

3. **Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Brian Milnes, Lead Cabinet Member for Environmental Services and Licencing declared an interest in item 8 (North East Cambridge Area Action Plan: Proposed Submission (Regulation 19)) as a Member on the Highways and Transport Committee at Cambridgeshire County Council.

Councillor Peter McDonald, Lead Cabinet Member for Business Recovery and Skills, declared an interest in item 8 (North East Cambridge Area Action Plan: Proposed Submission (Regulation 19)) as the Chair of the Highways and Transport Committee at Cambridgeshire County Council.

4. **Minutes of Previous Meeting**

Cabinet authorised the Leader to sign, as a correct record, the Minutes of the meeting held on Monday, 6 December 2021.

5. **Public Questions**

Cabinet received four public questions ahead of the meeting.

a) From Mr. Daniel Fulton, who attended in person:

Before asking his question, Mr. Daniel Fulton said he wanted to correct the record and that there had been five public questions, one of which was refused. The Leader explained that the Council had e mailed the questioner on the 6 January to explain the question had been refused on the grounds that the council was made aware the matter may be the subject of legal proceedings.

Mr. Fulton then asked his question:

Is the council in possession of the automated event log from Dante Controller from the planning committee meeting on 8 September 2021, and is the council in possession of the automated logs of 1:1 messaging in Microsoft Teams that are stored on the device in use by the democratic services officer present at the planning committee meeting on 8 September 2021? If not, when was the evidence in question destroyed?

Response from Councillor Bridget Smith, Leader of the Council:

You have previously asked for this information and we have provided responses to three requests under the Freedom of Information Act.

While we are not obliged to inform you whether or not the data is held (as explained in response 10130), it was made clear to you in our FOIA responses 9704 and 9779 that we do not hold the data you seek as this is an outsourced service.

With regards to your reference to the automated logs, again I refer you to previous requests you have made on this topic under FOI requests 9779 and

10130 and our outstanding request that you clarify the nature of the data you are seeking in FOI 10154.

In order to determine whether we can confirm the existence of data, or disclose it, we need to understand if it falls within the category which could represent a security risk to the organisation. We have previously asked that you make it clear whether you are seeking messages relating to technical information or general communications. We await your reply.

Please note we have also informed you and reiterate this now, that further requests concerning technical information from Council systems regarding the meeting on 8th September 2021 will be classed as vexatious and not responded to – clear explanation and reasoning for refusal/exemptions has already been provided on several occasions.

The Leader invited Mr. Fulton to ask a supplementary question:

Mr. Fulton made a statement disagreeing with the response provided by the Leader but did not ask a supplementary question.

b) From Jennie Conroy, who attended remotely:

National Planning Policy requires developing local plans to be flexible to accommodate changes in circumstances; what appeared to be the most appropriate course of action to attain a planning objective in one year may be less apparent a few years on. It is also a requirement that all reasonable alternatives have been identified and considered, that the plans are achievable and reflect National and Local Planning Policies.

There have been a number of changes and new circumstances since SCDC voted to support AW's application for HIF funding enabling AW to start the process of seeking a viable alternative site for the CWWTP in order to release the brownfield site, from which it currently operates, for housing. This is also relevant with regard to the objectives of the time table specified in the Local Development Scheme, in this case to progress to formal agreement by the Councils of the proposed submission NECAAP (Reg 19) at this time, 2 years ahead of public consultation, with an explicit objective to facilitate a successful DCO examination: 'The formal agreement by the Councils of the Proposed Submission AAP will be an important factor in the DCO Examination process to demonstrate commitment to development of the area'.

The size and scale of NECAAP as currently presented and the now proposed relocation of a large scale industrial waste water treatment plant in to open Green Belt, in close proximity to Cambridge City and principal Conservation Areas, will have significant impact on Cambridge itself. However, it will be the population and electorate served by SCDC that will be most effected; in particular, Milton from the high population growth on its doorstep and impact on existing green infrastructure and, as a result of the relocation of CWWTP, the villages of Horningsea, Fen Ditton, Stow cum Quy and Lode.

It is argued that the changes that have occurred, those that remain uncertain and new information that has come forward since the initial support behind the relocation project and evidenced below, are such that it would be in the best interest of SCDC and the population it serves to postpone agreement of the proposed submission of NECAAP (Reg 19) until after the outcome of the DCO and Public Consultation (Reg 18) of the emerging Local Plan First Proposals.

It is important for SCDC to retain flexibility and influence in the planning process with regard to NECAAP, size, scale, etc; to retain effective scrutiny and influence over the design and mitigation measures AW put forward for the new plant at Reg19 of the DCO and to be open to alternatives within the developing Local Plan that are achievable, most compatible with proposed Local Planning Policies and in the best interest of the populations SCDC serve.

The latter will be best achieved, and In keeping with recent guidance from Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service that the DCO application is 'not a project or proposal within the scope of the emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan or AAP to influence', to postpone the agreement of the proposed submission of NECAAP (Reg 19) to allow the DCO to be examined on its own merits without further direct influence by SCDC and to be open to alternatives and outcomes of the Public Consultation on the emerging Local Plan First Proposals.

Response from the Dr. Tumi Hawkins, Lead Cabinet Member for Planning Policy and Delivery:

Thank you for your statement seeking the postponement of the AAP at this stage. Having considered your statement, I believe that your concerns break down into a number of specific areas and I seek to briefly respond to them here.

I understand your request for a postponement is based upon concern around the full impact of the proposals contained within the North East Cambridge AAP being considered, notably the effects of the relocated Water Treatment works, on the communities close to the proposed site in Honey Hill. As the report has tried to set out however, the two processes of plan making and the consent process for the WTW are handled separately.

The Council's local plan evidence base makes clear that NEC is one of the most sustainable locations for future need to be accommodated. The argument in favour of the funding provided to allow for the WTW relocation is that it enables sustainable growth to be delivered on the NEC site. From a process started in 2014, both Cambridge City Council and SCDC have been exploring ways in which this area can be developed effectively. This is because we know that if we cannot develop the area effectively, we will need to meet that need in other ways, on other sites, in other locations – which are likely to include greenfield sites elsewhere in SCDC.

You have highlighted how densification, development at Cambridge Airport and options for development elsewhere in the green belt (such as the biomedical campus) might meet that additional demand. We are already considering development in some of those locations (such as Cambridge Airport) but each of those options also has consequences for those local communities. We already know from our evidence base work that NEC is the most sustainable location for future growth.

SCDC is meanwhile committed to the thorough and robust examination of the proposals for the new WTW. That examination takes place through the Development Consent Order process. Given the long-term ambition for the NEC area, I do however believe it is right for us to continue to quantify and shape the redevelopment of the NEC area and set out clearly how the potential of this site can be realised - as part of the AAP process.

The AAP will not progress to consultation until the DCO process, including its identification of impacts has concluded. Likewise, we will not be able to finalise our spatial strategy for the whole of greater Cambridge until the outcome of that process is known. But I do think it is important to continue to progress our work on this in parallel to the DCO process – not least to provide a context for proposals that may well come forward ahead of the AAPs adoption on those parts of the site that are less impacted by the WTW use.

The Leader invited Mrs. Conroy to ask a supplementary question:

Mrs. Conroy asked why the North East Cambridge Area Action Plan would not be delayed when there would be a substantive impact in the residents.

The Leader invited the Joint Director of the Shared Planning Service to respond, who noted that delaying the decision on the Area Action Plan would likely impact the timetable for the Council's new Local Plan. The DCO process already meant the adopted Local Plan might be out of date by the time the new plan could be adopted. So far, the Councils had said that the role of NEC justified delay, but any further delay to the DCO if a decision on the AAP was deferred, might require further delay to the new local plan and a potential need to consider alternative locations to NEC for development to meet needs.

c) From Mrs. Catherine Martin, who attended remotely:

The AAP proposes introducing 15,000 jobs into the area. Bearing in mind that many people will be travelling from locations where there is poor access to public transport, how many people do you estimate will be travelling to the area by car? There will also be 4500 densely packed homes. Your transport studies concede that the roads are already at capacity and local residents really do not want more traffic misery. How much confidence do you have in the ability to control the development by the notion of a 'trip budget'?

Response from Councillor Dr. Tumi Hawkins:

Thank you very much for your question.

It is clear that the only way that the comprehensive and sustainable delivery of the AAP can be achieved is if sites significantly reduce their vehicle trip generation, below current levels.

The Cambridgeshire County Council Highways Authority is responsible for Highways matters. It has moved away from the traditional approach of traffic management towards a vehicular trip budget model. The principle of the trip budget is to identify the maximum level of external vehicular peak-hour trips allowed for the development when fully built out, which would not result in a deterioration in the performance of the surrounding highway networks over existing levels. ([Transport Evidence Base \(June 2019\)](#), Ch.5)

To achieve this, developers will be subject to a strict trip budget and will need to show how they can meet that with measures to limit the number of vehicle trips allowed to and from each site. Development will not be permitted if proposals cannot demonstrate how they will achieve the trip budget, and there will be traffic monitoring to ensure compliance with the trip budgets.

Highways has undertaken traffic modelling to help inform the assessment of the proposals in the AAP and to help define how trips will be shared amongst the sites. On the basis of the modelling, the vehicle trip budget for the NEC area, to ensure there is no-net increase on the 2017 network baseline is:

- AM Peak (08:00-09:00): 3,900 two-way trips
- PM Peak (17:00-18:00): 3,000 two-way trips

Of the AM budget the modelling suggests that inbound employment-based trips are 2,882 with most of these inbound and 1,018 residential with most of these outbound.

Recognising that the AAP adoption is some years away, and some development is already happening in the area, the South Cambs and Cambridge City Councils Joint Development Control Committee has agreed some development principles based upon applying trip budgets to help inform the assessment of all new planning applications. Officers from the Councils Greater Cambridge Shared Planning and Highway Authority are therefore already seeking to address the concerns of residents on this issue.

For more information, please see the [Transport Position Statement \(Feb 2021\)](#), [High Level Transport Strategy \(November 2021\)](#) & [Transport Evidence Base \(June 2019\)](#) all of which are available to view on greatercambridgeplanning.org

The Leader invited Mrs. Martin to ask a supplementary question. Mrs. Martin declined but instead raised concerns of the proposed Wastewater Treatment Works being built on Green-Belt land.

d) From Mr James Littlewood, who attended remotely:

There are many things to commend in the environmental aspirations for this development but disappointingly the provision on natural greenspace is not one of them.

The amount of informal green space meets the minimum amount required by the council's policies but two thirds of this is provided on a business park, described on p26 of the Open Spaces Report as "these green spaces aren't perceived as being accessible to the wider public". Would you want to visit a business park for your leisure and recreation? It should be noted that the green space on the business park already exists, so it is not new space.

Only a third of the green space is provided in conjunction with the housing. Most of this is provided as linear green space or pocket parks, in other words small areas of green space that are loomed over by high-rise buildings. There is one larger park but the size of this is not provided in any of the documents. Extrapolating from the plans, we estimate this to be around 3 ha in size. Fig 20 in your report includes an infographic which aims to compare the amount of open space in the AAP with other Cambridge parks, the comparison is misleading because the parks which are used for comparison are just that, parks. A better comparison would be the main park proposed for the new development. At c3ha this is small in comparison to the other parks, given that it is to cater for 16,000 people.

At a bare minimum the proposals for the AAP might possibly just provide for the day-day open space needs of the new residents: play space for children, somewhere to walk the dog or kick a ball about. But what it won't do is provide the kind of green spaces that people in high density developments need access to - which is large natural greenspace: somewhere they can go for a long walk or run, experience nature, and escape the pressures of urban life.

There is of course somewhere for them to do that, it is Milton Country Park, and a subway is proposed under the A14 so that residents can get to it. And that is exactly where the 16,000 people will go. That would be great if it were not for the fact that the Country Park is already at capacity and cannot cope with 16,000 more visitors.

In the hundreds of pages text there is almost no mention of Milton Country Park at all, let alone of it meeting the needs of the development. There has been no assessment of whether the country park has the capacity to cope and what mitigation might be required to enable it to do so. We could see no requirement for 5106 contributions to support the park to cope only this rather vague paragraph on p54 of the Open Spaces & Recreation Topic Paper:

There is a need to build in community resilience and capacity into the existing open space provision for NEC. Alongside any on-site provision, opportunities to use 5106 contributions outside the city on large-scale green infrastructure should be considered. This will avoid pressure building up on existing parks, open spaces and cycleways, which might otherwise lose their biodiversity and other qualities. For example,

undertaking negotiations for specific 5106 contributions, for growth sites straddling the Cambridge/South Cambridgeshire boundary. These could explore opportunities for improving existing or creating new parks beyond the city which are easily accessible by foot and cycle, in order to avoid over-investment in, and over-use of popular or environmentally sensitive sites.

Natural England's Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards would require the AAP development to have a large 100-hectare site of accessible natural greenspace within 5km. Especially as this development is to be largely car free. But there isn't one. To make matters worse, the north of Cambridge will also see 20,000 people at Northstowe and 22,000 at Waterbeach. Where will these 58,000 people go to meet their green space needs?

This is an area which has been highlighted in the evidence base for the next Local Plan as already suffering from a deficit of green infrastructure and recreational pressure. This report, informing the Local Plan, highlights North East Cambridge to Waterbeach as a priority area for green infrastructure with its enhancement marked as of 'critical importance'.

Officers have suggested that the funding for that critical greenspace could be provided through a new requirement in the next Local Plan, and if that is possible then it would be very welcome and would alleviate our concerns. However, as yet there is no proposal in place for such a scheme and it would need to be approved by a planning inspector, in short at this stage this is an "if" rather than an agreed solution. If that does not prove possible then it would be essential that s106 contributions are secured from the NEC development towards this.

Response from Councillor Dr. Tumi Hawkins:

Thank you for your commendation of the environmental aspirations of the NEC plan. I note your disappointment relating to the provision of natural green space and hope that today's response goes some way to alleviating your concerns in that regard.

The AAP requires development to bring forward 27.6ha of new informal and children's play space across the area which is the equivalent of around 34.5 football pitches or around three times the size of Parker's Piece. In combination with the existing open spaces at NEC, including existing and re-designed spaces on the employment parks, the plan will therefore meet the informal and children's play space requirements in the adopted Local Plans on-site, meaning all residents will have access to open space within a 5-minute walk of their homes for day to day informal recreation and access within the NEC, to a range of different types of spaces for people to enjoy.

Some of the proposed open space areas are substantial in size and altogether, the spaces on NEC account for an area comparable with Milton Country Park. The new large green space is 4.1ha (over 10 acres) which is around the same size as Christ's Pieces or 5 football pitches. Similarly, the main linear park is between 70m and 100m wide, which is the length of a football pitch, and over

1.3km long. As required by the AAP, a landscape led approach to designing these spaces will ensure that there will be opportunities for individuals and families, residents, and workers to go for walks, run, play, and experience nature on their doorstep (including spaces in the business parks).

As set out in Policy BG/GI-Green Infrastructure in the First Proposals of the emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan, the Councils are also seeking to bring forward new strategic scale green spaces in addition to development. The nearest area identified to NEC lies immediately north of the A14 between the top of Cambridge, Waterbeach New Town and Northstowe, identified in the First Proposals Policies Map as Area 6 – North Cambridge Green Space. This area could provide new opportunities for open space to serve not only these developments but also existing communities. These wider proposals fall outside of the AAP area and, due to their more strategic role, will be considered further as the councils prepare the Greater Cambridge Local Plan.

Policy 8 of the Area Action Plan already requires that Planning obligations (S106 agreements) or conditions will be applied to ensure the delivery of on and off-site provision (*of open space*) linked and effectively phased to the delivery of new homes. Therefore, the AAP already proposes to seek contributions towards off-site open space provision where it is necessary to support the development. Whilst noting the lapsed planning permission for an extension to Milton Country Park, earmarking such contributions solely to that project would, at this stage, not be sensible given that the delivery of that additional open space area for formal sports is not, at this stage assured. Instead, through the AAP proposed policy, there will remain scope to invest in deliverable new off-site infrastructure to serve this and other communities formal open space needs.

The Leader invited Mr. Littlewood to ask a supplementary question:

Mr. Littlewood responded that he was unsure why provisions for open green spaces were not made within the Area Action Plan.

The Leader welcomed the question from CPPF and noted that the Council shared their aspirations regarding this site to ensure it was an exemplar of urban living. The Leader also highlighted that the councils were committed to continuing to engage with CPPF, recognising that they were an important local stakeholder. The Leader invited the Joint director of the Shared Planning Service to respond, who noted that the provisions detailed within the Area Action Plan were not definite, and confirmation of sites would be unjustifiable at this stage. The Joint Director highlighted that there was a relationship between the local plan and the provision of new strategic open spaces. As the Local Plan and AAP progressed in parallel, there would be more certainty around delivering these types of spaces, which was important in being able to demonstrate that the plans would be found sound at examination. Therefore, the precise wording of the AAP was likely to be kept under review alongside proposed allocations in the emerging Local Plan and any development proposals around the city, such as the expansion of Milton Country Park.

6. Issues arising from the Scrutiny and Overview Committee

At the Leader's invitation, Cabinet received the Scrutiny and Overview report summarising the meeting held on Thursday, 16 December 2021 relating to the following agenda item:

- North East Cambridge Area Action Plan: Proposed Submission (Regulation 19)

7. **Cambridge South Infrastructure Enhancements**

Cabinet received the Cambridge South Infrastructure Enhancements consultation response. Councillor Neil Gough, the Deputy Leader, introduced the report, noting the critical importance to the infrastructure project, and the Council's in principle support for a station at the south of Cambridge, but highlighted how the Council continued to raise specific concerns detailed in the report.

Councillor Brian Milnes, Lead Cabinet Member for Environmental Services and Licencing, agreed with the comments from the Deputy Leader, but raised concerns at the lack of biodiversity of the plan.

Councillor Peter McDonald, Lead Cabinet Member for Business Recovery, noted that Cambridgeshire County Council had also raised issues with the lack of biodiversity net gain set out in the proposals.

The Leader thanked Officers for their work, and the robust response to the consultation, and Cabinet:

Confirmed the Council's position as set out in the Statement of Case for the Public Inquiry (Appendix A), and **noted** the delegated authority to the Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development to approve and submit the Proof of Evidence and Statement of Common Ground on behalf of the Council.

8. **North East Cambridge Area Action Plan: Proposed Submission (Regulation 19)**

Cabinet received the Proposed Submission for the North East Cambridge Area Action Plan. Councillor Dr. Tumi Hawkins, Lead Cabinet Member for Planning Policy and Delivery introduced the report, thanking the Officers for their work in drafting the proposal, and detailing the sustainable regeneration and investment in the North East of Cambridge over the next twenty years, minimising emissions by encouraging modal shift to public transport. This report was brought to Cabinet following the public consultation in July 2020.

The Leader invited Councillor Judith Rippeth, Vice-Chair of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee to present the comments from their most recent meeting. Councillor Judith Rippeth thanked the Officers for delivering the final report, and the Scrutiny and Governance Adviser for the summary provided for Cabinet. The Committee noted the concerns about the capacity of Milton Country Park being exceeded and noted how this needed to be addressed but welcomed the

commitment to the 20% Biodiversity Net Gain. The Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development was invited to respond and said that the AAP had considered the range of open space requirements and sought to strike a balance with the spaces provided on site. Policy in the AAP would provide for contributions to be made off site to meet needs where appropriate but that the proposals for expansion of Milton Country Park were not assured – and for this reason it would not be appropriate to earmark contributions explicitly to this location at this time.

Councillor John Williams, Lead Cabinet Member for Finance, believed that the proposal allowed for a sustainable form of development and should not be delayed, in order to enable the DCO process and subsequently the Greater Cambridge Local Plan to continue on their projected timetables. This in turn would ensure the councils have an up to date development plan for the area and prevent speculative development across the villages and Green Belt as was previously the case before the adoption of the current Local Plan.

Councillor Neil Gough, the Deputy Leader, was supportive of the report, and the proposed enhancements to the area, alongside the broader plans within the Greater Cambridge Local Plan, and access for residents to green, open spaces.

Councillor Brian Milnes, Lead Cabinet Member for Environmental Services and Licencing, mentioned the potential for reducing car traffic as part of the proposal.

Councillor John Batchelor, Lead Cabinet Member for Housing, was pleased with the number of affordable houses that were part of the proposal.

Councillor Dr. Richard Williams asked whether delaying the Area Action Plan at this time would impact the Council's Five-Year Housing Land Supply, and raised concerns about the water supply for the proposed development, requesting the project be delayed until the Water Management Plan had been published. The Leader invited the Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development to respond. He confirmed that the AAP did not make a contribution to the Five-Year Housing Land Supply but delaying the plan process, may impact upon the Council having an up to date Local Plan to defend against planning decisions after 2023. By the time consultation began on the AAP, officers were confident that plans for meeting future water needs would be published by Water Resources East.

Councillor Dr. Claire Daunton was pleased the comments from the Scrutiny and Overview Committee had been included within the report, especially the recommended heights on all developments and accessible housing for older residents.

Councillor Anna Bradnam was concerned at the lack of provisions for sport pitches, faith spaces, cemeteries as well as a road bridge to serve the Fen Road communities. The Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development noted the comments and advised that consideration had been given to meeting these needs on site and that significant space at ground floor was identified for a range of "Class E" uses which could accommodate community needs, including faith

space, in addition to formal sports courts. The need for sports pitches and additional burial space had been considered as part of the plan process. Noting the trade-offs struck on informal and formal open space, officers considered that the burial and unmet on site formal open space needs could be met off site. The Joint Director commented that as detailed proposals for North East Cambridge were progressed, specific details could be discussed further with local communities, in particular through the Local Plan process. The Joint Director noted that Network Rail had not requested that land should be safeguarded for a new road bridge to serve the Fen Road community from North East Cambridge and that at this stage, it was not clear which would be the most suitable location for a new bridge once the technical requirements of the structure were taken into account as well as the financial implications on development viability of North East Cambridge.

The Leader closed the item, thanked Officers for their work in producing the report, and Cabinet:

- a) **Agreed** the North East Cambridge Area Action Plan: Proposed Submission (Regulation 19) (Appendix A1) and Proposed Submission Policies Map (Appendix A2) for future public consultation, contingent upon the separate Development Control Order being undertaken by Anglian Water for the relocation of the Waste Water Treatment Plant being approved;
- b) **Noted** the Draft Final Sustainability Report (Appendix B), and Habitats Regulation Assessment (Appendix C) and agree them as supporting documents to the North East Cambridge Area Action Plan: Proposed Submission (Regulation 19) that will also be subject to future public consultation;
- c) **Agreed** the following supporting documents to future public consultation:
 - a. Statement of Consultation, including the Councils' consideration of and responses to representations received to the draft North East Cambridge Area Action Plan (Regulation 18) consultation 2020 (Appendix D);
 - b. Duty to Cooperate Compliance Statement (Appendix E);
 - c. Draft Duty to Cooperate Statement of Common Ground (Appendix F);
 - d. Equalities Impact Assessment (Appendix G);
 - e. Topic papers (Appendix H).
- d) **Agreed** the findings of the following background evidence documents prepared by the Councils that have informed the North East Cambridge Area Action Plan: Proposed Submission and are proposed to accompany future public consultation:
 - a. Typologies Study and Development Capacity Assessment (Appendix I1);
 - b. Surface Water Drainage Core Principles (Appendix I2);
 - c. Chronology of the feasibility investigations of redevelopment of the Cambridge Waste Water Treatment Plant (Appendix I3).
- e) **Noted** the findings of the background evidence documents that have informed the North East Cambridge Area Action Plan: Proposed Submission and are proposed to accompany the public consultation (see

- Background documents to this report);
- f) **Agreed** that any subsequent material amendments be made by the Cambridge Executive Councillor for Planning Policy and Transport in consultation with Chair and Spokes, and by the South Cambridgeshire Lead Member for Planning, both in consultation with the JLPAG;
 - g) **Agreed** that any subsequent minor amendments and editing changes be delegated to the Joint Director of Planning and Economic in consultation with Cambridge Executive Councillor for Planning Policy and Transport and by the South Cambridgeshire Lead Cabinet Member for Planning.

**The Meeting ended at
11.57 a.m.**
