

## SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

**REPORT TO:** Council

1<sup>st</sup> February 2005.

**AUTHOR:** Director of Development Services

### **SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK: NORTHSTOWE AREA ACTION PLAN: RESULTS OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION ON PREFERRED OPTIONS AND DIRECTION OF WAY FORWARD**

#### **Purpose**

1. To advise Members of the results of the public participation on the Preferred Options Reports for the Northstowe Area Action Plan, to identify the key issues raised and determine the general approach to be taken in drafting the document to be submitted to the Secretary of State. Members are reminded to bring to the meeting the Preferred Options Report for Northstowe, published in October 2004.

#### **Effect on Corporate Objectives**

2.	High quality, accessible, value for money services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Assist the Council's objectives to deliver quality accessible development in the district</li><li>• Include the provision of affordable housing and the effective delivery of sustainable development at Northstowe and development of sustainable communities</li><li>• Assist the delivery of the Community Strategy</li><li>• Be used by Cambridgeshire Horizons (formerly the Infrastructure Partnership) to help the early and sustained development of the necessary services and infrastructure.</li></ul>
	Quality village life	
	A sustainable future	
	A better future through Partnerships	

#### **Background**

3. The Council published the Preferred Options Report on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2004. Public participation on the matters raised took place over a six-week period ending on 12<sup>th</sup> November.
4. Council met on 20<sup>th</sup>/21<sup>st</sup> January to determine the direction to be taken on the Core Strategy and Development Control Policies Development Plan Documents.
5. Public participation involved a number of exhibitions, public meetings, an inter-active website, a special edition of South Cambs magazine delivered to all households in the District, and copies of the reports being made available at the Council's offices and at public libraries and local access points. Copies of the Reports were sent to key organisations such as statutory bodies including Parish Councils.
6. For Northstowe, exhibitions were held at Oakington Primary School (Saturday, 9<sup>th</sup> October) and at Longstanton Primary School (Monday 11<sup>th</sup> October). A public meeting was held following the close of the exhibition at Longstanton. Just over 40 people attended the Oakington exhibition. At least 85 people attended the exhibition

at Longstanton, although it became more difficult to record numbers as people arrived for the start of the public meeting which was attended by at least 120 people.

7. The participation process has resulted in a total 2066 representations being made on the Northstowe AAP Preferred Options Report. Members should be aware that these may have been increased as in some cases the representations covered more than one point in which case they have been split to allow consideration to be given to each point.

### **Considerations**

8. This is the first of the special meetings of the Council which will consider the results of public participation on the Area Action Plans. It will determine the direction the Northstowe AAP should take having considered the responses to the options. Account will need to be taken of the decisions reached by Council on the Core Strategy and Development Control Policies DPDs on 20<sup>th</sup>/21<sup>st</sup> January. The approach for the Northstowe AAP will be as set out in the Preferred Options Report when changed as a result of recommendations in this report (with Appendices) or other decisions of Council.
9. The meeting of Council on 23<sup>rd</sup> March will determine the policy content of the draft Area Action Plan. A final meeting of Council on 9<sup>th</sup> May is programmed to deal with any amendments which need to be considered as a result of any of the previous meetings (20<sup>th</sup> May has also been reserved as a fall-back position if required).

### **Options**

10. In the Preferred Options reports options were presented as:
  - A *preferred approach* where it was considered that there were no appropriate alternative options
  - A *preferred option* where it was considered that alternatives were available other than that favoured by the Council
  - An *alternative option* where it was considered that there was a genuine choice to be made although the Council had indicated its preference
  - A *rejected option* where it was considered that there should be open debate about an option often put forward by other parties
  - A *series of options* where there was no preference expressed by the Council and there was a genuine choice to be made.
11. Council is now requested to consider the options which were the subject of participation and indicate, in the light of responses and any material considerations since the publication of the Preferred Options but also taking into account the views of the independent consultants who undertook the SEA/SA, whether particular options and approaches set out in the Northstowe AAP Preferred Options report should be confirmed, whether they need any amendment or refinement, or whether there should be a change in direction. This will enable officers to draft the Northstowe Area Action Plan which will come before Council on 23<sup>rd</sup> March.

### **The Main Issues to be resolved**

12. This section of the report highlights the *main* issues which arose during the participation process. Attached is Appendix 1, the detailed schedule which sets out a summary of each representation or group of like representations and an officer response with an action as appropriate. Members will need to consider the details set

out in the Appendix, noting that the main issues drawn out in this covering report are those which *officers* consider the key ones, either because of the volume of representations or because there is a significant change in direction which your officers wish to draw to your attention. At the end of each issue, a recommendation is made on the way forward, ie to confirm a Preferred Approach, to decide an appropriate option from those suggested, with any amendments necessary, or to decide on a different approach. Council is asked to determine the appropriate action for both the main issues set out in this report and the individual actions in respect of each representation in the schedules in Appendix 1. Also attached is Appendix 3 which is the index of those making representations.

13. The key strategic issues arising as a result of participation are considered to be:
- Determining the Site, its ultimate size and boundaries
  - Defining the Green Belt in the vicinity of Northstowe
  - Transport links including relationship with the A14 improvements and any link from Station Road, Oakington
  - Green Separation, including its appropriate landscape treatment for Longstanton and Oakington
  - Drainage and flooding.

#### *Site*

14. The Preferred Options report put forward 3 site options. Council on 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2004 resolved that the Preferred Approach to Green Separation for Longstanton and Oakington should be determined before putting forward site options. This led to the 3 site options:
- A for 8,000 dwellings contained within the St Ives railway
  - B for 9,000 dwellings by adding land to the west of the B1050
  - C for 10,000 dwellings by adding land north of the St Ives railway.

In each of these, the amount of Green Separation was constant. A further alternative, similar to Option C, put forward by prospective developers the Fairfield Partnership, suggested more development north of the St Ives railway and greater separation for Longstanton and Oakington. However, at Council in July, Members considered a report from officers which included a suggestion to consult on an option which was broadly similar to the Fairfield proposal but the Members' resolution ruled out consultation on such an Option as they considered that Green Separation should be determined before site selection. However, the Fairfield Partnership carried out its own public consultation in local villages in the weeks before the Council's participation exercise. This is reflected in the representations received.

#### *Site A*

15. Generally this was the most favoured site option. A total of 192 representations on this Option were received, of which 117 were in support. In part this support is based on the fact that as the Preferred Options Report put forward a Preferred Approach for Green Separation, this site would result in the smallest ultimate size of town of the 3 site options, with the least traffic generation and impact on drainage and would be contained within the line of the St Ives railway route. There are 75 objections, which include concerns that:
- the site is too small and cramped for 8,000 dwellings
  - not all the airfield is truly brownfield
  - there is insufficient Green Separation for Longstanton and Oakington
  - the Guided Bus proposal is unacceptable.

16. In response, it is considered that a new town of 8,000 dwellings is within the range of acceptable town size proposed in the Structure Plan. Following the debate at the Examination In Public, the Structure Plan was amended to propose that Northstowe should have a ultimate size between 8,000 and 10,000 dwellings, rather than "an ultimate size of 10,000 dwellings or thereabouts". In reaching that conclusion, the EIP Panel advised that the principal factors in determining size were likely to be secondary education provision, landscape and design issues and the possible impact on neighbouring communities.
17. Discussions with the County Council conclude that the best secondary education at Northstowe would be achieved with one larger school rather than two small schools. At 8,000 dwellings Northstowe would be a good-sized school which would support 8 forms of entry. 10,000 dwellings would support a 10-11 form of entry school. There are only three schools in Cambridgeshire which provide 10 or more forms of entry and experience demonstrates that a larger school would not be desirable. The size of secondary school does not therefore appear to be a limiting factor. However, given the proximity of Option A to Longstanton and Oakington, the County Council advises that it is possible that those 2 villages would be considered for inclusion in the catchment for the Northstowe school, in which case Northstowe at 8,000 dwellings with Longstanton and Oakington would support a 10-11 form entry secondary school.
18. The landscape analysis demonstrates that Option A will have the least impact on the wider landscape by containing Northstowe almost wholly in views from the west by Longstanton village. Containment by the St Ives railway to the east will also ensure that impact on Willingham and Rampton is minimised. Given the Structure Plan requirement for Northstowe to be located at Longstanton/Oakington and make best use of the previously developed land at Oakington Airfield, for these 2 villages the impacts will also be minimised because Northstowe will be at the lower end of the size range; Options B and C would give no greater separation and would result in these villages being simply as close to a larger town. Local impacts can be managed by a number of means but principally (1) the Structure Plan requirement for green separation for these 2 villages which can be supported by locating lower intensity uses on the nearest edges of Northstowe and (2) ensuring that access roads avoid traffic passing through the 2 villages. Option A also has the best fit with the requirement to be east of Longstanton and north of Oakington, would be best integrated into the proposed express Guided Bus service running along the disused St Ives railway line (by a local loop with a greater frequency of stops through the town) which provides the opportunity to create a sustainable design of new town and minimises the amount of agricultural land (including land of higher quality) that would be taken for development.

#### *Site B*

19. This received a total of 108 representations. Very few representations (5) support this option, although that does include the County Council and GO-East. There are 103 objections. Particular concerns generally suggest that the advantages of finding land for another 1,000 dwellings are outweighed by the disadvantages which include:
- Less well identified site boundaries than Site A
  - Uses more agricultural land including land of high quality
  - The impact on Longstanton, with existing development on Station Road being drawn into Northstowe which it is perceived would "wrap around" the village
  - The difficulties of re-routing the B1050.

## Site C

20. Out of a total of 130 representations on this option, there is some support (50 representations), although some of this is based upon the misunderstanding that it is the Fairfield option. Supporters cite:
- This is the only option to deliver 10,000 dwellings
  - It would give greater Green Separation for Longstanton and Oakington
  - Specify that the Fairfield option is preferred
  - Better to design the town around both sides of the Guided Busway.
21. Objectors ( 90 representations) focus on:
- The lack of clear boundaries to the site
  - 10,000 dwellings would be too large with the greatest impact on traffic and drainage
  - impacts on four villages by encroaching also onto Rampton and Willingham
  - the greatest impact on the landscape
  - uses more agricultural land and especially good quality land
  - is less well served by the Guided Busway which would be difficult to bridge
  - would be less sustainable pattern of development with part of the town severed by the proposed express Guided Busway – that part of the town north of the Guided Busway having less connectivity with the rest of the town
  - has the poorest fit with the Structure Plan especially in relation to being at Longstanton/Oakington.
22. Site C would develop a town of 10,000 dwellings which is within the range of acceptable town size proposed in the Structure Plan as noted above in the consideration of Site A. However, the landscape analysis demonstrates that it would have the greatest impact on the wider landscape. Developing north and east of the St Ives railway would also mean that impact on Willingham and Rampton would be greater than Options A or B. Given the Structure Plan requirement for Northstowe to be located at Longstanton/Oakington and make best use of the previously developed land at Oakington Airfield; for these 2 villages the impacts will also be minimised because Northstowe will be at the lower end of the size range; Option C would give no greater separation and would result in these villages being simply as close to a larger town. Option C also has the worst fit with the requirement to be east of Longstanton and north of Oakington, as a substantial part would be north of Longstanton, a similar criticism of Option B. It would be less well integrated into the proposed express Guided Bus service running along the disused St Ives railway line (by a local loop with a greater frequency of stops through the town) which provides the opportunity to create a sustainable design of new town and raise problems of crossing the Guideway, either by breaks in the Guideway which would reduce the effectiveness of the through route or by bridging which would be very expensive and intrusive in the landscape. Option C takes a greater amount of agricultural land (including land of higher quality) for development.

### *Conclusions and Recommendation on Site*

23. The Options for choosing a site has brought forward a very high level of response. The Preferred Options Report put forward the 3 site options without expressing a preference. Of these sites there is very little support for Site B. Site C has received some support but has raised concerns about the impact on the wider landscape and other village communities without any benefit for Longstanton/Oakington and problems of severance by the Guided Busway. The most favoured site option is A, which would bring forward a town of 8,000 dwellings, at the lower end of the Structure

Plan range, and which would be contained within the line of the St Ives railway/ Guided Busway which would provide a very clear boundary. It is therefore recommended that Site A be agreed as the site to take forward into the AAP.

#### *Vision*

24. Whilst there are a number of representations which relate to the Preferred Approach for developing a vision for Northstowe, many of the points raised cover other aspects of the document and it is difficult to draw together any specific themes which come from the representations. It will therefore be a matter to consider in the schedule of representations set out in Appendix 1.

#### *Green Belt*

25. NS5 – NS8 set out objectives and 3 options for dealing with the Green Belt in the vicinity of Northstowe. The Structure Plan at Policy P9/2 requires the outer boundary of the Green Belt to be reviewed, particularly because of the changed circumstances caused by the Northstowe proposal. NS5 put forward the Preferred Approach for the objectives of the Green Belt in the vicinity of Northstowe. These were generally supported, although this was qualified by concerns that there had to be adequate separation for Longstanton and Oakington.
26. Of the 3 options put forward, NS6, the Preferred Option, which would extend the Green Belt to surround Northstowe and designate as Green Belt the Green Separation between Northstowe and Longstanton/Oakington, was the most favoured option (47 representations in support). However, GO-East, in their support for Site B, suggested that it should be further extended north of the St Ives railway and west of the B1050. Having considered this point, and if the site agreed by Council is Site A, It is recommended that this suggestion be agreed by Council as it would be more logical to completely surround Northstowe and it would provide clear and distinct boundaries. The boundaries of the Green Belt in this additional area would be the road between Willingham and Over and the road between Over and Longstanton. There is also objection to NS6 on the grounds that it is not appropriate to include the Green Separation within the Green Belt. However, it is recommended that this is not accepted as this land is critical to prevent coalescence of settlements, one of the long established purposes of Green Belt.
27. An alternative Option, NS7, only included the Green Separation as Green Belt, which would leave the other boundaries of Northstowe unprotected by Green Belt, thus leaving opportunities for further expansion. There was no support for this option.
28. NS8 put forward a Rejected Option of keeping the boundary of the Green Belt as it currently stands. There was almost unanimous support for the Council's position of rejecting this option.
29. It is therefore recommended that the Green Belt be extended in the AAP as suggested in NS6 but including the additional land suggested by GO-East. The boundaries around Northstowe are dependant on the Site Option agreed by Council.

#### *Housing*

30. NS16 and NS17 put forward options for determining the overall housing density in Northstowe and whether an overall density higher than 40 dwellings per hectare should be specified in policy. These drew a mixed response. The intention of NS16 is to include a target figure higher than 40 dph which would be in accordance with Structure Plan Policy P5/3, which seeks "significantly higher densities" than 40 dph in planned new communities. Further work would be required to identify an appropriate figure. This would not be a ceiling on density levels and this would be made clear in a

policy. It is agreed that the approach to the development of Northstowe should be design-led but this must be in the context of the higher densities that would be appropriate in a town than have been typical in South Cambridgeshire. A density policy is a key part of achieving that objective.

31. NS19 set out the Council's Preferred approach to Affordable Housing, which was to apply the target set out in the Core Strategy (recommended as being 50%). There is some concern that whilst this is acceptable where there is an already established community, if 50% of the housing in Northstowe is Affordable it is unlikely to make for a balanced town.
32. The development strategy for the Cambridge area takes account of the high level of housing need identified in the 2002 Housing Needs Survey which recommends a 50% target for Affordable Housing in major new developments. If the Affordable Housing is not adequately provided in the major new developments, it would undermine the development strategy by providing market housing which would be taken up by those living and/or working outside the Cambridge area, for example commuting to Stansted or London. It is therefore important for Northstowe to play its part in providing significant levels of Affordable Housing. The key to ensuring that the Affordable Housing element is consistent with securing a balanced and sustainable community will be the mix of tenure and dwellings sizes. In terms of tenure, there needs to be a balance between social rented housing and various types of intermediate housing for others who cannot afford to access market housing, including key workers. There is a high level of need for social rented properties in South Cambridgeshire but this has to be considered against the need to ensure a balanced community with no over-emphasis on one social group. Whilst the AAP should not set prescriptive policies on tenure mix, which is best determined at the time of detailed schemes coming forward having regard to need at that time, it would be helpful to provide an indicative tenure mix in supporting text. It is recommended that the indicative proportions of Affordable Housing would be 50:50 social rented to intermediate housing, an element of which will be for key workers. In terms of the mix of Affordable house sizes, Affordable Housing over recent years has tended to focus on smaller units, addressing an historic emphasis on larger family units and rectifying this imbalance. At Northstowe a more balanced mix will be appropriate. It is particularly important that the Affordable Housing mix responds to needs at the time the scheme comes forward, so it is recommended that no targets be set in the AAP.
33. NS20 set out the Preferred Approach for market housing mix, and that it be that applied to the District as a whole. There is some concern that this would not create a balanced community. In the Core Strategy the mix is proposed to be altered from the Preferred Approach to the proportions 50%(1&2 bedrooms): 25%(3 bedrooms): 25% (4 bedrooms) and this is considered appropriate for development in villages where development is adding to existing communities. The original Core Strategy identified targets in the proportions 40%: 30%: 30%. These are still considered to be an appropriate policy approach for Northstowe; it would help address the high level of need identified for 1&2 bedroom properties whilst not compromising the creation of a balanced community in an entirely new settlement. Developers would need to demonstrate if an alternative approach was more appropriate for social or economic reasons. However, this would be an exception to the policy in view of the particularly high level of need identified and the need to respond to past trends.

#### *Employment*

34. NS22 put forward the Preferred Approach that the main employment area should be in and adjoining the town centre. Some responses seek an explicit statement that, as with the town centre, employment areas should not be near existing residences and

conservation areas (including Rampton Drift, Toad Acre, and St Michael's). In response, it is envisaged that the main employment area would be located to the south of the town centre and therefore away from Rampton Drift. There is no intention that it would be located on the edge of the town close to existing village communities. The employment area will most appropriately be embedded within the town to maximise accessibility to it from within the town, in particular from the local public transport loop which will pass through the heart of the town and support the town centre.

35. NS23 set out the Preferred Approach to locate adjacent to the Park and Ride site those employment uses not appropriate for a town centre or nearby location. There is some concern from a representation that this may require provision to be made adjoining the Park and Ride site explicitly for small scale uses within the Use Classes of B2 and B8. It is recommended that in principle that some small scale general employment uses (B2) would be appropriate and also storage and distribution facilities (B8); however these should be limited to a scale serving Northstowe and its immediate hinterland.

*Transport*

36. There is considerable concern that the Northstowe development should not be allowed to go ahead prior to the much needed improvements to the A14. In response, it is agreed that the upgrading of the A14 is vital for the full development of Northstowe, given the existing traffic conditions along the corridor. There needs to be a guarantee that the A14 upgrade will be implemented before any planning permission is granted. Although there has been a delay in the consultation on the scheme, the Highways Agency continues to indicate a start date for the improvement works in 2008. The District Council should seek assurance that the first phase of works will be between Bar Hill and Girton, the most crucial stretch for development. Some development at Northstowe may be able to proceed before the A14 upgrading as it will take more than a year after the development commences before houses will be available for occupation and completion rates will take a year or two to get up to full speed. The Area Action Plan should indicate that any planning application for Northstowe should be able to demonstrate that travel conditions will not significantly worsen the existing conditions, even if this means the developers putting in infrastructure in advance of the Highways Agency. For example, this could be the provision of a parallel distributor road, improvements to junctions and the links to the parallel road.
37. The other main issue which has raised representations is the provision of an additional road access north of Oakington, covered by Options NS31, NS32 and NS33. There is both support and objection. There are concerns that providing such a link into Northstowe would encourage traffic from the Cottenham direction, and from Northstowe, to use this route and then access Cambridge, the A14 and M11 via Oakington village. NS32 suggested that if there were such a link it should start from east of Westwick in order to protect that settlement as well as Oakington. In response, it is recommended that the provision of an access road north of Oakington could act as an informal bypass for Oakington and help reduce the amount of traffic in the village. Without an access road, traffic will be forced through the villages, thus exacerbating existing traffic problems. Measures will need to be incorporated in the detailed design of the access road to consider junction carefully layout/design, for example, restricted movement junctions, and should be supplemented with appropriate traffic management measures within the villages, to deter rat-running. Likewise, there can be careful consideration and design of the roads within Northstowe. Whilst it is noted that there would be advantages to Westwick to start such a road to the east of that settlement, this has to be balanced against the impact



on the wider countryside as it would be a longer route and involve a bridge over the Guided Busway. On balance therefore it is recommended that Station Road, Oakington would be preferable. It will be for the detailed design to determine the route and mitigate any potential impacts.

38. Whilst there is support for the Preferred Approach set out in NS34 of providing High Quality Public Transport, with a loop linked to the Guided Busway, objections to the Guided Busway proposals have been made. That is a matter for the Transport & Works public inquiry. The Structure Plan makes clear that Northstowe should be developed making best use of this proposal. The inclusion of the requirement to provide initial subsidies from developer contributions has been questioned but it is essential, as every effort needs to be made to achieve a step change in attitudes towards using public transport from day one. Subsidies will play a significant part in helping to achieve this.

#### *Landscape*

39. The crucial issue arising in representations on landscape (NS39 – NS57) concerns the extent and treatment of Green Separation for Longstanton and Oakington, and this is dealt with in NS40 – NS48.
40. NS40 set out the general Preferred Approach of a minimum of 200m between village frameworks and the edge of the built up area of Northstowe. There are representations in support of this approach but there are also others which seek a greater degree of separation. In preparing the Preferred Options Report, the Council considered in detail the purpose of Green Separation and how to achieve it. In coming to a view on this matter, Council agreed that distance was not the only determining factor in achieving adequate separation and that the treatment of that separation was crucial. An appropriate landscape treatment for the different parts of the green separation was considered in order to maintain visual separation between the existing villages and Northstowe and then the physical extent of land that would enable that treatment to be implemented effectively. It remains your officers' recommendation that a minimum of 200m separation is appropriate in principle, that a greater minimum distance is not considered necessary to maintain village character but that in sensitive areas such as Conservation Areas, site specific proposals should be made in other options. Members of the Northstowe Member Steering Group undertook a detailed site visit and confirmed this general approach.
41. NS41 set out a Preferred Approach for the treatment of the Green separation at Longstanton which was for a landscape of paddocks, hedgerows and copses. This drew a limited number of representations, most in favour. However, one representation that if it is comprised entirely of paddocks and small copses it would not be attractive or offer sufficient public access as the uses are too exclusive and difficult to control. In response, it is noted that the term paddock was intended to portray a pattern of smaller fields rather than a land use. It is recommended that the Preferred approach be confirmed as it refers to a mix of paddocks/small fields and small copses which could provide for a varied landscape which is appropriate for the historic landscape character.
42. NS42 set out the Preferred Approach for the Conservation Area at Long Lane, ie of an additional 50m of planting beyond Long Lane. This was in general supported although one representation suggests that this is a prescriptive approach too detailed for an AAP. Given the importance of Green Separation, it is recommended that it is important to set this out in the AAP and that it be confirmed as the approach to be followed.

43. NS43 set out the Preferred approach for Green Separation for St Michael's Mount, ie that the proposed minimum 200m separation from the framework would not be extended to provide 200m separation for this property which lies outside the village framework, there would need to be considerable tree planting to protect the property's character and the southern end of the village of St Michael's. Many representations consider that St Michael's Mount forms part of the village of Longstanton St Michael's even if it is not in the village framework and therefore it should receive 200m separation. **A separate paper on this matter is attached as Appendix 2 and illustrated in Maps 1 and 2.**
44. With the benefit of public participation, and taking account of the clear public perception of the property as part of the village in representations, it is recommended on balance that the approach to green separation be amended so that the 200m green separation is measured from the curtilage of St Michael's Mount and not from the village framework. Providing an extra 100m for St Michael's Mount would require an additional 4.14ha of land. This would result in a smaller site area for Northstowe and if there are any implications for achieving 8,000 dwellings on Site A, this could be offset by a marginal overall increase in density.
45. NS44 set out the Preferred Approach for Green Separation at Oakington, ie additional tree planting to reinforce the existing parkland landscape character. This was generally supported although there was a concern that it should include woodland planting. In response, it remains your officers' view that the character proposed should be a mixture of parkland and tree groups, rather than extensive woodland areas to best reflect the existing character.
46. NS45 set out the Preferred Approach for Rampton Drift which was for sensitive integration with appropriate landscape treatment. This approach was agreed by Members at the Northstowe Member Steering Group on 6<sup>th</sup> September following the site visit. A number of representations seek a separation of 50m, in part on the basis that this was referred to at the public meeting held in Longstanton on 11<sup>th</sup> October. Reference to 50m separation for Rampton Drift made at the public meeting (incorrectly, as it referred to the approach being considered before the meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> September) was corrected at meeting to make clear that the option the subject of public participation was for no fixed distance of separation but for an appropriate landscape treatment which could include additional planting supplementing the existing nearby mature trees. Rampton Drift would be incorporated into Northstowe in any site option and will therefore be surrounded by urban uses. It is important to ensure that this area is sensitively integrated into the new town whilst maintaining its residential amenity. It is not considered that a specified distance is required in the Area Action Plan in order for this to be appropriately achieved. The landscape treatment will be a matter for the detailed planning application and masterplanning process.
47. NS46 set out the Preferred Approach for landscape treatment at the airfield road, which is to supplement existing tree belt with an additional 50m of landscaping. In general this approach is supported although one representation suggest this is too detailed a matter for the AAP.
48. NS47 set out the Preferred Approach to providing landscape buffers for the ribbon development on the B1050 north of Longstanton/south of the railway. A number of representations object saying that these properties should have 200 metre separation not 50 metre. In response, it is noted that the Structure Plan requires green separation to protect village character. The ribbon of 5 houses in the countryside south of the railway on the B1050 lies outside the established village of Longstanton.

It therefore does not read visually as part of the consolidated village and does not require green separation to protect the village character of Longstanton. It would be integrated into Northstowe if Site B were chosen. Notwithstanding, in the context of the Structure Plan requirement for the development of a new town, it remains the recommendation that landscape treatment proposed is sufficient to ensure protection of residential amenity for those dwellings.

49. NS48 put forward the Preferred Approach to providing landscape buffers of 200m for the sporadic linear development on the B1050 north of the railway. This approach was generally supported.

*Biodiversity*

50. NS58 – NS61 put forward the Preferred Approaches for the objectives of the AAP for biodiversity and the treatment for biodiversity of the Water Park, the Green separation between Northstowe and Oakington, and the Green Corridors beyond the town. In general, most representations support these approaches.

51. However, one representation suggest that whilst connections may be provided to wildlife corridors off site it will not be possible to provide or deliver such off-site corridors and the land ownership, control and management issues this objective raises and therefore suggest that it should refer to connections rather than imply off site provision. In response, it is recommended that if such off-site improvements are needed beyond the boundaries of the town and the land under the control of any applicant for planning permission, it will fall to that applicant to negotiate with any other landowner to ensure delivery of what is needed to create a successful development.

*Archaeology and Heritage*

52. This section, covering NS62 and NS63 drew a limited response, most of which is in support. However, English Heritage consider that whilst mitigation is important, opportunities for enhancement should also be pursued. They suggest additional bullet points:

-referring to the need for development to be based on a thorough understanding of the present landscape and townscape.

-providing for enhancement of the historic environment, including the repair of existing historic fabric.

In response it is considered that it would be misleading to include references to the enhancement of archaeology and built heritage, as it is difficult to envisage how the construction of a new town can realistically be expected to enhance archaeology and built heritage. Archaeology can be preserved in situ and documented, but this cannot be said to constitute enhancement. The same applies to built heritage, as it is considered that the most appropriate setting for structures with a heritage value is the historic setting in which they were originally constructed. The development of Northstowe will mean that the original setting will be replaced. Preservation, maintenance and mitigation are more realistic goals. In the Landscape section of the AAP (Chapter 8), extensive consideration is given to the way in which Northstowe should be incorporated into the landscape and also to the need to take into account the Conservation Areas in Longstanton, Oakington and Westwick.

*Recreation*

53. NS64 – NS84 set out the options for meeting recreational needs. There are three main issues arising: the form of management of open space, countryside recreation (country parks) and the approach to be taken in respect of the existing golf course and the facility it provides.

54. There is general agreement that the management of open space must be addressed prior to the commencement of development. But there is representation that it is premature to settle on the model presented and that the AAP should set out general guidelines to inform detailed discussions.  
Suggested principles are:
- management plan in place prior to construction;
  - as few ownerships as possible;
  - provide for management as long as is required;
  - explore the potential role of Trusts and a Town Council
  - provide for consultation with the local community
- In response, it should be noted that a working group has been established to explore possibilities of a Northstowe Development Trust, and also the other possibility of a community trust to manage both open space and community facilities. A single ownership of facilities offers significant benefits, and should be required. For the AAP it is recommended that there should be a criteria based policy requiring the management plan to be approved prior to the S.46 agreement, and single ownership of facilities, but allowing greater flexibility on the exact method of management.
55. A number of representations object to the loss of the existing golf course, even if it were to be replaced locally. However, in response, it has to be recognised that the present golf course occupies such a strategic and central location within all of the site options that it will be developed. It is understood that a new pay and play course is under construction at Milton which would help offset the loss of that type of facility.
56. There is also comment that no provision should be made for a country park outside the site of the new town as no need has been demonstrated and it is unreasonable to require a developer to make provision of facilities beyond what is reasonably required to serve Northstowe or address under provision elsewhere in the sub-region. In response it is considered that Strategic Open Space is a type of open space for which is reasonable to seek developer contributions. The County Council, in partnership with the District Councils has undertaken a Strategic Open Space study which, when completed, will help identify what standard should be identified for Strategic Open Space and the appropriate contribution that should come forward from developments. It is clear that Northstowe will require the provision of strategic open space. There will therefore be no obligation imposed on developers to provide facilities at a level above that reasonably required by Northstowe.

#### *Drainage*

57. The key issue arising from the drainage matters (NS86 – NS97) is the alleviation of flood risk to Oakington and Longstanton. NS94, NS95 and NS96 set out three options for alleviating the flooding of the Beck Brook in Oakington, namely a new channel, a new balancing pond or by modifications to the existing balancing pond at Bar Hill. In response, the Environment Agency indicates that the method has yet to be determined and therefore that a preference should not be made at this stage. It is recommended that this be accepted and that a criteria based policy for the AAP be developed instead.
58. A number of representations also call for diverting Longstanton Brook along the B1050 Bypass as the new Environment Agency maps show that areas in Longstanton are in the highest flood risk category, as is Oakington. However, in response, it is noted that the diversion of Longstanton Brook is not required by the development, it may be difficult to deliver due to land ownership and it may not be the best option. However, if the development associated with Northstowe does have a direct impact, it would be required to make improvements to the flooding situation at

Longstanton. This might be achieved with new balancing ponds west of Longstanton, associated with the new Northstowe access roads.

*Telecommunications, Energy, Phasing/Implementation*

59. These sections drew a limited response which will need to be considered on the basis of the schedule set out in Appendix 1.

**Financial Implications**

60. The cost of progressing the LDF including the Northstowe AAP is set out in the Council's budget.

**Legal Implications**

61. The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 imposes a statutory duty to prepare a Local Development Framework and to keep it up to date. Northstowe is identified as a location for a small new town in the Structure Plan in Policy P9/3 and therefore requires an Area Action Plan to take this forward.

**Staffing Implications**

62. The programme for the LDF has been compiled having regard to the staffing resources that the Council can commit to planning policy preparation in the context of wider pressures for the early delivery of the development strategy set out in the Structure Plan.

**Risk Management Implications**

63. The Northstowe AAP is a key Development Plan Document within the LDF. The Structure Plan requires provision to be made to enable development on the site to be started by 2006. It is important for the District Council, as the plan-making authority, to be able to ensure that this development takes place consistent with its policies. If the AAP is not in place at an early stage there is the risk of the development being determined by the development control and appeal process.

**Consultations**

64. The Preferred Options Report has been the subject of extensive public participation.

**Conclusions/Summary**

65. The public participation exercise has been effective at involving local communities, individuals and organisations and has given them an early opportunity to determine the direction the AAP should take. It has presented a valuable opportunity for existing residents and communities to consider the implications for them of developing a new town at Northstowe. The Council will need to take these views into account in determining the approach to be taken in developing the Area Action Plan for Northstowe which will guide the preparation of masterplans and any supplementary planning documents and be the starting point for determining planning applications. It is in the interests of the District as a whole to ensure a high quality urban environment which will achieve a good quality of life for the future residents of Northstowe. Agreeing the approach to be taken in developing policies should enable the Council to meet its objective of submitting the AAP to the Secretary of State in the summer of this year.

## **Recommendations**

66. Council is recommended to agree the recommendations set out in this report and the Appendix as the basis for developing the policies to be set out in the Northstowe Area Action Plan. Council would receive this draft AAP at the special meeting arranged for 23<sup>rd</sup> March.
67. It is also recommended that any minor editing changes necessary to the responses as set out in Appendix 1 be delegated to the Development Services Director, with any which involve a material change being delegated to the Planning and Economic Development Portfolio Holder.

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

Core Strategy Preferred Options Report, SCDC, October 2004

Northstowe Area Action Plan, Preferred Options Report, SCDC, October 2004.

Representations received in response to the above documents.

Agenda and Minutes of the meeting of the Council, 20<sup>th</sup>/21<sup>st</sup> January 2005.

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