examination. However, in this area surrounding authorities with a much lower level of existing provision have previously expressed a view that need should only be met where it is identified.</p> <p>Not enough is known about the process, and what will count as constructive engagement, to understand whether this will offer a successful solution, but there is a continued danger of an even distribution of sites, with significant contribution in particular areas, which will in itself generate future demand for further pitches. The Council does not want its plan making delayed with protracted negotiations, but does want a balanced approach to be taken on a wider than district basis in a similar way as other land uses. The draft PPS should be more flexible to allow plan making to reflect local circumstances, allowing a plan to be found sound where the Council has planned a level of provision that is deliverable and appropriate to local circumstances.</p>
<p>Development Plans would be required to set out policies and strategies for delivering locally set targets, including identifying specific sites that will enable</p>	<p>The proposed requirement does not reflect the difficulties in identifying suitable, available and deliverable sites in comparison with bricks and mortar housing. The draft PPS needs to recognise that there may be circumstances</p>

continuous delivery of sites for at least 15 years	where it is not possible to allocate sufficient sites to meet the full target, particularly where there is a high level of need. In such circumstances a windfall policy may be an appropriate solution.
Local Planning Authorities to maintain a five year land supply of pitches, in a similar way to how bricks and mortar housing is planned. If a local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of traveller pitches/plots, the draft policy asks them to consider favourably applications for the grant of a temporary permission.	The draft PPS appears to offer blanket support in favour of granting temporary planning permission if a five-year land supply of deliverable sites cannot be identified. This is not appropriate. The Local Planning Authority must be able to consider the circumstances of the application, whether it is suitable in environmental terms, and whether the application would contribute towards meeting a genuine need which justifies a temporary consent.
Local Planning Authorities to develop criteria to guide the location of sites, considering issues such as access to schools and healthcare, and avoiding areas at high risk of flooding.	The Council has already developed criteria through the emerging Gypsy and Traveller Development Plan Document, which are generally consistent with the policies in the draft PPS.
Green Belt	An approach consistent with PPG2 is supported. However, there may be circumstances where site allocations in the Green Belt are justified by exceptional local circumstances, and it should be possible for these to remain in the Green Belt.
Transitional arrangements give local planning authorities six months to put in place their five-year land supply before the consequences of not having done so come into force.	Given the time it takes to put development plans in place this proposal is unworkable.
Major developments	It is disappointing that the policy does not acknowledge the opportunities provided by major development sites to deliver new site provision, and that this may be a route available to Local Planning Authorities, which would allow provision to be made through mainstream developments as part of the masterplanning of the development.
The definitions of Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople for planning purposes are the same as those currently contained in Circular 01/2006 and Circular 04/2007.	The proposal to maintain the existing definitions is supported.
Definition of a pitch: 'a pitch on a Gypsy and Traveller site'.	The definition adds little. It is an important definition given it forms the basis of the entire PPS, and therefore it is surprising it is not defined.
Asks local planning authorities to	The Council already strives to do this, and will

pay particular attention to early and effective community engagement with both settled and traveller communities when formulating their plans and determining planning applications.	continue to do so.
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Options

9. The Council has the option not to respond, but given the importance of the issue to South Cambridgeshire this is not recommended. The response proposed takes account of the Council's position on planning for travellers gained over many years of experience on both dealing with planning applications and plan making.

Implications

10. Key implications of the PPS relate to the impact on how the Council plans for Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople sites. Following the consultation the Government anticipates adopting the final Planning Policy Statement in Summer 2011.

11.	Financial	No direct cost in responding to consultation.
	Legal	Implications for planning and plan making are described in the main report.
	Staffing	No additional staff cost responding to consultation.
	Risk Management	Implications for planning and plan making are described in the main report.
	Equality and Diversity	Our Gypsy and Traveller population is our largest ethnic group. The Planning Policy Statement will impact on how we plan for future site provision.
	Equality Impact Assessment completed	No The consultation document includes an Equalities Impact Assessment of the draft Planning Policy Statement.
	Climate Change	No specific impact.

Consultations

12. A range of officers have been consulted on the preparation of this report, including Development Control, Senior Lawyer, the Travellers Team Leader. The consultation was also highlighted view the Weekly Bulletin, no comments were received from members.

Consultation with Children and Young People

13. None.

Effect on Strategic Aims

14. The Planning Policy Statement once adopted by the Government will impact on how the Council plans for Gypsy and Traveller sites, including the Gypsy and Traveller DPD.

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

Planning for Travellers Sites Consultation:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/travellerssitesconsultation>

Contact Officer: Jonathan Dixon – Principal Planning Policy Officer
Telephone: (01954) 713194

Appendix A

PROPOSED RESPONSE TO DRAFT PPS: PLANNING FOR TRAVELLER SITES

1. South Cambridgeshire District Council was anticipating 'light touch guidance' following the Government's announcements made in August 2010, however, it is difficult to describe this set of detailed policies as light touch guidance.
2. In general the move to make planning for travellers sites more consistent with the approach to planning for housing is supported, including clarifying the status of traveller sites as inappropriate development in the green belt, and that windfall sites in open countryside away from settlements should be strictly limited, whilst acknowledging that some rural areas may be suitable for some forms of travellers sites reflecting local considerations. It also noted that stronger enforcement powers are being addressed separately, and this is also supported.
3. The Council is supportive of more permanent sites being planned and delivered in order to meet established needs appropriately, to provide certainty to both the traveller and the settled community. However, it is important the responsibility of providing sites is not focused on only a small number of local authorities, particularly those where extensive provision has already been made.
4. South Cambridgeshire has already granted permission for over 200 permanent pitches, and consent for around 70 temporary pitches pending consideration through the plan making process. Localism's Duty to Cooperate is highlighted as the solution for areas with an existing high level of provision where as a result a high level of need has been identified. Identifying suitable deliverable sites is not an easy process and there is a risk of a few authorities being overburdened unless surrounding authorities take responsibility for meeting some of the need. This was the approach taken in the East of England Plan following detailed consideration through independent examination. However, in this area surrounding authorities with a much lower level of existing provision have previously expressed a view that need should only be met where it is identified. Not enough is known about the process, and what will count as constructive engagement, to understand whether this will offer a successful solution, but there is a continued danger of an even distribution of sites, with significant contribution in particular areas, which will in itself generate future demand for further pitches. The Council does not want its plan making delayed with protracted negotiations, but does want a balanced and regional approach to be taken on a wider than district basis in a similar way as other land uses. The draft PPS should be more flexible to allow plan making to reflect local circumstances, allowing a plan to be found sound where the Council has planned a level of provision that is deliverable and appropriate to local circumstances.
5. South Cambridgeshire District Council has carried out an extensive site search working with other public bodies, and two public 'call for sites' to identify potential site options for plan making. We have extensive constraints such as flood plain and green belt, and the Council has limited land holdings. Identifying a large number of available, suitable and deliverable sites, sufficient to meet the high level of need, is extremely challenging. Greater flexibility is needed in the draft PPS to acknowledge that local circumstances may mean a plan could be sound relying partly on a windfall allowance.
6. The draft PPS appears to offer blanket support in favour of granting temporary planning permission if a five-year land supply of sites cannot be identified. This is not appropriate. The Local Planning Authority must be able to consider the

circumstances of the application, whether it is suitable in environmental terms, and whether the application would contribute towards meeting a genuine local need which justifies a temporary consent.

7. Whilst the document refers to development plans not being delayed to reflect the guidance, the specific and wide ranging requirements of the PPS would have clear consequences to how South Cambridgeshire could proceed with plan making. The Council wants to complete its Gypsy and Traveller Development Plan Document to deliver sites to meet local needs, but the specific nature of the PPS could actually make this more challenging. Greater flexibility to plan according to local circumstances is required.

Q1: Do you agree that the current definitions of “gypsies and travellers” and “travelling showpeople” should be retained in the new policy?

8. Draft Response: Yes. The retention of the existing definitions is supported. They provide a clear definition relating to land use requirements.

Q2: Do you support the proposal to remove the specific reference to Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessments in the new policy and instead refer to a “robust evidence base”?

9. Draft Response: Yes. Flexibility to plan according to local circumstances and evidence is supported. However, in reality, if evidence is robust it will make little difference, and it is likely that areas with the highest existing provision will continue to identify the highest levels of need whilst those areas who have previously made no provision will identify low levels of need.
10. Local ‘Housing’ Authorities will still be required to assess the accommodation needs of travellers, as required by the Housing Act 2004. Such assessments are expensive and time consuming to produce and may be able to be adapted to consider both issues, or at least to be sufficiently clear of the basis of the need identified that any specific planning evidence can supplement rather than replace the Needs Assessment carried out for Housing purposes.

Q3: Do you agree that where need has been identified local planning authorities should set targets for the provision of sites in their local planning policies?

11. Draft Response: Yes. Treating travellers and the settled community equally means that setting targets through plan making is appropriate. South Cambridgeshire District Council therefore has no objection to a requirement to set a target, as long as there is flexibility regarding how it is set, and flexibility to allow provision to be planned for appropriately according to local circumstances. See also Question 4.

Q4: Do you think that local planning authorities should plan for “local need in the context of historical demand”?

12. Draft Response: No. Need should be identified on a sound basis. The Draft PPS and supporting document do not provide any reasoning or justification for the addition of the phrase ‘in light of historical demand’. Whilst this provides flexibility for local interpretation, it is unclear what interpretation will be found sound by inspectors through the development plan examination process. Further explanation would assist the plan making process if it is retained.

13. There is inconsistency between the wording of the Draft PPS and the wording of this question. The Draft PPS states that 'Local Planning Authorities should set pitch and plot targets which address the likely permanent and transit site accommodation needs of travellers in the light of historical demand.' It does not use the words 'local need' as in the question. The flexible nature of the definition in the draft PPS is supported, but it should be clearly established that the word 'local' does not mean that need can only be met within the district where it has been identified, as there may be circumstances where a more distributed pattern of meeting need is the most appropriate solution, in a similar way to planning housing market areas for the settled community.
14. The draft PPS includes the objective, 'Ensure that local planning authorities, working collaboratively, develop fair and effective strategies to meet need through the identification of land for sites.' South Cambridgeshire has continually strived to plan appropriately for Gypsy and Traveller site provision. It has granted planning permission for more private pitches than any other district in the region. The Council successfully argued through the regional planning process that need should be met fairly across a wider area, rather than concentrating sites into a few areas where significant provision has already been made.
15. Annex B (page 63) of the consultation document (justifying the draft PPS) describes a situation which has occurred in South Cambridgeshire, '*Local authorities that have a history of providing sites often report that travellers move from neighbouring authorities to their areas because they are more likely to find a site. This means that the need increases in those areas that have provided sites and decreases in those areas that have not and they will be liable to provide yet more sites. This could lead to some local authorities being unfairly overburdened in terms of provision unless neighbouring authorities work with them.*'
16. The solution proposed by the Government to replace regional plan making is the 'Duty to Cooperate', part of the Localism Bill, which will require Local Planning Authorities to engage constructively on the preparation of local plans. Recent revisions to the Bill have strengthened the requirements to cooperate, and it is understood this will be tested at the examination. However, it is currently unclear how the duty to cooperate will operate in practice, and what will count as constructive engagement. The risk of Local Authorities not working together is noted in the risk assessment accompanying the draft PPS, but it is given little weight. Some Districts adjoining South Cambridgeshire have previously supported a 'need where it arises approach' to planning for travellers, objecting to the East of England Plan which included the approach which was found sound of distributing site provision.
17. Under the approach proposed by the draft PPS, South Cambridgeshire would be required to plan for the whole of the need identified from within the district unless it is able to demonstrate that an element of the need will be met in other areas. Applying the duty to cooperate could introduce delay to the plan making process whilst this take place, and it is unclear how inspectors would treat an unwillingness to cooperate by adjoining districts in assessing the soundness of a DPD. Greater flexibility would allow the Council to plan a level of provision that is deliverable and appropriate reflecting local circumstances and how the need identified in the evidence base should be met.
18. The following underlined words should be added to Policy B Paragraph 9a, '*..set out their policies and strategies for delivering their locally set targets, including identifying specific sites where available suitable and deliverable land can be identified, that will*

enable continuous delivery of sites for at least 15 years from the date of adoption, identifying a windfall policy if appropriate.'

Q5: Do you agree with the proposal to require local planning authorities to plan for a five-year supply of traveller pitches/plots?

19. Draft Response: No. A requirement to maintain a five-year land supply does not reflect the difficulties in identifying suitable, available and deliverable sites in comparison with bricks and mortar housing, or provide the flexibility to plan appropriately.
20. There may be material considerations that mean that it may not be possible to identify a five year land supply of identified available suitable and deliverable sites. For example, in South Cambridgeshire there are environmental constraints, and large areas of Green Belt. Council owned land is in limited supply. Despite two 'call for sites' consultations very few suitable sites have been suggested. This contrasts to planning for bricks and mortar housing when a range of sites are typically put forward by developers which are available and deliverable.
21. There may be justified local considerations that mean that it may not be possible to identify a 15 year supply of available suitable and deliverable sites through a development plan in a particular district. PPS3 'Housing' acknowledges that local and sub-regional evidence of the availability of suitable land is a factor which could influence the level of housing requirement included in development plans. This is not reflected in the draft traveller PPS, which does not acknowledge that there may be reasons why a full level of need cannot be met.
22. An appropriate solution could be allocating suitable sites that have been identified, and utilise a windfall policy to meet the remaining need. This could be demonstrated as a sound approach through evidence to a planning inspector through the plan making process. The windfall policy should be allowed to consider whether the site proposal would meet the need identified in the evidence base that lead to the target. However, the draft PPS currently offers no flexibility to reflect such local circumstances.
23. Another element of PPS3 providing greater flexibility has also been excluded is the caveat that, 'Where it is not possible to identify specific sites for years 11-15, broad locations for future growth should be indicated.' A similar situation could reasonable occur when planning traveller sites, therefore the same caveat should be included. For example South Cambridgeshire may need to identify broad locations within the latter period of its Gypsy and Traveller DPD, where review of its wider LDF will provide opportunities for new sites during the plan period e.g. through major development proposals.
24. Most Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Need Assessments have been able to assess need based on evidence for a five year period. They provide much less certainty over longer term timescales, as it is difficult to predict trends such as movements to and from bricks and mortar and how future provision will be affected by site delivery patterns. Evidence in years 10 to 15 is likely to be based on projections and assumed rates, and is likely to be superseded by more accurate evidence as a result of on-going monitoring. This adds to the case for allowing greater flexibility for later years of the plan period, or addressed as necessary through plan review as for other residential development.

Q6: Do you agree that the proposed wording of Policy E (in the draft policy) should be included to ensure consistency with Planning Policy Guidance 2: Green Belts?

25. Draft Response: Yes. An approach consistent with PPG2 is supported. This would clarify that any applications for sites on unallocated land in the Green Belt would be departure from national policy and the development plan.
26. However, there may be circumstances where site allocations in the Green Belt are justified by exceptional local circumstances, and it should be possible for these to remain in the Green Belt. This could reduce pressure for alternative uses which may have a higher land value, and avoid creating isolated islands in the Green Belt which would create an undesirable precedent. If the developments are permitted in exceptional circumstances they could remain in the Green Belt rather than remove the designation. There are many circumstances where Green Belt washes over built development. Flexibility to apply this approach should be included.

Q7: Do you agree with the general principle of aligning planning policy on traveller sites more closely with that for other forms of housing?

27. Draft Response: Yes. In principle this is supported, however, there are a number of practical differences when delivering traveller sites that need to be taken into account, which have been highlighted elsewhere in this response. In addition, there are a number of inconsistencies with PPS3 which have also been highlighted.
28. Policy H should be reordered to provide greater clarity. Paragraph 22 should be the starting point, and therefore it should be the first element of the policy. The other elements should follow on from this. The addition of paragraph 22 does provide greater clarity regarding development in the countryside, and is welcome.

Q8: Do you think the new emphasis on local planning authorities consulting with both settled and the traveller communities when formulating their plans and determining individual planning applications will reduce tensions between these communities?

29. Draft Response: Potentially. The emphasis on effective consultation is supported. South Cambridgeshire District Council already strives to engage both the settled and traveller communities when planning new sites.
30. As part of the consultation for the South Cambridgeshire Gypsy and Traveller Development Plan Document, carried out in Summer 2009, a wide range of events were held to promote participation, including road shows across the district. Specific consultation material and assistance was provided to travellers in order to ensure they had the same opportunity to put their views forward as those of the settled community. As part of the Councils Gypsy and Traveller Community Strategy, wider measures have been taken to improve community relations and break down barriers. The plan includes a detailed action plan which is being implemented.

Q9: Do you agree with the proposal in the transitional arrangements policy (paragraph 26 of the draft policy) that asks local planning authorities to “consider favourably” planning applications for the grant of temporary permission if they cannot demonstrate an up-to-date five-year supply of

deliverable traveller sites to ensure consistency with Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing?

31. Draft Response: No. The statement appears to offer blanket support in favour of granting temporary planning permission, which is not appropriate. The Local Planning Authority must be able to consider the circumstances of the application, and whether the application would contribute towards meeting a genuine need for a site in the district. The draft PPS should state that consideration for temporary planning consent should be made in the context of draft Policy H (determining Planning Applications for Traveller Sites). This would allow the local planning authority to consider issues including the existing level of provision and need for sites, availability of alternative accommodation, and the personal circumstances of the applicant.
32. There are differences between the approach in the draft PPS and the approach to housing in 'PPS3' which it purports to reflect. PPS3 does require the Council to consider applications favourably when a five year land supply cannot be demonstrated, but it cross references to a paragraph referring to other considerations (paragraph 69) which are important considerations, such as considering the 'suitability of a site for housing, including its environmental sustainability'. For a traveller site to warrant temporary consent, a site would have to be suitable in planning terms. For example, it would be inappropriate to grant consent if it would cause harm to the environment even if it was temporary, or it would not provide a safe residential environment. This should be highlighted in the PPS, in a similar way to how the requirement to consider favourably is caveated in PPS3.
33. In addition, given that a five-year land supply would be judged against a target established through an adopted development plan, it is not clear how a judgment could be as to whether a five-year land supply is or is not available before a plan is adopted.

Q10: Under the transitional arrangements, do you think that six months is the right time local planning authorities should be given to put in place their five-year land supply before the consequences of not having done so come into force?

34. Draft Response: No. The draft PPS is specific that the five-year land supply should be identified through plan making. Given the time and resources required to deliver a Development Plan Document six-months is an unachievable timescale. Unless existing plans are at the examination stage, they will not be adopted in that period. It is therefore unclear what the purpose of the transitional period is and why six months has been selected, as this is not a reasonable time period to put plans in place.

Q11: Do you have any other comments on the transitional arrangements policy?

35. It should be clarified, in a similar way to the current circular, that the granting of a temporary planning permission does not prejudice the determination of any future applications for full permission for use of the land as a caravan site. There may be circumstances where a temporary planning permission is granted and a site is not suitable for permanent accommodation.

Q12: Are there any other ways in which the policy can be made clearer, shorter or more accessible?

36. The format is succinct comprising a series of policies, which does provide focus on key issues. However, it is difficult to see how it could be described as light touch as had been described by Government, given the specific nature of the policies.

Other Matters

37. There are a number of detailed points in the draft PPS which require clarification, as set out below:
38. Policy B paragraph 9 d states, 'allow for provision to be made for other family members who may not themselves physically move their own accommodation onto the site.' It is not clear what this statement is asking Local Planning Authorities to do.
39. Policy B paragraph 9 f states, 'relate the number of pitches or plots to the circumstances of the specific size and location of the site and the surrounding populations size and density.' This statement is not clear. If it is a statement that a site should be suitable in scale to its location, this should be made clear. It is helpful to make clear that size of site, relative to the location and surrounding communities, is a material planning consideration.
40. Policy B paragraph 10 states that, 'Criteria should be set to guide land supply allocations where there is identified need. Where there is no identified need, criteria-based policies should be included to provide a basis for decisions in case applications nevertheless come forward.' Local Planning Authorities should have the flexibility to prepare criteria based policies even if they are preparing criteria to guide site allocations. There may be particular issues relating to windfall applications that warrant additional criteria, in order to clarify which areas are considered suitable, and issues that must be addressed by planning applications.
41. Policy F states that where possible Local Planning Authorities should plan for traveller sites suitable for mixed residential and business uses. However, this approach is not consistent with the existing Government guidance regarding Design of Gypsy and Traveller Sites, which states at paragraph 49, 'Gypsy and Traveller sites are essentially residential and those living there are entitled to a peaceful and enjoyable environment'. It also does not reflect the experience of South Cambridgeshire, where the vast majority of sites are residential in nature, with occupants working off site. Whilst some sites may have business elements that are specifically consented, sites can be planned with a residential in character and impact. There is a danger that the draft PPS could be presenting all traveller sites as sudo-employment sites, and there should be flexibility to plan according to local circumstances and actual needs.
42. Policy G Major Development projects – The current policy acknowledges some major development proposals could require temporary or permanent relocation of traveller sites. It is disappointing that the policy does not acknowledge the opportunities provided by major development sites to deliver new site provision, and that this may be a route available to Local Planning Authorities, which would allow provision to be made through mainstream developments as part of the masterplanning of the development. For example, the East of England Plan identified the potential for major developments to contribute towards provision, due to their potential to address viability and deliverability issues.
43. Policy H paragraph 20e states that Local Planning Authorities '...should determine applications for sites from any travellers, not just those with local connections.' The

statement is not necessary, as Local Planning Authorities are required to determine all valid planning applications.

44. Policy H (paragraph 21) is specific that phasing the delivery of the identified allocated sites could be a material consideration when determining a planning application for an allocated site that has come forward early. However, sites coming forward as windfalls could equally undermine plan objectives, or mean that sites in a development plan are no longer required. Circular 01/2006 states that 'Local planning authorities should be able to release sites for development sequentially, with sites identified in DPDs being used before windfall sites'. The need to consider the impact on the development plan strategy should be highlighted as a material consideration when considering windfall site applications.
45. Annex A Definition of a Pitch – The definition given is 'a pitch on a Gypsy and Traveller site'. The definition adds little. It is an important definition given it forms the basis of the entire PPS, and therefore it is surprising it is not defined.
46. An appropriate definition would be, 'A parcel of land of such area and form as is sufficient to accommodate a single Gypsy or Traveller household together with their residential or domestic necessities as shall typically comprise a principal mobile home or stationary caravan, touring caravan, any visiting touring caravan, family and visitors' vehicles, day-room and other domestic belongings as are reasonably associated with such residential occupation by Gypsies or Travellers.'

Q13. Do you think that the proposals in this draft statement will have a differential impact, either positive or negative, on people because of age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation? If so, how in your view should we respond? We are particularly interested in any impacts on (Romany) Gypsies and (Irish) Travellers and welcome the views of organisations and individuals with specific relevant expertise.

47. It is noted that the assessment has been subject to a full Equalities Impact Assessment. The issues highlighted elsewhere in the Council's response highlight further considerations, in particular how the duty to cooperate will be enacted, to enable the best solution across a wider area to site provision.

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Northstowe and New Communities Portfolio Holder

23 June 2011

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

RESPONDING TO GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION: RELAXATION OF PLANNING RULES FOR CHANGE OF USE FROM COMMERCIAL TO RESIDENTIAL

Purpose

1. To agree the Council's response to the Government's consultation on proposals regarding relaxation of planning rules for change of use from commercial (B use classes) to residential (C3 use classes).

This is not a key decision because it is responding to a consultation. It was first published in the April 2011 Forward Plan.

Recommendations

2. That the Portfolio Holder agrees the response to the consultation with the comments set out in appendix 1 of this report.

Reasons for Recommendations

3. This is an important consultation, as the proposed changes will affect planning in South Cambridgeshire for commercial and residential development, and the control the Council has over changes of use, which could have significant implications for the district.

Background

4. The Use Classes Order (UCO) classifies certain types of use of buildings (and in some cases land) into broad categories. Changes of use within a use class are not classed as development and do not need planning permission. The General Permitted Development Order (GPDO) currently grants automatic planning permission for certain changes between use classes. B1 (Offices and light industry) uses can change to B8 (storage/distribution/), and vice versa, without a need for planning permission, whilst B2 (industry) can transfer to either B1 or B8 (subject to a limit on the size of building).
5. The consultation seeks views on the Government's proposals to amend the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (as amended) to grant permitted development rights to changes of use from commercial to residential use i.e. to allow such changes of use without the need for planning applications.
6. The key proposal is to introduce permitted development rights to allow changes of use from B1 (business – offices, research and development premises and light industry) to C3 (dwelling houses) to happen freely without the need for planning applications. However, they are also consulting on wider potential changes, to allow changes of use from B2 (general industrial) and B8 (storage and distribution) to C3

(dwelling houses) as permitted development. In addition views are sought on the potential to extend current permitted development rights to allow conversion to more than one flat above a shop, rather than it being restricted to a single flat.

7. Planning permission for any additional work to the exterior of an existing building would still be required although the principal of the change of use will already have been permitted by the proposed changes to the Use Classes Order.
8. Key reasons given by the Government to support the changes are:
 - The Government wants to encourage developers to bring redundant commercial premises back into use and at the same time deliver more housing.
 - The undersupply of housing land compared to employment land, evidenced by difference in their respective land values. This is likely to be in significant part due to the planning system.
 - There are higher vacancy rates for employment land compared to housing.
 - Removing the burden and costs involved in change of use should encourage developers to bring forward more proposals.
 - B1 uses are most likely to be in suitable locations for housing and in many cases lend themselves to conversion without the need for extensive external works.
9. DCLG is also encouraging local planning authorities to use Local Development Orders under their existing powers to grant other permitted development rights to speed up the development process and encourage local growth. This report focuses on the proposed changes to the Use Classes Order but will refer to Local Development Orders as an alternative approach.

Considerations

10. Notwithstanding the fact that a number of safeguards are proposed to address issues of potential conflict between land uses that could be created it is considered that the proposals, if enacted, could have significant adverse implications for the economy and sustainability of South Cambridgeshire. Whilst South Cambridgeshire is a resilient District, we did lose 5,000 jobs in the recession. The changes may, if enacted, have a serious adverse impact on places such as South Cambridgeshire that will not be balanced by the benefits of any additional housing they may bring to new and also existing residents. This seems at odds with the Government's stated aim of local communities receiving the benefits of new development to help encourage the provision of more housing.
11. The consultation poses 11 questions on the proposals, and a further 8 questions on the accompanying impact assessment. A proposed response is included in appendix 1 of this report.
12. In summary, it is recommended to object to the proposals to allow changes of use from B1 businesses uses to C3 dwellings for the following reasons:

- The removal of planning controls over change of use will reduce the ability to control development to achieve sustainable development.
 - It would undermine the adopted South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Policies which were put in place to protect village employment. Assisting provision of local jobs is a Council priority.
 - It could result in unsustainable patterns of development such as larger scale housing growth in infill villages, conversion of former agricultural buildings that have a business use into dwellings, or developments that are poorly served by services and infrastructure.
 - It could result in residential development in inappropriate locations, such as next to existing industry. This could create a poor residential environment, resulting in complaints under environmental health legislation, which could harm the ability to existing businesses to continue to function.
 - It could harm existing businesses, as the proposed change would not just apply to vacant buildings. Owners could seek residential value, and could seek to evict operating businesses.
 - It could be used to seek change of use of land rather than simply conversion. For example convert a building into flats, establishing a residential use, and then demolish and replace with traditional housing.
 - If change of use to residential from offices could be brought forward without planning permission, Local Planning Authorities would lose the ability to address infrastructure requirements created from a residential use through section 106 agreement or Community Infrastructure Levy, including necessary supporting community services and facilities. There would also be no requirement for affordable housing.
 - Change of use of buildings has the potential to significantly impact on the character and viability of a settlement. There would be no opportunity for local consideration of proposals.
13. Widening the change to encompass B2 and B8 would amplify the effects identified above. Whilst B1 uses are may be compatible with a residential area, with B2 and B8 there is a risk of allowing the introduction of fundamentally conflicting land uses. Conversion of one unit to residential that is close to B2 or B8 uses would create a conflict and potentially may threaten valuable employment uses in the longer term owing to current Environmental Health legislation.
14. Proposals to mitigate risks in the document are not sufficient to outweigh the potential harm. These are the imposition of conditions, which could be applied through a self certification process or a system of prior approval. A list of conditions would be unlikely to be able to address all the potential site-specific issues that could arise. A review procedure based on self-certification carries with it significant risk to public safety. It is not clear what the recourse would be if a development cause harm to a neighbour or breached conditions. A prior approval process, where the applicant gains consent if the council does not respond to the developer's notification within a certain time period, would require the Council to scrutinise the complex development proposal of a residential use, within a rigid timescale, in a similar function to a planning application, but there is no mention of a fee for this process.

15. Article 4 directions, which can be applied to restrict permitted development rights in specific areas, are proposed as the solution if Local Authorities have specific reasons to retain planning controls. However, they are normally applied to small and specific areas. The cost of implementing Article 4 directions would be significant, particularly if they were needed over a large number of areas, as they would be if the Councils existing policy approach of protecting village employment was maintained.
16. Local Development Orders are a tool already available to Local Planning Authorities to extend permitted development rights in certain areas where consistent with LDF policies. This offers a more focused response where there would be specific benefits to an area by bringing vacant commercial buildings back into use.

Options

17. Alternative options would be for the Council not to respond, but given the potential impact of the proposals this is not recommended. A further alternative would be to support the proposals, but given the potential issues that have been identified this is also not recommended.

Implications

18. Financial	Potential impacts are highlighted in the report. A particular concern could be infrastructure impacts that could result without the funding being secured from planning obligations and the requirement for the Council to respond to notifications from developers without receiving any income.
Legal	Potential impacts are highlighted in the report.
Staffing	Potential impact as a result of reduced planning applications, but a prior approval scheme could also require staffing to implement. Conversion of employment buildings to residential is currently approximately 0.2% of applications the Council receives annually (2009 2 applications, 2010 4 applications). That number could increase with landowners wishing to maximise land value (so prior notifications could increase if that system is implemented).
Risk Management	A number of potential risks have been highlighted in the draft response.
Equality and Diversity	There could be inequitable impacts on people who do not have a car and end up living in housing on industrial estates or areas far from local facilities and infrastructure.
Equality Impact Assessment completed	No. The Government have not carried out an assessment, and are seeking views on potential impacts that should be considered.
Climate Change	Potential impacts through residential development in unsustainable locations, and loss of village employment.

Consultations

19. The report has been prepared with input from a range of officers, including the Head of Planning, and the Development Officer (Economic Development). In addition, the Portfolio holder for Sustainability, Planning and Climate Change, and the Portfolio Holder for Economic Development have been consulted.

20. Cllr Wright, Portfolio holder for Economic Development, requested it is noted that he has a prejudicial interest concerning agricultural buildings at Marshalls Farm, Conington. He provided the following comments. "I would prefer the Council to be expressing comments rather than objections. There is no doubt that there are districts in the Country where these proposals will be of great benefit in providing growth and housing. However your comments made in relation to SCDC are fair. We have a tried and tested core strategy in place that addresses most of the time the balance between sustainable housing and employment. This is reflected by our growth, our low unemployment and surveys proving SCDC to be one best places in England to live. We do not have many of the redundant industrial buildings but we do have a housing shortage. For us I see that Local Development Orders might be a safer route to ensure that any housing brought forward is sustainable. I am concerned that this relaxation would result in the loss employment buildings, because the pressure for more houses is enormous. This could lead to the slowing of growth in our district. However we do not want buildings empty and our policies and new plan need to accommodate the flexibility to provide what our residents require."
21. Cllr Topping, Portfolio Holder for Sustainability, Planning and Climate Change, broadly supports the proposed response. He commented that landowners would be looking to build commercially under this relaxed regime so it wouldn't help the delivery of more affordable housing.
22. An email to members seeking views on the report in advance was circulated on 1st June. Cllr Hawkins submitted views that the Government's proposed changes should be supported, subject to appropriate checks and balances being put in place. In addition, the potential impact on existing businesses of developers who might wish to convert buildings that are still in use, and force out businesses to achieve their aim would need to be addressed. In particular in rural areas where there is a shortage of housing, and where the developer can get more for the land in question if used as residential. This would again be detrimental to those communities who by their very nature have few business units anyway.

Consultation with Children and Young People

23. None.

Effect on Strategic Aims

24. The change could impact on Aim D 'We are committed to assisting provision for local jobs for you and your family'. The Council will be less able to regulate the potential loss of employment buildings, or manage the supply of employment land.
25. It would also impact on AIM E, 'We are committed to providing a voice for rural life.' Opportunities to protect villages would be reduced. It will also reduce the Council's ability to achieve planning gain from development proposals.

Conclusions / Summary

26. The report has highlighted a range of potentially significant impacts of the Government's proposed changes to the use class order. It is recommended that the Council object to these proposals, as they would reduce the ability to control development to achieve sustainable development.

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

The consultation document 'Relaxation of Planning Rules for change of use from Commercial to Residential' is available to view on the Communities and Local Government website:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/relaxationchangeconsultation>

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Appendix 1

RESPONDING TO GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION: RELAXATION OF PLANNING RULES FOR CHANGE OF USE FROM COMMERCIAL TO RESIDENTIAL

Question A:

Do you support the principle of the Government's proposal to grant permitted development rights to change use from B1 (business) to C3 (dwelling houses) subject to effective measures being put in place to mitigate the risk of homes being built in unsuitable locations?

1. No.
2. A central element of the planning system is to deliver sustainable development. As highlighted in PPS1, good planning through a plan-led system ensures that we get the right development, in the right place and at the right time. The removal of planning controls over change of use will reduce the ability to plan with any certainty in development plans or to control development to achieve these objectives, and therefore to achieve sustainable development.

Undermine the Established Strategy

3. The adopted South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework seeks to achieve sustainable development, with policies to direct development to appropriate locations. The development strategy for the district, as a key part of the Cambridge Sub Region growth area, is economically led, with significant new housing proposed close to existing and forecast jobs. That housing is concentrated into large developments in the most sustainable locations, and is a move away from the previous strategy of housing development distributed around villages in this rural area because this proved to be an unsustainable form of development, particularly in terms of accessibility to local jobs by sustainable forms of transport and the presence of adequate levels of services, facilities and jobs in local villages.
4. However, the objective is to make our villages as sustainable as possible. Employment sites within villages are a scarce resource. With significant levels of out commuting to Cambridge from many villages across South Cambridgeshire, the Council considers it important to retain village employment, to provide opportunities for people to both live and work in these settlements. Adopted planning policies, which have been subject to public consultation, and found sound by Planning Inspectors, seek to protect employment sites in villages, unless it is demonstrated on a case by case basis that there it is inappropriate for employment use to continue, including taking into account market demand. Changes to the use class order would undermine this policy, meaning that the loss of this resource could no longer be controlled, with potential consequential harm to sustainability objectives.
5. The Council already sees a trickle of village employment land changing to residential uses, at around 1.7 hectares a year, through planning applications where issues have been fully considered, including testing that marketing has taken place to ensure there are no suitable alternative businesses to accommodate the premises. This trickle could become a flood.
6. There is a particular risk in the South Cambs context that employment buildings within village centres, mixed use areas or residential areas would be lost to

residential. Whilst this would provide more housing, it could impact on sustainability. Businesses could be forced out to rural business parks, increasing commuting levels further. There would be less local employment opportunities in villages, which is a key factor in assessing the sustainability of villages and determining the appropriate level of housing development that is appropriate. Loss of businesses should not be taken lightly in the context of the current market conditions and whilst there is a need for new housing, the Council sees supporting local business as a key corporate priority.

7. The proposed change threatens the Council's ability to manage the supply of employment land, and to provide for the current and future needs of local businesses. It could result in losses of employment land at a time when the country is only slowly coming out of recession, and when the market picks up, will need more land allocations to offset the losses.

No Account of the Location

8. The consultation makes the assumption that the location of B1 uses is always likely to be appropriate for residential. However, not all B1 is in locations appropriate for residential use, and may also for example be a buffer between residential areas and other incompatible uses. Dwellings are a more environmentally sensitive land use than business uses. The consultation appears to rely on the market to avoid inappropriate locations, but it could equally result in low cost housing being developed providing poor residential environments.
9. Allowing conversion into a dwelling could actually harm existing businesses. For example, if a B1 use adjoins B2 uses, where noise or other environmental issues that were previously not an issue, installing a residential use could create conflict. The new residential occupiers could object to these impacts, and seek to restrict the operations of the existing businesses. This could deter investment if they fear encroachment by residential development. It could also make it harder for businesses to find locations for potential bad neighbour uses.
10. It must also be noted that there are B1 uses in rural areas, such as conversions of agricultural buildings. Government policy has previously focused on the reuse of redundant buildings for employment uses, to enhance the rural economy. Such buildings could freely be turned into dwellings, losing the benefit of his policy, and creating unsustainable patterns of development, contrary to normal planning policies restricting housing development in the countryside.
11. There could be an impact on the character of village and town high streets if businesses are converted to residential properties. Whilst listed buildings are proposed to be excluded, the potential impacts on Conservation Areas are not explored in the consultation document. Building works required for use as residential could harm traditional frontages, which could have an impact on the character Conservation Areas. Even in circumstances where planning permission for building work is not required, the change in character to a residential environment could be significant, for example, the appearance of curtains in a traditional building frontage, the lack of amenity space or storage for wheelie bins, or impact of additional car parking.

Land Value Differences

12. One of the key reasonings behind the Government's proposal is the difference in values between residential and employment land, and that in most cases housing

land has a significantly greater value than that for commercial uses. The difference in land values enables businesses to find affordable premises. It could affect business start up if available premises are reduced and costs increased.

13. The consultation also focuses on the opportunities to bring vacant buildings back into use. However, the change would also apply to non-vacant buildings, and there is significant potential that land and property owners may take up the opportunity to realise residential land values. This could impact on existing businesses where they are in leased or rented premises, as they could end up being evicted, and forced to go through an expensive relocation process, with consequential impact on the recovery of the economy.
14. As the easiest buildings to convert are likely to be small offices within settlements, the impact is likely to be greatest on small businesses.

Infrastructure Costs

15. If change of use to residential from offices could be brought forward without planning permission, Local Planning Authorities would lose the ability to address infrastructure requirements created from a residential use through section 106 agreement or Community Infrastructure Levy. This would mean impacts on transport, education, open space would all be increased, but without the funding for improvements being secured, or for other provision normally secured through section 106 obligations to support a development such as community provision. There would also be no requirement to make provision for affordable housing which is a key aspect of housing provision in an area such as South Cambs. This could incentivise conversion and loss of employment land over other planned development or regeneration, as costs would be significantly lower.

Vacancy rates

16. The consultation document highlights that vacancy rates for employment land are higher than residential, but this does not take account of where the vacant buildings are located.
17. The Employment Land Review undertaken for Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire did find a significant oversupply of employment land in South Cambridgeshire. That oversupply is primarily in relatively remote business parks as at I Q Cambridge (previously known as the Cambridge Research Park located on the A10, 5 miles north of Cambridge) where there are vacant buildings and large areas of still undeveloped land. These would not be sustainable locations for residential development unless they are large enough to develop freestanding new communities with a full range of local services and facilities, including schools and (ironically) local employment, which is unlikely but it is also of concern that significant scale of residential development could come forward outside the plan making system and in the absence of a properly planned approach, potentially at odds with the development strategy for the area.

Result in demolition and rebuild as well as conversion

18. Establishing a use in a building could be as simple as converting part of a building into a flat. Having established a residential use the building could then be demolished and planning permission for housing sought where a residential use has been established. Given the differential in the value between residential and commercial development, there is the potential for a significant loss of employment

buildings which could include losing existing firms which are leasing buildings and the landlord decides to realise the asset or where firms take the increased value of their assets and relocate their businesses. It could also have a significant impact on the sustainability of a settlement if there is a large increase in dwellings at the same time as a significant loss in employment.

Local input

19. The current system allows the public and stakeholders to give their views on applications for change of use, so that issues can be fully considered, through the democratic processes of local authorities. Change of use of buildings has the potential to significantly impact on the character and viability of a settlement, and it is therefore reasonable that local people can have the opportunity to consider proposals on their merits.
20. The consultation document mentions that discussions could occur between a developer and a neighbourhood on a voluntary basis, to address local concerns or issues. However, developers are primarily profit driven. It is not appropriate to rely on a voluntary approach to secure necessary infrastructure contributions that would properly be requirements on other residential development coming through the planning system.

Mitigation Measures

21. The mitigation measures proposed are not sufficient to outweigh the potential harm of this policy change, as detailed later in this response.

Question B:

Do you support the principle of granting permitted development rights to change use from B2 (general industrial) and B8 (storage & distribution) to C3 (dwelling houses) subject to effective measures being put in place to mitigate the risk of homes being built in unsuitable locations?

22. No.
23. Widening the change to encompass B2 and B8 would amplify the effects identified above.
24. The approach would undermine a planned approach to employment land provision, and could lead to homes being developed in unsustainable locations. Further to this, and taking account the mitigation and prior approval measures being considered, there is a risk of allowing the introduction of fundamentally conflicting land uses. B1, B2 and B8 can all generally comfortably co-exist next to one another with little conflict. Conversion of one unit to residential that is close to B2 or B8 uses would create a conflict and potentially may threaten valuable employment uses in the longer term owing to current Environmental Health legislation as outlined in response to Question A.

Question C

Do you agree that these proposals should also include a provision which allows land to revert to its previous use within five years of a change?

25. No.

26. Particularly in the case of B2 or B8, the location may no longer be compatible with employment uses if a residential environment has been established.

Question D

Do you think it would be appropriate to extend the current permitted development rights outlined here to allow for more than one flat? If so should there be an upper limit?

27. No.
28. Whilst enabling a single flat above a shop allows potentially efficient use of redundant space with a relatively minor impact, allowing more significant scales of development should be considered through the planning application process, so that impacts can be assessed and appropriately mitigated, and infrastructure requirements considered.

Question E

Do you agree that we have identified the full range of possible issues which might emerge as a result of these proposals? Are you aware of any further impacts that may need to be taken into account? Please give details

29. No.
30. The following issues need to be considered:
- There would be no provision for affordable housing as a result of these developments, which is a key aspect of housing need in many areas, including South Cambridgeshire.
 - There will be unplanned growth with no assessment of infrastructure needs, and no mechanism to obtain funding through section 106 or CIL, which is likely to result in poor quality developments and inadequate provision of supporting infrastructure.
 - There is no assessment of the potential negative impacts on business and employment, such as the potential loss of certain types of premises, or the impact on businesses potentially being forced to relocate, which is of concern to the Council under any market conditions, but is of particular concern in a time of challenging market conditions where supporting business is key to economic recovery.
 - The proposal could impact on development of new communities or regeneration projects, which are likely to have higher costs in comparison to conversions. Developers could therefore focus on the lower cost opportunities instead.
 - It would increase the burdens on viable industry by creating insecurity and uncertainty, as employment sites could be affected by residential conversions occurring on adjoining sites or by landowners deciding to terminate leases to maximise land value.
 - There is a reliance on the market delivering good quality dwellings in suitable locations. In reality the driver in house buying is price. If dwellings are sold at a significantly cheaper level they are likely to sell even if they are a poorer quality of dwelling and even if developments come forward that may be suitable, they will not make appropriate infrastructure and other contributions (as above).

- It will undermine development plan policies which protect important employment land resources, to take a strategic approach to sustainable development.
- The potential for it to be used to change the use of buildings before demolition and replacement with traditional housing, resulting in the potential loss of larger scale employment land.
- Potential transport impacts of housing development occurring piecemeal in employment developments, both in terms of traffic safety, and access to alternative modes such as public transport. This could have an impact on carbon emissions.
- See also Question F and the notification process and impact on Council funding and resources.
- Impact on the localism agenda, reducing ability of communities to input to planning decisions or shape their neighbourhoods.

Question F

Do you think there is a requirement for mitigation of potential adverse impacts arising from these proposals and for which potential mitigations do you think the potential benefits are likely to exceed the potential costs.

31. Yes. Adverse impacts must be mitigated, but proposals in the consultation would not prevent the potential for significant adverse impacts.

Conditions and Prior Approval

32. A standard list of conditions attached to the permitted development right would need to be significant and specific, but would be unlikely to be able to address all the potential site specific issues that could arise. Evidence of this is the range of issues and consultees that are addressed when considering a planning application.
33. A self-certification route carries with it significant risk to public safety. It is not clear what the recourse would be if a development caused harm to a neighbour or breached conditions.
34. The current prior approval process means the applicant gains consent if the council does not respond to the developer's application within a certain time period, and most commonly relates to telecommunication or agricultural developments. Such a system would require the Council to scrutinise the more complex development proposal of a residential use, within a rigid timescale, to ensure conditions are met. This would appear a similar function to a planning application, but there is no mention of a fee for this process. This has significant implications for Council resources, particularly in times of restricted public sector funding and the need to secure income through the planning process.

Thresholds and Exclusions

35. Applying a size threshold would not address all the potential adverse impacts identified above.

36. Potential exclusions listed in the document, such as listed buildings and contaminated land, do not go far enough to ensure potential impacts would be addressed. It would also be difficult to apply and enforce. Using contamination as the example, how is the mechanism established? Consideration often requires specific on site investigations that would normally be required as part of a planning application and considered through that robust process.

Article 4 directions

37. Article 4 directions, which can be applied to restrict permitted development rights in specific areas, do not offer an appropriate solution. They are normally applied to small and specific areas. The resources to identify locations where Article 4 Directions may be needed and the cost of implementing Article 4 directions would be significant, particularly if they were needed over a large number of areas, as they would be for South Cambridgeshire if the Council's existing policy approach of protecting village employment was maintained.

Question G

Can you identify any further mitigation options that could be used?

38. No. The Council is firmly of the view that the range and scale of potential significant adverse impacts cannot be appropriately mitigated.

Question H

How, if at all, do you think any of the mitigation options could best be deployed

39. The Council does not believe that it is possible for suitable mitigation measures to be deployed.

Question I

What is your view on whether the reduced compensation provisions associated with the use of article 4 directions contained within section 189 of the Planning Act 2008 should or should not be applied? Please give your reasons

40. It would increase financial losses if Local Authorities were forced down this route.

Question J

Do you consider there is any justification for considering a national policy to allow change of use from C to certain B use classes? Please give your reasons

41. No.
42. The question appears unrelated to the wider consultation, and has not been given the same level of scrutiny in the document.
43. Most of the same risks identified regarding the potential to change use from employment to residential would apply with regard to change from residential to employment. It could lead to an unplanned loss of dwellings in inappropriate locations for business uses, and risk harm to residential amenity. This would undermine the purposes of a plan led system in the same way as the current proposals.

Question K

Are there any further comments or suggestions you wish to make

44. The proposals are so far removed from anything the Council could support that there are no further comments or suggestions.

Impact Assessment Questionnaire

Question 1:

Do you think that the impact assessment broadly captures the types and levels of costs and benefits associated with the policy options?

45. No.
46. The impact assessment does not fully assess the benefits of the current system. A number of the potential costs identified above have not been fully considered.

Question 2:

Are there any significant costs and benefits that we've omitted?

47. Yes to both.
48. Costs to existing businesses (particularly small business), costs to local authorities, and costs to local communities identified above have not been adequately assessed.
49. Cost savings have been exaggerated. For example, the analysis notes the average cost of a small residential development is £25,100. However, it does not make clear whether this is based on a conversion of business to residential. Much of this cost would be likely to be technical documents, to demonstrate how site issues could be addressed, such as flood risk assessments. Costs will still apply if operational development is required rather than simple change of use.

Question 3:

Are the key assumptions used in the analysis in the impact assessment realistic?

50. There are a number of judgments that do not appear to be based on evidence. These include the following:
- If there was complete freedom to change between uses, over time, supply would simply adjust to the price differences resulting in more land for housing (page 44);
 - Making it easier for land to be used for its most valuable purpose will reduce transaction costs and increase economic efficiency (page 45);
 - The removal of planning restrictions will help to encourage the most efficient use of land (page 45);
 - The risk of unsustainable development is considered "minimal" as locations such as industrial sites are unlikely to represent an attractive option for housing providers (albeit that they could still be attractive to property speculators) (page 62);

Question 4:

Are there any significant risks or unintended consequences we have not identified?

51. Yes.
52. These have been addressed in response to previous questions.

Question 5:

Do you agree that the impact assessment reflects the main impacts that particular sectors and groups are likely to experience as a result of the policy options?

53. No.

54. Impacts have been addressed in response to previous questions.

Question 6:

Do you think there are any groups disproportionately affected?

55. House buyers will be faced with potentially sub-standard housing that has not been sufficiently planned in relation to required infrastructure.

56. Small businesses could face a loss of suitable premises.

Question 7:

Do you think this proposal will have any impacts, either positive or negative, in relation to any of the following characteristics – Disability, Gender Reassignment, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race, Religion or belief, Sex, Sexual Orientation and Age?

57. There could be inequitable impacts on people who do not have a car and end up living in housing on industrial estates or areas far from local facilities and infrastructure.

Question 8:

Do you have any information on the current level of planning applications for change of use from B use classes to C3 in your local authority area which might be helpful in establishing a baseline against which to measure the impact of this policy?

58. The Council monitors employment land supply, and net change in employment land supply, through its annual monitoring report. The amount of employment land lost, and specifically the amount of land lost to residential is also monitored.

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SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Northstowe and New Communities Portfolio Holder Meeting 23 June 2011
AUTHOR/S: Executive Director Operational Services/Corporate Manager Planning and New Communities

PERFORMANCE MEASURES 2011/12**Purpose**

1. To present proposed performance measures for the Northstowe and New Communities Portfolio for 2011/12
2. This is not a key decision and has been brought to the Portfolio Holder because it sets out a set of measures proposed to monitor the performance of services reporting to the Northstowe and New Communities Portfolio Holder. It should be noted that the proposals within this report might influence future amendments to policy frameworks. It was first published in the June 2011 Forward Plan.

Recommendations

3. That the Northstowe and New Communities Portfolio Holder agree the set of performance measures in paragraphs 8 - 12.

Reasons for Recommendations

4. The performance measures contained in paragraphs 8 - 12 reflect the outcome of a review of performance measures led by the Corporate Manager, and include priorities from the Service Plan and Corporate Plan.

Background

5. Performance reports are presented to Portfolio Holder meetings every three months. The re-organisation of portfolio responsibilities combined with proposals to introduce a balanced scorecard approach towards performance management has informed this report. The balanced scorecard is being developed by the Customer and Community Services service.
6. 'Performance Management is used by officers and councillors to drive continuous improvement and increase efficiency. Performance management is also used to ensure policy decisions are being implemented and that customers are receiving the standard of service they expect at a cost that represents good value for money. More specifically, performance management is about effective management, ensuring priorities and targets are met for the benefit of the community.' (SCDC Performance Management Manual July 2010)

Considerations

7. It is proposed that the quarterly performance reports provide information in three categories:

- (a) A set of targets that measure the effectiveness of the service, that will be entered onto Corvu the Council's performance management IT system. These measures are expected to form the basis of a balanced scorecard. For Northstowe and New Communities, the proposed measures are Customer Satisfaction and the determination of major planning applications.
 - (b) Information regarding levels of activity, against targets where possible, such as amount of external funding secured as match funding for the capital grants programme and supply of ready to develop housing sites.
 - (c) Monitoring implementation of the New Communities Service Plan, including relevant priorities from the Corporate Plan.
8. The proposed targets regarding the effectiveness Northstowe and New Communities for entry into Corvu are:
- a) 75% Customer Satisfaction. Revised standard questionnaire to be produced and introduced in Autumn 2011, so that comprehensive data will be reported for Quarter 3. This is considered to be the key overarching Performance Indicator.
 - b) 60% large-scale major planning applications processed in 16 weeks. This matches the national target.
 - c) 60% small-scale major planning applications processed in 13 weeks. As above, this matches the national target.
9. It is proposed that information be provided on a quarterly or annually basis regarding the following activities that relate to the Northstowe and New Communities portfolio:
- a) Amount of external match funding secured for the Capital Grants programme (Annual)
 - b) % New homes completed on previously developed land (Annual)
 - c) Additional homes provided (reported annually in September)
 - d) Affordable homes provided (Annual)
 - e) % of schemes of over 10 homes that meet Building for Life standards
 - f) Supply of ready to develop housing sites, that is, five year supply (Annual)
 - g) Number of participants in sports and arts activities (Quarterly)
10. Measures in the Service Plan that relate to the Northstowe and New Communities portfolio are shown below. Clear targets will be developed, where appropriate, for the performance reports. It is also expected that these service improvements will support the overarching measure of increased customer satisfaction.
- (a) Review performance indicators across Planning and New Communities, and improve benchmarking – cross service action.
 - (b) Review content of web pages – cross service action.
 - (c) Review how we engage with Children and Young People, and deliver actions set out in the Children and Young Persons Plan.
 - (d) Revise s106 requirements for Northstowe
 - (e) Identify forthcoming major applications and work with parish councils to identify community requirements including Orchard Park 220 – cross service action.

- (f) Review New Communities grants as part of wider corporate review of grants, and consider opportunities for volunteering and social enterprise.
- (g) Make Public Consultation documents simpler and more direct
- (h) Produce new Local Development Framework and Gypsy and Traveller DPD – in accordance with agreed timetable
- (i) Work with County Council, Joint Promoters and other stakeholders to deliver Northstowe
- (j) Bring forward major growth sites and other major applications to meet housing need and deliver New Homes Bonus.
- (k) Support Parish Councils and neighbourhoods to take advantage of measures in the Localism Act (when it become law)
- (l) Ensure SCDC secures maximum benefit from the Department for Transport A14 study.

11. The Corporate Plan includes the following actions for the Northstowe and New Communities Portfolio:

Action B1 We will ensure appropriate design of new developments and open spaces to enhance the quality of life for older people through our planning guidance.

Action B2 We will encourage the development of existing, and the creation of new, sporting opportunities for all age groups:

- i) Maximising developer contributions towards new sporting facilities to serve developments of over ten dwellings
- ii) Working with dual-use sports centres, local clubs and partners to increase participation and signpost opportunities for funding
- iii) Working with partners to run specific events as part of the build-up to London 2012 and prepare to take advantage of the Olympic legacy for participation and economic development
- iv) Continuing to work with statutory and voluntary health and community partners to increase participation in sport and recreation

12. The performance report will include monitoring information regarding complaints and service enquiries.

13. Information on financial performance will be presented separately to Portfolio Holder meetings on a quarterly basis.

14. It is intended that, during the year, further work will be undertaken to identify performance measures that are more outcome-related and qualitative. There will also be work on benchmarking so that we can compare our effectiveness and value for money with other similar authorities. In addition, corporately there will be a review of Customer Service Standards. It is expected that revised and updated measures will be introduced for 2012/13.

Implications

15. Performance management and reporting has helps to drive continual service improvement.

16.	Financial	No direct implications
	Legal	No direct implications
	Staffing	No direct implications

Risk Management	Risks associated with poor performance are included and managed through the Planning and New Communities Risk Register.
Equality and Diversity	No direct implications.
Equality Impact Assessment completed	No EIA's are completed for specific actions and policies.
Climate Change	No direct implications

Consultations

17. Managers across Planning and New Communities, and from Policy and Performance.

Consultation with Children and Young People

18. None

Effect on Strategic Aims

19. The performance reports will include information regarding delivery of agreed corporate actions for 2011/12.

Conclusions / Summary

20. The proposed measures and activities will be regularly monitored and reports presented quarterly. This information will provide a fair and comprehensive account of progress achieved by New Communities and Planning Policy during the year.

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

New Communities Performance Report: End of Fourth Quarter 2010/11 presented to New Communities Portfolio Holder on 19 May 2011

SCDC Performance Management Manual – July 2010

Contact Officer: Jo Mills- Corporate Manager
Telephone: (01954) 713350

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Northstowe & New Communities Portfolio Holder

23 June 2011

AUTHOR/S: Executive Director (Corporate Services)

**FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT
NORTHSTOWE & NEW COMMUNITIES PORTFOLIO
FINAL REVENUE AND CAPITAL EXPENDITURE FOR 2010-11**

Purpose

1. The purpose of this report is to compare the actual revenue and capital expenditure for the Northstowe & New Communities Portfolio with the final working budget for the year ending 31 March 2011.

Recommendations

2. That the Northstowe & New Communities Portfolio Holder notes the revenue and capital expenditure for the Northstowe & New Communities Portfolio for the year ending 31 March 2011.

Reasons for Recommendations

3. The report shows an acceptable comparison between the actual revenue and capital expenditure against the working budget for the year.

Background

4. The Northstowe & New Communities Portfolio is one of the small number of changes to Cabinet made by the Leader of the Council on 23 May 2011. In terms of services that come under the remit of this portfolio, the only service under the previous Northstowe Portfolio was Communications, which now comes under the Policy & Performance Portfolio, while the only change from the services under the previous New Communities Portfolio is that Sustainability now comes under the Sustainability, Planning & Climate Change Portfolio.
5. There was one previous monitoring report to the then New Communities Portfolio Holder in 2010-11, covering expenditure up to the end of August 2010. In addition, the New Communities 2010-11 revised estimates were reported to the then portfolio holder in January 2011.
6. The format of this report is consistent with the previous monitoring report and the revised estimates report, in that it concentrates on the direct costs, which are under the control of the relevant cost centre managers, whereas the various recharges are dependent on factors that are more corporate in nature.
7. The reported figures are summarised in **Appendix A**. The working budgets against which to compare the year-end figures are the 2010-11 revised estimates, as adjusted for additional virements.
8. Grant expenditure is shown on a commitments basis to 31 March, whereas other expenditure is on an accruals basis.

Considerations

- 9. Total Direct Revenue Portfolio Expenditure: under by £25,896
The revenue net direct costs show £250,884 spent out of a budget of £276,780 (91%). The main areas of underspending are set out in paragraphs 10 to 14 below.
- 10. Community Development: under by £6,164
The underspend is mainly due to a late request for a £5,000 Community Developments Grant to fund a particular initiative, submitted to officers in March 2011, which - when assessed - did not quite fit the grant scheme criteria and was therefore rejected. [Note: This underspend has a disproportionate effect on the overall percentage spent against this budget.]
- 11. Sports Development: under by £3,901 – this is within 4% of both the original and revised 2010-11 estimates.
- 12. Arts Development: under by £2,518 – this is within 3% of both the original and revised 2010-11 estimates.
The portfolio holder has approved a rollover from 2010-11 to 2011-12 of £1,550 in respect of the Dual Use Arts Programme.
- 13. Growth Agenda: under by £5,742
The underspend is due to less use of consultants in the year than anticipated (£9,261 spent against the revised estimate of £15,000, which again has a disproportionate effect on the overall percentage spent against this budget).
- 14. Planning Policy: under by £7,571
Less expenditure was required on the Local Development Framework in the year than anticipated (£8,646 spent against the revised estimate of £15,320, which again has a disproportionate effect on the overall percentage spent against this budget).
- 15. Capital Grant Expenditure: under by £4,731
Capital grant expenditure comprises Village Sports Facility Grants, Community Facilities Grants (both of which were virtually fully allocated by the year-end) and Arts Capital Grants, of which grants of £10,250 were awarded out of the remaining budget of £14,940 at the then New Communities Portfolio Holder meeting in March 2011.
- 16. Other Capital Expenditure (River Cam Project): over by £170
This capital expenditure – while it slightly exceeded the working budget – is externally funded, which means that the small adverse variance is covered.

Implications

17. Financial	Financial implications are set out in paragraphs 9 to 16 above.
Legal, Staffing, Risk Management, Equality and Diversity	There are no Legal, Staffing, Risk Management, or Equality and Diversity implications resulting from this report.
Equality Impact Assessment completed	No Not applicable, as the report compares actual expenditure against the budget, rather than setting out a policy, strategy or procedure.
Climate Change	There are no Climate Change implications resulting from this report.

Consultations

18. The cost centre managers have been informed of the expenditure and grant details and budgets.

Consultation with Children and Young People

19. There has been no consultation with children and young people on this report.

Effect on Strategic Aims

20. The report has no effect on the strategic aims of the Council.

Conclusions / Summary

21. There was underspending of £25,896 (9%) on direct costs for this portfolio; reasons for the variances on individual budget headings are given in paragraphs 9 to 14 above.
22. There was underspending of £4,561 (2%) on the capital programme for this portfolio; reasons for the variances are given in paragraphs 15 and 16 above.

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

Budget files, grant decisions and the financial management system.

Contact Officer: John Garnham – Principal Accountant (General Fund and Projects)
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South
Cambridgeshire
District Council

Northstowe and New Communities Portfolio

APPENDIX A

Recharges removed below
Grants on commitment basis
Non-grants on payments/receipts basis

To 31/03/11 2010-11 MONTH 12

Actual 2009/10 £	Revised Estimate 2010/11 £	less central recharges £	Virement/ other y/end recharges £	Adjusted Estimate ex.recharge £	Net payments to date £	Grants committed £	Adjust- ments £	Adjusted expenditure to date £	% Spent	Variance to budget £	Additional notes to budget
<u>NORTHSTOWE & NEW COMMUNITIES PORTFOLIO</u>											
REVENUE EXPENDITURE											
184,123	104,880	(74,880)	0	30,000	19,774	4,062	0	23,836	79%	6,164	}
204,799	162,690	(62,240)	4,750	105,200	86,749	14,550	0	101,299	96%	3,901	}
164,189	129,740	(49,740)	0	80,000	77,482	0	0	77,482	97%	2,518	}
770,629	592,930	(1,178,180)	628,510	43,260	37,518	0	0	37,518	87%	5,742	}
581,560	537,500	(545,200)	26,020	18,320	10,749	0	0	10,749	59%	7,571	}
1,905,300	1,527,740	(1,910,240)	659,280	276,780	232,272	18,612	0	250,884	91%	25,896	IN HAND
(excluding recharges and year end transactions)											
CAPITAL EXPENDITURE											
99,979	100,000	0	0	100,000	99,981	99,981	0	99,981	100%	19	}
105,651	100,000	0	0	100,000	99,978	99,978	0	99,978	100%	22	}
34,026	40,000	0	0	40,000	35,310	35,310	0	35,310	88%	4,690	}
239,656	240,000	0	0	240,000	0	235,269	0	235,269	98%	4,731	IN HAND
91,342	5,080	0	0	5,080	5,250	5,250	0	5,250		(170)	see report paragraph 16
330,998	245,080	0	0	245,080	5,250	235,269	0	240,519	98%	4,561	OVERSPENT

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Forward Plan - Northstowe and New Communities Portfolio 2011-12

Portfolio Holder Meeting	Agenda Title	Key Purpose	Corporate Manager(s)	Responsible Officer(s)
20 Sept 11	Improvement Plan & Financial Performance – Q1	Monitoring	Jo Mills	Richard May / John Garnham
	Water Cycle Strategy up to 2031 - Major Growth Areas in and around Cambridge Phase 2	Note study, (adoption as evidence base to support planning decisions)	Jo Mills	Jonathan Dixon
15 Nov 11	Papworth West Central Supplementary Planning Document	Agreement to undertake consultation	Jo Mills	Caroline Hunt
	Waste Design Guide SPD	Agree response to County Council consultation	Jo Mills	Alison Talkington
25 Jan 12	Draft Service Plans 2012/13	Information	Jo Mills	Paul Howes
	Capital and Revenue Estimates 2012/13	Recommendation to Cabinet/Council	Alex Colyer	John Garnham
	Improvement Plan & Financial Performance – Q2	Monitoring	Jo Mills	Richard May / John Garnham
	LDF Annual Monitoring Report	For decision	Jo Mills	Jenny Nuttycombe
21 Feb 12	Improvement Plan & Financial Performance – Q3	Monitoring	Jo Mills	Richard May / John Garnham
17 Apr 12	Final Service Plans 2012/13	Decision	Jo Mills	Paul Howes

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