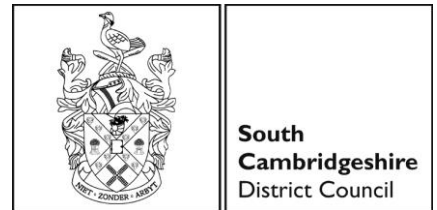


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30 October 2017

To: Councillor Robert Turner, Portfolio Holder

Anna Bradnam
Graham Cone

Philippa Hart

Bridget Smith
Ingrid Tregoing
Aidan Van de Weyer

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

Dear Sir / Madam

You are invited to attend the next meeting of **PLANNING PORTFOLIO HOLDER'S MEETING**, which will be held in **MONKFIELD ROOM, FIRST FLOOR** at South Cambridgeshire Hall on **TUESDAY, 7 NOVEMBER 2017** at **10.00 a.m.**

Yours faithfully
Beverly Agass
Chief Executive

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

AGENDA

| | PAGES |
|---|----------------|
| 1. Declarations of Interest | |
| 2. Minutes of the meeting held on 25 August 2017 | 1 - 4 |
| 3. DCLG consultation: Planning for the right homes in the right places | 5 - 28 |
| 4. Work Programme | 29 - 32 |
| 5. Date of Next Meeting | |
| The next Planning Portfolio Holder meeting has been scheduled for Monday 11 December 2017, starting at 10.00am. Meeting dates in the New year, and up to May 2019 have yet to be confirmed. | |

OUR LONG-TERM VISION

South Cambridgeshire will continue to be the best place to live, work and study in the country. Our district will demonstrate impressive and sustainable economic growth. Our residents will have a superb quality of life in an exceptionally beautiful, rural and green environment.

OUR VALUES

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

- Working Together
- Integrity
- Dynamism
- Innovation

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Agenda Item 2

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Planning Portfolio Holder's Meeting held on
Friday, 25 August 2017 at 10.00 a.m.

Portfolio Holder: Robert Turner

Councillors in attendance:

Opposition spokesmen: Anna Bradnam

Also in attendance: David Bard, Kevin Cuffley, Lynda Harford and
Tony Orgee

Officers:

| | |
|---------------|---|
| Jane Green | Head of New Communities |
| Stephen Kelly | Joint Director for Planning and Economic Development |
| David Roberts | Principal Planning Policy Officer |
| Ian Senior | Democratic Services Officer |

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In connection with Minute 5 (Uttlesford Local Plan Consultation), Councillors David Bard and Kevin Cuffley declared non-pecuniary interests because they had been present, as observers only, at a meeting of a group contesting Uttlesford District Council's draft Local Plan. Councillor David Bard also attended a meeting of parish council Chairmen along with Councillor Rolfe, Leader of Uttlesford District Council, and his senior planning officer.

In connection with Minute 7 (Heritage Guardianship Sites), Councillors David Bard and Kevin Cuffley declared non-pecuniary interests because they had been involved in various discussions relating to the Sawston Tannery Drying Shed.

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Planning Portfolio Holder signed, as a correct record, the Minutes of the meeting held on 25 August 2017, subject to the following amendment:

Minute 3 (South Cambridgeshire Local Plan - Review of Local Green Space following the Inspector's interim findings)

Deletion of the sentence "There was some debate as to where the frontage was in fact" and insertion of the text "Members noted that the frontage might be used to widen the cycle way being promoted by the Greater Cambridge Partnership. However, it would nevertheless continue to provide protection." The paragraph would thus read as follows:

"With regard to Fen Ditton, the Principal Planning Policy Officer said that a 'frontage' had value. Members noted that the frontage might be used to widen the cycle way being promoted by the Greater Cambridge Partnership. However, it would nevertheless continue to provide protection. The Planning Policy Manager assured Members that the removal of Local Green Space designation did not automatically render a site suitable for development."

3. CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE LOCAL PLAN CONSULTATION

The Planning Portfolio Holder considered a report on the draft Central Bedfordshire

District Council Local Plan (Regulation 18) consultation.

The Principal Planning Policy Officer summarised the background to the Local Plan, and highlight the main implications for South Cambridgeshire and, in particular, Gamlingay. Councillors Sebastian Kindersley and Bridget Smith had been consulted in their capacities as local Members for Gamlingay. Their concern was to mitigate any increased traffic pressure on the village, and to protect countryside views as much as possible.

Councillor Anna Bradnam emphasised the need to ensure the supply of fresh water to the proposed settlement at Tempsford. In reply, the Joint Director for Planning and Economic Development gave an assurance that Central Bedfordshire District Council would liaise in the usual way with Anglian Water so that the question of infrastructure could be dealt with in a strategic manner. In response to a further question from Councillor Bradnam, the Portfolio Holder considered it unlikely that there would be an increased traffic impact on Gamlingay, even if people lived in Tempsford and travelled to work in Cambridge.

The Planning Portfolio Holder **agreed** that a consultation response be submitted based upon paragraphs 18-25 of this report.

4. HUNTINGDONSHIRE LOCAL PLAN CONSULTATION

The Planning Portfolio Holder considered a report on the draft Huntingdonshire District Council Local Plan (Regulation 18) consultation.

Councillor Anna Bradnam referred to paragraph 12 in the report, and highlighted the importance of addressing the cumulative impact on the A428 of various developments, including Cambourne West and, potentially, a new village at Bourn Airfield. In response, the Joint Director for Planning and Economic Development said that a spatial strategy had been designed based on both these developments, which had both been allocated in the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan. And although the Cambourne West development would be more extensive than that envisaged by the Local Plan, South Cambridgeshire District Council officers were satisfied that any increased impact was unlikely to be significant.

The Planning Portfolio Holder **agreed** that a consultation response be submitted based upon the following:

“Huntingdonshire are consulting on their draft Local Plan between the 4th July and 4.30pm on the 25th August. They intend to consult again in late 2017 on a Proposed Submission Local Plan and submit their plan for examination in March 2018. The plan includes strategic scale developments at Alconbury to the north of Huntingdon and at St Neots East. The plan proposes sites to meet all of the objectively assessed housing need in the district. Overall its draft policies and proposals are considered to be an appropriate response to the planning challenges affecting Huntingdonshire insofar as it affects South Cambridgeshire. The plan is also considered to be consistent with the agreed duty to cooperate documents relating to the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough area.” (paragraph 10 of the report)

5. UTTLESFORD LOCAL PLAN CONSULTATION

The Planning Portfolio Holder considered a report on the draft Uttlesford District Council Local Plan (Regulation 18) consultation.

The Principal Planning Policy Officer reported that officers had met with Parish Councils on 23 August 2017, and that the proposed response could usefully add a number of points

which had emerged from that meeting, including

- reference to whether a start date in 2021/22 for the North Uttlesford Garden Community (NUGC) was deliverable
- boosting the report concerning village rat running
- giving more emphasis to implications for the Parkway station at Whittlesford
- noting possible impacts on Saffron Walden during the long build out phase of the NUGC
- referencing the need for high quality public transport links to key local destinations.

The Principal Planning Policy Officer drew attention to a letter from Uttlesford District Council dated 24 August 2017 concerning that Council's emerging Local Plan. He summarised its contents, noting that it had already been circulated to the Portfolio Holder, Opposition Spokesmen and Scrutiny and Overview Committee Monitors.

Officers summarised the report from the Joint Director for Planning and Economic Development.

The Planning Portfolio Holder referred to paragraph 8 of the report, and expressed empathy with the challenges being faced by Uttlesford District Council in its efforts to bring forward a sound Local Plan.

Councillor Tony Orgee (local Member for the Abingtons) thanked officers for their contribution to this process, and addressed the Portfolio Holder. He made the following points:

- He had concerns about the supply of fresh water
- Referring to paragraph 33, it should be emphasised that South Cambridgeshire District Council was able to approach this issue on the basis of the real evidence gained from major developments already in progress, and not simply projected figures
- The problem of "rat running"
- It should be noted that Great Chesterford railway station was simply a stopping station, and therefore should not form part of the sustainability argument. People would use Whittlesford station instead.

Councillor David Bard (a local Member for Sawston) raised the question of viability in respect of foul water treatment and water recycling, and expressed concerns about the underlying aquifer.

Councillor Kevin Cuffley (another local Member for Sawston) said that the traffic data relied upon in drafting the Local Plan needed to be updated. He also raised concerns about flood risk, and the impact on landscape. In reply, the Joint Director for Planning and Economic Development pointed out that the traffic data had been agreed between Cambridgeshire County Council and Essex County Council. He said that the challenges ahead included the proof of soundness of Uttlesford's Local Plan, levels of certainty of investment in transport, and mitigation measures.

Councillor Anna Bradnam highlighted the importance of secondary education given the capacity challenges already being encountered by Linton Village College by virtue of several recent planning consents issued by South Cambridgeshire District Council, and the possibility that the NUGC might not be developed to a point at which it could justify

having its own secondary school. Furthermore, the withdrawal of school buses could have an adverse impact in terms of traffic congestion at peak times.

The Planning Portfolio Holder **agreed** that a consultation response be submitted on the draft Uttlesford Local Plan based upon paragraphs 15-35 of this report, taking account of agreed modifications and additions including those concerned with transport, the North Uttlesford Garden Community start date, build-out rates, water supply and disposal, and 'rat running'.

6. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANS: THRILOW NEIGHBOURHOOD AREA DESIGNATION

The Planning Portfolio Holder considered a report detailing an application to designate the parish of Thriplow as a Neighbourhood Area.

The Planning Portfolio Holder **approved** the designation of a Neighbourhood Area for the parish of Thriplow as proposed by Thriplow Parish Council (see Appendix A).

7. HERITAGE GUARDIANSHIP SITES: LANDBEACH TITHE BARN, EAST HATLEY CHURCH AND SAWSTON TANNERY DRYING SHED

The Planning Portfolio Holder **received and noted** a report updating him on progress with the Landbeach Tithe Barn and Sawston Tannery Drying Shed Projects, and reporting on the transfer of St. Denis Church, East Hatley.

Those present discussed the report in general terms. In connection with the Sawston Tannery Drying Shed, Councillor Kevin Cuffley (a local Member) highlighted the need to address security issues on site.

8. WORK PROGRAMME

The Planning Portfolio Holder, and those present, noted the Work Programme attached to the agenda.

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next scheduled meeting was on 7 November 2017, but an additional meeting would be called before then, if needed.

The Meeting ended at 11.40 a.m.

Agenda Item 3



Report To: Planning Portfolio Holder

7 November 2017

Lead Officer: Joint Director for Planning and Economic Development

DCLG consultation: Planning for the right homes in the right places

Purpose

1. To consider the contents of the consultation and agree an appropriate response.
2. This is not a key decision. It relates to a Government consultation and was first published in the September 2017 Forward Plan.

Recommendations

3. It is recommended that the Planning Portfolio Holder agree that the consultation response set out in Appendix A be submitted to the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG).

Reasons for Recommendations

4. To respond to the consultation from the DCLG having regard to their implications for this district.

Background

5. In February 2017 the DCLG consulted on the White Paper: 'Fixing our Broken Housing Market'. Its proposals concerned improvements to the planning system, how to build homes faster, diversifying the house-building market and tackling the impacts of the housing shortage on households and communities. This Council made representations on the White Paper following Cabinet consideration of a report on the 20th April 2017.
6. The current consultation primarily relates to the 'improvements to the planning system' element of the White Paper. The measures proposed are summarised in the remainder of this report and will primarily affect the content of the next Local Plan and planning decision making. Subject to the outcome of the consultation, the Government will need to revise the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) to bring any changes into effect.

Considerations

7. The following provides a summary of the key elements of the consultation proposals. The draft response to each of the 19 questions posed by the Government is provided in Appendix A. The Council's representation to the consultation will need to be submitted by 9 November.

Proposed approach to calculating the local housing need (see Appendix A questions 1-6)

8. Government is proposing the use of a standard methodology for calculating local housing need; which is intended to be simpler and more transparent than current methodologies and

which is expected to speed up local plan preparation. The current methodology involves the preparation of strategic housing market assessments in accordance with national guidance. These have proved to be expensive and time consuming to prepare and a source of considerable dispute at local plan examinations across the country.

9. In summary the proposed standard methodology starts with a demographic baseline based on projections of household growth over a 10 year period. This is then modified to take account of local house price affordability ratios by applying a multiplier, lower in affordable areas and higher in areas where house prices are more than four times average local earnings. A 40% cap is then applied to the level of any increase above the annual requirement in an up-to-date local plan (one adopted in the last five years), to ensure any 'step-change' in housing requirement is manageable.
10. The Government have applied the proposed new methodology to all local planning authorities using current data for illustrative purposes. Overall the methodology provides for additional housing across most of the south of England and less growth in most of the north of England, with a national target of 266,000 annual home completions. Locally, the outcome for Greater Cambridge is summarised in the following table which also includes the local housing need totals from our current local plans.

| | Indicative standardised housing need assessment 2016-2026 (<i>dwelling per annum</i>) | Current Local Plan housing need assessment (<i>dwelling per annum</i>) | Annual difference |
|-----------|--|--|-------------------|
| Cambridge | 583 | 700 | -117 |
| SCDC | 1,182 | 975 | +207 |
| Totals | 1,765 | 1,675 | +90 |

11. This would imply a relatively small housing increase will need to be planned for in the next joint Local Plan (1,800 extra homes over 20 years). However, a number of points need to be kept in mind. First, the standard calculation will change annually as new data becomes available and so the assessment will be different when the joint Local Plan is being prepared; second, it is widely accepted that national population forecasting for University cities often underestimates actual recorded levels of population growth¹), and third, the distribution of the aggregated local housing need across our wider 'housing market area' may be varied by agreement through a 'statement of common ground' (SoCG). In this regard, it should be noted that question 7c) of the consultation asks if there should be a role in the preparation of the SoCG by elected Mayors without strategic plan-making powers (such as the Mayor of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority). Finally it can be noted that the indicative standardised housing need assessment 2016-2026 has proven to be difficult to replicate accurately using the original data sources.
12. The consultation states that if a local plan uses the standard local housing need figure derived using the new methodology, this will satisfy the tests of soundness regarding local housing needs. Beyond this 'baseline' requirement, higher housing targets can be adopted within local plans to reflect factors such as local economic ambitions, to provide a better local balance of homes to jobs, or the implementation of new strategic infrastructure. However, it is considered essential that any amendment to the NPPF specifically states that it will only be the 'baseline' figure that is used to assess and authority's assessed need and to calculate housing delivery requirements under 5-year housing land supply and any new housing delivery test as envisaged by the Housing White Paper, so as not to penalise those wishing to promote a higher housing provision.

¹ For example the 2011 Census recorded 15,000 more Cambridge residents than had been forecast by the Office for National Statistics.

13. Importantly, the consultation proposes some sensible transitional arrangements to smooth the introduction of the standard approach to housing need assessment. In this regard, up-to-date Local Plans and plans at examination (such as our own) can continue to use their current approach until the plans are next reviewed.
14. As an incentive to local planning authorities to get new local plans in place, the consultation states that after the 31st March 2018 the new standard approach will apply as the baseline for calculating 5 year housing land supply calculations except where an up-to-date local plan is in place. This means that the South Cambridgeshire future 5 year housing land supply calculations would be based on the Local Plan 19,500 dwelling target, (and with the addition of the Cambridge 14,000 dwelling target if the Inspector agrees with our proposed joint housing trajectory proposed modification).
15. As a result, it can be expected that a number of our neighbours will seek to submit their emerging Local Plans for examination before the 31st March 2018 as their standard housing need assessment is higher than the housing need figure included in their draft Local Plan. This includes Uttlesford whose housing need increases from 14,100 to 16,280 homes, Central Bedfordshire whose housing need of 51,060 homes is at the top end of the possible range they were considering, and Huntingdonshire whose need increases from 20,100 to 25,250 homes. A further round of plan consultations and duty-to-cooperate requests can therefore be anticipated.
16. It is considered that subject to the qualification above to the revised NPPF, the proposed changes are positive and should be supported. There are issues needing clarity that are raised in the draft representation, but it is considered that having a standardised methodology will negate the uncertainty inherent in the existing approach that results in the housing need figure being the key matter at dispute in the examination of an emerging local plan.

Statements of common ground (see Appendix A questions 7-9)

17. The NPPF already expects local planning authorities to cooperate across administrative boundaries, and the effectiveness of this cooperation is tested during the examination of local plans. However, the system does not always work effectively, with failing the duty to co-operate one of the most regular reasons why plans are found unsound by the Planning Inspectorate. In this regard, the local planning authorities in Cambridgeshire have had a good track record of working together to agree a common spatial development strategy and housing distribution. But many other areas have not, particularly around our major conurbations and cities which has led to development needs not being met to the detriment of the local economy and of those seeking somewhere to live.
18. The consultation proposals seek to tighten the duty to co-operate requirement, requiring the preparation of SoCG to a set timetable, and to amend the tests of soundness to ensure that plans are based on an agreed strategy for a wider area and based on effective joint working. It also asks if there should be a role for directly elected Mayors for areas without strategic plan-making powers (such as for the Mayor of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough combined authority). The main SoCG each local planning authority will have to be party to, will be for the 'wider area', which will usually comprise a group of districts which together form a sensible 'housing market area - HMA'. But other areas are not ruled out and it can be noted that the boundary of our current HMA is different from the boundary of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough combined authority. As at present we will also have to engage with local planning authorities in different HMA outside our 'wider area', such as with Uttlesford, Central Bedfordshire and North Hertfordshire. These SoCG can record areas of disagreement as well as of agreement.

19. It is not considered that this 'tightening' of the duty to cooperate will necessarily give rise to any new concerns to Cambridgeshire and other neighbouring authorities. The scope for the Combined Authority to engage with the discussions as part of the SoCG has the potential to make more complex the process of assigning growth across a HMA - particularly where agreement is not reached. The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority is nevertheless already engaged in the preparation of a non-statutory spatial plan which has the potential to support SoCG discussions amongst the constituent authorities. In this respect, it is suggested that these changes are also broadly supported.

Planning for a mix of housing needs (see Appendix A question 10)

20. The NPPF already expects local planning authorities to plan for a mix of housing to address the needs of different groups in the community; however current guidance would not reflect the proposed new approach to assessing local housing need.
21. The consultation proposals are that the total local housing need be disaggregated into the overall need for different types of housing and tenures before taking account of constraints. The identified groups include older and disabled people, families with children, affordable housing, self-build and custom housing, student accommodation, travellers who have ceased to travel, the private rented sector, and for build to rent housing. The consultation is seeking suggestions on how best to plan to meet the needs of particular groups and seeks comments on whether the definition of older people in the NPPF remains fit for purpose.
22. While the principle of this proposal is supported, there is a significant risk that the total disaggregated housing mix would exceed the 'baseline' figure derived through application of the new methodology for assessing housing needs. In such circumstances, the local authority will either 1) have to commit to meet the total of all different types of housing and tenures identified or 2) justify why certain types of housing are to be prioritised for delivery over others. Where viability is not a consideration, the latter is likely to result in proponents of certain forms of housing challenging the priority applied. This has the potential to not only offset the benefits associated with the new methodology (above) and delay local plan production but also to significantly skew the resultant housing mix being delivered, and could exacerbate overall housing need. Unfortunately, there does not seem to be a simple solution to this issue, which is why the Government is asking for suggestions rather than providing options. It is likely therefore that further consultation will be required on any reasonable solutions put forward through this consultation.

Neighbourhood Planning (see Appendix A question 11)

23. Communities who want to make provision in a neighbourhood plan for their future housing need face a number of difficulties. Although over 400 neighbourhood plans have been brought into force across England since 2011 there is no standard methodology for establishing a housing need figure for a neighbourhood area. Many communities resort to commissioning consultants to provide this figure, but this is costly and can discourage communities from taking a neighbourhood plan forward.
24. The consultation proposals are that where a Local Plan is up to date or close to adoption local planning authorities may provide each neighbourhood area / parish with a housing figure by making a reasoned judgement taking account of the settlement strategy and housing allocations already included in their Local Plan. But where a Local Plan is not up-to-date or close to adoption the consultation proposes that the housing need figure in each neighbourhood area would be the same percentage of total district wide housing need that the population of the neighbourhood area/parish is of the total population of the district. The consultation makes clear that this approach would still allow local constraints to be taken into

account, for example in regard to villages set within the Green Belt, or being bounded by land at risk of flooding.

25. While it is considered that neighbourhood plans should be positively prepared and where appropriate seek to address local housing needs, it is nevertheless difficult to understand how these proposals would work in an area like South Cambridgeshire which has around 100 parish councils and meetings. This council could not rely on all of them bringing forward a neighbourhood plan to help provide the sites needed to meet the standard district-wide baseline local housing need. Furthermore because of our expanding economy much of our district-wide housing growth will be the result of migration from elsewhere which many village residents will not recognise as constituting local housing need. A further complication is that many of our larger more sustainable villages are located within the Cambridge Green Belt and neighbourhood plans cannot amend Green Belt boundaries. At the other end of the scale, 55 of our smaller villages / parishes lack any shops, or schools and are not considered to be sustainable locations for any significant level of development. It follows that past and current development planning has sought to focus a significant proportion of planned growth into the most sustainable locations (urban extensions to Cambridge, new settlements and around our larger villages), which has also allowed for infrastructure provision to be made as efficiently as possible. For these reasons, these proposals are not fully supported in this format.

Proposed approach to viability assessment (see Appendix A questions 12-17)

26. The NPPF requires viability to be taken into account in regard to plan making, and when making planning decisions on planning applications. However the current system can lead to delays in plan making, disputes about scheme viability for example in regard to affordable housing contributions, and concerns from the public about a lack of transparency when planning obligations are being negotiated.
27. The consultation proposals aim to ensure future viability assessments are simpler, quicker to prepare and more transparent; that Local Plans should identify the infrastructure and affordable housing needed to implement the plan, how this will be funded and the contribution that developers will be expected to make. The aim being that if viability has been tested during the preparation and examination of a Local Plan it should not need to be tested again at the planning application stage. Finally it proposes that all local planning authorities and elected Mayors should closely monitor, report on and publicise what section 106 agreements have been secured and how they have been spent.
28. This proposal is supported in principle, as the Council already expects developers to take account of the applicable policies of the plan and likely cost of planning obligations, including affordable housing and the provision of infrastructure, in their negotiations of the price they pay for land. However, while this may be appropriate for small straight forward development proposed, the viability of major strategic developments is likely to change significantly as large sites are developed out over time, enabling schemes to deliver greater community benefits or a more suitable balance of uses. Equally, the local plan policies and the viability assumptions underpinning these at the time of drafting, are also likely to be subject to changing economic conditions over the life (15-20 years) of the plan. Review mechanisms are therefore essential to account for changes in development viability over time.

Planning fees (see Appendix A question 18)

29. Government is aware that nationally planning fees do not recover the full cost of processing planning applications and with reduced central funding for local councils, many planning departments now lack sufficient resources to properly plan for their districts. This lack of capacity is thought to form a drag on national housing delivery and economic growth. In

response the consultation proposes to bring forward the already promised 20% fee increase at the earliest opportunity, whilst also seeking views on additional criteria that local planning authorities would be required to meet to allow them to increase fees by an additional 20%.

30. With Council budgets continuing to shrink, it is appropriate that the planning authority should be able to recover the costs incurred in determining planning applications. This proposal is therefore strongly supported but should be taken forward without the need to meet certain criteria to enable the increase in the fees.

Other issues (see Appendix A question 19)

31. The consultation is concerned with how to get more homes built more quickly and to a high standard. The consultation ends by asking if there are any other measures which could be taken to increase housing build out rates. It also asks if an incentive to plan making could be provided by tightening the guidance on when a planning application may be refused on grounds of 'prematurity'. Prematurity guidance is intended to prevent well advanced emerging plans from being undermined by development proposals that are allowed before the plan is adopted.

Next Steps

32. Representations to the consultation will be submitted as agreed by the Portfolio Holder.

Options

33. The Planning Portfolio Holder has the following options:
- (a) Agree the proposed response; or
 - (b) Agree the proposed response with amendments; or
 - (c) Not to agree the proposed response.

Implications

34. In the writing of this report, taking into account financial, legal, staffing, risk management, equality and diversity, climate change, community safety and any other key issues, the following implications have been considered:

Financial

35. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

Legal

36. There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

Staffing

37. There are no direct staffing implications arising from this report.

Risk Management

38. No direct risks to this Council or to South Cambridgeshire residents and businesses have been identified.

Equality and Diversity

39. There are no direct equality and diversity implications arising from this report

Climate Change

40. There are no direct climate change implications arising from this report.

Consultation responses

41. Officers have worked with Housing officers and Cambridge City Council Planning Officers in the preparation of this report. But note that each Council will be submitting its own consultation response

Effect on Strategic Aims

A. LIVING WELL Support our communities to remain in good health whilst continuing to protect the natural and built environment

42. This report has identified a number of potential risks to the environment of the district which could arise from future speculative development if safeguards are not included in the update to the National Planning Policy Framework expected in Spring 2018.

B. HOMES FOR OUR FUTURE

Secure the delivery of a wide range of housing to meet the needs of existing and future communities

43. The provision of sufficient homes to meet local needs is a national and local priority. The changes set out in the consultation are intended to help achieve this.

C. CONNECTED COMMUNITIES

Work with partners to ensure new transport and digital infrastructure supports and strengthens communities and that our approach to growth sustains prosperity

44. The provision of new homes will support economic growth and so sustain local prosperity. But it is important that such growth is planned and enabled by the provision of necessary infrastructure, and the response set out in Appendix A includes a number of safeguards to ensure that this is the case.

Appendices

Appendix A: Proposed SCDC response to the DCLG: Planning for the right homes in the right places consultation.

Background Papers

Where [the Local Authorities \(Executive Arrangements\) \(Meetings and Access to Information\) \(England\) Regulations 2012](#) require documents to be open to inspection by members of the public, they must be available for inspection: -

- (a) at all reasonable hours at the offices of South Cambridgeshire District Council;
- (b) on the Council's website; and
- (c) in the case of documents to be available for inspection pursuant to regulation 15, on payment of a reasonable fee required by the Council by the person seeking to inspect the documents at the offices of South Cambridgeshire District Council.

Link to the 20th April 2017 Cabinet Report on the Housing White Paper:

<http://modern.gov/ie/ListDocuments.aspx?CId=293&MId=6799&Ver=4>

Link to the DCLG consultation 'Planning for the right homes in the right places':

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/planning-for-the-right-homes-in-the-right-places-consultation-proposals>

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Appendix A - Response to the DCLG 'Planning for the right homes in the right places' consultation 2017

Note that each question asks for a 'Yes, No, Not sure / don't know' response before inviting wider comment.

Proposed approach to calculating the local housing need

Question 1 (a)

Do you agree with the proposed standard approach to assessing local housing need? If not, what alternative approach or other factors should be considered?

Yes.

The key advantages of the proposed approach are its transparency and simplicity which will save time and money during Local Plan preparation and examination. It has been demonstrated that no system of estimating local housing need is perfect so a simple approach that arrives at an appropriate national total is of more utility than more complex, time consuming and expensive alternatives. Importantly the standard approach does not prevent Local Planning Authorities from seeking to deliver more housing than indicated by the standard approach where this is justified by local evidence. However these advantages would be lost if it is not made clear in national planning guidance that use of the standard approach to calculating local housing need will be considered to be 'sound' (i.e. that the resultant figure represents the objectively assessed housing need that the local plan must make provision for). No loopholes should be left open that would allow a Local Plan to be found unsound if the standard approach is used, for example by claims that the standard local housing need assessment for a district will not provide enough housing to achieve forecast economic growth without creating unsustainable patterns of commuting. The strength of using DCLG household projections means the methodology is consistent nationally and therefore less likely to be open to challenge. It would be helpful to have a similar approach using published datasets on economic growth to avoid lengthy disputes on how economic growth should be assessed as part of the overall calculation for housing need.

One area of uncertainty about the new standard approach relates to the 10 year demographic baseline referenced in paragraph 17 of the consultation and the guidance in the NPPF at paragraph 157 that Local plans must have a 15 year time horizon. Does this mean that future Local Plans will have a 10 year time horizon, or that they will still look as far ahead in terms of strategy, but only include a 10 year housing trajectory in regard to site allocations, or is the intention that the 10 year demographic baseline should be extended over at least 15 years?

Looking ahead we do have concerns that the standard approach will simply roll forward high levels of growth in districts that have in the past planned responsibly and positively for growth, whereas areas that have not been responsible and have restrained past growth, will roll forward low levels of growth into the future. There may be other unintended consequences of the standard methodology and Government should commit itself to a review of the working of the methodology with a view to refining it over time.

It can be expected that the new standard approach will deliver large amounts of additional land for housing development across England, in some cases up to a 40% increase in land supply. Such an increase will likely prove challenging to plan for by the local planning authority, and to deliver by the housebuilding industry. In this new world, it cannot also be

right to maintain the penalty requirement for an additional 20% housing site buffer to be provided where the development industry has failed to build enough houses to maintain a 5 year housing land supply. To do so would be to set up a system where if there is a delivery failure, the solution is to add even more housing supply in areas where there can be no demonstrable shortage of land.

Finally any amendment to the NPPF must specifically state that it will only be the 'baseline' figure that is used to assess and authority's assessed need and to calculate housing delivery requirements under 5-year housing land supply and any new housing delivery test as envisaged by the Housing White Paper, so as not to penalise those wishing to promote a higher housing provision to reflect their aspirations for economic growth or for other reasons, if this aspirational growth cannot then be delivered on the ground for whatever reason.

Question 1(b)

How can information on local housing need be made more transparent?

National Planning Policy Guidance could be amended to require this information to be included in the Annual Monitoring Reports already prepared by each Local Planning Authority.

Question 2

Do you agree with the proposal that an assessment of local housing need should be able to be relied upon for a period of two years from the date a plan is submitted?

No.

This is too short a period. Local Planning Authorities and Planning Inspectors should be able to rely upon the assessment of local housing need on which the submitted plan is based, during the full course of its examination. We submitted our Local Plan for examination in March 2014 and do not expect to adopt it until Spring 2018 and the proposed 2 year cut-off would have added further delay to the examination process as modifications to the Local Plan would have been required to address any increase or decrease in housing need.

Furthermore, s78 Planning Inspectors when considering planning appeals must be required to rely on the local housing need figure included in an adopted Local Plan within 5 years of its adoption, rather than any more recent standard local housing need figure. To do otherwise would encourage 'planning by appeal' from developers in circumstances where the standard local housing need figure has gone substantially up from the figure in an up to date Local Plan (one adopted in the last 5 years).

Question 3

Do you agree that we should amend national planning policy so that a sound plan should identify local housing needs using a clear and justified method?

Yes.

The key advantages of the proposed approach are its transparency and simplicity which will save time and money during Local Plan preparation and examination. It has been demonstrated that no system of estimating local housing need is perfect so a simple approach that arrives at an appropriate national total is of more utility than more complex, time consuming and expensive alternatives. Importantly the standard approach does not prevent Local Planning Authorities from seeking to deliver more housing than indicated by the standard approach where this is justified by local evidence. However these advantages would be completely lost if it is not made clear in national planning guidance that use of the standard approach to calculating local housing need will be considered to be 'sound'. No

loopholes should be left open that would allow a Local Plan to be found unsound if the standard approach is used, for example by claims that the standard local housing need assessment for a district will not provide enough housing to achieve forecast economic growth without creating unsustainable patterns of commuting.

This is a foreseeable challenge to the proposed standard assessment approach and dispute over it, backed up by evidence documents, could discount the time and cost advantages gained by its introduction.

Question 4

Do you agree with our approach in circumstances when plan makers deviate from the proposed method, including the level of scrutiny we expect from the Planning Inspectors?

Yes.

The proposed approach to allow Local Plans to provide housing in excess of the standard local housing need assessment, but not to provide less, is sensible and proportionate. Issues which often arise in terms of capacity and constraints in one district in a housing market area would fall to be addressed by the required statement of common ground for that housing market area.

Question 5(a)

Do you agree that the Secretary of State should have discretion to defer the period for using the baseline for some local planning authorities? If so, how best could this be achieved, what minimum requirements should be in place before the Secretary of State may exercise this discretion, and for how long should such deferral be permitted?

Yes.

The Secretary of State should have discretion to defer application of the new standard approach for 5 year housing land supply calculations from the baseline date of 31 March 2018. This deferment should apply to all local planning authorities who have submitted their Local Plans for examination by that date and during the course of the examination. After adoption of the new Local Plan the housing need figure included in the Local Plan would apply to all 5 year housing land supply calculations until it is replaced by a new Local Plan or for a period of 5 years from adoption whichever is sooner. After 5 years if the Local Plan has not been replaced these calculations would be made in accordance with the latest figure generated by the standard approach to calculating local housing need.

It would not be conducive to public confidence in the planning system if the housing need figures included in a recently adopted Local Plan were to be quickly superseded for the purposes of calculating the 5 year housing land supply by a more recent standardised local housing need figure, whether need increases or decreases.

The consultation states in paragraph 48 that for local planning authorities without an up-to-date local plan in place by the 31st March 2018 planning decision makers must use the new standard approach in 5 year housing land supply calculations. This is described as an incentive to get plan making. To avoid confusion and dispute at s78 planning appeals, clear guidance must be provided on how this approach will work in detail. For example as the standard need will be based on 2016 or 2017 baseline data does this mean that there is no housing need backlog to be added in from earlier years in the Local Plan period? (assuming for example a plan period of 2011-2031, where a backlog has built up in delivery to 2016 or 2017).

Question 5(b)

Do you consider that authorities that have an adopted joint local plan, or which are covered by an adopted spatial development strategy, should be able to assess their five year land supply and/or be measured for the purposes of the Housing Delivery Test, across the area as a whole?

Yes.

But this approach should also apply where two or more Local Planning Authorities have agreed under a duty to co-operate agreement (and/or a statement of common ground - SoCG) that their housing phasing and housing trajectories should be considered together for planning decision making. This is the approach being pursued by Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire District Councils who have prepared separate Local Plans which both state that their housing phasing and housing trajectories should be considered together for planning decision making including for calculations of 5 year housing land supply. This exemption would cease to apply if the duty to co-operate agreement or SoCG were to lapse).

We made a strong case in support of this approach to our Local Plan examination hearings recently based upon the planned strategic urban extensions to Cambridge starting in Cambridge and only later extending into South Cambridgeshire. Whilst this circumstance may not be a common one, there will be other reasons why such an agreement would make excellent planning sense. If all affected authorities agree and there is no reduction in the overall 5 year housing land supply provision, national planning policy should not prevent what is a common-sense solution to the alternative, which locally, is unplanned speculative village development in less sustainable locations.

Question 5 (c)

Do you consider that authorities that are not able to use the new method for calculating local housing need should be able to use an existing or an emerging local plan figure for housing need for the purposes of calculating five year land supply and to be measured for the purposes of the Housing Delivery Test?

Yes.

Question 6

Do you agree with the proposed transitional arrangements for introducing the standard approach for calculating local housing need?

Yes.

Yes the proposed transitional arrangements are very important, being necessary, sensible and proportionate. They will provide clarity and avoid uncertainty and help to avoid expensive and wasteful disputation at Local Plan examinations. Two refinements are however necessary. First in regard to plans at examination and adopted in the last 5 years it must be made clear in national guidance that such plans once adopted will remain sound in regard to new standard local housing need figures until replaced by a new Local plan or the expiry of a 5 year period after adoption whichever is sooner. Second, it should be made explicit that these transitional arrangements also apply to s78 planning appeals. It would not be conducive to public confidence in the planning system if the housing need figures included in a recently adopted Local plan were to be quickly set aside by a s78 Inspector for the purposes of calculating the 5 year housing land supply by a more recent standardised local housing need figure.

Statement of Common Ground

Question 7(a)

Do you agree with the proposed administrative arrangements for preparing the statement of common ground (SoCG)?

Not sure / don't know.

The consultation document is not clear on who will be responsible for preparing and updating the SoCG. At paragraph 64 it states that every local planning authority will produce a SoCG for the housing market area, but at paragraph 70 it refers to local planning authorities working together to develop and maintain the SoCG. Furthermore paragraph 81 refers to the SoCG being reviewed and updated when each of the participating authorities reach four key milestones in the plan-making process. The housing market area (HMA) centred on Cambridge currently includes seven local planning authorities. This implies that the SoCG would need to be updated 28 times. Setting aside the implied heavy administrative workload involved it is unclear what would be the benefit of this mechanistic approach which could quickly yield multiple SoCGs for the same HMA and become a confusing assemblage of documents all being worked on to differing timescales.

A better approach would be to state that a SoCG should be prepared for each housing market area or other agreed geographical area within the proposed 6 and 12 month deadlines, and that this be updated as necessary for the whole HMA every 2 years. As an aid to the smooth running of Local Plan Examinations it would be helpful if a national map of HMAs or other agreed geographical areas could be centrally published and maintained by Government. It is suggested that where there is an elected Mayor for an area with multiple local planning authorities, that the HMA boundary should normally be the same as the boundary for the Mayoral Combined Authority, unless a different boundary can be robustly justified. For example for South Cambridgeshire, our relationship with West Suffolk in terms of travel to work data, identifies that it has been correct to consider that district to be part of our Housing Market Area although it is not included within the Combined Authority area.

Under this alternative arrangement local planning authorities on the boundary of one HMA would be expected to individually engage with the SoCGs being prepared for all the different HMAs it shares a boundary with. This may help reduce cross-boundary disputes and would reduce the administrative burden of engaging with the SoCG of all adjoining local planning authorities.

Question 7(b)

How do you consider a statement of common ground should be implemented in areas where there is a Mayor with strategic plan-making powers?

No comment.

Question 7(c)

Do you consider there to be a role for directly elected Mayors without strategic plan-making powers, in the production of a statement of common ground?

Yes.

Logically yes given their other responsibilities and powers. In the case of the Mayor of the Combined Authority for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough (which area differs from the current HMA incidentally), the Combined Authority has extensive transport powers and responsibilities and has commenced work on a 'Non-statutory Spatial Plan'. This allows scope for strategic planning and transport constraints and opportunities to be considered

together in the preparation of a SoCG. But this approach would not work so effectively if the HMA boundary is not the same as the Combined Authority boundary, although where there are direct links with areas outside of the Combined Authority, these should not be overlooked.

Question 8

Do you agree that the proposed content and timescales for publication of the statement of common ground are appropriate and will support more effective co-operation on strategic cross-boundary planning matters?

Yes.

The proposed content of the SoCG are appropriate as are the proposed timescales, but a clear definition should be provided as the meaning of the phrase 'unmet need' in regard to the distribution of need in the 12 month version of the SoCG. This must mean 'need for which sites have to be allocated in new plans', not, as development interests may claim, some type of hidden need or backlog of need which is additional to the aggregate of the standard local housing need assessments across the HMA.

It would also be helpful to be more specific about the required content and format of SoCGs. To be machine readable it is presumed that the SoCG will need to be in spreadsheet form. It would be helpful if a template spreadsheet could be produced. This would add to consistency of understanding of required contents, and to the clarity of presentation.

Question 9(a)

Do you agree with the proposal to amend the tests of soundness to include that:

- i) plans should be prepared based on a strategy informed by agreements over the wider area; and**
- ii) plans should be based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic priorities, which are evidenced in the statement of common ground?**

Yes.

As much clarity as possible needs to be given into the meaning of the words 'wider' under criteria i) and 'effective' under criteria ii). A lack of clarity will be filled by opposing views at Local Plan Examinations which will cause delay and so add expense to the examination process.

Question 9(b)

Do you agree to the proposed transitional arrangements for amending the tests of soundness to ensure effective co-operation?

Yes.

The proposed transitional arrangements are proportionate and likely to be effective. One further improvement could be made however to address the status of Local Plans adopted before the changes to the NPPF to be published in 2018. It would much reduce dispute at s78 planning appeals if the updated NPPF were to clearly state that up-to-date Local Plans (within 5 years of adoption) will remain 'sound' for all planning purposes even where their date of adoption is before the date of introduction of the updated NPPF.

This is a foreseeable argument that development interests may use to undermine or cast doubt on the status of otherwise up-to-date Local Plans in planning appeals.

Planning for a mix of housing needs

Question 10(a)

Do you have any suggestions on how to streamline the process for identifying the housing need for individual groups and what evidence could be used to help plan to meet the needs of particular groups?

The following comments are related to the question asked.

First that the disaggregated total need must not exceed the standard assessment of local need figure and must provide a balanced approach to meeting local housing needs. There is a significant risk that the total disaggregated housing mix would exceed the 'baseline' figure derived through application of the new methodology for assessing housing needs. In such circumstances, the local authority will either 1) have to commit to meet the total of all different types of housing and tenures identified or 2) justify why certain types of housing are to be prioritised for delivery over others. Where viability is not a consideration, the latter is likely to result in proponents of certain forms of housing challenging the priority applied. This has the potential to not only offset the benefits associated with the new methodology (above) and delay local plan production but also to significantly skew the resultant housing mix being delivered, and could exacerbate overall housing need. A common example of the issues which can arise here are where affordable housing need assessments find that affordable need amounts to a great majority of the total housing need forecast in a locality. In regard to paragraph 89, should not market purchase and private rented housing be added to the list of tenures to be examined?

Second, that the NPPF or other guidance must be clear on what elements of this housing will count towards satisfying the standard local housing need 'target' of a Local Plan. This has been a matter of dispute in regard to student accommodation in the past and with a richer mix of housing types and tenures now being developed such as co-housing and community housing schemes will remain an area of uncertainty and dispute if clear national guidance is not provided.

The new methodology proposed, identifies the number of homes, but there needs to be a next step as to how to interpret this figure into households by age group and size. This position would then set the baseline for the types of homes to be provided, i.e. older person households, affordable tenure, etc.

It would be useful for further guidance to be published alongside amendments to the NPPF, setting out the specific groups to be assessed as a baseline and the datasets to be used in the methodology. In particular:

- Assessment of affordable housing needs to be aligned to the overall standard local housing need figure. Previous methodology has been complex, which included calculating a backlog of affordable housing need and assumptions on overcrowding, homelessness and housing supply based on relets. This meant that the need for affordable housing was often a large proportion of the overall housing need, or in some cases above the objectively assessed housing need figure. South Cambridgeshire District Council and Cambridge City Council are currently undertaking analysis to understand the affordability of households in the area and what types of housing they could afford, rather than concentrating purely on social housing. Taking into account income data for the existing population, assumptions could be made for incomes of newly forming households and the types of homes they could access, either in the social or private sector.
- Housing for Older People – It would be useful to have a consistent approach to modelling older people's housing as part of the SHMA guidance. As part of the

Healthy Towns Initiative, South Cambridgeshire District Council have recently commissioned Sheffield Hallam to undertake research on the housing needs of older people. It is anticipated that this research will support the development of a methodology for understanding the types of accommodation required in terms of Older People. Again it would be useful to have a nationally recognised consistent approach.

- Further clarification/guidance is required on planning policy for traveller sites. There should be clear guidance on how to identify travellers who no longer travel and how local planning and housing authorities should deal with those who no longer meet the definition. Draft guidance is unclear as to the assessment of caravan dwellers and appears to confuse assessment of gypsy and travellers and that of caravan dwellers.
- Specialist housing, such as supported accommodation for those with learning disabilities is very difficult to project in terms of what types of accommodation to provide in the future. It would be helpful for guidance demonstrating how this information can be captured and the available datasets.

Question 10(b)

Do you agree that the current definition of older people within the National Planning Policy Framework is still fit-for-purpose?

Yes.

The current definition allows for flexibility from those that are still active to those that are frail elderly. The overall assessment of older people needs to differentiate between those that require general needs accommodation (such as downsizer homes) to those with care needs. The definition defines older people as people over retirement age. As the age of retirement varies, it would be useful to have clarification on a specific age for older people within the NPPF.

Neighbourhood Planning

Question 11(a)

Should a local plan set out the housing need for designated neighbourhood planning areas and parished areas within the area?

Yes.

Yes, but this should be in the form of a permissive encouragement to do so rather than being couched as a requirement for every Local Plan. This more flexible approach will enable local planning authorities to decide on this question themselves after sounding out the views of Parish Councils and other local bodies. On this issue we do not see a role for the Mayors of combined authorities who should not be concerned with such a local issue.

A permissive approach is also necessary to take account of the difficulty of estimating capacity in non-parished urban areas which will not have a full coverage of neighbourhood areas.

While it is considered that neighbourhood plans should be positively prepared and should where appropriate seek to address local housing needs, it is difficult to understand how these proposals would work in an area like South Cambridgeshire which has around 100 parish councils and meetings. This council could not rely on all of them bringing forward a neighbourhood plan to help provide the sites needed to meet the standard district-wide baseline local housing need. Furthermore because of our expanding economy much of our district-wide housing growth will be the result of migration from elsewhere which many

village residents will not recognise as constituting local housing need. A further complication is that many of our larger more sustainable villages are located within the Cambridge Green Belt and neighbourhood plans cannot amend Green Belt boundaries. At the other end of the scale, 55 of our smaller villages / parishes lack any shops, or schools and are not considered to be sustainable locations for any significant level of development. It follows that past and current development planning has sought to focus a significant proportion of planned growth into the most sustainable locations (urban extensions to Cambridge, new settlements and around our larger villages), which has also allowed for infrastructure provision to be made as efficiently as possible.

Question 11(b)

Do you agree with the proposal for a formula-based approach to apportion housing need to neighbourhood plan bodies in circumstances where the local plan cannot be relied on as a basis for calculating housing need?

Yes.

But only to help neighbourhood plan bodies who want to take forward a Neighbourhood Plan which will address local housing need issues to identify the broad extent of their local need. Such a formula would however need to make clear what its purpose is and is not. Otherwise there is a danger that such an approach would be relied upon by developers to justify unwanted village developments, or to justify changes to the Green Belt boundary in the next Local Plan review for villages inset within the Green Belt.

Proposed approach to Viability Assessment

Question 12

Do you agree that local plans should identify the infrastructure and affordable housing needed, how these will be funded and the contributions developers will be expected to make?

No.

Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council (Greater Cambridge) are well aware of the importance of infrastructure delivery to support growth. The submitted local plans of both Councils indicate the strategic infrastructure that will be required to support strategic development sites. We have prepared a joint Infrastructure Delivery Study to provide evidence to support our local plans, setting out our anticipated infrastructure requirements, likely costs, and potential funding sources, including from developers. At the strategic scale these costs and funding are likely to be estimates, which will be refined through subsequent planning processes often a number of years later. Our concern is whether it is possible or appropriate for local plans to be as specific as implied by the question. There is a risk of adding complexity and delay to plan making that will not contribute to speeding up delivery both in terms of up-to-date adopted plan coverage and housing completions.

The current expectation that local plans and their examination are informed by high-level viability evidence is considered to remain the most appropriate approach. It would be counterproductive to try to front-load the assessment of site viability as proposed. The viability of major strategic developments is likely to change significantly as large sites are developed out over time, enabling schemes to deliver greater community benefits or a more suitable balance of uses. Equally, the local plan policies and the viability assumptions underpinning these at the time of drafting, are also likely to be subject to changing economic conditions over the life (15-20 years) of the plan. Review mechanisms are therefore essential to account for changes in development viability over time.

Agree that in terms of affordable housing, the percentage of homes to be affordable should be set out within the Local Plan and that it should be free serviced land. However, in terms of funding for affordable housing, this is complex and dependent on the availability of funding and cross-subsidy and needs to be considered on a scheme by scheme basis.

Question 13

In reviewing guidance on testing plans and policies for viability, what amendments could be made to improve current practice?

One of the main problems with development viability appraisals is the sensitivity to changes in values and costs over time. As a consequence, fixing cost and value over time as the consultation proposes will magnify any problems. In strong markets, developers may realise returns that appear excessive, and the community be deprived of much needed affordable housing, especially where the developer has successfully obtained planning consent with a reduced affordable housing requirement. In weak markets, fixed costs and inflexible policy requirements may prevent sites coming forward for development.

To make the process more transparent and consistent, publically available information on comparable schemes should be made available, and a more collaborative approach agreed between developers and local planning authorities to prevent inflexible, risk averse schemes that reduce the affordable housing provision, especially in strong market areas such as Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire.

Review mechanisms should be a mandatory requirement in order that the level of affordable housing and other planning obligations can be balanced against the actual costs of bringing developments forward and the values realised for the open market housing and non-residential development elements. This will enable larger growth sites, which have substantial up-front infrastructure costs, to proceed with below policy compliant levels of affordable housing, if they are not supported by other infrastructure funding.

Question 14

do you agree that where policy requirements have been tested for their viability, the issue should not usually need to be tested again at the planning application stage?

No.

The South Cambridgeshire Local Plan states that developments should deliver 40% affordable housing at a ratio of 70% rented to 30% intermediate housing. This policy being based on a viability assessment which showed that across the district this approach should be viable in most localities and in most circumstances. But as a planning authority we are well aware that local issues may affect scheme viability, such as unknown decontamination costs, lack of suitable infrastructure, lower than normal land values and the scale of other planning obligations needed to offset the impact of the development. It would be very difficult, expensive and time consuming to discover and take account of all of these considerations during the preparation and examination of a Local Plan.

Furthermore, if the affordable housing policies were to be established at local plan stage then (similar to CIL) these policies would likely need to be set at a sufficiently low level to take account of market changes over time. Such an approach would result in lower affordable housing levels than would currently be secured.

It follows that policy requirements impacting upon viability will still need to be tested on a site by site basis but following a standardised national review methodology to speed up the process. In addition, this standardised approach should be used to determine the level of

infrastructure funding needed to either improve viability or unlock stalled developments. This standardised review mechanism should also allow for infrastructure funding to be recycled where such policy compliant funded schemes deliver out-turn values that exceed the threshold needed to deliver reasonable developer profit.

What would be helpful both for the development industry and local planning authorities is if the Government was able to clarify whether 'site value' is the product of affordable housing policies or the other way around. Unless and until this is understood there will always be disputes at planning application stage.

Question 15

How can Government ensure that infrastructure providers, including housing associations, are engaged throughout the process, including in circumstances where a viability assessment may be required?

Engagement by all parties can be ensured through the use of a national standardised approach to viability assessment requiring a more collaborative and transparent approach and including mandatory review mechanisms. Utility providers should be required to engage with local planning authorities on this work.

However this ambition is difficult to achieve when, with a greater use of outline planning applications, many planning permissions are issued long before housebuilder or land promoter has engaged with an housing association.

Question 16

What factors should we take into account in updating guidance to encourage viability assessments to be simpler, quicker and more transparent, for example through a standardised report or summary format?

A standardised viability appraisal model, such as an upgraded version of the DCLG's own HCA DAT model, should be the mandatory model to be used in both local plan and individual scheme viability assessments.

It is often the case that housing associations are engaged much later in the process, and have little influence on the design and size of the properties. This can affect the viability of the scheme and the offers made by the housing association.

Furthermore clarification is needed as to the extent to which planning policies, including but not limited to affordable housing, are to have a direct influence on land value in the way that CIL does.

Question 17(a)

Do you agree that local planning authorities should set out in plans how they will monitor and report on planning agreements to help ensure that communities can easily understand what infrastructure and affordable housing has been secured and delivered through developer contributions?

Yes

It is agreed that the monitoring and reporting of planning agreements and infrastructure delivery is necessary and useful to local communities, but this does not need to be set out in every Local Plan. The provision of a requirement to report on planning agreements in legislation, similar to the requirement to report on CIL funds collected in CIL Regulation 62, would be sufficient to ensure this takes place without adding to the burden of requirements on local authorities at the plan preparation stage. The most practical method to do this would

be by the inclusion of additional details (in addition to what is already included) in the annual monitoring reports that every local planning authority have to publish.

In this regard account must be given to the fact that many agreements with developers are directly entered into by County Councils (CCs), and often District Councils (DCs) do not monitor or report on the subsequent delivery of these obligations. Many CCs already have their own monitoring and reporting systems set up, and it would be simplest if they were required to report on obligations they have entered into directly, without input from the DC. However, should there be a requirement on DCs as local planning authorities to monitor and report on CC obligations, provision must be made to require CCs to provide DCs with the information they need in an accessible format.

Question 17(b)

What factors should we take into account in preparing guidance on a standard approach to monitoring and reporting planning obligations?

Planning obligations are not new – most local planning authorities have many historic agreements, and there will be a wide range of database systems in use to store information on the obligations secured. It is therefore important that any standard approach set by government provides a high level framework, allowing authorities to adapt the details to their own existing systems and ways of working.

The government should consider what it is that communities generally want to know. The questions we receive from communities are mostly regarding total amounts of money secured, received and spent towards types of infrastructure/projects or in relation to specific developments. It would be best to focus the requirement to report on these areas. The question is overly narrow. The substantive issue is not the monitoring and reporting of planning obligations but removing pooling restrictions to ensure developments properly contribute to the cost of infrastructure necessary to mitigate their impacts.

Question 17(c)

How can local planning authorities and applicants work together to better publicise infrastructure and affordable housing secured through new development once development has commenced, or at other stages of the process?

Please enter your comments here:

The most appropriate place to report the delivery of affordable homes and infrastructure would be as part of the authority's monitoring report.

Planning fees

Question 18(a)

Do you agree that a further 20 per cent fee increase should be applied to those local planning authorities who are delivering the homes their communities need? What should be the criteria to measure this?

Yes. :

With Council budgets continuing to shrink, it is appropriate that local planning authorities should be able to recover the costs incurred in determining planning applications. This proposal is therefore strongly supported but should be taken forward without the need to meet certain criteria to enable the increase in the fees.

Question 18(b)

Do you think there are more appropriate circumstances when a local planning authority should be able to charge the further 20 per cent? If so, do you have views on how these circumstances could work in practice?

Yes.

Some additional fee income increase should be given to local planning authorities who are seeking to deliver strategic scale developments through Local Plan allocations, whether in the form of new settlements, sustainable urban extensions or major urban redevelopment schemes provided that each such development will provide at least 1,000 additional new homes.

Question 18(c)

Should any additional fee increase be applied nationally once all local planning authorities meet the required criteria, or only to individual authorities who meet them?

Apply to Individual authorities only.

A national increase should only be applied as a general incentive to maintain housing provision. The suggested criteria is that the fee increase would apply in the year following that in which the national housing completions total, meets or exceeds the aggregate of all standard local housing need assessments.

Question 18(d)

Are there any other issues we should consider in developing a framework for this additional fee increase?

No comment.

Other issues

Question 19

Having regard to the measures we have already identified in the housing White Paper, are there any other actions that could increase build out rates?

Yes.

Build out

It is suggested that Government consider removing the borrowing cap to free up Councils to borrow against their housing assets to directly build new housing across all tenures and give greater flexibility for investing 'Right to Buy' receipts into affordable housing. These measures would over time significantly boost housing delivery. In this regard, recent policy proposals, such as the required sale of higher value council homes, could affect any ambitions that Councils have for developing themselves and reduce the supply of social rented homes.

The principles set out in the Housing White Paper relating to 'Build to Rent' could enable accelerated delivery and the Council would welcome further clarification through the NPPF in this respect. Council-owned housing companies could play an important role in bringing such schemes forward but it would be detrimental to delivery if such companies were caught by legislative requirements, such as the right to buy.

Prematurity

The NPPF already provides policy guidance on prematurity at paragraph 216. The paragraphs on prematurity in the 'National Planning Policy Guidance' are not in themselves particularly helpful, and simply transferring them to the NPPF would not provide much of an incentive to support plan production.

The biggest factor undermining confidence in the planning system is not the difficulty local planning authorities have in justifying a refusal on grounds of prematurity, but the very substantial harm caused to public confidence when an adopted Local Plan is undermined when a 5 year housing land supply cannot be demonstrated. In South Cambridgeshire, a district of 100 villages and no towns, this situation has led to a rash of speculative housing applications in our less sustainable villages.

Work Programme 2017-18 – Planning Portfolio

| Date of meeting | Reports to be signed off and sent to Dem Services by 5pm on: | Title of Report | Key/ Non-key | If key – reason (see below) | Purpose of report e.g. for recommendation/ decision/ monitoring | Report Author | Date added to Corporate Plan* (contact Victoria Wallace) |
|-------------------|--|--|--------------|-----------------------------|---|---------------|--|
| To be rescheduled | | Denny Farm Museum | | | | Jane Green | |
| To be rescheduled | | Land North of Cherry Hinton | | | Decision (resolution to adopt once Local Plan has been adopted) | Ed Durrant | |
| 11 December 2017 | Friday 1 December | Waterbeach New Town SPD (tentative date) | | | To endorse draft SPD for consultation | Katie Parry | |

Agenda Item 4

Page 27

Work Programme 2017-18 – Planning Portfolio

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|-----------------|--|--------------------------|--------------|-----------------------------|--|----------------------------------|--|
| | Friday 1 December | Annual monitoring report | | | | Jenny Nuttycombe | |
| | Friday 1 December | Foxton Conservation Area | Non-key | | To endorse proposed extension and management plan for consultation | Trovine Monteiro / Celia Wignall | |
| | Friday 1 December | Brownfield Land Register | | | Decision | Claire Spencer | |

Work Programme 2017-18 – Planning Portfolio

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|--|--|--|--------------|-----------------------------|---|-------------------|--|
| | Friday 1 December | Neighbourhood Planning - results of consultation on neighbourhood plan guidance with parish councils | | | Decision | Alison Talkington | |
| Late February / early March 2018 Date tbc | | Foxton Conservation Area | Non-key | | Decision | Rachel Cleminson | |
| | | Waterbeach New Town SPD | | | Decision (resolution to adopt once Local Plan has been adopted) | Katie Parry | |

Page 29

Key Decisions

1. it is likely to result in the Council incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant having regard to the Council's budget for the service or function to which the decision relates, or
 2. it is likely to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area of the District comprising two or more wards.
- In determining the meaning of 'significant' for the purposes of the above, the Council must have regard to any guidance for the time being issued by the Secretary of State in accordance with section 9Q of the 2000 Act (guidance)

Updated: 30 October 2017

Work Programme 2017-18 – Planning Portfolio

Key decisions can only be made after they have been on the Corporate Forward Plan for at least 28 clear calendar days not including the day on which they first appear on the Forward Plan or the day on which the decision is to be made.